

INSPECTION REPORT

SIDDINGTON CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Siddington, Cirencester

LEA area: Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 115665

Headteacher: Mrs Ann Blakelock

Reporting inspector: Hugh Protherough 8339

Dates of inspection: 25th – 27th September 2000

Inspection number: 224989

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:	Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Coach Road Siddington Cirencester Gloucestershire
Postcode:	GL7 6HL
Telephone number:	01285 652866
Fax number:	01285 652866
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Emma Archer
Date of previous inspection:	24 th – 26 th June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Hugh Protherough, 8339	Registered inspector	English Information technology Art Design and technology Music Physical education Equal Opportunities Special educational needs	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
Andy Anderson, 14083	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Martin Lester, 20596	Team inspector	Under fives Mathematics Science Geography History Physical education Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? How well does the school care for its pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

Hugh Protherough
PO Box 396
Banbury SO
Banbury
OX15 5XJ

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

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a very small primary school with 78 pupils on roll comprising 41 boys and 37 girls of predominantly white ethnic origin. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals [15.7 per cent] and the proportion of pupils with special educational needs [20.8 per cent] is broadly average. There is one pupil with a statement of special educational needs. The pupils' attainment on entry covers the full range, but is generally below average. A new headteacher took post in May following the retirement of the previous long serving headmaster in December of last year.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is at an important point in its development. Under the determined, clear sighted leadership of a new headteacher there is a fresh impetus towards improving both the quality of education and the standards the pupils reach by the age of eleven. The staff has responded positively to the challenge of the new organisation of the classes. The great majority of lessons are of good quality. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average at the end of Key Stage 1. The pupils' achievements are starting to improve at the end of Key Stage 2, but standards in Years 4, 5 and 6 have previously been much too low. The cost of educating pupils at the school is very high. Although the early indications are that the school is starting to raise standards and improve, it does not yet offer satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The headteacher, staff and governing body are working together effectively to deliver the school's new vision.
- There is a keen awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and a sensible plan that sets out how improvements are being made.
- The quality of teaching is good. Throughout the school the pace and demand of lessons are increasing. The teaching in Years 5 and 6 is particularly strong and as a result the pupils here are starting to work harder.

What could be improved

- Standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2.
- The teaching of the skills of information and communications technology [ICT] and their use and application across the curriculum.
- The poor behaviour of a significant minority of boys in Years 3 and 4.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Although the standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are better than those described at the time of the last inspection, standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are far lower. Progress towards improving the teaching and learning of information and communications technology has, until very recently, been far too slow. However, the leadership and management of the school are far stronger. The new headteacher has a very good insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the school. She provides good curriculum leadership that recognises and develops the individual strengths within the staff team. Together with the governing body the staff have devised a brisk, but realistic, programme for school

improvement and development. A good start has been made. In particular, the reorganisation of the age groups within each class and the deployment of teachers are major steps forward. As a result the quality of teaching is much better than that described in the last report. Most of the lessons observed during this inspection were of good quality and in Years 5 and 6 were frequently very good. This is starting to raise the pupils' own expectations of what they can achieve. Taken overall, the school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection and is well placed to sustain this in the months ahead.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests. It is left blank because fewer than 10 pupils took the tests and the data generated would be unreliable.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	[]	[]	[]	[]	well above average above average average below average well below average
mathematics	[]	[]	[]	[]	A B C D E
science	[]	[]	[]	[]	

The very small numbers of pupils in each year group means that the statistical analysis of the results of the national tests must be treated with caution. However, a clear and consistent pattern emerges when examining the results of the past four years. By the age of seven, standards have generally been in line with the national average in reading and writing and slightly above average in mathematics. In the national tests for 2000 there was a big improvement; almost every pupil reached the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics and a significant number achieved beyond this. The analysis of their class work shows that standards were clearly above average. The work of the current Year 2 cohort also indicates that standards continue to be above average in all three subjects.

The pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 has been much slower. On average over the last four years standards have been below the national average in English and science and well below average in mathematics. These results compare very unfavourably with those achieved by pupils from similar schools. In 2000 very few pupils took the national tests for eleven-year-olds, but they included a significant number with special educational needs. The results showed that this group achieved appropriately and had made steady progress since the age of seven. However, this cohort was taught in a class also containing Years 4 and 5. The analysis of last year's work shows that there was often a significant lack of challenge leading to considerable underachievement especially by the average and higher attaining pupils. The three teachers responsible for the class differed in their expectations. In many instances, the pupils in Year 2 were producing more work of a better quality than their older counterparts. However, there was a marked upturn in performance after the arrival of the new headteacher in May. Following the sensible reorganisation of the classes one teacher is now responsible for the current Years 5 and 6. She is starting from a very low baseline because standards in the current Year 6 are clearly below average. Nevertheless, the pupils' achievements are appropriate given their prior attainment and there are already signs of much faster progress. A new

system of tracking performance means that the school is setting challenging, but realistic targets for every pupil.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. With the exception of a few pupils in Years 3 and 4 most pupils are attentive, enthusiastic, well motivated and keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Almost all the pupils are friendly, polite and behave well in lessons and on the playground. However, a significant minority of boys in Years 3 and 4 occasionally behave very poorly and try to disrupt lessons.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. Most pupils act with consideration towards each other and accept responsibility willingly. They are developing positive relationships with their teachers.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Broadly in line with 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	good	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 quality of teaching is far better than that described at the time of the last inspection. On this occasion, all of the lessons observed were at least satisfactory. Of these 72 per cent were of good quality or better and 27 per cent were very good. The teaching in Years 5 and 6 is particularly strong.

As a result of the conversations about the school's new aims and vision, the teachers have high, and more consistent, expectations of the pupils. Thus, in Key Stage 2 in particular, the children are starting to work harder, show greater interest and concentrate for longer. There remains a few individuals who can be truculent and disruptive. Nevertheless, the way that the teachers have organised explicit and consistent approaches to managing behaviour is beginning to pay off.

The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught effectively throughout the school. The teachers have a secure knowledge of these subjects and plan their lessons in good detail. In most lessons, the teachers set out clearly what they want the pupils to learn, and often share this with the class so that the children know what they are expected to do. The small team of ancillary staff makes a valuable contribution either in supporting individuals with special educational needs or by working with small groups of pupils. The use of drama and role-play in subjects such as history is particularly effective in improving the pupils' skills in speaking and listening.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	With the exception of the arrangements for information and communications technology the school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that caters successfully for the needs of all pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. This aspect is well organised so that the pupils receive appropriate support and make steady progress towards the targets on their individual education plans. New arrangements for building stronger links with parents are developing well.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The provision for pupils' moral and social development is strong because the staff team provides a good example and is setting consistently high expectations about how pupils should behave.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The arrangements for checking and supporting the pupils' personal and academic progress have improved and are now good. The procedures for child protection and health and safety are satisfactory.

The school works hard to keep parents informed. It has responded to their concerns about homework and sends home details of the targets agreed with pupils about how they might improve their work. The regular newsletters keep parents in the picture.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The new headteacher, staff and governors have successfully established a common vision that underpins all major decisions. The staff team is working together effectively to raise standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	With the exception of some omissions from their annual report to parents, the governors fulfil all of their statutory responsibilities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher has led a rapid and accurate evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the school based upon a thorough analysis of the available evidence. The targets within the resultant school improvement plan are the right ones.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school makes full use of its delegated budget. However, the new library is at an early stage of development and it is difficult for the pupils to gain frequent, profitable access to the school's computers.

The school's financial planning is effective because it is linked to the priorities of its improvement plan. The principles of best value are being applied to all major spending decisions. There has been considerable improvement in the way that the school makes use of its buildings and spacious, attractive

grounds. There are sufficient, qualified teachers. The lessons in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 class benefit from the effective support of a nursery nurse and a special needs assistant. The levels of educational resources throughout the school are 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"> • The uncertainties surrounding the leadership of the school have been resolved. • Their children enjoy coming to school. • The teachers try to make learning fun and expect the children to work hard and do their best. • Behaviour is good and improving further. • The school is helping the children to develop a sense of maturity and to act responsibly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality and consistency of homework. • The range of extra-curricular activities.

