

# INSPECTION REPORT

**WOOTTON ST PETER'S CE VA PRIMARY  
SCHOOL**

Wootton, Oxford

LEA area: Oxfordshire

Unique reference number: 123223

Headteacher: Mr Philip Hibbs

Reporting inspector: Mrs Stephanie Lacey  
3764

Dates of inspection: 18 - 21 September 2000

Inspection number: 224983

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: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Wootton Village  
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Oxfordshire

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Telephone number: 01865 735643

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Michael Varnom

Date of previous inspection: 5 - 7 November 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Stephanie Lacey 3764	Registered inspector	English, information technology, art, physical education, English as an additional language and special educational needs	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Derek Bowers 9528	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils?
Anna Sims 23945	Team inspector	Mathematics, design and technology and music	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Carol Slade 23812	Team inspector	Foundation stage, science, geography, history and equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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The Registrar  
Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Wootton St Peter's is a small village school with 90 pupils on roll. At the moment there are slightly more girls than boys. Most pupils have their cultural roots in the British Isles with ten per cent coming from other ethnic backgrounds. There are no pupils learning English as an additional language, but there are bilingual speakers who use English well. Children begin in Class 1 in the term in which they are five. Last year, baseline assessment showed that children's understanding, knowledge and skills were wide-ranging, but broadly average for Oxfordshire schools. The balance of higher and lower attaining pupils in each year group varies from year to year. About 11 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average. Thirty-nine per cent of the pupils are on the school's register of special educational need, which is above average. Three of these pupils have a statement of special educational need.

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

Wootton St Peter's is a good school where pupils of all abilities reach their potential. Standards in national tests were high this year, but these vary from year to year because of the small numbers and the make-up of particular year groups. Pupils do well because the teaching is good, the school is organised very efficiently and the headteacher provides clear and purposeful leadership. Even though small schools are more expensive to run, in view of the effectiveness of this school, Wootton St Peter's offers good value for money.

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

- Standards in national tests were high this year in English, mathematics and science.
- Teaching is good overall and very good in reception and Years 1 and 2.
- Pupils are very positive about school and work hard.
- The headteacher leads the school very well.
- The governors provide excellent support.
- The school has excellent links with the local community and a very good partnership with parents.

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

- Pupils do not do so well in writing as they do in reading and mathematics.
- There are no other significant areas for improvement in the school's work. Some minor points for development are included in the full report. These are related to curriculum planning, consistency of classroom routines, teaching about other cultures and plans for redecoration and refurbishment.

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

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

The school was last inspected four years ago, when it was found to provide 'a good quality education'. Since that time there have been several changes in the leadership of the school and for a short time the school did not move forward as fast as it should have done. The present headteacher has now been in post for two years and the school is once more functioning very effectively. There have been substantial improvements in financial planning, the curriculum has been reviewed and revised and, most importantly, the strong community ethos has been developed further. The issues for improvement from the previous inspection have been addressed and standards of work and the quality of teaching remain good.

## 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	C	D	A*	A*
mathematics	C	C	A	A
science	E	C	C	C

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

This year pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 did very well in national tests, coming in the top five per cent of all schools in reading in Year 2 and in English in Year 6. They did better than their peers in similar schools (where the same percentage of pupils are entitled to free school meals) in all subjects except science, where their performance matched those of their peers. There are several reasons for these high standards, the most significant being that higher attaining pupils generally do well at Wootton St Peter's. The table shows that pupils' overall attainment in tests does not always compare so favourably with the national picture. This is not due to any deficiency in the school's provision, but is the direct result of the impact of small numbers on statistical information and the balance of higher and lower attaining pupils in different year groups. The key question is whether individual pupils make sufficient progress. The inspection found that pupils of all abilities make good progress at Wootton St Peter's in most subjects and especially in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology.

The current Year 2 and 6 classes include a large proportion of pupils with special educational needs and therefore overall standards are not so high as last year. In Year 2, pupils' attainment is average in science and mathematics and below average in English. In Year 6, pupils' attainment is above average in science, average in mathematics and below average in English. The school has set challenging targets for pupils in 2001 tests and is set to meet them as a result of carefully targeted support for pupils in Year 6.

Throughout the school pupils do not do as well in writing as they do in reading and mathematics. This is true in most other schools, but the difference is a little wider at Wootton St Peter's. The school has already identified this as an area for development, especially for lower attaining boys. In most other subjects, pupils do as well as they should for children of their age. They do better in some aspects of information and communication technology in the oldest pupils' class and throughout the school pupils do well in the area of environmental education, which includes work in science, geography and design and technology.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are eager to come to school and are interested in their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave sensibly in lessons and at playtimes.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils get on well with each other and their teachers. Older pupils take on extra responsibilities effectively.
Attendance	Improved significantly during the last year and is now 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	Very good	Very good	Good

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

The good overall quality of the teaching is a strength of the school and ensures that most pupils make good progress. Forty-five per cent of the teaching seen was very good, 30 per cent was good and 25 per cent was satisfactory. English and mathematics are well taught overall, with good attention paid to the development of literacy and numeracy skills. Good support is given to pupils with difficulties in these areas. Higher attaining pupils are also challenged well. Strengths in the teaching include very good relationships between pupils and teachers, good use of learning support assistants and good provision for individual pupils' learning needs. Specialist teaching also helps pupils to do well in information and communication technology. There are some minor areas for development related to the marking of pupils' work and consistency in classroom routines.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	An interesting curriculum is planned, with an excellent contribution from the community. Environmental education is very well developed, with substantial input from Little Wittenham Nature Reserve. There is a very good range of activities outside lessons, including annual shows and plays. Staff are working hard to plan for the revised National Curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. This area is managed well and appropriate support is provided for pupils with special educational needs. Most of these pupils are only slightly behind their peers. Pupils with statements of special educational need are nurtured well.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils speaking English as an additional language are all fluent. They do not need extra support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Very good provision for pupils' moral and social development, with a strong personal, social and health education programme. Good provision for pupils' spiritual development. Sound provision for cultural development; not enough emphasis on learning about other cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Successfully. Staff know pupils very well and take good care of them.

There is a very good partnership between parents and the school, based on mutual trust and respect. Parents support their children well and are very involved in the life of the school.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher gives a firm steer to the work of the school and successfully leads a good staff team. Subject co-ordinators are developing their roles this term, as several take on new responsibilities.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Excellent. The majority of governors at Wootton St Peter's give their time and talents generously. They work very effectively with the headteacher in the management of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Staff and governors analyse the strengths and areas for development in the school in a climate of mutual trust.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. As a result of very careful financial planning the school has moved out of a deficit budget, while still maintaining small classes for younger pupils. Principles of best value are applied very well.

The school is well staffed by dedicated, hard-working and appropriately qualified teachers and support assistants. The accommodation is currently being extended and improved. However parts of the building need redecoration and refurbishment. The grounds are well developed. Resources are generally adequate.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teaching is good. (100%)</li> <li>• Children behave well. (100%)</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed. (100%)</li> <li>• Children make good progress. (98%)</li> <li>• Children are expected to work hard and do their best. (98%)</li> <li>• The school is helping children to become mature and sensible. (96%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ten per cent do not think that the school provides an interesting range of activities outside school.</li> <li>• Nine per cent are not happy with the amount of work pupils are expected to do at home.</li> <li>• Six per cent do not think that the school works closely with parents.</li> </ul>

*Percentages are taken from an analysis of the 57questionnaire replies received*

Parents' responses at the meeting held before the inspection and in the questionnaire were very positive about all aspects of the school. The inspection wholeheartedly agrees with these views. A very small number of parents expressed some concern about a small number of issues. The inspection found that their worries were not justified. There is a good range of activities outside lessons for the size of the school, including before and after school care for pupils of working parents. The homework given to pupils is appropriate for their age and stage of development. There is a good emphasis on reading at home. The school tries very hard to work closely with parents and provides every opportunity for parents to discuss problems and concerns.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1 Children start school at Wootton St Peter's in the term in which they are five. In most years, baseline assessment shows that children's understanding, knowledge and skills are very wide ranging, with some doing much better than others. There are few 'average' children at the school. The balance between the number of children who are doing better than one would expect for their age and those who are behind their peers varies from year to year. Most children achieve the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. This year, as pupils begin Year 1, the overall profile of the group is broadly average.

2 The very wide range of ability within each year group, together with the relatively small number in each year group, means that the school's performance in statutory tests often swings dramatically from year to year. In 2000, for example, standards were high at the end of both key stages. Comparisons with the national average show that overall in Year 2, pupils' attainment was very high in reading (in the top five per cent of all schools), well above average in mathematics and above average in writing. In Year 6, they were very high in English (in the top five per cent of all schools), well above average in mathematics and average in science. The school was only average in science, even though all pupils reached the expected level 4, because the higher attainers did not do so well as in other subjects. Pupils did better than their peers in similar schools (where the same percentage of pupils are entitled to free school meals) in all subjects except science, where their performance matched those of their peers.

3 In these particular year groups there was a good proportion of higher attaining pupils, who raised the overall profile. In the Year 2 group, there were also a few pupils who struggled with reading and writing and did not reach the expected level 2. Year 6 pupils did particularly well, with 50 per cent having made very good progress since the statutory tests they took as Year 2 pupils in 1996.

4 Overall, standards vary from year to year because of the size and composition of each year group. However, some constant factors do emerge. One is that higher attaining pupils generally do well. Another is that in several year groups there is a proportion of lower attaining pupils who have particular problems with reading and writing; most of these are boys. This was highlighted by Year 2 tests over the last few years. The school has looked carefully into the reasons for this and is trying to address the problem by providing extra support in class and using material that will grip boys' interest. There was also a low point in 1998 in Year 6 tests, when the class had a disrupted year.

5 The school exceeded its targets for Year 6 pupils' performance in the year 2000. It has adjusted its targets for 2001, so that they are more challenging. It is beginning to make good use of performance data to compare its performance against other schools and to identify areas for improvement. In order to raise standards pupils are given their own specific targets for literacy and numeracy in Years 2 to 6. They also set themselves an additional target that could relate to other subjects or a non-academic area.

