

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MARY AND ALL SAINTS CE AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL

Reading

LEA area: READING

Unique reference number: 110002

Headteacher: Mrs Beverley Clements

Reporting inspector: Mr Fred Riches
23235

Dates of inspection: 27-30 November 2000

Inspection number: 224982

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Aided

Age range of pupils: 5-11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Wensley Road
Coley Park
Reading
Berkshire

Postcode: RG1 6DU

Telephone number: 0118 901 5545

Fax number: 0118 901 5546

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr John Symonds

Date of previous inspection: October 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Fred Riches 23235	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology; physical education; English as an additional language.	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Derek Bowers 09528	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils?
Stephanie Lacey 03764	Team inspector	English; art and design.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Anna Sims 23945	Team inspector	Mathematics; design and technology. music; equal opportunities.	How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Carol Slade 23812	Team inspector	Science; geography; history; special educational needs.	

The inspection contractor was:

PRIMARY FOCUS
34 Duns Tew
Nr Bicester
Oxfordshire
OX25 6JS

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The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This Church of England Voluntary Aided school has 183 boys and girls on roll aged five to eleven. Most come from the local area, but a few travel from further afield, as their parents have chosen a church school. Twenty-two per cent of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds, including black Caribbean, African, Indian, Pakistani and Chinese. Eleven pupils speak English as an additional language, but none are at an early stage of English language acquisition. They do not require extra support. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school covers a wide range, but is broadly average overall. Twelve per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This falls into the broadly average range. The school has just over 34 per cent of pupils on its register of special educational need. This is above average. Two pupils have statements of special educational need.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school with a strong Christian ethos. Pupils' attainment at age eleven is above average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils of all abilities are achieving well overall, as a result of a well-balanced curriculum, particularly strong teaching in infant classes, good leadership and management by the headteacher and positive support from the governing body. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve high standards in English, especially in reading;
- Teaching is of consistently high quality throughout Years 1 and 2;
- Leadership by headteacher, senior management team and subject co-ordinators is good and the governing body gives dedicated and thoughtful support;
- Teaching assistants give very effective support in classes, in group work and with individuals, particularly to pupils with special educational needs;
- Personal, social, spiritual and moral education is good; the school offers good care and guidance for pupils and has good procedures for monitoring their progress;
- Administrative staff work extremely efficiently to enable the school to run smoothly;

What could be improved

- The overall level of challenge and involvement of pupils in some junior lessons to match that seen in infant classes;
- Application of the school's behaviour management systems, which work well for most pupils, but are not fully effective for a small number of junior pupils;
- The level of support for pupils with special educational needs in Years 5 and 6;
- The effectiveness of the home/school partnership;
- The working environment for junior pupils.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good improvement since the last inspection in October 1996. It has raised standards in English, mathematics and science. The quality of curriculum planning and teaching is better, with particularly strong improvement in the infant department, where there has been a more stable staffing situation. The headteacher, staff and governors have successfully addressed all of the key issues. They have worked hard to improve teaching strategies, assessment systems, provision for personal, social and moral education and to sharpen school development and improvement planning procedures. They have improved resources and planning for information and communication technology (ICT).

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	A	A	B	B
Mathematics	B	A	C	C
Science	A	C	D	D

Key

very high A*

well above average A

above average B

Average C

below average D

well below average E

very low E*

The table shows standards in summer 2000 above the national average and above those of similar schools in English, average and in line with those of similar schools in mathematics, and below average and below those of similar schools in science. The trend shows improvement in 1998 and 1999, with all pupils having made good progress through the junior department. There was a dip in mathematics and science in 2000, however, when not all higher attainers did as well as they should. Standards in the current Year 6 are above average in English, mathematics and science. The difference between this year's and last year's standards in mathematics and science is related to two factors. Firstly there are fewer pupils with special educational needs and secondly the school has set higher expectations for all pupils. These had not been sufficiently challenging, particularly in science. Results for seven-year-olds in 2000 were well above average in reading, above average in science and average in writing and mathematics. Standards in the current Year 2 are well above average in reading, and above average in writing, mathematics and science. Standards at age seven have risen consistently since the last inspection, as a result of high quality teaching and additional staffing. Standards in ICT are satisfactory at age seven, but eleven-year-olds are not yet achieving as well as they should, because of gaps in earlier learning. Standards are good in history throughout the school and in design and technology in infant classes. In physical education and art, infant standards are satisfactory, but junior standards are below average. Standards are broadly average in other subjects. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and with particular gifts and talents, are achieving as well as they should.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good overall; most pupils show interest, concentrate well and have a positive attitude to their work; a very small number of junior pupils show less enthusiasm for learning and occasionally their lack of application disrupts the learning of others.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good overall; all pupils behave well at break times; most behave well in lessons, but a very small number of junior pupils misbehave.
Personal development and relationships	Good; most pupils develop good relationships with each other and their teachers; relationships in infant classes are very good.
Attendance	Very good; well above the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Not applicable	Very Good	Satisfactory

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

The quality of teaching is good overall, with 95 per cent of lessons satisfactory or better, including 31 per cent very good or excellent. Five per cent are unsatisfactory. This represents a considerable improvement from the last inspection. These overall statistics mask a difference between the very good quality of teaching in infant classes and satisfactory teaching for the juniors. Teaching is consistently good or better in Years 1 and 2, with a high proportion of very good lessons, including those in literacy and numeracy. Pupils of all abilities are achieving very well in these classes as a result of the high quality of teaching. Teachers plan meticulously. They and their assistants have developed very caring relationships with pupils in their classes. They make lessons lively and interesting, organising groups carefully to support and challenge pupils appropriately. As a result of their teachers' high expectations and excellent class management, pupils show active interest in their learning, want to please, and put real effort into their work. Teachers in junior classes plan lessons and organise groups and equipment well. Teaching in these classes is satisfactory overall, but lacks imagination and pace at times. Class sizes are larger and there are fewer teaching assistants. Pupils of all abilities are achieving satisfactorily, but do not show consistently high levels of interest and application in all lessons. Throughout the school, teachers provide well-matched tasks for pupils with special educational needs and assistants give very good support to groups and individuals. Teachers ensure equality of opportunity and participation for all pupils by involving them fully in all activities.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good; planning for work in different subject areas has improved, with work still needed on the new curriculum for reception children. The range of additional activities is satisfactory, though the school currently provides fewer than in the past.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good; systems are in place to ensure early diagnosis and support; learning support is of high quality and makes a significant contribution to pupils' progress, but there is insufficient in Years 5 and 6.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory; none of these pupils require additional support; they are all fluent bilingual speakers.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall; the school's strong Christian ethos underpins work in this area; provision for pupils' social and moral development is good; the school has a strong musical tradition; provision for cultural education is satisfactory, with not enough emphasis on the cultural traditions of non-western societies.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good overall; staff know pupils well; child protection procedures are very good; the school has good arrangements for pupils' welfare; staff track pupils' progress carefully and provide appropriate support.

The school provides good information to parents, but the home/school partnership is not yet fully effective, despite the school's best efforts.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher gives a strong lead and sets a clear educational direction. The senior management team and subject co-ordinators understand and fulfil their roles well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Well. An experienced and sensitive Chairman visits regularly and leads a supportive governing body through efficient committee procedures, ensuring the school meets all statutory requirements.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school development and improvement plan is an effective tool for improving educational provision and raising standards. Monitoring procedures are mainly good, but not always sufficiently focused to support staff new to the school.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school applies the principles of best value well.

Staffing levels are good, except in Years 5 and 6. Learning resources are good. Grounds are good. Accommodation is adequate. The school is well maintained. Staff and administrative areas are cramped. The junior block offers a less encouraging working environment than the rest of the school and this affects pupils' behaviour.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>About nine out of ten replies state:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children like school; • behaviour is good • the school is helping children become more mature; • teaching is good • the school expects children to work hard; • staff are approachable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About half feel there are not sufficient activities out of school hours; • Around a third feel children do not get the right amount of homework; • One in five feels insufficiently informed about how children are getting on; • One in five feels the school does not work closely enough with them.

The inspection team received 55 replies from 183 questionnaires issued

The inspection team is in general agreement with the positive views expressed by the large majority of parents. With reference to the first and second areas that parents would like to see improved, the inspection team also agrees that these are concerns which need addressing. The school is aware that it does not currently provide as many additional activities as in recent years. The school development and improvement plan includes measures, involving both parents and staff, to address this situation. Teachers' use of home/school or homework diaries varies. Some offer a model for parents and teachers working together effectively to help children achieve well. Others are not monitored sufficiently. The effectiveness of homework arrangements is unacceptably varied across the school. The inspection finds that the school's procedures for informing parents about their children's progress and about school life, events and the curriculum are good. It finds no evidence to substantiate the claims of the parents who feel that the school does not work closely enough with them or inform them sufficiently how their children are getting on.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

Headline

1 The school's results in national tests at age eleven have been mainly average or above in recent years. Variations reflect mainly the nature of particular year groups. On the whole, pupils achieve well during their primary years. The consistent year on year improvement in standards at age seven are a direct result of improvements in the quality of teaching, curriculum planning and assessment over the past three years. Changes in teaching staff and less favourable support staffing ratios have contributed to a more varied trend in results for eleven-year-olds. However, standards are above average in the current year in English, mathematics and science. The school has raised standards in all three subjects since the last inspection, when they were average.

Foundation Stage (Reception Year)

2 The school's records show that children's attainment on entry to the reception class or Year 1 is wide ranging, but broadly average overall. The school has only Year 1 pupils on roll in the autumn term, with reception year pupils starting at the beginning of the spring and summer terms. The youngest pupils have all attained the early learning goals in the six areas of learning and are working appropriately at the early stages of the National Curriculum.

English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2 - age 5-7)

3 Results for seven-year-olds in 2000 were well above average in reading, above average in science, and average in writing and mathematics. Standards in the current Year 2 are similar in reading and science, but are improving in writing and mathematics and are now above average, as a result of the school's identification of a need to raise standards in these subjects and the very good teaching of literacy and numeracy. Standards at age seven have risen since the last inspection, as a result of high quality teaching and additional staffing, as well as a stable staffing situation.

English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 2 (Years 3 to 6 - age 7-11)

4 Standards in the current year are above average in English, mathematics and science. The improvement between last year's and this year's standards in mathematics and science is related to two factors. Firstly, a very high percentage of pupils in the previous Year 6 were on the school's register of special educational need. Secondly, the school's targets were set comparatively low for the previous year group, whereas staff have set more demanding expectations for pupils in the current Year 6.