The inspection arrived at a watershed in the school's history. The majority of parents indicate that they are happy to have a new headteacher who is setting a brisk pace of change and improving the school, but they recognise that Rome was not built in a day. Nevertheless, there is a significant minority that remains anxious and unhappy about the impact of the many changes and uncertainties of the past twelve months. The inspection team agrees with the positive views expressed by the majority of parents.

The school has introduced a new system for homework. All those present at the parents' meeting felt this was working well. The inspection team agrees with this view although comments made during the course of the inspection revealed that while the majority of parents welcome homework some feel there should be none at all. The school provides a reasonable range of extra-curricular activities. For instance, hockey and soccer clubs operate after school during the week. Although it cannot field full teams on a regular basis, the children have regular opportunities to compete at sporting events organised by the local cluster of small schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The very small numbers of pupils in each year group means that the statistical analysis of the results of the national tests must be treated with caution. However, a clear and consistent pattern emerges when examining the results of the past four years. By the age of seven standards have generally been in line with the national average in reading and writing and slightly above average in mathematics. In the national tests for 2000, there was a big improvement because almost every pupil reached the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics and a significant number achieved beyond this. The analysis of their class work shows that standards were clearly above average. The work of the current Year 2 cohort also indicates that standards continue to be above average in all three subjects.
2. The pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 has been much slower. On average over the last four years standards have been below the national average in English and science and well below average in mathematics. These results compare very unfavourably with those achieved by pupils from similar schools. **This is a key issue for action.** In 2000 very few pupils took the national tests for eleven-year-olds but they included a significant number with special educational needs. The results showed that this group achieved appropriately and had made steady progress since the age of seven. However, this cohort was taught in a class also containing Years 4 and 5. The analysis of last year's work shows that there was often a significant lack of challenge leading to considerable underachievement especially by the average and higher attaining pupils. The three teachers responsible for the class differed in their expectations. In many instances the pupils in Year 2 were producing more work of a better quality than their older counterparts. There was a marked upturn in performance after the arrival of the new headteacher in May. Following the sensible reorganisation of the classes one teacher is now responsible for the current Years 5 and 6. However, she is starting from a very low baseline because standards in the current Year 6 are clearly below average. Nevertheless, the pupils' achievements are appropriate given their prior attainment and there are already signs of faster progress.
3. Further analysis of the test results of the past four years indicates that at the end of Key Stage 1 boys and girls are achieving similar results, but at the end of Key Stage 2 the boys have been performing better than the girls in all subjects. However, the inspection could identify no significant differences in current performance, nor any imbalance in the ways that girls and boys are taught.
4. There are good arrangements for supporting those pupils with special educational needs enabling them to make steady progress in relation to the targets within their individual education plans. The precise targets, regular review and the close attention given to the development of literacy skills means that progress in this area is improving. The effective use of Additional Literacy Support also makes an important contribution to lifting the pupils' achievements.
5. The new system of tracking the pupils' performance is enabling the teachers to set challenging, but realistic targets for every pupil. As a result, the standard of the pupils' work is improving, particularly in English and mathematics. This is because the teachers have embraced the national strategies for literacy and numeracy in positive fashion. They have

made effective use of the national guidance and the additional training, and made sensible modifications to their curriculum plans the better to meet the needs of their pupils who are taught in mixed age classes. Thus most pupils are gaining in confidence as speakers, especially at the end of Key Stage 2 where some can now talk and act as characters other than themselves. The use of group reading is helping many pupils to start to recognise that by varying their tone of voice and expression they can make reading poetry aloud more enjoyable for their listeners. The pupils' writing skills are developing, but more slowly, and this limits their ability to record their thoughts and ideas in many other subjects of the National Curriculum. In mathematics, far more seven-year-old children are gaining confidence in their recall of simple number facts and use this knowledge effectively when learning to deal with money. Many of the brighter children are exceeding the levels expected of seven-year-olds. The teacher of the Years 5/6 class has in the short time since the beginning of term worked very hard to identify reasons for the lack of progress throughout Key Stage 2. She has accurately identified some significant gaps in the pupils' numeracy skills and their confidence to apply their knowledge effectively when solving problems. The current focus upon filling these gaps and significantly increasing the speed of working is supporting good progress in learning in lessons at the end of Key Stage 2.