6 The inspection found that the attainment of pupils at the end of the foundation stage, who have just started in Year 1, is broadly average in English and mathematics. In Year 2, pupils' attainment is broadly average in mathematics and science, but not as good in reading and writing. This is because a very high percentage of pupils in this year group are on the school's register of special educational need some with identified difficulties in the area of

language and communication. Nonetheless these pupils work hard and achieve well.

7 There is also a difference in the standards of attainment in different subjects in Year 6. Overall pupils' attainment is above average in science, average in mathematics and reading and below average in writing. Again this is because a significant number of pupils have had problems with work in the area of English. The school has targeted support for pupils in this area and hopes to raise attainment by the end of the year. In the lessons seen, pupils in all year groups worked hard and achieved well in most lessons. The school's own tracking system shows that some of these pupils made slower progress when they were in Years 3 and 4. However, throughout the school pupils do not do so well in writing as they do in other subjects. The school has tried to tease out reasons for this and several factors have had a bearing on pupils' attainment in this area. One has been the limited opportunity for extended writing during the literacy hour. Another has been a lack of consistency in teachers' expectations of well-presented work and handwriting.

8 Standards in other subjects are at least in line with expected levels. Generally standards have been maintained since the last inspection, but have fallen back a little in history. There are some subjects where pupils achieve particularly well. They excel in environmental studies and this embraces work in science, geography and design and technology. This is largely because of the emphasis the school places on this area through the very good links with Little Wittenham Nature Reserve. Information and communication technology is another area where pupils in the two oldest classes do particularly well, especially in the area related to exchanging and sharing information.

9 Gifted and talented pupils are challenged well. The school has identified pupils who are doing well in English and mathematics and makes special provision for them by buying in supply teachers to split the class into smaller teaching units. These pupils respond well to the high expectations set for them. Some work particularly well with older pupils in numeracy, for example.

10 Pupils who do not have their cultural roots in the British Isles also do well. Some are bilingual and speak English fluently. A small number are on the school's register for special educational need and are supported effectively.

11 Pupils with special educational needs do well because they are very positive about their work. Most pupils on the school's register of special educational need are a little behind their peers and receive extra help in literacy and numeracy particularly. A high proportion of these pupils are boys and the school is working hard to make learning interesting for them. A minority of pupils on the register have more serious learning difficulties and these include three pupils with statements of special educational need.

12 The Year 2 pupils with statements are making good progress, in the main, towards the targets on their individual education plans. The school struggles to meet one section of one of the statements, in spite of the best efforts of the staff. Staff and governors are aware that they will have to review the school's ability to meet the conditions of this particular statement appropriately.

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

13 High standards of behaviour and positive attitudes to learning have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils show keen interest and enthusiasm in their work and enjoy coming to school.

14 The youngest children quickly settle into the routines of the reception class because of the good induction arrangements. Many of them visit Wootton St Peter's for a weekly singing

activity with their parents, for example, before starting school and so are well used to the school surroundings and the teaching staff. The three children in the reception class are already familiar with school routines and clearly know the difference between right and wrong.

15 Pupils are very positive about school. They respond well in lessons. They listen carefully to their teachers and are eager to start their individual activities. They are encouraged to respect each other and show consideration in lessons and in the playground. When working together, on games in numeracy lessons, for example, they take turns and are helpful and supportive. In one session, a pupil was particularly sympathetic when his neighbour was unable to complete her work and took great care to explain the procedures quietly. They share equipment well. This was noticeable in the playground, where they took turns with balls and skipping ropes and played well together.

16 Pupils' behaviour is good. They respond well to the school's caring environment, which promotes the values of honesty, fairness and a respect for others. Pupils have contributed to school booklet, '*The way we behave in school*' and each class has its own list of rules. Pupils are generally sensible in classrooms and respond well to teachers' requests. Playtimes are happy social occasions and there is no evidence of any bullying. Pupils understand that if they have a problem they should share it and they know that staff will listen to them very carefully.

17 Pupils are developing very good personal skills and form very good relationships with their peers and teachers. This is evident in the friendly way in which pupils greet each other and the staff as they come into school. They respect each other's views and take account of other pupils' opinions in sessions like 'circle time' (when pupils sit in a circle to share ideas and feelings). They enjoy taking on responsibility and even the youngest children enjoy the special task of taking the dinner register to the office. Responsibilities increase as pupils move into the junior classes. Some of the older pupils help the younger children during the lunch hour, for example. They also take turns to help in the dining hall. They act as librarians, help in the shop that sells outgrown uniform and stationery, and in the weekly tea-shop. Last year, as part of their technology lessons, pupils planned and helped to organise a summer sports event.

18 Attendance during the past year was well above the national average and showed a substantial improvement over the levels in the previous three years. The majority of authorised absences are from parents who take their holidays during the term. Timekeeping is generally good and no pupils have regular patterns of late arrival.

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

19 The overall quality of the teaching is good and is a strength of the school. The positive picture painted by the last inspection has been maintained, even though two thirds of the teaching staff have changed since that time and one is only very recently qualified. Twenty sessions were seen, some of them quite lengthy, and in these the teaching was very good in 45 per cent, good in 30 per cent and satisfactory in the remaining 25 per cent. The good overall quality of the teaching ensures that pupils of all abilities make good progress. The quality of the teaching is strongest in the foundation stage and Years 1 and 2.

20 There are several strengths that underpin all the teaching. One is the very good relationship that has been developed between all staff and pupils. Staff respect pupils and treat them with care and consideration. Consequently, pupils are positive about school and work hard. Teachers and learning support assistants value pupils' efforts and this helps all pupils to feel that they are successful. Teachers manage their classes well and so very little time is spent in dealing with inattentive behaviour. This means that classrooms are settled and calm, providing a good environment for learning.

21 Another strength is the very good use made of the learning support assistants. They work particularly with the younger pupils, as well as those with special educational needs. They provide help for individuals and small groups and this focused attention helps pupils to make good progress. Teachers plan activities very carefully with the assistants so that the tasks for the pupils are appropriate. The work of the learning support assistants makes a significant contribution to good support given to pupils with special educational needs.

22 Teachers are adept at providing the right level of challenge for pupils' different needs. This requires careful planning because most pupils are in classes that span two-year groups. They manage this successfully in most subjects. Literacy and numeracy lessons are particularly well planned. This provides a good structure to the sessions, and most lessons move at a brisk pace and much is achieved. Occasionally, the whole class part of the lesson goes on for too long and some pupils lose interest. Teachers are flexible in their grouping of pupils and in literacy and numeracy use ability grouping well so that pupils work on appropriate tasks during the activity part of the lesson. Consequently they all make at least satisfactory progress. Phonic skills are taught well within the literacy hour, particularly in the two younger pupils' classes. In literacy and numeracy, pupils in Years 3 to 6 have individual targets for improvement and this helps them to focus on particular aspects of their work.

23 Planning for science has improved this year and provides more challenge for higher attaining Year 6 pupils. Previously Year 5 and 6 pupils worked on very similar tasks and this year higher attaining pupils did not do so well in science in tests as they did in other subjects. In the lessons seen in science the teaching was very good overall and this was because of the clear planning and very good level of class discussion. Only one lesson was seen in information communication technology and this was very good. The computer suite was not in use during the inspection, because of building works, but teachers' plans and pupils' attainment indicate that teaching in this area is at least good.

24 In the better lessons and particularly in the reception year and Years 1 and 2, teachers' lively approach grasps pupils' interest and imaginations. Consequently pupils are fully engaged in discussions and the teachers' skilful questioning enables pupils to move forward more quickly.

25 About a third of the pupils in the school have identified special educational needs and they receive good support. Teachers and assistants work sensitively with these pupils, who respond well to the extra help and are very positive about their work. Within this group are a number of boys who have particular difficulties with reading and writing. Teachers take care to provide activities that will capture their interest and encourage them to persevere when they find the work challenging. Three pupils have statements of special educational need and have made great strides in their grasp of basic skills because of the focused support given to them.

26 The school also identifies gifted and talented pupils well. They too receive appropriate challenge and in numeracy, for example, some pupils move classes to work with older pupils. Teachers are conscious of the wide range of attainment levels in their classes and are careful to modify their questioning in the introductory part of the lesson to meet the needs of pupils with differing levels of understanding.

27 About ten per cent of pupils have their cultural roots outside Great Britain. Currently all who speak English as an additional language are fluent English speakers. Teachers and support staff offer them the same sensitive support that all pupils receive.

28 Within this positive picture there are some minor areas for development, largely related to consistency between classes and teachers and particularly in the two older classes. This is

especially relevant at Wootton St Peter's, where all but Year 2 are taught by two teachers. Generally the teachers sharing classes manage issues related to planning very well, but in some other areas teachers' practice varies and this could be confusing to pupils. At the moment, for example, although there is a whole school marking policy, individual teachers use their own systems. In some classes the teacher's handwriting is not a very good model for the pupils. Some marking is confusing, when written work is ticked as correct even when errors have been identified. In the better marking pupils are given clear pointers about what to do to improve.

29 Teachers adopt similar organisational strategies and have moved towards more common practice in the use of the same books for recording pupils' work. Some inconsistencies remain, in the labelling of pupils' books, for example, and in expectations of how pupils should set out work. This results in some confusion for pupils about what is expected of them. As a result, some of the work of pupils in the oldest classes is untidy and handwriting is not as neat as it should be.

30 The amount of homework given to pupils is appropriate, increasing as pupils move through the school. Pupils benefit particularly from the good emphasis that teachers put on reading.

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

31 The school has maintained the broad and balanced curriculum identified by the last inspection report and worked hard to implement new government initiatives. The literacy and numeracy strategies now underpin work in English and mathematics and staff are developing new planning documents to incorporate the new elements in the revised National Curriculum. All statutory requirements with regard to the curriculum are being met.