5 Results in English at age eleven in summer 2000 were above the national average and above those of schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. In mathematics they were average and in line with those of similar schools. In science they were below average and below those of similar schools. Most pupils made satisfactory progress in English and mathematics through Years 3 to 6, but there was underachievement by a few pupils in mathematics and science, mainly boys. The school's tracking systems have identified this and the issue is being addressed.

6 Standards at age eleven were showing improvement in 1998 and 1999, when records show that all pupils made good progress through the junior department. They dipped in 2000, particularly in mathematics and science, when not all higher attainers did as well as they should. The school's targets for higher attainers were not sufficiently challenging, particularly in science, where a high proportion (92 per cent) reached the standard level 4 (compared

with a target of 60 per cent), but few pupils reached the higher level 5. In the current year, staff are challenging higher attainers more fully in mathematics and science. The school is making good use of its improved tracking systems to pinpoint areas for development, as well as setting challenging targets for individual pupils' achievement. The school has set more appropriate targets for Year 6 pupils' attainment in 2001 and 2002.

Pupils with special educational needs; talented and gifted pupils; pupils learning English as an additional language; equality of opportunity

7 Over a third of the pupils in the school are on the register of special educational need. These pupils make mainly good progress in their learning in Years 1 to 4, and often very good progress where teaching assistants provide additional, individual and small group support. Most pupils' individual targets are sufficiently precise, measurable and achievable. However, there are a few examples where they are too broad and imprecise. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 make steady progress, but have insufficient support. Two pupils have statements of special educational need. Both are very well supported and make very good progress towards their targets. A very small number of pupils have insufficiently clear strategies to deal with their behavioural targets and this affects the pace of their learning.

8 Gifted and talented pupils make good progress in the infant classes and satisfactory progress in the junior classes. The difference is due to higher levels of assistance and higher teacher expectations in infant classes. Staff throughout the school are making better use of the school's assessment information in the current year to ensure that pupils who show gifts and talents are all recognised and challenged appropriately. There are quite significant gender imbalances in some year groups and results show occasional differences between boys' and girls' attainment. The school has correctly identified that these differences are entirely to do with individual factors, not to any gender bias in the school's provision. The inspection found a high proportion of boys from ethnic minorities among lower attaining groups in junior classes. Tracking systems are at an early stage and the numbers of pupils are small. The school is identifying gender differences well, but does not yet compare the achievement and results of pupils from the different ethnic groups represented in the school, in order to address any findings. Pupils for whom English is an additional language all make similar progress to their peers. They are all bilingual and none require additional support.

Other subjects

9 Standards in information and communication technology are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and pupils achieve particularly well when using computers to support work in literacy and numeracy. Standards in work undertaken in junior classes is also broadly satisfactory. A few pupils in Year 6 have developed good desktop publishing skills, but overall, pupils are not yet achieving as well as they should by age eleven. This is because the mini-computer-suites have been only recently installed, with the school having to take its turn in the local education authority's installation programme, and hence there are gaps in pupils' earlier learning.

10 Standards in history are above average throughout the school, because pupils respond well to the interesting presentation of the subject. Pupils also show good attainment in design and technology in Years 1 and 2, where consistently good teaching includes regular opportunity for practical activity. In physical education and art, infant standards are average, but junior standards are below. The low junior standards are due to some weak teaching in physical education and to a lack of focus on skills development in Years 4, 5 and 6 in art. Standards are broadly average in all other subjects.

Statutory Targets

11 The school has set appropriately challenging statutory targets for attainment in literacy and numeracy by the end of Key Stage 2 for 2001 and 2002. The school recognises that previous targets were not sufficiently challenging in mathematics and science. The targets are now carefully set with reference to pupils' known achievements at age seven, and in end-of-year tests at age nine and ten. The school is on track to meet its targets for 2001.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

Headline

12 The behaviour and attitudes of most pupils are good and have been maintained well since the previous inspection. Pupils' personal development has improved in recent years and they now take on greater responsibility for their own learning.

Attitudes

13 Most of the pupils show interest in their work and they concentrate well. Infant pupils show great enthusiasm and good motivation. In a few junior lessons, a small number of pupils occasionally take some time to settle or become a little disruptive during a lesson. This happens more often when the content of the lesson is unchallenging or not sufficiently stimulating. The more positive attitudes among infant pupils also stem partially from the fact that they are working in an environment which has been more attractively designed and furnished. The junior block is comparatively stark.

Behaviour

14 The behaviour of most pupils in lessons is good. They are polite and generally follow the instructions of staff promptly. A very small number of junior pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties occasionally disrupt lessons, especially in physical education. Behaviour at breaktimes and lunchtimes is also mainly good. Pupils relate well to all staff and to each other. In the main, there is a pleasant, friendly atmosphere in the school throughout the day. Most pupils take good responsibility for their learning in lessons. They can be trusted to work on their own without constant supervision, for example, in the recently created computer areas. There are more examples of unsatisfactory behaviour in the overcrowded junior cloakrooms, staircase area and tucked-way shower block changing rooms than in any other areas of the school. There have been no exclusions or other significant sanctions in recent years.

Personal development and relationships

15 The personal development of most pupils is good. They take increasing responsibility for their own learning, particularly during their individual tasks in literacy and numeracy lessons. Older pupils volunteer to act as playground monitors and give valuable support to staff at breaktimes and lunchtimes, particularly during bad weather. Others take on duties such as organising the hall for assemblies. Representatives from Year 2 through to Year 6 meet to discuss playground and lunchtime activities and organisation. They make valuable contributions to school life and regularly report back any decisions to their own classes.

Attendance

16 Attendance is very good and there are very few unauthorised absences. This shows further improvement on the good attendance reported at the last inspection. The punctuality of most pupils is good although a few arrive late some days, mainly due to travel difficulties.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

The quality of teaching overall

17 The quality of teaching overall is good, with 54 per cent of lessons good or better, including 31 per cent which were very good or excellent. Almost all of the high quality teaching observed was in infant classes. Five per cent of lessons observed were unsatisfactory. These were in junior classes. The overall picture, with 95 per cent of teaching satisfactory or better and a high proportion of very good teaching, represents a considerable improvement from the last inspection. This is in no small measure due to the way the school has tackled the key issue from the last inspection requiring a broader approach to teaching and learning. The teaching and learning policy, introduced as a result of the school's deliberations on this issue, underpins the improvements. Three of the four teachers in the junior department have arrived at the school within the last four terms. This instability largely explains why the steps taken do not appear to have been so beneficial for the teaching of older pupils. In fact, the good Year 6 results in 1998 and 1999 suggest that the changes were equally effective for junior pupils. The inspection concludes that procedures for the induction of new staff have not ensured full understanding and commitment to the policy.

Teaching quality in infant classes

18 Teaching is very good in Years 1 and 2. Of 18 lessons observed, one was excellent, ten very good and seven good. With teaching of such consistently high quality and favourable staffing levels, pupils of all abilities are achieving very well in all subjects. Teachers plan well and stipulate clearly in their planning what it is that they wish pupils to learn. They plan lively activities, which catch pupils' interest and secure their involvement. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, the teacher donned an apron to welcome her customers to the 'Yummee Cake Café'. She created a role play situation in which pupils learned the value of coins, and different ways of using coins to make a total amount, in an enthusiastic shopping experience. Once the class teaching was over, an assistant reinforced this learning by repeating the experience for a small group who needed the consolidation exercise. Teachers brief their assistants clearly and all adults have very caring relationships with pupils in the three infant classes. In a physical education lesson, for example, the teacher ensured equality of access to a pupil with emotional needs by carefully managing a known behaviour pattern during individual work, before nurturing involvement in paired activities. Without the teacher's behaviour management skills, the child would doubtless have had to sit out the lesson or be sent from the hall. Teachers in all three classes organise groups according to the purpose of the lesson. They support and challenge pupils very well by assessing well and matching activities to each group's known capabilities. They make good use of homework booklets, setting useful tasks and clarifying these with pupils, so that the work done at home effectively supports learning at school. Through all of these teaching attributes, the teachers show the pupils that they have high expectations. They have established very good relationships with pupils and have excellent class management. As a result, pupils are eager to participate and learn. They have confidence in their teachers and work equally readily in small groups with assistants. They learn successfully because they are putting real effort into their work.

Teaching quality in junior classes

19 A large proportion of the teaching in junior classes is satisfactory. Equal small proportions of good and unsatisfactory teaching were observed, and one very good literacy lesson. Teachers in junior classes plan lessons equally well in the main. They organise their groups well and involve pupils in setting out the necessary equipment. In most lessons, they make the purpose clear, writing up the main points of focus for literacy and numeracy lessons, for example. Teaching in these classes lacks pace at times, however. Pupils have time to chatter a little when equipment or a resource is not quite ready and the teacher has to regain attention. The content of lessons suggests that teachers are focusing too much on the knowledge and skills pupils need to acquire, and not enough on the relevance of the

learning to the pupils. The teaching does not fire pupils' enthusiasm on the whole, although two lessons, one in history and the other in science involved a more imaginative approach and resulted in greater pupil involvement and more successful learning. A few pupils do not show consistently high levels of interest and application in all lessons. This is partly due to teachers organising too many sedentary lessons and too little active learning. Junior classes are considerably larger than infant classes and the school provides fewer assistants than in infant classes. The junior accommodation is comparatively stark and does not promote such positive working attitudes as the well-designed and well-fitted infant wing. These factors contribute to the difference in the quality of teaching and learning between the two key stages. Homework arrangements for juniors are also not as effective as in infant classes. Some pupils make good use of their homework books, but many do not. Teachers' systems for monitoring work done at home, including reading, and the use of homework books are not fully effective. As a result, the school's use of homework is not promoting pupils' learning sufficiently well in junior classes.

Teaching of pupils with special educational needs and of gifted and talented pupils

20 Teachers provide well-matched tasks for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils from Years 1 to 4 with identified learning needs make good, and often very good, progress towards the targets on their individual education plans, as a result of the high quality support for groups and individuals. A teaching assistant gives valuable support for younger junior classes and to a pupil with a statement of special educational need. In one session observed, with a Year 3 group, the assistant, who is highly experienced, was caring, patient and supportive. In meeting the language needs of the four pupils, she was working closely to their individual education plans. They expressed disappointment when the session ended. In each class, there are a very small number of pupils whose behaviour is challenging. Teachers' strategies for managing pupils' behaviour are very good in some classes, but less well developed in others. While infant teachers ensure equality of opportunity and participation for all pupils by involving them fully in all activities, the systems for managing a very small number of junior pupils deny them full access to the physical education curriculum. Throughout the school, teachers are making better use of day-to-day assessment and year-by-year tracking systems. This is proving particularly beneficial for gifted and talented pupils, whose abilities are clearly recognised. Teachers are challenging these pupils appropriately, except in art and physical education in junior classes.