6. Inspection findings show that in science standards remain broadly average at the end of Key Stage 1 and below average at the end of Key Stage 2. The analysis of the pupils' work from last year shows that Key Stage 1 pupils covered a good amount of interesting and relevant work across the full range of the National Curriculum programmes of study. The teacher provided opportunities for the pupils to work practically, to record their findings systematically and to benefit from helpful marking. Last year's work at the end of Key Stage 2 is similarly broad but the volume and standard of the work is below that expected for pupils of this age. However, the early evidence from this year suggests that throughout Key Stage 2 the pupils' progress in science is improving.
7. The school has not yet improved the quality of the pupils' work in information and communications technology. Standards in this subject remain below the levels expected at the end of both key stages. **This is a key issue for action.**
8. There is some strength in the pupils' work in subjects such as art and design and technology. Standards in the other non-core subjects of the National Curriculum are generally in line with the levels expected at the end of both key stages. Standards in religious education are in line with those set out in the locally agreed syllabus at the end of both key stages.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. The pupils' attitudes to the school and their behaviour are good. Their personal development and relationships are satisfactory. The headteacher, staff and most of the pupils themselves have high expectations of the standards of behaviour that are acceptable in the school. The vast majority of parents feel that behaviour is well managed and are happy with the high standards achieved by the school. These parents feel that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.
10. The pupils' attitudes towards learning in the school are good. The majority of pupils consistently demonstrate positive attitudes to their work. They are confident, motivated and eager to learn. They listen carefully to their teachers, ask and answer questions, and willingly offer their own ideas and suggestions. Nearly all children quickly settle down diligently in class, are capable of sustained periods of concentration and stay on task well.

11. Overall, behaviour is good. The vast majority of pupils behave well and act in a mature and responsible manner at all times. Their behaviour in the classrooms is consistently very good which contributes to a positive learning environment. However, a small number of boys, in Years 3 and 4, sometimes present challenging behaviour. These children are generally well managed by the teachers but on occasions their behaviour disrupts the work of others. The pupils move around the school in a quiet and orderly manner, and their behaviour at breaks and lunchtime is also good. During the inspection there were no signs of either bullying or isolation of individual children. There were no exclusions either in the year prior to the inspection or the current academic year to date.
12. Relationships in the school are satisfactory. The pupils relate well to their teachers, to other adults whom they come into contact with, and also to one another. Children of all ages are polite, courteous and welcoming to visitors. For example, the pupils listened attentively to the local vicar taking an assembly. Most pupils are capable of collaborating well, sharing resources, taking turns and listening to each other. Nearly all pupils show respect for their teachers, but there is a small group of boys who can be extremely disrespectful at times. During assemblies, the pupils show appropriate respect for the occasion, for example, bowing their heads during prayers and willingly joining in hymn singing. There is no deliberate damage to school property and a remarkably low incidence of litter around the school site.
13. The pupils' personal development is satisfactory. They are learning a sound range of social skills that is helping them to develop into well-rounded individuals. They have little scope to take responsibility for their own work in the classrooms, but where these opportunities are provided, the children respond well. In some lessons, for example, the pupils were observed working independently and staying on task. The pupils are given an appropriate range of responsibilities around the school, for example, collecting registers, handing out hymnbooks and milk. They carry out these duties well.
14. The levels of attendance are satisfactory and broadly in line with the national average. There is almost no unauthorised absence. The pupils enjoy coming to school and most parents are supportive in maintaining good attendance levels. Most pupils come to school on time, but there is a significant group of pupils who regularly arrive late.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. The quality of teaching observed during the inspection was far better than that described in the last report, and in particular was far stronger towards the end of Key Stage 2. On this occasion all the lessons seen were at least satisfactory. The great majority of lessons (72 per cent) were of good quality or better, including 27 per cent that were very good.
16. As a result of the recent discussions about the school's new aims and vision, the teachers have higher and more consistent expectations of the pupils. The teachers are strongly committed to helping all the children realise that with hard work and perseverance they can achieve highly. They set a good example by providing tidy and attractively displayed classrooms. They speak politely to the pupils and other adults working at the school. They use praise frequently to encourage the children, especially when a pupil has either listened carefully and responded appropriately to a particular instruction or achieved a personal target. As a result, most children show a positive attitude in lessons and try to work hard and do their best. However, this remains difficult for a few, especially a small group of boys in Years 3 and 4. When pupils fail to live up to expectations, the teachers exercise a firm and fair discipline based upon the rules agreed with the class.