32 The curriculum at the foundation stage for children in the reception year makes good provision for them to work towards the early learning goals. Teachers and support assistants work hard to make the curriculum for these children active and lively. They generally provide a satisfactory balance between the need for calm periods of structured learning and times for independent choice. The school has a draft planning document for the foundation stage.

33 The breadth, balance and relevance of the curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory overall, with some strong features. Teachers are sensitive to the needs and interests of pupils. They try to make learning opportunities meaningful and enjoyable. The strength of the environmental education provision has a significant impact on the good quality of the geography and science curriculum, with the regular contribution from outreach workers from Little Wittenham Nature Reserve bringing the work alive

34 Planning for different subjects is still developing. The revised National Curriculum is being fully implemented, but some subject plans have only been put in place this term and have yet to be fine-tuned. Most have two-year rolling programmes. This two-year cycle will help teachers to plan more effectively for the two year groups in each class. At the moment there are not sufficient links made between subjects in the planning. For example, opportunities for developing writing or information and communication technology skills in subjects like history, geography, science and religious education are not noted.

35 Satisfactory strategies are in place for the teaching of literacy skills. The literacy strategy is fully implemented and opportunities are taken to develop literacy skills across the curriculum, but this has not yet had the desired effect of raising standards in writing in Years 3 to 6. The school's programme for implementing the numeracy strategy is good. Additional

literacy support is provided in Years 3 and 4 to support less able pupils whilst in Year 6 'Booster' lessons for English, mathematics and science are usually established in the term before pupils take national tests. Last year these had a very positive impact on pupils' progress.

36 The school is conscious of the need to offer all pupils equal opportunities and makes satisfactory provision for social inclusion. An equal opportunities statement appears in most curriculum policies. The school has identified the relatively lower performance of some boys, particularly in language skills, as a factor that might impede their equality of access to the curriculum, for example. Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. They are diagnosed early, often in the first term of the foundation stage. Most of the support planned for these pupils is within lessons. Occasionally pupils are withdrawn for specialist support. Two of the pupils with statements have weekly music therapy sessions, for example. Individual education plans are clear and focus well on pupils' individual needs and both teachers and support staff are involved in their compilation.

37 The school makes very good provision for extra curricular activities, which help pupils to develop their social skills. After school clubs, often run by volunteer parents, are varied and encompass many interests such as competitive sports, computers, gardening and cycling proficiency. A weekend visit to the Isle of Wight is a regular annual event for Year 6 pupils and this helps them to develop independence away from the security of home. A before and after school care club is organised by local people to meet the needs of pupils whose parents work.

38 The excellent links with the local community make a very good contribution to the curriculum and particularly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The church values the school and church members, along with other village people, play an active part in the life of the school. For example, every child in the school is fortunate to have a member of the local community who regularly visits to hear them read.

39 The school's overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and has been maintained well since the last inspection. Pupils' spiritual development is well promoted. The use of poetry and music in assemblies provides good opportunities for pupils to reflect on their experiences, particularly during the piano playing as pupils enter and leave the hall. The vicar visits regularly and his input is an inspiration to both pupils and staff. Some parents of the Jewish and Muslim faiths have shared their practices with pupils and this helps them to understand the beliefs of others.

40 Staff cater very well for pupils' moral and social development. All adults in school are very good role models and the very positive and caring ethos in the school sets a very firm basis for pupils' development. Pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong and expected to take responsibility for their own actions. They are encouraged to make their own choices but are made aware of the options available, their impact on others and the consequences. Pupils are involved in decisions about school behaviour. They worked with staff in writing a booklet, *'The way we behave in school'*, for example, which focuses on the importance of sharing, looking after each other, listening, being honest and doing the right thing. Pupils are encouraged to behave as members of a family and to show care, concern and respect. There are incentives at different levels to promote pupils' interest in taking responsibility for their work and the school. Class achievement awards celebrate pupils' success during a special weekly assembly, for example. On an individual level, pupils are given personal targets. They are also expected to act as class monitors, lunchtime monitors and librarians. Many of the school's activities welcome the wider village community; senior citizens are invited to the younger children's Christmas production, for example. The school also helps pupils to think of others less fortunate than themselves and supports various

charities, most recently the NSPCC.

41 The school's provision for personal, social and health education is very good. The local authority's published scheme of work underpins 'circle time' (when pupils sit in a circle to discuss their concerns and feelings). Persuasive writing focuses on valuing each other's opinions. Suitable provision is made for both sex and health education during work in science and a Drugs Awareness event is held during the summer term for the older pupils.

42 Provision for the pupils' cultural development is satisfactory overall. Opportunities are made for them to listen and take part in musical activities, for example. Pupils listen to a variety of taped music in assemblies and also enjoy listening to the competent pianist who accompanies their hymn singing. There is music tuition in strings, wind and brass. Occasionally artists and actors visit the school. The school is developing links with schools in Europe, which will help pupils to understand more about other European cultures. The school is about to embark on a three-year initiative to maintain links with partner schools in Spain and Sweden. Teachers from these schools have visited the pupils and described school life. Although areas contributing to a cultural diversity are included in the school's policy on multi-cultural education, the development of this area is in the very early stages. The school holds an International evening. However there are few books in the library or in the classrooms, and few artefacts apart from those used in religious education as part of the teaching of the Muslim and Jewish faiths.

43 In the main, the school has good relationships with its primary partners in the local cluster and with the secondary schools to which pupils transfer. This has a positive impact on curriculum provision at Wootton St Peter's. For example, a link teacher supports information and communication technology development in a number of local schools. Resources to promote boys' literacy skills have been purchased and these will circulate cluster schools. A variety of friendly but competitive sporting events take place between nearby schools. Partnership head teachers meet regularly to co-ordinate new initiatives.

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

44 The school makes very good provision for the care of its pupils. There has been continuous improvement in recent years, particularly in the revision of policies that record and formalise the good practices in the school. All staff know pupils very well and this is enhanced by the long associations between families and the school over many years. Staff are very welcoming to parents and their children.

45 Staff strive very consciously to be good role models. They are consistent in their management of, and relationships with the pupils. Parents and pupils share the high expectations of hard work and good behaviour. Staff meetings include sessions on behaviour and bullying. A common, vigilant approach is shared by all staff. The very positive ethos is a strong feature of the school and makes a good contribution to the very positive, caring attitudes of pupils.

46 Attendance is monitored closely and staff follow up absences promptly. Parents are regularly reminded in newsletters of the importance of good attendance. The closer monitoring and higher profile given to attendance resulted in a significant improvement last year.

47 Personal development is fostered effectively through lessons, circle time and assemblies. Children of all ages are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and for their learning. Many pupils take on specific responsibilities for a wide range of duties to help with the running of the school. For example, older children organise younger ones at



playtimes and lunchtimes. A rota of pupils ensures the efficient clearing of the hall at the end of lunch so that it is available for curricular activities during the afternoon. Staff actively consider the personal development of all pupils and set targets for them in the termly reviews.

48 Child protection procedures are in place and all members of staff have been made aware of these through informal and formal discussions or induction programmes. The recently revised health and safety and risk assessment policies are clear and comprehensive and the drafting of these revised documents has benefited significantly from the expertise of the governors. Staff vigilance helps to ensure that any potential hazards are drawn to the attention of those responsible.

49 The school has made good progress in developing assessment procedures since the last inspection, when this area was identified as needing improvement. A detailed policy in draft form outlining the rationale and procedures used in the school's assessment of its pupils is awaiting presentation to governors. Some good assessment arrangements are already well established in the school. Some are newly introduced and need fine-tuning. Others have been decided on but are still to be implemented.

50 At the foundation stage the class teacher makes valuable home visits before children enter reception. As she completes an entry profile in discussion with parents her folio of useful and varied assessment evidence takes shape for each child. It has satisfactory indirect links with the stepping stones that mark progress towards the early learning goals. At entry to reception, baseline assessment is used to assess where children are in their language, mathematical and personal and social development.

51 As pupils continue through the school less formal, observational and evaluative assessments blend with national ones at ages seven and eleven to give teachers a full picture of their pupils' personal and social development, as well as their intellectual progress. From Year 3, pupils take annual tests in English and mathematics and these are used to help teachers to plan subsequent work and target improvement for the following year. Detailed records are kept of individual pupils' progress and this are enhanced this year by a good summative sheet kept at the front of each file.

52 Individually negotiated target setting is being used increasingly in the school as an assessment procedure. Personal targets for attainment or behaviour have already been negotiated with individual pupils in the two oldest classes. Discussions are about to begin with parents of pupils in the reception year and Years 1 and 2, on how younger pupils can be involved more directly in their own learning in this way.

53 Teachers have a very good understanding of their pupils' personalities and learning needs. They are constantly on the move in their classrooms during independent learning times, effectively assessing pupils' progress. Generally, good use is made of information gathered from assessments, both formal and informal, in guiding teachers' planning. For example, a teacher was observed providing pupils with an enjoyable verbal quiz towards the end of her science lesson. She will use the information it gave her on the quality of pupils' learning so far in preparing her next lesson. Assessment is used to organise ability groups in mixed age classes. It helps teachers to provide work of varied levels of challenge for their pupils. Teachers are adopting assessment techniques to use at the end of a topic to evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching as well as the quality of pupils' learning.

54 Staff are beginning to analyse pupils' performance in statutory tests at seven and eleven to tease out areas that need to be improved. This analysis highlighted the disparity between boys and girls, especially in writing, for example.

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

55 '*Parents are welcome*' is emblazoned under the school's name on the board outside the front door and this very positive statement underpins the very effective partnership with parents. This has been maintained since the previous inspection and is still a strength of the school. The response to the questionnaire and the meeting held for parents before the inspection show that parents are very positive about the school. They are extremely happy with their children's progress. They know that their children like coming to school and they are pleased with the high expectations of the teachers with regard to work and behaviour. They feel that their children are a credit to the school when they make visits into the community and that the school is well led and managed.