Teaching of literacy and numeracy

21 The teaching of literacy and numeracy matches the picture described in all subjects for both infants and juniors. Additional strengths in the infant teaching of these basic skills are the joint planning by staff and the setting of pupils according to ability. The setting arrangement has been particularly effective for pupils who have made a slow start, as the school has created a very good adult-child ratio for these pupils, who are making very good progress as a result of the high levels of support. Phonics are taught well and teachers throughout the school make good use of opportunities to extend and apply pupils' literacy skills in other subjects, especially history. The school is also encouraging teachers to develop pupils' numeracy skills in other contexts, as in a successful Year 5 lesson, where pupils were using spreadsheets to record their findings from a science investigation.

Teaching in other subjects

22 Throughout the school, teachers are making better use of information and communication technology than they were during the last inspection. A few still lack confidence, however, and the school has rightly prioritised further staff training in this subject. Another subject in which teaching shows some weaknesses, though only in the junior classes, is physical education. While the inspection judgements are based only on indoor physical education in the hall, it is clear that this is a subject where teachers do not ensure a sufficiently brisk pace and crisp following of instructions, in order to raise standards.

Otherwise, teaching is of equally high quality in all subjects in Years 1 and 2, and equally satisfactory quality in Years 3 to 6.

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

Introduction

23 The school has made great strides in developing the curriculum since the last inspection. At that time there was a satisfactory balance between different subjects and all statutory requirements were met. However, detailed planning was underdeveloped and there were not enough opportunities for pupils to work independently, investigate, question or extend the tasks set. Planning for pupils' personal and social development was unsatisfactory. The school now plans well for work in all subjects and has made good progress in addressing this issue. It has made satisfactory progress in providing opportunities for pupils to work independently and use their own initiative. Provision for pupils' personal and social development is now good, as a result of the school's strong commitment to work in this area. The school fulfils all statutory requirements relating to the National Curriculum.

The foundation stage

24 The school has children who are in the foundation stage for the spring and summer terms only. There was, therefore, no opportunity to see the curriculum in action during the inspection. Last year the children in the reception year worked with pupils in Year 1. Teachers planned work for them within the six areas of learning, with links made between these and the work planned for pupils in Year 1 based on the National Curriculum. Staff are preparing for the revisions necessary from January, when they will plan for the reception year children with reference to the new national guidance about work in the early years. Some training has been undertaken, but at the moment planning is at a very early stage. Staff are aware that a subject-based programme of work will not be appropriate and that children will need opportunities to learn through play.

Years 1 to 6

25 The school has improved the planning for different subjects by adopting the literacy and numeracy strategies for English and mathematics and national guidance for all of the foundation subjects. The exception is music, where staff plan from a published scheme. These plans ensure that pupils develop knowledge, skills and understanding in a systematic way. In some subjects, such as art, these planning formats have been adopted fairly recently and so their impact on standards is still to be realised. Staff are aware that planning for some aspects of English, such as drama, is underdeveloped.

26 The work planned is subject-based, with some links made between English, information and communication technology, history, geography, religious education and art. There is room for the further development of links between subjects. In literacy, for example, opportunities are sometimes taken to link the class text with work in other subjects. In one lesson seen, Year 4 pupils looked at a textbook about the Tudors and Stuarts in order to develop their understanding of non-fiction texts. However these links are not systematically planned.

27 There is a good balance of work in different subjects, with appropriate amounts of time allocated to each. Teachers have adopted the format of the literacy and numeracy strategies for work in other subjects and consequently there is a pattern in most sessions of a lengthy introduction by the teacher, with less time available for pupils to engage in practical learning. This is less crucial in Years 1 and 2, where teachers plan work that grips the pupils' imaginations. This concentration on whole class teaching is one of the reasons why the school has made satisfactory, rather than good progress towards helping pupils to work

more independently. It has addressed this issue in the main by providing opportunities for pupils to work independently in small groups, in the literacy hour for example.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs

28 The school offers good support and an appropriate curriculum for pupils on the school's register of special educational need. The school ensures that pupils receive good support in class and in small group sessions with assistants from Years 1 to 4, but pupils in Years 5 and 6 currently receive no additional support. Work is usually well matched to pupils' ability in literacy and numeracy. Pupils in Years 3 and 4, with literacy and concentration difficulties, also receive a range of extra, highly structured support in small withdrawn groups. Curriculum planning ensures that pupils with special needs still have equal access to the full National Curriculum.

29 The school makes good provision for pupils with statements of special educational need. The educational psychologist regularly reviews progress. Each pupil has a named learning support assistant to work with them. In one case two assistants share the work. They communicate effectively with teachers and keep detailed daily diaries of pupils' progress. The pupils have full access to the curriculum with the help of the good level of support they receive.

Provision for gifted and talented pupils

30 The school has a policy to underpin work in this area. Staff know pupils well and although gifted and talented pupils are not formally identified, appropriate support is provided for them in English and mathematics. There is a special weekly numeracy session, for example, for higher attaining mathematicians in Year 6. Some higher attaining pupils also move appropriately to an older year group for numeracy lessons. Occasionally the school transfers a pupil to a higher year group, but only after close consultation with parents and taking personal and social factors as well as academic ability into consideration.

Equal opportunity issues

31 Policies for all subjects and for various aspects of school life state clearly the school's commitment to equality of opportunity for boys and girls and for pupils of the various cultural backgrounds represented. Through the purchase of resources, including books, and through the choice of themes for study, the staff ensure that the school's policies are reflected in practice. Photograph albums show a few displays highlighting festivals and celebrations from other cultures, but this aspect of the school's life was underrepresented in displays around the school at the time of the inspection. While all members of the school are valued and respected, the inspection found little evidence of the school celebrating the diversity of cultures represented among its pupils.

Activities outside lessons

32 The school does not provide the range of clubs after school this term that it has in previous years. This is partly due to staff changes and also because teachers find preparation for lessons is their first priority. The few activities that do take place, including courses in football and rugby, do not match the provision of schools of a similar size. Overall the full range of activities planned outside lessons is satisfactory. These include an annual residential trip for older pupils, cycling proficiency courses run by volunteer parents, and involvement in a number of musical festivals, as well as regular, weekly recorder sessions, guitar lessons and lunchtime computer clubs.

Links with the community and other schools

33 The school has very strong links with All Saints Church. The vicar and curate are frequent visitors and the church organises a weekly youth club in the school hall for junior

pupils. Members of other local Christian churches also take part in assemblies from time to time. These all contribute to the Christian ethos of the school. Occasionally other members of the community visit the school. A local historian, for example, spoke to older pupils earlier this term about life in Reading in the past. Otherwise, the school has few business and community links. The school has good links with other schools. It hosts many work-experience students from local comprehensives, for example. Staff visit some of the wide range of pre-school nurseries and play groups before children start school, for example. The school shares a boundary with another primary school and sometimes staff meet together for staff training. Links with the secondary schools are also good and ensure that pupils settle quickly into their next school.

Provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

34 The school has worked very hard since the last inspection to formalise provision for pupils' personal development. The last inspection found that, although pupils' behaviour and attitudes were good, there was no planned programme for personal and social education. This is no longer the case. A detailed planning document now underpins work in this area. It is complemented by behaviour, discipline and bullying policies. Sex and drugs education are incorporated into the teaching programme and provision in this area is good.

35 Overall the provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. It is founded on the school's strong Christian ethos and promoted by the positive staff role models and contributions from members of local churches.

Spiritual development

36 The promotion of pupils' spiritual development is good. It has a strong Christian bias, with acknowledgement of the role of other faiths in the spiritual development of Muslim and Sikh pupils. Opportunities to think about spiritual truths are provided in assemblies and these are enhanced by regular contributions from local church leaders, and most particularly the vicar and curate from All Saints. Christian statues, crosses and pictures provide a visual focus for pupils' reflections. Opportunities are provided in religious education lessons for pupils to talk about spiritual matters, but there is less evidence of reflection on these things in other lessons.

Moral development

37 This is another positive area, with clear guidance given to pupils about the difference between right and wrong. All pupils are involved in deciding on classroom rules and know what is expected of them. A team points system operates in junior classes to encourage teamwork and co-operation. Staff set clear standards for good behaviour, although some are more successful in achieving this than others. They take care to praise good behaviour and attitudes by a merit point system, with awards for individual pupils displayed in the hall. Similarly a 'card' system is used effectively to show pupils when their behaviour needs to improve. In some classes 'circle time' (where pupils sit in a circle to discuss their feelings) is used well to reinforce teaching about moral issues.

Social development

38 Good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their social skills. Within lessons pupils are often required to work with a partner or in a small group. At playtimes, older pupils are expected to act as play leaders and staff have introduced a playtime council to provide an opportunity for pupils to share ideas, which is another positive move. As pupils become older they are expected to take on more responsibility and this area has also improved since the last inspection. Year 6 pupils, for example, take turns in organising others and helping in a range of ways. Older pupils also take part in a residential field trip and this helps them to develop social skills away from the security of home.

Cultural development

39 Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. The strongest part of this provision is related to opportunities for pupils' musical development and the school participates in a range of musical events, which help pupils appreciate Western musical traditions. Older pupils especially are given the chance to participate in local music festivals and this helps them to appreciate what it is like to be a performer. Understanding and appreciation of artists and their work is not well promoted. A rich diversity of cultural background and traditions are represented within the school community, but the school does not celebrate these sufficiently. Occasionally staff invite representatives from non-Christian faiths and other cultures, recently including a Sikh and a Chinese parent for example, to talk about their belief and study customs in other countries, but this area is underdeveloped.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

Overall care and guidance

40 All members of staff know the pupils well and they build good relationships within stable classroom settings. Staff have put considerable effort into revising the behaviour and bullying policies. This included wide consultation with governors and parents and external agencies, including the local behaviour support team. There is wide acceptance of the revised policies and procedures. Merit systems encourage consistently good attitudes and behaviour by most pupils.