17. In order to motivate the pupils and raise standards the teachers are careful to plan lessons that are both interesting and challenging. They are most successful during the teaching of English and mathematics because they have a secure subject knowledge that has benefited recently from additional training. As a result, their planning for these subjects contains good detail. They set out clearly what they want the children to learn, and in the best lessons they are observed regularly referring to these objectives with the children. For instance, in English in the upper part of Key Stage 2 the teacher wanted the pupils to get to know the work of some significant English poets, to learn to identify some of their techniques and to try them out for themselves. 'The Windmill' by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was read aloud by the whole class and the pupils were swift to recognise the use of personification. This was because they had learnt about this the day before when the aim of the lesson was written on the whiteboard.
18. The teaching of numeracy frequently benefits from a similar clarity of purpose and the clever way that the teachers gain the interest and motivation of the pupils. For instance, in the Key Stage 1 class the introduction of work on money for Years 1 and 2 started with the quick fire practice of counting on and back in ones, twos and tens. This helped to get the pupils 'warmed up' before hearing a rhyme about currant buns during which they had to match coins of the correct value to the price of the bun. The pupils enjoy this type of activity and much rapid learning took place. Thus, by the middle of the week most of the Year 2 pupils had a very good grasp of the different combinations of coins they could use to produce a given total, such as 20 pence. The brighter ones were handling money up to a pound. The teacher is meeting her objectives.
19. In science, the teachers gain the interest of the pupils by taking care to ensure that they get the chance to engage in practical activities. They often set up tests and experiments within the classroom. Thus, in Years 3 and 4 the pupils are trying to find out about friction by testing the gripping power of different types of shoes and by designing non-slip coasters for a mug or glass. Once again, the teacher's own good knowledge can be seen in the way that she questions the pupils using correct technical language and ensures a systematic approach to setting up the experiment and the recording of findings. Most of the pupils behave well and work hard because they find the work challenging. The teacher uses praise extensively and reminds those few whose concentration is slipping of what has to be achieved. A further strength is the way that the teacher ensures that the children share what they have learned in a brief plenary at the end of the lesson.
20. The school makes effective use of its ancillary staff. These additional adults make a significant contribution by helping the teachers to manage the wide range of age and ability within each class. In the class containing Reception and Key Stage 1, their support during group work activities is particularly effective. This is because the teachers are frequently able to plan a good range of interesting and challenging activities that motivate the children and speed up their learning. For instance, the pupils in their Reception Year often join in the early stages of the literacy hour to share a story. However, when it is time for group work the teacher and the nursery nurse take it in turns to work either with the Reception children or on more challenging activities with the Year 2 pupils. In Key Stage 2, the school secretary makes extremely effective use of the materials provided for Additional Literacy Support so that those pupils who need a bit of extra help receive this on a regular basis.