56 Parents are invited to join their children for the first activity of the day and this welcoming atmosphere pervades the school. The weekly session for '*toddler music*', followed by a cup of tea (and cakes donated by the parents) also gives both parents and children the opportunity to meet teachers regularly. Parents feel that the teachers are very approachable and confidently seek clarification on homework assignments. Clear information is given on expectations and timing of homework and parents are generally satisfied with the content and quantity, although a few expressed some dissatisfaction. The inspection found that appropriate homework is set. All pupils take reading books home regularly and a record book for the younger pupils provides a dialogue for parents and teachers. The older pupils keep their own record of the books they have read and enjoyed. Work in other areas is sent home and this increases appropriately as pupils become older.

57 Parents are very involved in the life of the school. A most important feature is the opportunity for before-and-after-school care. These sessions are always very well supported. Another initiative is the '*walking bus*', which provides supervision for pupils as they walk to school. Parents and other members of the community volunteer as reading counsellors and each pupil in the school has personal support. The Friends of Wootton School play a very strong role in the life of the school. They provide materials and resources through a series of social and fund-raising events. They recently provided extra funding to support pupils with special educational needs. They have provided a wilderness area, an adventure playground, and a garden for the youngest children and playground equipment. They offer support in the classroom, in after-school activities, in the teashop, and on visits, and generally show an over-riding interest and willingness to help the pupils. Parents have undertaken the marketing of the school and this includes the organisation of sponsorship from local firms to help with the extension. Many parents have come forward with particular skills that they can offer.

58 The information given to parents about the school and their children's progress is very good. A very small minority of parents do not feel that the school works closely with them. The inspection found that the school makes every effort to talk to parents about their children's progress. There is a weekly newsletter and two consultation evenings are held through the year. A curriculum evening is held at the beginning of every term to share with parents the proposed activities. Parents are able to see the teaching staff at other times for further information. Parents of children with special educational needs are kept well informed of their children's progress. Parents of children with statements of special educational need are suitably involved in termly and annual reviews.

59 The school has consulted parents on a range of issues, including school ethos, admissions, literacy, numeracy and individual targeting. Information is accessed through questionnaires, class curriculum meetings, whole school meetings, individual formal and informal meetings, class representatives and views of parent governors. The school is

always very responsive to suggestions and keen to involve parents in sharing their expertise. An effective Home/School Agreement has been implemented, after consultation with parents.

60 A few parents do not think that the school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. The inspection found that this view is not justified. There is a good range of activities for the size of the school, including before and after school care for the children of working parents.

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

61 The very strong leadership of the headteacher is evident in the everyday life of the school. He has been successful in developing a united team of staff, governors and parents who work hard to improve provision for the pupils in order to raise standards. There is a good deal of mutual trust and respect between the adults working in the school. Staff, governors, parents and village people feel valued and appreciated and consequently make substantial contributions to the work of the school in terms of time, energy and enthusiasm. Good examples of this are the work of the reading counsellors, who visit regularly to help pupils with reading and the voluntary support of a previous headteacher in music and information and communication technology.

62 The current headteacher has been in post for two years and together with staff and governors have successfully addressed a series of challenges. These included the induction of a number of new staff, financial planning to rectify a deficit budget, the disruption caused by building works and the introduction of government initiatives, such as the literacy and numeracy strategies.

63 Issues for improvement from the last inspection have also been addressed. One of these was to revise the school development plan to make it a more effective tool for driving the school forward. The work undertaken in this area has been very successful and the new plan now underpins the work of the school. The plan is drawn up in consultation with staff, governors and parents. It provides a very clear agenda for improvement and development, directly linking the improved provision with its intended impact on pupils' development. The plan runs for three years and sets out clearly aims, priorities, staff development, resource implications and success criteria. It has been implemented over a relatively short time and addressed the problems experienced a few years earlier due to fluctuating pupil numbers and deficit budgets.

64 Staff and governors are very effective in planning and allocating resources to ensure the implementation of the school's educational priorities. The school has addressed the key management and planning issues from the previous inspection and planning, financial management and budgetary control have improved considerably in recent years. Senior staff and governors monitor expenditure and the implementation of planning priorities regularly and record the outcomes and decisions fully. The school employs a professional bursar and this contract provides very good value for money. Consequently the management and control of expenditure is very good. The most recent audit in October 1999 confirmed the quality of the financial controls and management. The school accounts separately for expenditure of the standards fund allocations and income for special needs and uses these funds effectively.

65 The school applies the principles of best value very well. The extent of consultation between staff, governors and parents is exceptional. Considering the size of the school the additional income provided by parents and friends is very high. For example, in the previous year parents provided very substantial additional income through donations and fund-raising to enable the continuation of the level of classroom support and to assist with the implementation of building developments. The school is beginning to use benchmarking

information to make comparisons with expenditure patterns in similar schools. Their expenditure in most areas is close to the average for these schools. Careful consideration is given to the cost-effective use of contractors to provide the range of services to ensure the smooth running of the school. Competitive tendering is applied properly and the diocese gives the school effective support.

66 Administrative procedures, including financial management, are very efficient and the school secretary gives good support to the staff, governors, pupils and parents. The accounts for the main delegated income and the school fund are in good order. General information and records are filed well. The school runs very smoothly. It is giving good value for money.

67 A further issue from the previous inspection was to build on existing assessment and monitoring procedures in order to plan work for the pupils. Again the school has tackled this well. There are now clear procedures for assessing pupils' progress on a regular basis. These are constantly being refined. For example, this term each child will have a summative sheet at the front of their assessment folders to show their progress through the school. These assessments are used well to set targets for pupils and to group them within the class. The headteacher also analyses the annual statutory tests and assessments in order to identify areas for improvement. The lower attainment of some boys in relation to girls was noted for example, especially in English. The school has not yet analysed pupils' performance in particular strands of English, mathematics and science in order to tease out distinct strengths and weaknesses.

68 A third area for improvement from the last inspection was related to establishing a pay policy and linking responsibilities and rewards to the school development plan. This has been accomplished. A staffing committee has been established and is developing procedures to complete the implementation of the policy and to take account of the requirements for staff reviews. However, because of recent staff changes several teachers have new subject co-ordinator responsibilities this term and their roles are not yet fully developed. The school development plan clearly highlights opportunities for new and established co-ordinators to develop their understanding of provision and standards through the school by monitoring work in classrooms. This cycle of monitoring and evaluation of classroom practice in order to move forward has already been initiated. Up until now it has been linked to the school's own appraisal arrangements and the introduction of the literacy and numeracy hours. Staff feel that it has been helpful to discuss their own teaching skills with colleagues.

69 Staff with more established co-ordinator roles undertake their responsibilities effectively. The special educational needs co-ordinator, for example, has a firm grip on the reviewing and recording of pupils' progress. Records are carefully organised and all statutory requirements in relation to the three pupils with statements of special educational need are met. There is a sufficient number of learning support assistants appointed to work with pupils who need extra support. Release time for the co-ordinator is planned into this year's budget and this will enable her to monitor and evaluate the support pupils receive.

70 Governors also take time to evaluate the strengths and areas for development in the school. They monitor provision for the pupils by visiting classrooms, by working alongside pupils and by discussing the impact of new initiatives in governors' meetings. The overall contribution of the governors to the work of the school is excellent. They are a group of talented and enthusiastic people who use their individual skills well to the benefit of the school. The contributions of the governors and the use of their expertise goes well beyond the level experienced in most schools. For example, one governor has taken responsibility for marketing and has produced extensive literature and detailed computer presentations of

the life of the school. These are used effectively to celebrate the school's achievements within the wider community, including local industry and commerce. The detailed preparation has proved useful in enabling the school to respond quickly in submitting successful applications for special grants for a variety of enhancements to the premises, grounds and resources. All statutory requirements are met.

71 The school faces some challenges for the future. One is to maintain the number of pupils on roll in order to keep four classes. In the last year numbers have dropped slightly, partly because of families moving away from the area. Another possible reason for the fall in roll has been the different admissions policies of neighbouring schools, who are able to offer pupils places at a younger age than at Wootton St Peter's. Governors have responded to this by setting up a marketing group in order to celebrate the educational opportunities offered at the school. This is beginning to bear fruit.

72 Another continuing challenge is the need to provide staffing stability. As a consequence of the drop in roll and the secondment of a permanent member of staff, two teachers are unavoidably on part-time contracts. The headteacher and governors are aware that possible future changes in the staffing structure need to be planned very carefully, so that the pupils are not working with a series of different teachers. This challenge needs to be set within the context of a generous staffing level, with small classes for pupils up to seven. Current staff are well qualified and most are very experienced. Well-qualified learning support assistants also make a very good contribution. In addition, the school draws upon visiting specialists such as a music therapist, instrumental teachers, an information and communication technology teacher and outreach workers from a local nature reserve. There are plans to employ a music specialist. A significant amount of work with pupils is also undertaken by the large voluntary band of parents, governors and friends of the school who bring their own particular talents to different curriculum areas.

73 A third challenge is the need to refurbish parts of the building and replace some of the furniture. The school has wisely directed most of its resources in recent years into maintaining four classes. The new extension to the front of the building has also been a focus for improvement to the fabric of the school. However, there is not a programme in place for redecoration and refurbishment and consequently several areas are now in need of attention. Carpets in classrooms, for example, are very well worn, and are stained from water leaking through the roof. Some of the furniture in the younger pupils' classes is old and heavy to move and in several places the paint is chipped. Only one of the four classes has water in the classroom and the thin divider between Classes 3 and 4 means that teachers have to plan carefully so that the other class is not disturbed by noisier activities, such as music, at inappropriate times. Staff work hard to ensure that the curriculum is taught well in spite of the limitations of the building. Again this area for development needs to be set alongside the many good points about the fabric of the school. The new extension, for example, will provide space for a valuable computer suite and library. There have also been some very good recent developments in the grounds, such as the living willow hedge, which provides a shady quiet retreat for pupils at playtime. Generally, there is an adequate amount of equipment and books in all curriculum areas, although the number of books celebrating the wide diversity of cultures within the British Isles is limited. The resources for information and communication technology are good.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

74 In order to build on the many strengths of the school and to improve the provision for the pupils, the headteacher, staff and governors need to:

- Improve standards of writing through the school by:
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length, especially in the two oldest classes;
  - setting higher and consistent expectations for the presentation of pupils' written work;
  - identifying opportunities for developing writing in history, geography, science and religious education within the planning for pupils' writing development.