Monitoring of behaviour, including bullying

41 Any reported incidents of bullying or harassment are dealt with promptly and all staff are briefed to monitor the pupils concerned. There are clear, progressive sanctions for misbehaviour and if necessary parents become involved at an appropriately early stage. The implementation of the rewards and sanctions systems are discussed and reviewed by staff periodically.

Child protection procedures

42 The school's clear child protection procedures are included in the staff handbooks and summarised well in the brochure. The responsible officer meets all staff after her own training sessions and updates them on any developments in procedures. The school receives very good support from the local education and welfare agencies and there is good involvement by all parties in pastoral support programmes for pupils and their families.

Monitoring of attendance

43 There is active, regular monitoring of attendance by teachers and administrative staff. Parents are contacted promptly if pupils are absent without explanation. The educational welfare service provides good support. Punctuality is recorded each day and any patterns of lateness are followed up by staff.

Monitoring of personal and social development

44 The well-structured personal, social and moral education programme provides good opportunities for personal development, including the assumption of increasing responsibility for the pupils' own learning. Duties of the older children include breaktime monitors and playtime council members. Personal development is monitored throughout the year and pupils are set personal targets. This area of pupil development has improved substantially in recent years.

Health and safety procedures

45 The governors and staff are very active in all aspects of health and safety and security. Governors have used their considerable professional expertise to produce a comprehensive

risk assessment document for the school. Governors and designated staff undertake full inspections of the whole site twice a year and all staff report potential hazards promptly throughout the year. Inspection findings are recorded in detail and reported to governing body meetings, together with details of actions taken. There are clear, effective procedures for managing illness and accidents and parents are informed promptly if there are any causes for concern.

Assessment

46 Assessment of pupils' attainment and progress was a weak area at the time of the last inspection and one highlighted for improvement. The school has made great strides forward since that time and procedures are now good.

47 Formal assessment tests have been introduced, in addition to national tests. These are now used from Year 2 to track pupils' progress from year to year and to set targets for individual pupils for the following twelve months in English and mathematics. These are carefully recorded and both individual and class records are discussed thoroughly at the end of the year by the current teacher, the receiving teacher and the headteacher. Teachers use these discussions as a basis for grouping pupils by attainment in order to challenge them appropriately.

48 The headteacher, in association with the deputy head and subject co-ordinators has also analysed national test results carefully in order to ascertain the areas where pupils did well and those where more development is needed. As a result staff realised that last year higher attaining pupils in Year 6 had not make the progress that they should have done from Year 2 through their junior classes in mathematics and science. The school has set more challenging expectations for identified higher attainers in the current Year 6. It has also targeted support for pupils of average attainment or a little below average, through after-school booster classes. The school is beginning to analyse the relative performance of boys and girls, and is at an early stage in analysing that of different ethnic groups, exercising caution because of the relatively small numbers involved. The school identifies pupils' special educational needs and has good assessment procedures in place to monitor the progress of these pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

Overall judgement

49 The school's partnership with parents has been maintained at a satisfactory level since the previous inspection, but there is room for improvement in this area.

Parents' views

50 The response from the questionnaire and at the meeting held for parents before the inspection shows that parents feel the school is a safe moral environment for their children and promotes positive attitudes and good discipline and order. The large majority of parents say that their children like school, the teaching is good and children are expected to work hard, their behaviour is good and the school is helping children to become more mature. Parents feel happy in approaching the school with suggestions or a problem. The inspection team is in general agreement with these positive views.

51 However, some parents feel the school does not provide sufficient activities out of school hours. The inspection agrees with this view, but is also in sympathy with the school's current situation, with three new teachers in the past year. The provision of a range of additional pursuits involves parents, teachers and governors planning together. The school has in the past offered a greater range of activities than it does at present. The school is aware of parents' concerns and its development and improvement plan includes measures, involving

both staff and parents, to address this situation. Some parents feel that pupils do not receive an appropriate amount of homework. The teachers' use of home/school records, or homework diaries varies. Some, particularly in infant classes, are very effective and enable parents and teachers to work together to help the children achieve well. Others are not monitored sufficiently, with the result, for example, that not all junior teachers have an overview of pupils' reading. Overall, homework arrangements are currently good for infant pupils, but unsatisfactory for the juniors. Procedures for informing parents about their children's progress, information about the curriculum and current events are good. The inspection finds no evidence to confirm some parents' views that the school does not work closely enough with them or give them sufficient information about their children's progress.

Information provided by the school; the effectiveness of the school's links with parents; the impact of parents' involvement with the work of the school

52 The school has worked hard to involve parents more in their children's learning. It provides good information on pupils' progress and comprehensive newsletters, which include curriculum news, special events and topic information. A literacy evening was well attended and the school has set up opportunities for parents to see the school at work in literacy and numeracy. The next curriculum meeting will focus on clarifying parents' understanding of mathematical terminology. Baseline screening and assessment results are shared with parents, as are samples of work and assessment papers, to help inform them of the standard required and the level their child has reached. The school has begun to share with parents the targets set for individual pupils to achieve by the end of each school year. There are two consultation evenings in the autumn and spring term and parents receive a written report during the summer term. There is also an optional parents' evening to discuss these reports and parents are always welcome to visit the teachers at other times. New parents receive a *Welcome Pack* with information about the school. Despite the measures taken, the views shared by a significant minority of parents through the inspection questionnaire show that links with parents are no better than satisfactory.

53 Overall, the impact of parents' involvement with the work of the school is also satisfactory. A few parents support the school particularly well by committing their time and energy to help in lessons or organise events at the school. One parent took an assembly, for example, showing pupils the use of dance and large flags in worship. Another reported to pupils the success of the Christmas Fayre, held the week before the inspection. The Parents' Association, with the strong support of the teaching staff, provides resources, such as staging and lighting equipment, through a series of fund-raising events. Each of these contributions enriches the school's provision and helps build a sense of partnership between parents and teachers. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are fully involved with the establishment and review of individual education plans. A detailed record is kept of proceedings at review meetings and parents are asked to sign minutes of the meeting. Parents often agree to be named as providers of support on the individual education plan.

54 Parents have been consulted on a range of issues, including homework, and behaviour and discipline. A new homework policy, with detailed information, was sent out with the home/school agreement, but this is not fully effective in practice. Parent helpers are encouraged, but recent efforts to recruit new helpers have proved unsuccessful. The school is aware that there is still work to do to build up and sustain a thriving home/school partnership.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

Headline

55 The school is well led and managed. The headteacher gives strong and effective leadership. In this she is very well supported by the senior management team and the governing body. The school has fully addressed key issues identified by the last inspection. All aspects of the school's leadership and management show considerable improvement since the last inspection.

Leadership by the headteacher and key staff

56 The school's aims and values are clearly reflected in its work. It is an orderly, well-organised establishment. Systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and for tracking pupils' progress show the school's clear commitment to improving the quality of its educational provision and to raising educational standards. The headteacher has led both of these initiatives, successfully addressing issues identified by the last inspection. The headteacher, deputy head and key staff have observed lessons and given constructive verbal and written feedback, which has improved the quality of teaching. The introduction of a teaching and learning policy has also had a significant positive impact on teaching. Subject co-ordinators have clear job descriptions and most have a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects.

57 The school has a positive ethos, which combines Christian principles of care and concern for individuals with a rigorous drive to analyse standards achieved and raise these by addressing perceived weaknesses. The teaching staff meet regularly to address national educational initiatives and improve the school's curriculum provision and assessment systems.

School development and improvement planning

58 The school's development and improvement plan is now a much more useful tool in shaping the direction of the school. It sets clear and appropriate priorities and acts as a focus to underpin the school's work. The headteacher ensures that governors maintain a clear picture of how the school is progressing towards targets set out in the plan by reporting fully at termly governors' meetings. Priorities in the school's overall development are sensibly linked with targets in the newly-introduced performance management systems.

Equality of opportunity, including provision for pupils with special educational needs

59 Commitment to equality of opportunity is enshrined in all of the school's policies, when dealing with staff and pupil issues, and in the purchase of resources and their access. The policies seek to ensure that all members of the school are valued and respected. Two aspects of this commitment which require further attention in practice are the school's monitoring of pupils' achievement by ethnicity and the celebration of pupils' own cultures. In ensuring that all pupils are treated the same, the school is not necessarily ensuring that pupils from different ethnic backgrounds are succeeding equally well, or that their distinctive cultural heritages are acknowledged.

60 Special needs procedures and co-ordination are good. The co-ordinator has appropriate time allocated to manage the provision and register. She has regular contact with the educational psychologist and access to external specialist advice. The school has arranged specific training for all staff, including, for example, a day arranged by the Dyslexia Society. Statutory requirements for special educational needs are met.

The role of the governing body

61 The governing body offers constructive support. The chair of governors is experienced and gives a sensitive steer to governors' committees. Several governors bring particular expertise to their roles, benefiting the school by their readiness to use their talents for the benefit of the pupils. Governors show conscientious commitment to the wellbeing of the pupils and staff, as well as to setting high standards. Procedures are well ordered. Minutes

record decisions faithfully and show that governors are fully involved in monitoring the school's educational provision and standards. Governors understand their roles well and receive very clear reports from the headteacher, which keep them well informed. They have a full picture of the school's analyses of strengths and weaknesses. They are fully involved in the whole school development planning process. Governors new to the school receive helpful guidance on their roles. Several governors, including the chair, visit the school regularly in session. All statutory requirements are met.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

62 The design of the school building creates quite distinct infant and junior blocks. These areas have a different feel. The infant area is warm and welcoming, whereas the junior area presents a less attractive working environment. Plans to improve the junior staircase have not yet been put into action. The care put into the design and choice of fittings and furnishings for classrooms, shared areas and cloakrooms in the infant wing has had a positive effect on pupils' behaviour and working attitudes. The school has not yet given sufficient attention to creating conditions conducive to positive behaviour and working attitudes in the junior wing, where a bare staircase, crowded cloakrooms and changing rooms tucked away in a disused shower block create management difficulties. The stairs, changing rooms and crowded cloakrooms are the only area of the school where behaviour is often unsatisfactory. The area at the foot of the stairs is currently used to teach groups of pupils with special educational needs. The assistant gives the pupils good support and does her best within this situation, but it is unsatisfactory. The asset management plan includes redecoration and reflooring of the staircase, but other priorities have resulted in postponement of action to address the disparities between the infant and junior areas.

63 Learning resources are good. The school has made particular strides in its provision for information and communication technology, imaginatively adapting three shared areas in the school to create small computer suites. The only minor shortage is in the number and variety of poetry books in the school's library stock.