*(Reference paragraphs: 4,7,29,34,35,89,91 and 96)*

In the context of its many strengths, the headteacher, staff and governors should also consider the following minor points for inclusion in its improvement plan:

- Implementing the marking policy more consistently. *(Reference paragraphs: 28,96 and 115)*
- Completing whole school plans for the work in all subjects. *(Reference paragraph: 34)*
- Planning for redecoration and refurbishment of the school. *(Reference paragraphs: 73)*
- Achieving consistency in classroom organisation and systems. *(Reference paragraphs: 28 and 29)*
- Improving provision for and teaching about other cultures. *(Reference paragraph: 42)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	20
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	40

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	45	30	25	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (Full-time Equivalent for part-time pupils)	87
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	11
<b>Special educational needs</b>	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	36
<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.2
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	8	12	20

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
	Total	17	16	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (77)	80 (69)	100 (92)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
	Total	17	20	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (77)	100 (92)	100 (92)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year. The details of boys' and girls' performance have been omitted because there are less than eleven in one of the groups.

### 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	4	8	12

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
	Total	12	11	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100 (69)	92 (77)	100 (85)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
	Total	12	10	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100 (57)	83 (64)	92 (86)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year. Details of the separate performance of boys and girls is omitted because there are less than eleven in each gender group.



### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	81
Any other minority ethnic group	7

*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: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.0
Average class size	22.0

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

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	90

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	200,001
Total expenditure	196,526
Expenditure per pupil	2114
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	3475

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	90
Number of questionnaires returned	57

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	72	23	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	65	33	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	79	21	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	46	44	9	0	2
The teaching is good.	82	18	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	68	28	4	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	74	23	2	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	81	18	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	67	28	4	2	0
The school is well led and managed.	72	28	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	75	21	2	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	51	33	5	5	5

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

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

75 There are currently three children in the reception year. They share a class with fourteen Year 1 pupils in the morning and this class joins their friends in Year 2 for the afternoons. As numbers increase during the year the reception and Year 1 pupils will remain in one class for the whole day. Most children who start school at Wootton St Peter's have had some experience of pre-school education, either in playgroups or nurseries. Assessments of children's skills, knowledge and understanding when they start school shows that in most year groups there is a very wide span of ability. The balance of higher and lower attaining children varies from year to year. When the present Year 1 started school, for example, their overall attainment was broadly average compared with children in other Oxfordshire schools.

76 The previous inspection did not report specifically on the provision for children in the foundation stage and so it is difficult to draw direct comparisons. The current provision is good overall, with some very good features. As a result, most children achieve the early learning goals by the beginning of Year 1 and are well prepared for the transition.

77 A major asset to the children's foundation education is in the high quality of teaching they receive. Their teachers are a strong team, dedicated to making learning enjoyable. They are well trained and the co-ordinator is very experienced. For the most part they have adapted their planning effectively to integrate the new foundation stage and the National Curriculum. They make very good use of support staff to provide fully for the needs of children at the various stages on the stepping stones to the early learning goals.

78 The co-ordination of early years provision is good. In particular, the teacher with responsibility for this area has worked conscientiously to establish a strong partnership with parents. Home visits are made prior to a child's entry to the reception class and a caring induction system is in place. This enables children to become familiar with school and their new teachers before they begin to attend full time. Parents are well informed and reassured before their child makes the first step away from home. A termly curriculum meeting for parents continues to support the principle of partnership. In the meeting planned for this term, for example, parents will be invited to contribute ideas to the introduction of 'target setting' for children in the foundation stage and Years 1 and 2. In this type of target setting children are set individual goals for improvement in their learning, especially in English and mathematics.

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

79 Children make good progress towards the early learning goals for personal, social and emotional development. The foundation classroom provides a happy, lively, welcoming environment in which they can thrive. The children's day usually begins with a well-planned activity, which they share with their parents or carers as they settle into their nurturing school environment. They develop a good level of independence in managing their clothing at playtimes and for physical education lessons, as well as organising their personal hygiene. They participate well in class discussions, learning to listen well and to respect each other's ideas and feelings. Most sustain good levels of concentration for increasing periods of time. They take pride in their achievements. They take part in the daily act of collective worship. During one such meaningful learning experience children looked at engaging pictures of young animals being cared for by their mothers and shared in quiet reflection on the importance to them of their own families. Whilst the morning sessions are usually devoted to structured mathematics and language and communication tasks, during the afternoon there

are wider opportunities for the children to make independent choices from a variety of learning activities.

80 The teaching of personal, social and emotional development is good. Teachers and support staff work very hard to provide enjoyable, productive learning environments and activities for foundation stage children. For example, lively painted self portraits by the children are well displayed to foster self-esteem in the current topic about '*Ourselves*'. All adults form good relationships with the children and teachers are consistently encouraging and positive in their interactions. Reward stickers and '*special person for the day*' badges also help children to feel proud of their achievements. Staff are clear about the boundaries of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

81 Most children achieve the goals expected for their age by the time that they reach the end of the reception year and last year some reached them well before then. There are many planned opportunities for speaking and listening during the day in which children can express their ideas and feelings and share them with their peers and adults. Generous, good quality classroom support enables adults to stimulate conversation and language development during small, focused, group activities. During the literacy hour children's understanding of book conventions are extended. They know that books contain enjoyable stories that are sequenced and accessed through turning the pages. They understand the function of print and its orientation and make good progress along the stepping stones towards the early learning goals for reading. They know that words are made up of letters. Most can sing or say the alphabet and identify letters, particularly those contained in their names. Some already make the phonic connection between letters and sounds and are reading books well matched to their levels of ability. Joined writing is effectively taught from the outset and most children are forming readable letters and some familiar words independently as they move into Year 1.

82 The quality of teaching in communication, language and literacy is very good. Teachers have created a strong language environment and structured learning activities in which children have a variety of opportunities to acquire book skills, phonics, letter formation and expressive writing skills. Resources are varied and well chosen for the foundation stage. A variety of good quality picture story books are accessible to the children. Exciting '*big books*' are the focus for early reading activities and include non-fiction as well as story narratives. Many audiotaped stories are available for children to listen to independently using earphones. Teachers keep detailed records of children's progress in their learning of phonics and key words. Morning activities with parents and carers usually include a language activity such as joined writing, which is often used at home to guide additional support activities.

### **Mathematical development**

83 Provision for children's mathematical development is good and most of them are reaching the early learning goals for this area by the end of the reception year. They enjoy singing number songs. Children match a number of objects accurately to a single digit number. Most can count up to ten and some are using numbers above one hundred. Many children count forward and back from zero to twenty and are beginning to understand that these processes are akin to addition and subtraction. They understand how a simple spoken number phrase can be translated into mathematical symbols to make a sum. They use such resources as shapes, puzzles, and sand and water play to extend their understanding of shape, size and capacity and have access to a wide range of games and other mathematical activities.

84 The quality of teaching is very good. The daily focus for mathematical learning is based on the numeracy strategy, which is sensitively adapted to meet the needs of the different ability levels in the class. Well-managed, high quality support staff provide very good additional mathematical language input, which successfully raises the quality of children's learning. Teachers make activities enjoyable and motivating with the result that children concentrate well for extended periods of time and achieve very well. There are a variety of resources including games and other play equipment, which enable the children to augment their mathematical development through independent choice during less structured afternoon sessions.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

85 Most children make good progress towards the early learning goals in their knowledge and understanding of the world because of the good quality of the teaching. In exploration and investigation they look at visible body parts and think about their function as part the topic about '*Ourself*s'. From a choice of pictures and photographs of a variety of people they select and cut out heads, arms and legs and place them in sets. Children reflect on their own history and recall a special time in their lives. One child talked animatedly, recalling in detail events that occurred at her third birthday party. Children enjoy using the computer. Some work confidently. They know the function of the 'enter' key for moving down a line and manipulate the mouse to control the cursor effectively on screen. They know how to click onto icons to access a file. Through story the children appreciate that there are a wide variety of plants and animals in the world and make sensitive suggestions about how they might be protected. From traditional stories and songs, the daily experience of music during assemblies and religious celebrations such as harvest festival children derive an early sense of culture and beliefs.

### **Physical development**

86 Provision for children's physical development is generally satisfactory and most are achieving some of the early learning goals before the end of the reception year. As they cut, stick and glue, build with construction kits, and complete jig saw puzzles children are developing ever more accurate manual dexterity. Most children are putting these finer co-ordination skills to good use as they practice their joined writing and form figures neatly. The children have a variety of daily opportunities for vigorous activity on the playground and in the use of small equipment and large outdoor adventure apparatus. Although reception children share these playtime facilities with older, more vigorous children, they seem undeterred by their presence. They confidently and resolutely pursue their own physical activities, even though some are in only their third week in school. Children join in lessons with older children in the hall. During one dance lesson, although space was quite restricted, children moved uninhibitedly and with imagination as they interpreted rhythms freely but with an awareness of each other's space. A secure outside play area adjacent to the reception classroom is available, staff and weather permitting. It has its own fixed adventure play apparatus and a generous supply of wheeled active play equipment easily accessed from a well-organised adjacent shed.

87 The standard of teaching in physical development is good overall. The children have a wide variety of opportunities to develop their skills of both fine co-ordination and gross motor control, though only the latter appear in teachers' planning. In the dance lesson observed the teacher effectively concentrated on the skills involved in reflecting sound rhythm through bodily movement. She used praise well in motivating children to improve the quality of their movements.

## **Creative development**

88 By the time they reach the end of the reception year, most children are achieving the requirements of the early learning goals for creative development and provision and teaching for children in this area of the foundation stage is good. Most aspects of the curriculum are provided with some opportunities for creativity, whether it be inventing simple stories, expressing ideas through bodily movement or trying to empathise with how someone else is feeling. Children have opportunities to learn a variety of songs with accompanying gesturing, to create sounds with musical instruments and to role-play in the home corner. Painting, drawing collage and model making equipment are on hand.