64 The cleaner-in-charge and her staff maintain the school well. Grounds are spacious and pleasant. There is a good-sized hard surface area, well marked for activities and the field and gardens are well tended. The school's accommodation is satisfactory overall and is set to improve. A well-planned extension in the new year will overcome the cramped conditions currently endured by all education and administrative staff.

65 The number of teachers and assistants is adequate, except for the current lack of support for pupils in Years 5 and 6 with special educational needs. Greater staffing stability, favourable staffing levels and joint planning in the infant department have clearly contributed to the high quality of provision for pupils in Years 1 and 2. With three changes of teacher in the junior department since the beginning of the last academic year, the school's staff induction procedures have been tested. Appraisal procedures have been effective in supporting and developing established staff. They have not fully ensured that teachers new to the school rapidly pick up procedures agreed across the whole school, in matters such as homework or behaviour management, for example. The school has taken effective steps to introduce new systems of performance management, but in some respects, the school appears to run as two separate units and this needs to be surmounted, in order to ensure a common approach to policy and practice.

Financial management and control; administration and efficiency

66 Governors and staff are very active in financial management and control. The educational priorities in the action plans are used directly to prepare the annual budgets. Wise annual budgeting and stable pupil numbers have enabled the school to create a permanent additional class in the infant years and derive the benefits of smaller class sizes

in the autumn term. The headteacher and chair of governors actively seek additional funds from a variety of foundations and grant-awarding bodies. The school assesses the longer-term impacts of expenditure decisions. For example, the implications for the budget for the full-year appointment of the additional infant teacher were evaluated over five years.

67 There is wide consultation of all staff and governors. The finance committee is very active, meeting each month to monitor the budget. All teachers discuss and agree the allocations for each subject each year. The subject co-ordinators manage their own budgets and actively consult other staff on their resource priorities.

68 The school accounts properly for the special earmarked funds it receives. In all areas the money is used for the purposes intended. Staff and resources are deployed efficiently. The diocese provides very good support for the maintenance and development of the premises. The architect has worked closely with the school to produce a rolling 5-year programme of maintenance and development. The premises are in good order. Well planned budgeting has enabled the school to build a reserve for essential buildings developments. The school receives valuable income and support from the Parents' Association.

69 The school applies the principles of best value well. There is wide consultation and the arrangements for purchases and contracts ensure effective competition. The staff and governors rise to the challenge of seeking additional funding from a wide variety of sources. The governors and staff monitor the service contracts closely. They have chosen alternatives to the previous cleaning and caretaking and payroll contracts and are getting better services and better value for money. The school is beginning to make effective use of comparative data on schools provided by the local authority, in order to judge strengths and weaknesses and set priorities.

70 The administrative staff are experienced and competent. They provide very good support to the staff, children, governors and parents. They actively monitor attendance and arrivals and provide good first-aid facilities. Records are well managed and efficiently stored. The bursar keeps good records for the main accounts and school funds. The recent auditors' report this term confirmed the good quality of the procedures and records. Very good use is made of computers and internet facilities to ensure efficient data recording and processing and rapid transmission of information to and from the local authority and other schools in the area. The school is actively using new software to assist recording and assessment.

71 The attainment of the pupils on entry to the school, the socio-economic circumstances of their families and the unit costs are average. Taking these together with the good attainment and progress, the good teaching, spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision the school is giving good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

72 In order to build on the school's current strengths, to improve the quality of education provided and raise standards further, the headteacher, staff and governing body should:

- (1) improve the quality of teaching in junior classes to match that in infant classes by:
 - raising teachers' and pupils' expectations;
 - injecting pace and more imaginative teaching strategies to involve and challenge pupils more fully;
 - organising opportunities for teachers to observe and discuss each other's lessons;

Reference paragraphs: 4-11, 19, 48, 62, 79, 84, 108.

- (2) improve the behaviour and participation of a small number of junior pupils by:
 - ensuring that all teachers use the agreed systems for behaviour management effectively;
 - providing activities which support and engage them;

Reference paragraphs: 13, 14, 20, 79, 91.

- (3) Increase the level of support for pupils with special educational needs in Years 5 and 6;

Reference paragraphs: 7, 20, 65, 79, 85.

- (4) Improve the effectiveness of home/school partnership arrangements, so that the minority of parents who are currently dissatisfied with some aspects of the school's provision feel able to work in partnership with the school;

Reference paragraphs: 32, 49-54, 77.

- (5) Improve the working environment for junior pupils.

Reference paragraphs: 13, 14, 19, 62.

Minor issues:

- Standards and the quality of teaching/curriculum provision in art and physical education at Key Stage 2; (10, 22, 94-98 & 125-129)
- Teachers' monitoring of pupils' reading in junior classes; (19, 51, 77)
- The consistent use of homework books and diaries; (19, 51, 77)
- Curriculum provision for drama; (25, 76)
- The school's poetry book stock. (63, 77)
- Checking the progress of different groups of pupils through the school, including different ethnic groups; (8, 48, 59)
- Celebration of the cultural diversity of the school population; (31, 39, 59)
- Planning and assessment systems for the new foundation stage curriculum for pupils in their reception year; (24)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	39
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	51

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	28	23	41	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	Y1 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (Full Time Equivalent for part-time pupils)	183
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	22
Special educational needs	Y1 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	48
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	11
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.1
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	10 (13)	17 (15)	27(28)

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	(14)	(11)	(13)
	Girls	(12)	(13)	(11)
	Total	26 (26)	24 (24)	25 (24)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (93)	89 (86)	93 (86)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	(14)	(14)	(14)
	Girls	(12)	(12)	(12)
	Total	24 (26)	25 (26)	26 (26)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (93)	93 (93)	96 (93)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year. Separate statistics for boys and girls are not included when the total of either within the year group is eleven or less. This was the case in 2000.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	14 (14)	12 (17)	26 (31)

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10 (10)	11 (11)	13 (10)
	Girls	10 (15)	9 (15)	11 (16)
	Total	20 (25)	20 (26)	24 (26)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (81)	77 (84)	92 (84)
	National	75 (71)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10 (10)	11 (11)	13 (10)
	Girls	10 (16)	9 (16)	12 (16)
	Total	20 (26)	20 (27)	25 (26)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (84)	77 (87)	96 (84)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	7
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	7
Indian	4
Pakistani	3
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	3
White	141
Any other minority ethnic group	16

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: Y1 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	26

Education support staff: Y1 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	94

Financial information

Financial year	2000
	£
Total income	336142
Total expenditure	320778
Expenditure per pupil	1716
Balance brought forward from previous year	28303
Balance carried forward to next year	43667

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	183
Number of questionnaires returned	55

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	55	36	6	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	40	42	7	9	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	36	55	5	2	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	24	49	24	4	0
The teaching is good.	45	42	5	5	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	40	13	9	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	22	4	9	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55	36	5	4	0
The school works closely with parents.	27	51	16	5	0
The school is well led and managed.	49	33	7	7	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	42	7	5	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	15	27	27	18	13

Numbers may not always add up to 100%

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

ENGLISH

73 Pupils do well in English. Standards have been well above average in national tests in reading for the last few years. In Year 2, there has been a picture of continuing improvement in reading since 1996. In Year 6, standards have been consistently high, with a temporary fall back in 1997. Standards in writing are not so high. They have been broadly average in Year 2 for the last few years, with the 1999 group doing better. Similarly pupils in Year 6 do not do as well in writing in national tests as they do in reading, reflecting the national picture. Here standards have been broadly average and sometimes better. Generally more pupils reach higher levels in reading than in writing. In the summer 2000 tests, Year 6 pupils did not do so well as they had in previous years, although standards were above average overall and above those of similar schools. This apparent drop in standards was because a high proportion of the class had special educational needs. Changes of staff also affected the progress of some, although higher attaining pupils made good progress from Year 2. There is no significant difference between the overall performance of boys and girls, although there is a higher proportion of boys in Years 3 to 6, who find writing more difficult.

74 The inspection found that standards are well above average in reading in Year 2 and above average in writing. This reflects the very good progress that pupils make from entry to school, when overall attainment is broadly average. In Year 6 this year standards have risen and are above average in reading and writing. This is an improvement overall since the last inspection, when standards were average in both Years 2 and 6. There are several reasons for this improvement. One is the very good quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2, which helps younger pupils achieve well. Another is better planning for the subject and a third is the closer assessment and analysis of pupils' achievements, which feeds into targets for improvement for individual pupils. In the junior part of the school there have been several staff changes recently and the overall quality of teaching is satisfactory rather than any better.

75 A number of pupils have difficulties with the whole area of language and communication and have been entered onto the school's register of special educational need. They generally achieve well when they receive extra support from a teacher or learning support assistant and sometimes struggle when working independently.

76 Pupils' skills in speaking and listening are above average in Years 1 and 2 and broadly average in Years 3 to 6. This difference is related to the greater emphasis placed on developing speaking skills in the three youngest classes. Junior teachers offer fewer opportunities for pupils to extend their speaking and listening skills. This is partly because the infant classes are smaller, with good support from classroom assistants and so pupils often work in small groups. Most of the regular opportunities for pupils to speak occur within the introductory sessions of lessons, when teachers discuss the tasks with pupils. Sometimes pupils work together in the activity part of the session and are asked to discuss their views with each other. There are fewer opportunities for pupils to speak to larger audiences, in assemblies for example. At the moment teachers do not identify the development of particular speaking skills in their written planning and progress in this area is incidental, rather than planned. The co-ordinator is aware of this and is planning to write a scheme next year to cover all aspects of this work. Drama is not a regular part of the timetable, although pupils sometimes engage in role-play in history.

77 Reading is a strong area. Younger pupils develop good strategies to help them tackle new words as a result of the good teaching of phonics in the literacy hour and the individual support that they receive from staff at school and their parents at home. They enjoy reading

and are enthusiastic about books. In one very lively discussion with a group of Year 2 boys, for example, one pupil captivated his friends by his expressive reading of a book about space travel. He engaged them in animated discussion and all were clear about the nature of the book and the difference between fiction and non-fiction text. Teachers monitor pupils' individual choice of books carefully and the reading record books which pupils take home provide a very good link between home and school. These books are meticulously prepared, with helpful notes of guidance for parents and carers. There are elements of this good practice in some junior classes. Teachers continue to encourage pupils to take home books on a regular basis, but in some classes the homework diaries are not sufficiently monitored by the teacher. This is particularly the case for those who are no longer on the reading scheme. Pupils continue to enjoy reading and talk with enthusiasm about their favourite authors, however and the literacy hour is used reasonably effectively to teach pupils more advanced reading skills. There are some areas for development. The library, for example, was under-used during the inspection. It is a pleasant room with an adequate supply of books, although the poetry section is limited. In discussion it was clear that pupils were confident about using the library to find information, even though it is not used for this purpose on a daily basis. There is also a reasonable range of books in most classroom collections, with not such a wide choice for higher attaining boys. In some of the older pupils' classes there were no book displays to capture pupils' interest or to encourage them to read more widely.

78 Pupils write for a range of purposes throughout the school. Often their writing is lively and imaginative. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are encouraged to write for different audiences and this helps them to appreciate the enjoyment of writing. They make books, for example, for their own class libraries and to share with their friends. Older pupils in Year 6 have made books to record their recent residential trip in Bude and again this has brought the purpose of writing alive for these pupils. There is a good emphasis on developing the skills of writing. In Years 1 and 2, for example, teachers teach spelling well. In one session, for example, the teacher talked to the pupils about building up words and explained that they could spell 'growl' if they knew how to spell 'owl'. Learning is fun for the pupils in younger classes, who enjoy taking spellings home, because the teachers make the work enjoyable by putting the words on little caterpillars. They also have opportunities to write for themselves and record ideas and stories in their 'busy books', both at home and at school. In junior classes there is sound teaching of grammatical structure and spelling and opportunities are used well in other subjects to develop pupils' writing skills. Handwriting standards are good and by the time pupils reach Year 6, most write in a joined and legible style. Staff are adapting the literacy hour, especially for older pupils, so that they have more opportunity to write at length.

79 The quality of teaching is very good in Years 1 and 2 and ensures that pupils achieve well. Teachers plan very carefully and prepare for sessions in a meticulous way. They make the work interesting for the pupils and present lessons in a lively and imaginative way. It is satisfactory overall in Years 3 to 6 and this year pupils have made steady progress in all these classes. However teaching in the junior classes is not always consistent. In the lessons seen, for example, there was a range from unsatisfactory to very good. Planning is generally sound, although in one lesson seen the activity planned did not help pupils improve their literacy skills. Teachers explain new ideas carefully, but sometimes the presentation is not very interesting and so pupils do not move forward as fast as they should. In one or two sessions seen the pupils were not attentive and the teacher did not manage to fully involve them in the lesson. In Year 5, particularly, the teacher does not have enough support for the pupils with special educational needs and so at times these pupils struggle. Pupils' work is marked regularly, but there is some inconsistency from class to class. Set against this there are also strengths in the teaching of junior pupils. Teachers have been using individual targets for pupils for the past year, for example, and this has helped them to understand what they need to do to improve. As a result of the success of this strategy, infant teachers have

introduced the use of targets this term. Teachers are also linking work in literacy with work in the humanities particularly and in some classes computers are used to help pupils to develop their writing skills. The contribution of the learning support assistants to the additional literacy programme is also good.

80 The co-ordinator has been in post for about eighteen months and brings a good deal of enthusiasm to her work. She has a clear view of standards and teaching through the school by monitoring work in classrooms. She has a clear agenda for improvement. Writing, for example, is a focus for this year. She organises special events, such as theatre visits and poetry days. These help pupils to enjoy learning. Parents are involved particularly well in their children's English work. They have visited literacy hours, support their children at home with their reading and take part in the termly book fairs. The school has implemented the literacy strategy successfully.

MATHEMATICS

81 In the national tests for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 in summer 2000, pupils achieved average standards. Their performance was also in line with that of pupils in similar schools. Over the last four years the performance of pupils in Year 2 shows a steady improvement, whilst the results of pupils in Year 6 are more variable. In 1999, for example, with an academically strong year group, pupils achieved results that were well above average. Results then fell in 2000, in a year group with a much larger proportion of pupils with special educational needs. The school also recognises that a few pupils who had attained well at age seven did not maintain a sufficiently good rate of progress to attain an above-average level at age eleven. Inspection findings in the current year show standards above average in Year 2 and Year 6. The rise in Year 2 standards is due to the consistently high quality of teaching. The higher Year 6 standards stem mainly from distinctive year group factors, continuing the fluctuation of recent years, rather than any significant change in the quality of teaching or curriculum provision. The school is, however, requiring junior teachers to use the evidence from its tracking systems more effectively to raise expectations, particularly for pupils who have attained well by age seven. Overall, the school has raised standards at age seven since the last inspection and maintained standards at age eleven. There are no marked differences in the performance of girls and boys.

82 The school has implemented the numeracy strategy well and teachers of pupils in Years 1 and 2 use this lesson structure very successfully. The youngest pupils count from one to twenty and back to zero while the teacher points to a number line. They know the names of simple two-dimensional shapes and have made their own examples of numbers from one to twenty using an appropriate number of gummed shapes. Older pupils in Year 1 use fans to make up numbers using two digits. Pupils suggested the numbers which added up to six, for example. They use real money to purchase items from the class shop and select the smallest number of coins possible to pay for their goods. Pupils in a Year 2 lesson recalled doubles to twenty and used cubes with corresponding halves. They responded correctly when questioned and clearly showed their good understanding of doubles. They also worked well with a partner, praising each other for a correct answer. Their work on fractions was very well matched to the different abilities in the class.

83 The imaginative use of resources inspires a love of learning in the younger pupils. A visit to the Yummy Cake Café, for example, reinforced teaching about money. The teacher donned an apron and requested pupils to buy appropriate items for the money in their purse. Mathematical displays in each classroom support learning by asking appropriate questions. For example, pupils enjoy looking at Ollie Octopus for the number of the week. In a second classroom, Sam Spider reveals the number of the week and has appropriate questions on its legs - '*Is it odd or even?*'

84 In Years 3 to 6 pupils also follow very carefully structured lessons. The work is well organised to match the different abilities of the pupils and the older pupils are set in appropriate classes, but the pace of lessons is slower and pupils do not always fully understand their tasks. Year 3 pupils learn various strategies to understand fractions. They found a quarter of a number by halving it, and then halving it again, for example, and were quick to write down their answers on their whiteboards. The teacher had also made a function machine to make learning interesting and to provide further practical experience. Some of the older pupils had difficulty in completing their activities in one lesson because the initial explanation was unclear. Pupils made a rather slow start, as time was wasted in giving out equipment. Some pupils in one group had problems with drawing appropriate shapes to represent mixed numbers, for example $2\frac{3}{4}$, and some in a second group did not understand the written activity where they had to make an identified number of quarter turns. Higher attaining pupils solved number problems successfully, however, by finding either a half or quarter of whole numbers. Other pupils added several two-digit numbers mentally, using a range of strategies. The games activities to reinforce these skills were well matched to the different abilities, whilst the higher attaining pupils worked on more challenging activities from textbooks. Pupils in Year 6 had a brisk start to their introductory session by having a 'money shoot-out'. This required quick mental calculations to find the change from one pound. The main focus of the lesson was to choose strategies for solving problems and pupils discussed the most appropriate method with a partner. Pupils knew a range of strategies for solving these problems but some had difficulty in using them to achieve the correct answer.

85 The quality of teaching is very good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. Throughout the school, teachers organise groups and plan their lessons carefully to ensure that work is appropriately matched to pupils' abilities. In the high quality teaching seen in Years 1 and 2, these traits are particularly strong. Additionally, teachers in these classes make imaginative use of resources and teaching pace is brisk. Staff are encouraging and relationships are good, resulting in confident pupils. Teachers give clear explanations, which enable pupils to understand the task and start their activities immediately. They phrase questions carefully and boost pupils' confidence in the way they handle answers. Teachers and assistants make good use of time by assessing pupils' capabilities as they work at their practical and recording tasks. They praise and prompt appropriately as they observe and converse with the pupils. They give good support for pupils with special educational needs in Years 1 to 4. Teachers in Years 5 and 6 offer satisfactory support for these pupils, but only pupils with a statement in these classes currently receive additional support.

86 Staff are making improved use of information and communication technology to support and stimulate pupils' learning about money, shape, fractions and spreadsheets. Staff also make effective use of opportunities to apply pupils' mathematical understanding in science. Year 5 pupils, for example, measured time variation in the length of day while investigating its relationship of the tilt and rotation of the earth around the sun. Year 6 pupils measured the temperature of liquid and used a line graph to plot their results. They also investigated how much of a given substance can be added to a liquid before it becomes super-saturated, entering data onto a spreadsheet to see if there was a mathematical connection to the results. These wider applications of numeracy skills contribute successfully to the good standards achieved.

87 The subject is well managed. The school has put in place a very clear action plan, detailing numeracy targets for each year group and objectives for overall performance in numeracy. Booster classes and extension classes for higher attaining pupils in Year 6 provide added focus for the pupils concerned and there is good provision for pupils with special educational needs in Years 1 to 4. The school is aware of the need to improve support for Years 5 and 6.

SCIENCE

88 Standards in science at age seven and eleven have fluctuated in comparison with the national trend over recent years. Standards in the current year are above average in Year 2 and Year 6. Overall therefore, despite the fluctuations, standards have improved since the last inspection, when they were broadly average. Teachers' assessments reveal that almost all seven-year-olds reach the average standard and a high proportion do better than this. Results of published assessments from summer 2000 show above average attainment by seven-year-olds, broadly in line with those of schools with a similar context. Summer 2000 test results for eleven-year-olds show that the proportion of pupils reaching the standard level 4 was above average, but the proportion attaining the higher level 5 was well below average. Because of this latter statistic, the overall performance of the school was below average. Teaching in lessons and booster classes was particularly effective for below-average attainers. As in mathematics, a few pupils who were higher attainers at age seven reached the standard for age eleven, but did not fulfil their potential to reach a higher level. The school has identified this through its tracking systems and is now making better use of these to ensure that higher attainers are appropriately challenged throughout their junior years.

89 Throughout the school, pupils are provided with interesting, meaningful science investigations, from which they gather a good range of scientific skills, understanding and factual knowledge. Pupils with special educational needs generally make good progress within their abilities, though the best progress is made in lessons where there is an additional classroom assistant. In Years 1 and 2, pupils carefully observe the movement of a range of toys. They accurately decide whether a pulling or pushing force is required to make them move and make lively records of their findings using Venn diagrams. Other pupils use similar toys, as they excitedly learn how stored electrical energy is converted into different kinds of movement.