## **ENGLISH**

89 Pupils did well in English in the national tests this year in both Year 2 and Year 6. Overall attainment was very high, in the top five per cent of all schools, in reading in Year 2. Pupils at Wootton St Peter's did better than their peers in similar schools. Standards in writing were above average. In Year 6, pupils' attainment was also very high, again in the top five per cent of all schools. In both these year groups there was a good proportion of higher attaining pupils and it was as a result of this that the overall standards were so good. In Year 2 there was also a group of pupils who need not do so well, because they had difficulties in writing in particular.

90 Since the last inspection there have been fluctuations in the school's performance in national tests at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. This is largely because of the different balance between the proportion of higher and lower attaining pupils year by year and because of the impact of small numbers on percentage swings. Overall pupils do better in reading than in writing. Higher attaining pupils do well, but there has been a pattern of lower attainment by some boys in several year groups.

91 The inspection found that overall pupils in Year 2 this year are a little below average in reading and writing. This is because this particular year group has a very high number of pupils with special educational needs, including three pupils with statements of special educational need. There are also a few pupils who are reaching high standards. Year 6 also has a large span of attainment levels within the class, with a significant number of pupils who are on the school's register of special educational need. Standards are also below average overall, although some pupils are doing better. Throughout the school pupils do not do so well in writing as they do in reading.

92 This pattern of wide ranges in attainment levels in each year group is common throughout the school. However, irrespective of their attainment levels all pupils achieve well because they are taught well and have very positive attitudes towards learning.

93 Teachers take care to boost pupils' self esteem and as a consequence pupils are confident and express themselves clearly. In one assembly, for example, a young pupil, who has had difficulties in the area of speech and communication, spoke clearly to the whole assembly about her cat. Most opportunities for developing speaking skills are planned during the discussion periods at the beginning and end of lessons. Most pupils respond well at these times, using increasingly complex language as they become older. Sometimes pupils work in pairs or small groups and again are confident in their use of language. At the moment, there is no whole school plan for developing speaking and listening skills to ensure that pupils cover the full range of activities identified in the revised National Curriculum. There are few regular opportunities for pupils to participate in drama work.

94 Reading is taught effectively and most pupils do well because of the varied approach and

the very good support from parents and reading counsellors. There is a good balance between work on reading strategies and helping pupils to develop a love of reading and books. Within the literacy hours teachers focus effectively on the teaching of basic skills. In a Year 2 session, for example, the teacher concentrated on teaching the 'ee' and 'ea' sounds. She captured the pupils' interest well by her enthusiasm and sense of fun and consequently pupils remembered what they had been taught and identified the sounds in printed words. In contrast, pupils in Years 5 and 6 studied a text in order to identify verbs in the past tense. Some found this quite challenging, but managed well because of the clear explanations given by the teacher.

95 Alongside this work in the literacy hour pupils also spend time enjoying stories and reading for information. In the two older classes pupils spend time each week in groups, reading and discussing a book together. This helps them to understand the meaning of the text and to develop their reading skills. Often there is a focus on particular authors. Years 5 and 6 are looking at the work of Michael Morpurgo this term, for example. Staff are discussing the authors and books that they feel all pupils should read during their primary school years, but have not yet incorporated these into the whole school planning for reading. Pupils also develop their own personal preferences and take books home to share with their parents and carers on a regular basis. Older pupils often bring books in from home to share with their friends. Many pupils have their own 'reading counsellor', who works with them on a regular basis in school. Pupils benefit enormously from this extra support, which is provided by local people. Classrooms have a good collection of books to capture pupils' interest. The library is currently in temporary accommodation, while building work continues. It has a satisfactory collection of non-fiction books.

96 Pupils' writing skills are also developed within the literacy hour and to some extent in science and the humanities. Pupils write for a range of purposes and samples of work from last year include some good poetry written by pupils in the two older classes. Some of the pupils' poems have been published. However, generally pupils do not do so well in writing as they do in reading. Although this is a national trend, the gap is wider at Wootton St Peter's. There are several factors that have affected pupils' attainment in writing. One is the time available for pupils to spend on their writing. Until recently pupils have not had the opportunity to spend extended periods on writing because teachers have felt that they should try to keep to the twenty minute activity time recommended by the literacy strategy. They are now setting aside more time for writing, but there is not yet a whole school plan for this. There is also some inconsistency in the way pupils are expected to present their work. There are no clear guidelines, for example, about the use of pen and pencil in the older pupils' classes. The school has a marking policy, but there are some differences in the implementation of this by different teachers.

97 Staff are aware of these areas for development and are moving towards more consistent practice. This term, for example, staff are using similar books for pupils to record their work in. Teachers have also identified the need to challenge lower attaining boys and make every effort to plan work that is interesting for them and to give them extra support in lessons. The overall quality of the teaching is very good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory with good features in Years 3 to 6. Particular strengths are the careful planning and the good match of activity to pupils' understanding and skill. In the better lessons, teachers are very clear in their explanations and vary their presentation so that pupils are fully involved in the whole class work. Learning support assistants are very well deployed and give the lower attaining pupils effective support. As a result, pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets on their individual education plans. Sessions are well organised, with care taken to prepare materials beforehand, although in one lesson pupils found it hard to see the class text because of the seating arrangements.

98 The co-ordinator is new to the post this term, but she is an experienced teacher and has worked closely with the previous co-ordinator to plan the development of the subject. There have been some very positive recent moves to use assessment to set individual targets for older pupils. Teachers have also discussed and improved their practice as a consequence of monitoring by colleagues last year. Staff are currently working on whole school plans for aspects of speaking and listening.

## **MATHEMATICS**

99 In this year's national tests, standards were high in both Year 2 and Year 6, (in the top five per cent of all schools in Year 2). Pupils did better in mathematics than their peers in similar schools. This masks a very wide span of ability in both year groups, especially in Year 2, where a significant proportion of pupils struggled to reach the level expected for their age. In both year groups higher attaining pupils did well. Above average standards have been the trend since the last inspection as far as Year 2 is concerned. In Year 6 tests, pupils have generally done well, with a fall back in 1998 and 1999, following a disrupted year for these two groups of pupils.

100 The inspection found that pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 this year are reaching standards that are broadly average. This is because both year groups have an unusually high number of pupils with special educational needs, not because standards are falling.

101 Since the introduction of the numeracy strategy, teachers have a clearer understanding of how to express concepts and learning intentions and numeracy skills are well taught. In Years 1 and 2, all lessons start with a mental activity. For example, in one lesson seen, the younger children counted forwards and backwards to twenty and then they counted on from five to fifteen. Using a number line, they are beginning to understand that they have counted on ten. Pupils use effective learning strategies. For example, they remembered the larger of two numbers and then added the smaller number. They speak confidently and are eager to explain their mathematical thinking. Good use is made of resources, particularly the introduction of mathematics through a story, as it is integrated where possible, and seen as part of the whole curriculum. There are challenge sheets for extension work, and play mats are used to introduce mathematical concepts such as number recognition, sorting and ordering, matching and number bonds.

102 Pupils who need extra support in mathematics have been identified. They attend the introductory activity and then complete similar work at a more simple level as part of the main session. They then return to class for the plenary activity. Work is well prepared for them in advance.

103 Pupils in Year 2 focus on a number for the week and, during the week of the inspection, had to find ways of making twelve. In their oral activity they used a number square to add and subtract ten. They then added three numbers together, again remembering the largest number. As part of the main session, pupils reinforced this work, playing games in pairs. They collaborated very well together. Work was very well matched to the different abilities in the class. The higher attaining pupils used numbers for addition between one and twenty, a second group used numbers between one and ten and a third group added similar numbers, but used cubes to aid their counting. Lower attaining pupils are well supported with extra adult help. There is sufficient work planned to extend the higher attaining pupils who have finished their first activity. These pupils added ten more or counted ten less from a range of given numbers. All pupils listen very well and are really enthusiastic in their lessons. They are eager to respond with the correct answer and in the plenary session could explain strategies used for identifying missing numbers on the number square.



104 In Years 3 to 6, pupils also follow very carefully structured lessons. In one lesson, pupils doubled numbers within ten, then added two numbers, identifying near doubles within them. The main activity focused on knowing addition and subtraction facts to twenty, by heart, using the relationship between addition and subtraction. Pupils checked their answers with the inverse operation. The higher attaining group solved a range of problems where answer and operation were given, but some numbers were missing. Again, they used their knowledge of doubling and inverse addition. Depending on their ability, pupils worked with numbers to one hundred or to fifty, or number bonds to ten. There were opportunities for assessment in the plenary session, when pupils wrote the answers to a series of questions on individual whiteboards.

105 A second lesson focused on measurement, and was again well matched to the different abilities in the class, the higher attaining pupils working in millimetres and the lower group measuring given lines in centimetres. A third group measured the table and the blackboard, using a metre rule, and noted the answers in metres and centimetres, although some of the pupils found it difficult to measure accurately. All pupils were encouraged to estimate their answer first. Three able pupils from this class work with the oldest pupils for all their lessons in mathematics.

106 Another mental activity required the pupils in Year 6 to double odd numbers and halve even numbers. All pupils listened and responded well when questioned. They could multiply by breaking down numbers and using brackets, and they knew that the answer was the same whatever the order of factors. They remembered their previous learning and could apply it to the current activity. The set homework was clearly explained and the teacher was careful to ensure everyone understood what was required. Pupils work very well together in group activities and offer good support to those in their group who are less confident.

107 Effective use is made of mathematical understanding in science investigations. When investigating the effectiveness of heat insulation, for example, pupils made comparative measures of the loss in temperature over time of hot water in two beakers, one lagged with insulation, the other without insulation. Temperature readings were made at intervals in both beakers and results recorded. Comparative line graphs were made on the same chart to illustrate results.

108 Pupils also applied their mathematical skills well in a geography lesson in Year 5. In this session, rubbish from the class waste bin was sorted into categories of types of waste and a pictogram produced of the waste types. The whole was then weighed and the result entered on a block graph. Efforts will be made to reduce waste, and the contents of the bin will be measured at regular intervals and posted on the block graph to see if they are successful.