90 In junior classes, teachers are using a successful, motivating scheme of work to challenge and interest pupils. Early on, pupils study the origins of soil. They examine rocks and observe, discuss and compare different samples. They produce large, diagrammatic, cross-section pictures of volcanoes, showing the subterranean origins of some rocks and soils. In Year 4, pupils study the skeletal and muscular components of movement. They investigate human physical diversity by exploring the relationship between the height and arm span of members of the class. With the help of careful evaluation from the teacher, pupils are able to challenge the accuracy and validity of their own results. Older pupils explore the relationship of the seasons to the earth's orbit and tilt, as it rotates around the sun. To successfully aid pupils' learning, the teacher uses a globe and table lamp, analogous to the earth and sun, and graphically demonstrates how the area of maximum light changes on the earth's surface. By Year 6, pupils are combining a good range of prediction, observation, and experimentation skills as they investigate the quantity of a soluble substance needed to create a saturated solution. Whilst there is generally good progress across the school in the development of science skills and pupils enjoy investigations, team working and collaborative learning skills are sometimes lacking in junior classes.

91 Whilst the quality of teaching is good overall, it is consistently stronger in infant classes, where all lessons seen are very good or, in one case, excellent. In junior classes, teaching is mainly satisfactory. Teaching is based on good subject knowledge. From this strong foundation, in the best lessons, teachers develop interesting, meaningful activities which maximise learning for their pupils. Teachers' expertise also enables them to frame challenging questions, which help pupils to think and make connections with their prior knowledge. Teachers usually make lessons enjoyable for their pupils and in consequence a large majority have positive attitudes towards science. Teachers have well planned

procedures, age-appropriate tasks and well-organised resources, in order to achieve their clear aims, and there is a liveliness to lessons. Despite this, a small minority of junior pupils find the give and take of co-operative working more difficult than others. During group investigations, concentration is variable for these pupils and their achievement is reduced.

92 Teachers usually assess their pupils well. They use a varied range of successful strategies to build up their information and keep effective assessment records. During lessons, probing questions help them to know pupils' level of understanding. Active circulation around groups usually adds to the picture, as does the regular marking of work, though the quality of the latter is variable. Whilst some marking is of good quality and guides pupils in how they may improve, this is not always the case. Some teachers effectively use the assessment information they have gathered to carefully match science work to pupils' attainment, but there is variation in this process across the school. Although greater consideration is given to the needs of higher attaining pupils in some lessons, this aspect of science provision could be developed further.

93 The leadership and management of science is good. National test results are monitored carefully and strategies for improvement discussed and implemented. The school has recently adopted the national scheme of work for science to ensure that progression is secured across the age range from 5 to 11. The co-ordinator monitors the teaching of science by sampling and reviewing pupils' written work, but does not have time allocated on a regular basis for monitoring science lessons.

ART

94 There were no lessons planned for the inspection period and judgements are based on pupils' work and teachers' plans for the year. It is evident that in Years 1 and 2 pupils undertake a range of work with different media and are developing skills in a systematic way. Standards achieved by pupils in the infants are in line with those expected for their age, as are the standards in Year 3. There was less evidence of a breadth of study in Years 4 to 6, but based on the limited amount of work seen, standards are below those expected for pupils of this age group.

95 Standards and the quality of teaching were judged to be just satisfactory at the time of the last inspection. Planning was identified as an area for improvement. The school has made some headway since that time, but these efforts have not yet had a significant impact on older pupils' achievements. Soon after the last inspection, for example, an artist in residence worked across the school with pupils on a project related to mask making based on Thai and African cultural traditions. Some observational work linked to an Eskimo narwhal tusk was also undertaken by younger pupils. This input lifted the quality of pupils' work for the duration of the project. It has not been sustained at this level through the school because staff subject expertise needs developing.

96 Planning of work has improved. The school has adopted a national scheme to guide teachers' planning and preparation. While this is a positive move and should ensure that pupils develop skills in a systematic way, the scheme has not yet been in place for long enough to make a measurable difference to older pupils' achievements. Pupils in Year 6, for example, have a very limited understanding of the work of famous artists and could only recall looking at reproductions of Lowry's and Picasso's paintings since they started school. Their work in sketch books, on display, in the schools' art portfolio and recorded photographically shows that they have made progress in developing drawing techniques and that they have worked on paper collage, but that work with paint, clay, fabric and print-making is underdeveloped.

97 This is not the case in Years 1, 2 and 3, where lively work enhances the classroom environment. Notable work of good quality is the display of painted poppies in a Year 1 and 2 classroom and the oil pastel work based on a African study in Year 3. In some displays around the school, opportunities to develop pupils' awareness of line and colour are lost.

98 The co-ordinator has a clear picture of work in the infant part of the school, but not in the junior section. She has audited resources, which are satisfactory overall and provides support to colleagues who need help with particular projects. The monitoring of teaching and standards are at an early stage. A portfolio of work is being put together. At the moment it provides a record of work undertaken, but is not organised to demonstrate progression in the strands of drawing, painting, printing, collage, three-dimensional work and work with textiles.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

99 Two lessons were observed during the inspection, both at Key Stage 1. Judgements have also been based on discussion with the co-ordinator, planning, photographs and a portfolio of work. Infant standards have risen since the previous inspection and junior standards have been maintained. Pupils of all abilities are achieving well in Years 1 and 2, and satisfactorily in Years 3 to 6. Work in this subject is planned in short, intensive blocks of time, rather than a weekly lesson. A recently published planning framework was implemented in January 2000.

100 The good standards at Key Stage 1 result from good teaching, which includes thorough planning, the good development of speaking and listening skills, challenging questions and a calm working atmosphere. Pupils in Year 2 are creating designs for puppets. They suggested a variety of ideas and drew detailed sketches, which they labelled. The teachers asked challenging questions, encouraging the pupils to think about the materials they were using. Pupils then made lists of what they would need. Some pupils used the computer to create pictures for calendars, whilst others produced lively, detailed design drawings of angels, bears and butterflies for puppets or decorations for Christmas.

101 The younger pupils have completed other interesting activities. They designed a healthy meal and chose fruit for a fruit salad. They gained an understanding of taste, texture and appearance and recognised the importance of eating fruit. Pupils developed their understanding of simple mechanisms by designing and making moving pictures that incorporated simple levers. They learned about wheels and axles and how to use them when making wheeled vehicles. They made houses, which gave pupils opportunities to develop their understanding of structures. All pupils evaluated their finished products well.

102 No lessons were seen at Key Stage 2, but pupils in Year 6 discussed their current project, making slippers, and showed the examples they had started. They spoke with enthusiasm about other activities, remembering exactly what they had made before. These included a caravan and a lorry, with wheels that had to move, springing Christmas trees, and calendars mounted in wooden frames. They discussed in detail the materials and tools they used.

103 A well-organised portfolio of work shows other examples of work from Year 3 and Year 6. The older pupils produced shelters for a small toy, and used a range of interesting ideas to develop a wooden framework; a coffee machine, book-ends, a game with rolling balls, a pencil holder and a money-box.

104 There is good expertise among the staff. The co-ordinator has a very good understanding of the subject. She supports staff well and orders appropriate resources as they are needed. The school plans to collect further work samples and make assessments,

in order to refine teachers' skills.

GEOGRAPHY

105 Standards in geography have been maintained at an average level at both key stages since the time of the previous inspection.

106 The school makes good use of external environments throughout its geography curriculum. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, have a good knowledge of the locality of the school. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 take an exploratory walk around the locality of the school discriminating the function of buildings. They remember man made features of the landscape which they have seen and express their feelings and opinions about them. They paint bold pictures of buildings and roads and the teacher uses these to construct a large interactive map, asking pupils to match buildings with their appropriate photographs. More mapping skills are developed as pupils discriminate accurately the lateral and aerial views of objects and places and begin to construct their own maps of their route to school. Geographical enquiry skills are soon established as, for example, pupils construct a pictogram of the methods by which they travel to school, using mathematics to interpret their findings. This is just one of many, deliberately-planned cross-curricular, geographical themes, which combine to give greater context to the national curriculum.

107 Pupils in Year 3 extend their knowledge of world geography and gain a general understanding of the regional pattern of weather on the earth. Using a world map, they select a holiday destination and empathise with a stereotypical character who will go there and decide what they will need to carry with them in their suitcase. Clear progression of knowledge and understanding of weather is shown by Year 5 pupils as they use a globe to explore the climatic effects of the earth's tilt and orbit around the sun, thus enhancing their geographical and scientific knowledge. Year 6 pupils demonstrate the clear progress made in the quality of their enquiry skills as they make a detailed survey of traffic in a local road and perceptively discuss ways in which the situation might be improved. The annual residential visit to Bude this term provided pupils with a rich and exciting geographical learning opportunity. Pupils were able to gain a first hand experience of geology as they abseiled down cliffs, and of the varied flow of rivers as they canoed. Year 4 pupils look at topical world news with a geographical focus.

108 The quality of teaching in the few geography lessons seen is satisfactory overall. It is good in infant classes and satisfactory in junior classes. Teachers communicate well with their pupils and have strong caring relationships with them. These encourage pupils and give them confidence to express ideas, knowing that they will be valued. Teachers choose learning activities which are meaningful to pupils and help them to relate thinking to previous experiences. Well-chosen resources aid this process, as do strong questioning techniques. In junior classes, teachers' use of time is sometimes unbalanced, with disproportionate length given to their expositions and insufficient to pupils' independent enquiries.

109 Geography is well managed in the school. The national scheme of work has been adopted, but the school is making appropriate modifications to meet their local needs and their own priorities. A systematic means of assessment for geography has been devised and is well established. Geography has benefited from a major focus on the school development plan recently. A complete review of all aspects of the subject has been undertaken and teaching has been monitored. A portfolio of pupils' annotated work, which exemplifies national curriculum levels in geography, is well on the way to completion and provides a useful additional assessment tool.

HISTORY

110 At the time of the last inspection standards in history were average. Since then there has been an overall improvement and standards are now good for pupils in both key stages.

111 Progress is mostly good across the school. Pupils enjoy their history lessons because teachers usually make them interesting and meaningful. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their historical learning, within their abilities. In infant classes, teachers create many opportunities to give pupils a sense of time passed. For example, there are linear timelines for individual children, which chronicle their birth and important days in their life, including when they started school. Pupils begin to learn about key figures in English history and the context of their lives. Some pupils are well supported by their parents as, for homework, they research Florence Nightingale's life and enjoy sharing their findings with the rest of the class. Through good, second-hand, historical video evidence, they are able to contrast hospitals today with the conditions Florence Nightingale experienced in a wartime field hospital during the 19th century.