109 The quality of teaching is good. There is very careful planning to ensure that work is well matched for the differing abilities and age groups. Teachers remind pupils of earlier activities during the week and give pupils every opportunity to explain the strategies they use in solving problems. Teachers write clear learning targets for each lesson on the blackboard and make good reference to work to be done the following day, ensuring pupils understand the progression. They give thorough explanations, so that pupils have a good understanding of the work they do. All teachers make excellent use of praise and encouragement to raise pupils' confidence and self-esteem. There is a careful balance between the introductory activity and the group work, and the plenary sessions are used well to assess pupils' knowledge. Teachers show good subject knowledge in the mathematical language that they use and in the direct questions that they pose, ensuring that these questions are appropriate for the pupils they ask. Learning assistants support pupils with special educational needs well and teachers spend much time in preparing appropriate materials so that they know exactly what to do.

110 The subject is well managed. There is a very detailed timetable for implementing and monitoring the development of the numeracy strategy and the link governor with a responsibility for numeracy has been involved. A comprehensive numeracy audit has also taken place and key learning objectives have been detailed for each year group in the school. There are appropriate resources in each classroom, although some of those stored centrally are still inaccessible to the pupils. Marking is not consistent throughout the school and there are low expectations of presentation. A portfolio of assessed work is in the early stages of development. It does not yet include work from Years 1 and 2 and Years 5 and 6. The policy has not yet been updated to incorporate the requirements of the numeracy strategy.

## **SCIENCE**

111 This year there was some improvement in Year 6 national tests and all pupils reached the expected level 4, although overall standards remained average, because higher attaining pupils did not do as well as they did in English and mathematics. The attainment of pupils at Wootton St Peter's matched that of their peers in similar schools. Standards in Year 6 have declined and then risen again since the previous inspection. Teacher assessments for Year 2 show that standards were above average in 2000, as they were at the time of the last inspection.

112 The inspection found that attainment for most pupils in Year 2 is average, though a small number do better than this. As in other subjects, this change from 'above average' in Year 2 last year to 'average' this year is because the current Year 2 has an unusually high number of pupils with special educational needs, not because standards are falling. In the present Year 6, standards are above average. Pupils are doing better in science than they are in English and mathematics this year.

113 In Years 1 and 2, pupils learn how to investigate systematically by framing questions. They know that living things can grow, move and breathe. By carefully following simple logic pathways and by asking and answering thoughtful 'yes' and 'no' questions they excitedly discriminate living from non-living things. Pupils are building up a bank of scientific knowledge. In the Year 3 and 4 class, for example, pupils enthusiastically investigated the function of the human skeleton. As a result, they understood in principle the significance of the skeleton to bodily strength and movement. They made a detailed analysis of which parts of their own skeletons are moving during specific activities. They recorded their findings succinctly on a matrix. Upper junior pupils have a highly detailed understanding of living things. They know that animals need oxygen and that they eat, drink and dispose of waste and have senses which inform them about their environment. They too use logic pathways to design investigative questions, but in reverse, working back from a known answer.

114 Pupils' work in the lessons observed in Year 2 and Year 6, clearly show how, within the same area of the science curriculum, good progress is being made over time in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding of scientific processes. Analysis of last year's work shows that similar learning gains are made in all strands of the science curriculum across the school. Generally, pupils of all abilities, including pupils with special educational needs, make good progress. The exception was the progress of higher attaining pupils in Year 6 last year, who did not do so well in science as they did in English and mathematics. The school has recognised a possible reason for this related to planning for the subject. This has now been addressed by the introduction of a two-year programme of work.

115 The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and are very interested in science. Their high subject competence enables them to ask challenging open questions which help pupils to explore their own ideas and extend their learning.

Teachers' enjoyment and enthusiasm motivate pupils to apply themselves single-mindedly to assigned tasks. Teachers understand their pupils well and adapt activities to meet the needs of a range of abilities so that all pupils can achieve and gain in self-esteem. They have high expectations of both the quality of pupils' learning and of their behaviour. Teachers have caring, cheerful relationships with their pupils and a sense of humour. Activities are taken at a lively pace and pupils are gently reminded of time deadlines. Whilst teaching during the inspection was of a high quality, some less positive issues are evident from an analysis of pupils recorded work from the previous educational year. Teachers' marking is not always encouraging nor does it consistently tell pupils how they can improve their work. Presentation does not always do justice to the quality of investigative work.

116 The leadership and management of science is good. The part-time co-ordinator has a particular interest in science. She co-ordinates the regular contact with a local nature reserve. Environmental field workers regularly support the science curriculum in school. Pupils also visit the centre at varying times of the year. These rich additional learning opportunities have a significant impact on standards achieved in science. The school has adopted the local education authority's scheme of work and accompanying assessments and is in its first term of their implementation. Resources for science are good. Equipment is well organised in accessible storage and is sufficient to cover all the strands of the science curriculum. There is an outside greenhouse, which is well used for the propagation of seeds.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

117 No art sessions were planned during the inspection period, but it is evident from work displayed around the school that at least sound attention is paid to the development of pupils' artistic skills. Pupils achieve satisfactory standards and there are a few examples of work of high quality. In the entrance hall, for example, there are some striking three-dimensional papier-mâché figures and models, which older pupils made two years ago with artist in residence, Claire Plumb. The work is based on pupils' studies of Ancient Greece and is exciting and lively.

118 In the work seen on display and in the portfolio of work that the school is developing to show the progression of skills, there are examples of a range of techniques. Teachers' planning shows that staff are paying attention to work in drawing, painting, printing, collage and fabric, as well as three-dimensional work. In the younger pupils' classes, for example, there are some striking self-portraits. Pupils have used paint well to produce individual and confident pictures. At the moment there are no plans to chart how skills in different areas are to be developed.

119 Pupils are also taught about the work of established artists. Year 1 pupils have learnt about Paul Klee, for example, in relation to work on colour mixing. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have looked carefully at a picture by Paul Gauguin, and then each pupil copied a small section.

120 There is an adequate supply of materials and resources for pupils to use, and these are stored in classrooms, with some materials stored centrally. Only one of the four classrooms has a sink and although staff feel that they manage well without easy access to water, this is not an ideal situation.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

121 No lessons were observed during the inspection, but judgements have been based on teachers' planning, photographs, displays, artefacts seen and a range of assessed work. It is evident that pupils make good progress and reach the good standards identified by the last inspection by the time that they leave the school. Planning has improved and staff now base

their planning on a recently published planning framework. The timetable has been reorganised since the last inspection and work in this area is planned in short and intensive blocks of time, rather than a weekly lesson.

122 Younger pupils develop skills by working on a range of different activities. They use a range of construction toys, for example. As part of their work in food technology, they planned a healthy meal. This involved estimating amounts and cost, shopping and then preparing the meal. Pupils develop their understanding of simple mechanisms by designing and making moving pictures that incorporate simple levers. Teachers' plans for the coming year show interesting, well-considered learning activities.

123 Older pupils also develop skills well through working on relevant tasks. For example, they designed a sandwich and had to explain how it formed part of a healthy diet. They listed their ingredients, the equipment needed and their order of work. They made a carefully-labelled diagram of the finished snack and noted the health and safety features in this activity. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 designed and made a mechanical toy that could be propelled a distance of three metres, carrying a weight of one kilogram, without direct contact with anyone. Pupils are encouraged to use initiative. One interesting challenge was to plan a carousel of activities for a school sports event. Pupils had to be organised into equal groups of age, gender and ability. The older pupils prepared instructions for each activity and designed programmes and score cards. In planning, they had to ensure that the activities were safe and suitable for all ages from five to eleven years, consider whether activities were enjoyable to watch and use a minimum of small equipment. Work at Little Wittenham nature reserve also enhances work in this area. An exciting display on '*Shelters*' was the result of a visit to design and construct shelters from natural materials. The designs focused on the different purposes of the shelters: to hide or keep things, or to protect the occupants.

124 Although no teaching was observed, plans for the year and pupils' achievements suggest that it is good. All work was well presented, marked with appropriate comments and had final responses from the pupils. An assessment portfolio is in the early stages of development. It does not yet include examples of work from the younger pupils. The domestic science area has been improved to provide more hygienic surfaces for food preparation. However, the two adjacent classrooms have no running water, so this area is also used for art and science lessons, and requires special setting up for food technology.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

125 The inspection team was unable to observe any geography lessons, so judgements have been based on evidence drawn from the small amount of geography completed in pupils' books at this early stage in the term. An analysis was also made of pupils' work from the previous educational year, teachers' plans and a discussion with the co-ordinator for humanities.

126 Pupils' attainment in geography is in line with levels expected for their age by the end of Year 2 and they do better than expected by the end of Year 6. These standards are an improvement on those of the previous inspection. They are particularly noteworthy since they come at a time when the school is faced with the increased pressures on curriculum time of the national literacy and numeracy strategies. The high profile of environmental education in the school and its valuable cross-curricular links make a significant contribution to improving standards in geography.

127 Most pupils make satisfactory progress in their knowledge of world geography, in the skills of enquiry and mapping, and in understanding the impact which human activity has upon the world. Teachers regularly adapt activities to meet the varied needs of pupils. As a result pupils with special educational needs usually make very good progress in their work.

Higher attaining pupils are frequently well challenged with enrichment activities. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are beginning to establish a sense of place, by studying the local area. They effectively translate the concept of aerial view to map making and begin to create their own succinct maps of their route to school, for example. Work is planned to grasp pupils' imaginations. They enjoy following the travels of 'Barnaby Bear', for example, as they increasingly familiarise themselves with the geographical and international features of the world. As pupils move through Years 3 to 6 they acquire a deeper understanding of the human effects on world geography. They study environmental change and explore achievable actions that might make a difference to environmental protection. In a meaningful topic on waste, for example, pupils emptied out the class rubbish bin and categorised, quantified and weighed the daily amount of waste deposited in it over time. The school has used the study of Ancient Greeks well with the oldest pupils to establish successful cross-curricular links between geography and history.