112 In junior classes pupils' historical knowledge, skills and understanding are developed further as they examine the effects of invasions upon our ancient ancestors. They compare the clothing styles of Celts and Romans and learn about another powerful historical woman figure, Boadicea, and the battles she fought. Their knowledge of chronology is extended to incorporate an understanding of time calibrated before and after the birth of Christ. Artefacts play an important part in the teaching of history as do visits to museums and places of special historical interest, such as an authentic Victorian classroom. By Year 6, pupils are able to observe first-hand historical evidence in the form of real Victorian toys. They hypothesise about the social class of the original owner, as well as how the object actually works. They present detailed argument to peers as they explain their opinions based on factual observations, prior knowledge and their own personal experiences of life. Progress is slower where the teachers' own subject knowledge of English history is still developing. There is less evidence of recorded history work in Years 4 and 5 and some pupils lack a secure understanding of key aspects of the period they are studying.

113 The quality of teaching is good overall with some very good teaching in infant classes. Pupils' learning closely matches the quality of teaching. In the best lessons, teachers share the aims of the lesson with pupils at the outset, so that a context for learning is quickly established. Well-chosen resources are also a key factor in the good quality of pupils' historical understanding. They excite pupils' interest and curiosity, as is seen in the Year 6 lesson previously mentioned. Teachers mostly have a good subject knowledge, which enables them to frame well-crafted, challenging questions. These help pupils to make pertinent connections between the evidence before them and previous experiences and learning. Pace and challenge in tasks stretches pupils and keeps them concentrating well. Teachers also circulate effectively, assessing pupils' progress and providing additional help, particularly where no teaching assistant time is allocated.

114 The leadership and management of history is satisfactory. The school has adopted the national scheme of work and a good assessment system to match it. A portfolio of work for assessment, containing clearly annotated work with all the relevant national curriculum levels, is nearing completion. There is a little evidence of role play and empathy activities and the school promotes pupils' interest and makes their learning relevant by organising visitors to come into the school, to talk about their war experiences for example. A museum loans service provides fine quality artefacts which pupils can handle. Teachers have also set up some stimulating, interactive history displays around the school.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

115 Standards are satisfactory and sometimes good in Years 1 and 2. In junior classes they are broadly satisfactory, although pupils have not had the breadth and depth of experience in the use of computers, as current facilities were introduced only during the past year. Nevertheless, the huge improvement in resourcing and curriculum planning has already led to higher standards than those found at the previous inspection. The school has made good improvement in this subject.

116 The best quality work in Years 1 and 2 is in pupils' use of computers in art. Examples of Christmas Card designs show pupils adeptly using the 'fill' command, for example, to create vivid and colourful effects in their Christmas scenes. Pupils in the three infant classes are also making regular use of computers to support their work in literacy and numeracy. They work independently and with high levels of concentration at well-chosen tasks, which are carefully linked to the teachers' weekly plans. Teachers and assistants show good knowledge of the software and give very good support.

117 Pupils in Year 3 have a sound understanding of how to programme a robot to move in different directions. Samples of work from Year 4 show the beginnings of the use of information downloaded from the internet, on weather patterns for example. Pupils know how to select fonts and point sizes to create headings for their word processing. They save their work to disk and close down the program independently. Year 5 pupils are making good use of the shared upper junior computer suite to support their mathematics and science. They input information about sunrise and sunset onto a spreadsheet in order to create graphs showing the pattern of the varying length of days. A few Year 6 pupils have made good use of desktop publishing facilities to take photographs around the school with a digital camera and describe various aspects of school life, with the intention of producing a booklet. Some have also used desktop publishing skills in their Bude books, making very appropriate use of information and communication technology to complete this homework task, following their autumn field trip. During the inspection, Year 6 pupils showed sound understanding of the use of direction and angle commands to create different mathematical shapes. Several grasped the concept of creating a procedure to repeat a pattern.

118 The quality of teaching is improving throughout the school as teachers and assistants become more experienced with the hardware and software. It is good in the infant area and satisfactory in the junior areas, where there is currently less teaching assistance. The regular use of the infant suite is better planned, again, partly because of a better staffing ratio. The school is aware of a continued training need and all staff are set to receive further training, particularly in the use of e-mail and the internet for learning.

119 The subject co-ordinator is comparatively new to the school, but has good knowledge and is building enthusiastically and successfully on the hard work of the previous co-ordinator, who masterminded the installation of the three suites. Year 6 pupils benefit from lunchtime computer club sessions three times a week and this level of commitment by the co-ordinator is having a positive effect on pupils' interest and on standards. The subject is now well resourced and the additional assistance in Years 5 and 6 will enable planning for more regular use of the suite during lessons. While schemes of work show planned use in all subjects, the school currently has little evidence of a wide breadth of pupils' work in ICT. Teachers use appropriate assessment sheets, but the lack of individual pupil folders means it is difficult to monitor individual pupils' understanding, level of skill and breadth of use. Overall, however, this is an improving subject. A staff training program is in place and the co-ordinator's enthusiasm is reflected among the staff in both infant and junior classes.

MUSIC

120 Standards seen are satisfactory in both infant and junior classes. They have been maintained since the previous inspection. Two lessons were observed during the inspection, one in Year 1 and one in Year 6. Judgements are also based on discussions with the co-ordinator, pupils, planning and schemes of work.

121 The quality of teaching and learning in Year 1 is very good. The lesson seen was well planned, with good use of praise and encouragement, which gave pupils confidence in their playing. There was a clear explanation of the meaning of the poem '*Billy is blowing his trumpet*', which the pupils were going to accompany with percussion instruments. The teacher showed very good subject knowledge, ensuring pupils learned the correct terminology and paid attention to dynamics. A good introduction to the lesson encouraged pupils to listen quietly and copy the teacher in a sound effect changing game. They remembered the previous week's teaching and could identify *p* in *piano* and *f* in *forte* and not only understood the meaning of these letters, but could adapt their playing accordingly. Resources were well prepared with sufficient instruments for everyone to participate.

122 Pupils in Year 6 composed a musical accompaniment using a poem '*The Harbour*' as a stimulus. This lesson was well planned with a good introduction, following the teacher's pattern of clapping different rhythms. Pupils were then divided into groups with three percussion instruments and a copy of the poem. Clear instructions enabled them to make choices on their organisation of reading and playing. All pupils co-operated well and discussed their performance. Each group chose a different way of presenting the poem and an effective plenary session allowed opportunities to assess what pupils had learned. Although pupils had some interesting ideas, they could have created a better atmosphere with some tuned percussion and a more varied choice of instruments. They also need to learn the correct names for the instruments they use.

123 All pupils take part in services, plays, concerts and festivals. At the time of the inspection the older pupils performed both singing and dancing in two operettas, '*Creation Jazz*' and '*Jonah man Jazz*'. Some pupils learn the guitar with a visiting specialist teacher and there is also an opportunity to attend master classes. Two groups of pupils learn the recorder. Those in their second year of learning play tunefully and with a good tone. All pupils held their recorders correctly and were careful not to over-blow. They read the music well, noted the correct timing, understood how to play crotchets, quavers and semibreves and recognised the repeat signs. They were able to play well together in a four-part round, '*London's Burning*'.

124 The subject is well managed. Resources are good, with recent improved provision of percussion instruments for Key Stage 1 to allow whole classes to participate. The school ensures that pupils listen to a range of contemporary and classical music in assembly. Visiting musicians add to the pupils' knowledge and interest in music. The Parents' Association has been generous in its support and has provided a lighting system and stacking equipment for the staging, which improves performance facilities for the pupils.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

125 Standards seen in infant classes are satisfactory. In the junior classes they are unsatisfactory. These judgements are based only on observations of gymnastics, dance and one example of the games aspects of physical education in the school hall. The difference in standards is due to differences in teachers' expectations. The school's records show that almost all pupils reach the necessary 25 metre standard in swimming by the time they transfer to secondary school. The school has maintained standards in infant classes since

the last inspection, but in junior classes they have fallen.

126 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 focus well and put a lot of effort into their work. They follow instructions closely, showing balance and control as they perform a short sequence of floor movements. In one lesson observed, pupils adapted well to each other's moves as they worked in pairs on the floor, trying to synchronise their movements, as they balanced, before twisting and turning to adopt another steady balanced position. In another, pupils again showed an ability to balance 'like a statue', using different points of contact, on benches and mats. They collaborate well putting out equipment and returning it at the close of the lesson. Junior pupils do not exhibit the same level of concentration or effort. When moving, pupils tend to have their eyes on what others are doing, rather than focusing on improving the precision of their own balance or body control. Paired and group work in a Year 4 lesson resulted in satisfactory bat and ball control, but in the dance and gymnastics lessons there was little refinement or improvement of pupils' skills between the start and end of the session.

127 The quality of teaching is good in infant lessons, but barely satisfactory overall in junior lessons, where some unsatisfactory teaching was observed. All lessons were well planned, with clearly written expected outcomes, but these were not routinely shared with pupils. As a result, pupils engaged in activities, but did not necessarily see the purpose behind them. In infant lessons, this was less important, because the teachers' management and assessment skills during the lesson drew out the strengths of pupils' performances. By praising and encouraging good work, they successfully drew other pupils' attention to demonstrations, with the result that all pupils refined and improved their work. In junior lessons, teachers organised demonstrations by pupils, but their accompanying commentary did not highlight the strengths effectively, except in the games lesson. Junior class teachers showed less confidence in the subject, allowing pupils to underachieve, without making demands.

128 In one infant lesson, the teacher's management of a pupil with emotional difficulties was a model of thoughtful, patient planning. In the two junior lessons where behavioural difficulties arose, teachers' management of an individual pupil's poor behaviour was not effective. The lack of pace in lessons and low expectations of teachers in terms of pupils' performance are the main teaching weaknesses. These are contributory factors to pupils' unsatisfactory behaviour. In none of the lessons observed did teachers really challenge pupils to exert themselves to the extent that their heart-rate would increase. The planned format of each lesson included a warm-up, but these loosening-up exercises were usually the most demanding exercise of the lesson. In junior lessons, pupils are generally less focused on their tasks. Some classes change noisily in the adjacent shower rooms and this does not set a positive tone for the lesson.

129 Resources are of good quality and sufficient quantity. The co-ordinator is new to the school and has not yet had the opportunity to assess strengths and weaknesses. There has been little staff training in the subject and the new scheme of work is not being used effectively by junior staff. Some lack subject knowledge and confidence. There is a need for staff training.