128 The school has won several awards for its environmental work. Pupils have thoughtfully decided how the money prizes should be used to make the play areas of the school more environmentally friendly. Experienced outreach workers from a nearby nature reserve help to enrich the geography curriculum in providing valuable additional support for environmental studies.

129 The leadership and management of geography is good. The part-time co-ordinator for humanities has worked hard in the two terms she has been at the school to evaluate the status of geography and to produce her plan for its future development. With guidance from the local education authority's adviser, staff have trialled and modified a national planning document to meet the school's particular needs. End-of-topic assessments are being devised and the co-ordinator is also assembling a portfolio of pupils' graded work to standardise assessment within National Curriculum levels. Whilst the school is generously supplied with Ordnance Survey maps, world maps, globes and atlases are in short supply.

## **HISTORY**

130 During the inspection only one lesson was observed. This was in Year 2. Judgements were also made from an accumulation of other evidence obtained through discussion with the co-ordinator and analysis of work completed this term and in the last school year. Teachers' planning and resources were also looked at.

131 Standards achieved by most pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6 are in line with levels expected for their age. Higher attaining pupils are usually effectively provided with additional learning challenges. Pupils with special educational needs also receive work well matched to their abilities and make very good progress as a result. Standards are not as high as they were at the time of the last inspection. This is due to some weaknesses in planning work, which have now been addressed.

132 In Years 1 and 2, pupils begin to gain a sense of the chronology of their own lives as they recall events which happened a long while ago and compare the detail of their memory of them with those which happened recently. In a Year 2 session pupils recalled their experiences of the previous day enthusiastically and began to clarify and sequence them in their thoughts. They then made their first entries in their individual diaries, which they will keep over time. In Years 5 and 6 pupils have also made an enthusiastic start to their study of European history through the influence of the Ancient Greeks. With the detailed political map work of their first lessons they are establishing effective links between their studies in history and geography.

133 The quality of teaching in the lesson seen was very good and had a significant influence on the high quality of historical learning which the pupils achieved. The teacher began the lesson with a lively introduction, which sparked the pupils' interest and got them thinking. Carefully worded questions extended pupils' ideas further. Their contributions to the initial class discussion were praised and valued and self-esteem was raised. Pupils were very responsive to the teacher's high expectations of behaviour and, because of this, high levels of concentration were maintained and the quality of learning was further enhanced. It is evident from the good quality of work produced so far on the Ancient Greeks by pupils in Years 5 and 6 that they too are experiencing a similar high standard of teaching and learning.

134 The co-ordinator for humanities is a part-time teacher who has held this position for two terms. She makes a strong contribution to the implementation of the revised National Curriculum for history. She has completed her own development plan for the subject, has consulted with the local education authority's adviser and has a clear view of what needs to be done to raise standards. Resources are well organised and accessible and provision is generally satisfactory but the co-ordinator has identified a shortfall in some resources for teaching the revised curriculum. The adoption, this term, of a national planning framework has improved the planning for the development of skills, knowledge and understanding. It provides a two-year rolling programme for history to cater for the two age groups in each class. Assessments are planned for, but are not yet in place. However, a useful portfolio is currently in preparation showing pupils' work, which is marked to indicate National Curriculum levels.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

135 This area has been developed well since the last inspection. An individual learning programme is now well established and investment has been made in new machines for classrooms. Several machines are now linked to the Internet. Currently the school is being extended to house a computer suite, which will enable staff to teach a whole class at once. A long term planning framework has recently been put in place and is beginning to be implemented.

136 As a consequence of the disruption caused by the building work at the time of the inspection, the machines used for the individual learning programme that supports work in mathematics and English were not in use. In some classes, pupils worked independently on the computer on tasks related to the subject being taught. However, generally this valuable classroom resource was under-used during the inspection. This was partly because at the beginning of term teachers were establishing new routines with their new classes and also because teachers are planning to begin the work for the year after half term, when all the machines will be in operation. In one classroom the computer was not working. Older pupils were working in small groups with the support of an adult on creating a web page.

137 On the basis of the limited evidence available, pupils reach at least satisfactory standards throughout the school, with older pupils doing very well in the area of exchanging and sharing information. There has been less coverage of the control and modelling elements of the subject and the school is aware that this is an area for development. Pupils' good progress in the work undertaken is fostered by their enthusiasm for and enjoyment of the subject. Many pupils have access to computers at home and this helps them to consolidate and extend their skills and understanding.

138 It is evident that pupils use computers from the time they start school. In Class 1 pupils enjoy working on the class machine. In one session two of the youngest children were very confident in their use of the keyboard and space bar, needing only a little help from the

teacher to accomplish their task. Work from last year shows that pupils are developing at least satisfactory word-processing skills. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, for example, drafted play scripts straight into print, using the tab key and varying the font size and style appropriately. Pupils explained that most of their work is stored on their class room computers in individual pupils' files. These are transferred from one machine to another as pupils move through the school.

139 Pupils have undertaken some good work on exchanging and sharing information. Last year pupils in the older classes learnt how to send e-mails and linked with a school in Wales. At the moment pupils in Years 5 and 6 are building a school web page using 'Powerpoint'. This work is extremely well supported by a governor with expertise in this area. During the inspection she worked with groups of four pupils to save components onto files to insert later into presentation slides. She explained the process very clearly and gave all pupils the opportunity to select and save information.

140 The school makes good use of specialist teaching in this area. In addition to the support from a governor, the school also welcomes a retired teacher, who works in school for several sessions a week. She supports pupils particularly on the integrated learning programme. An advanced skills teacher, based in another local school, also contributes to the work on a less regular basis. Older pupils have also had the opportunity to work in the computer suite within the university and recalled their work with enthusiasm. School staff are developing their subject knowledge and more training is planned for this year.

## **MUSIC**

141 Only one music lesson was observed during the inspection and judgements are also based on discussions with the co-ordinator, assemblies, singing practice and teachers' planning. Standards of attainment have been maintained since the previous inspection and pupils make good progress. A published scheme is used at each key stage and provides a structured approach with a range of taped resources.

142 In Years 1 and 2, pupils learn a variety of simple songs and accompany them using tuned percussion on selected notes. They make up rhythms using pictures and names of food, to link with their topic for the term. They clap the rhythms and use simple percussion instruments for an accompaniment. They learn the dynamics of loud and quiet. There are also opportunities planned for listening and appraising.

143 Older pupils learn graphic notation, using symbols to perform and communicate musical ideas. They focused on the story, '*Peace at Last*' for example, and used the symbols to illustrate the different sounds in the story. In the lesson seen, pupils listened to the rhythm of a Polynesian war dance and kept time by clapping to the very fast music. They used body movements to imitate the war dance. They gave a very good performance of the song they had been learning, which linked with their history work on Ancient Greece. They then worked with a partner to write another verse, remembering rhythm and rhyme. No percussion instruments were used in the lesson. Pupils are consolidating their understanding of rhythm, and beginning to recognise simple rhythm patterns in music. They are set to reach the required standard of attainment by the end of Year 6.

144 Pupils make good progress with their singing. They listen carefully and sing tunefully, and are very quick to learn new songs. Singing is seen as a central part of the life of the school and in the weekly practice, pupils sang a variety of hymns in readiness for the harvest assembly. They sang with enthusiasm and performed a particular favourite with obvious enjoyment. They also listened carefully to the introductory music at the beginning and end of assemblies, and older pupils appreciated the representation of water in a piece called '*The*

*Source'*. Pupils have opportunities to perform. Younger children take part in a musical production at Christmas, before an invited audience of senior citizens. They join with other schools in the area for a *'Music Morning'*. The older pupils participate in musical productions, assemblies and church festivals and sing at venues in the community at Christmas.

145 In the session seen, teaching was good with high expectations of good behaviour and good control. Clear learning objectives were shared with the pupils. Good subject knowledge of both history and music was evident. Brass and woodwind lessons are given by visiting teachers.

146 Co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. Long term planning and an updated policy support the teaching of music. Taped music for assembly is well chosen to link with the planned theme, or pupils listen to the playing of a skilled pianist, which provides good opportunities for quiet reflection. There is a range of well-known classical music on tape, but little music from other cultures. Percussion instruments are stored centrally and organised on a trolley or in neatly labelled drawers.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

147 Only two lessons were seen during the inspection period. Based on these, pupils reach standards appropriate for their age and make sound progress in the development of physical skills. Provision and standards in this area have been maintained since the last inspection.

148 In one session, for example, pupils from reception and Years 1 and 2 worked in the hall in order to develop movement skills. They worked hard and enjoyed the session. Most used the space well and controlled their own movements carefully. They used their imaginations successfully to move in different ways. Younger pupils did particularly well, most balancing on one foot, for example. The pupils' good achievements were fostered by the teacher's enthusiasm and imaginative use of a variety of shoes to act as a stimulus. Pupils with statements of special educational need were particularly well supported in this session, although one found it hard to respond to the structure of a class lesson and had to be withdrawn. In this session the space in the hall was adequate for the number of pupils, but the size limits the breadth of work that can be undertaken by older and larger pupils. The hall is also used to store equipment for physical education and one section is used as a music area, because there are no other suitable places in the school.

149 Pupils in Years 3 and 4 also worked on skills development and in the session seen developed their control of bat and ball. All pupils persevered well and many improved during the session. They worked well together and responded well to the teacher's instructions. The lesson was very well structured, with good attention paid to the importance of a good warm up. This particular session took place in the playground, which is a reasonable size for work of this nature. A games shed to one side means that there is easy access to small games apparatus and no time has to be wasted in the lesson on the organisation of equipment. Parts of the playground are becoming a little worn.

150 Work in physical education is enhanced by activities after school, when there are opportunities for pupils to participate in football training. Until recently a netball club was also in operation. Teams from Wootton St Peter's compete in local tournaments. All pupils go swimming once a week at a local public school and last year all of Year 6 pupils learnt to swim at least twenty-five metres.