21. Throughout the school, the teachers make regular and effective use of drama to help improve the pupils' skills of speaking and listening and to bring learning alive. In religious education, for example, in Years 5 and 6 the children worked very hard in response to the story of the prodigal son. They watched the opening of the story on video, then decided in groups of three how the story might end. They acted this out with gusto and the teacher helped summarise the different feelings expressed by each group. In history, one pupil researched the role of a Victorian chimney sweep. With the help of the teacher he developed a character and a costume. Once introduced to the class, he made a considerable impact and the quality of his classmates' questions and answers indicated that much new learning was encouraged by this work. This type of activity is a major strength of the teaching.
22. The marking of the pupils' work has improved considerably in recent months. The teachers check the children's books more regularly and their written comments both encourage and inform each individual how they might improve their work. This commitment to raising standards is also reflected in the introduction of a new approach to homework. Each Monday the teachers set homework tasks appropriate to age and ability. The pupils then have until Friday to complete the work. This system is very new, but most parents are pleased to see homework set and marked on a regular basis.
23. The reorganisation of the classes has helped considerably. The fact that the oldest pupils in Years 5 and 6 are now taught by one, very effective teacher rather than by three part-timers is a big improvement. The lessons in this part of the school are planned in great detail and are frequently of extremely high quality. This is because the teacher knows the children's capabilities and sets consistently appropriate challenges for all abilities.

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

24. The curriculum for Key Stage 1 and 2 offers an appropriately broad range of opportunities for the pupils but does not fully meet the statutory requirements. This is because the provision for information and communication technology is currently unsatisfactory and does not fulfil the needs of the pupils. The curriculum for the children in the foundation stage of learning is adequate overall and provides a reasonable range of appropriate experiences. The school recognises the need to closely monitor and evaluate the appropriateness of the curriculum for the Foundation and Key Stage 1 pupils as they are now taught in one class.
25. The school has made a satisfactory start to the introduction of the revised National Curriculum and the new Foundation Curriculum for the youngest pupils. Secure strategies are already in place for raising attainment in literacy and numeracy. The planning is coherent across the school and ensures that all aspects of these subjects are taught: often and to good effect. The teachers have made sound use of the QCA guidance for other subjects and the school is well placed to continue the development of a curriculum that successfully meets the need of pupils in mixed age classes throughout the school
26. The previous inspection noted significant shortcomings in the curriculum for information and communication technology. The school's strategy for delivering the statutory curriculum in this subject is now improving. There is a clear intention to cover all aspects of the attainment targets of the National Curriculum but although resources have improved since the last inspection, the teachers are not always confident in their use. **This remains a key issue for action.**

27. The provision for the pupils with special educational needs is good. Their needs are clearly identified in their Individual Education Plans and the suitability of activities to ensure their progress is carefully monitored. This provision is enhanced through the effective deployment of a part-time teacher for one day each week.
28. The provision for the pupils' personal and social development is good. All members of staff are committed to raising the pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem so that they willingly attempt increasingly challenging tasks. There is a sound personal, social and health awareness programme and promotion of physical exercise through a range of sports and dance activities. School assemblies and lessons in religious education are well planned to enhance the pupils' self-awareness and help them to develop a sound value system.
29. The provision to foster the pupils' spiritual development is sound. School worship provides regular opportunities for pupils to reflect and consider important issues such as the wonder of God's creation. Important social issues are also considered such as our stewardship of the environment. In some lessons such as art and religious education there are occasional opportunities for pupils to extend their appreciation of issues in a spiritual dimension as they discuss their feelings with the teachers. However, teachers have yet to consider systematic approaches to ensuring such occasions are included in lessons on a more regular basis.
30. All adults in the school consistently promote sound moral principles. They deal fairly when difficulties arise and consistently apply the agreed rules. This creates a climate where pupils are increasingly able to consider the consequences of their actions. However, a few pupils, mainly in Years 3 and 4, have yet to reach this level of maturity. The pupils are given responsibility both around the school and in the classrooms for everyday tasks, such as taking registers to the office and distributing milk at playtimes. The older pupils interact quite naturally with younger ones and in most lessons observed, the pupils were effectively encouraged to work together and to share ideas and resources. Visits and visitors provide further useful opportunities for developing effective social skills.
31. The curriculum contains a sound cultural strand. This is enhanced through participation in local music and drama events and visits to places of educational interest, such as The London Dome and Gloucester Cathedral. In addition, interaction with the local community ensures that the pupils develop a secure sense of their own local identity. The development of the pupils' awareness of other cultures is also supported by the organisation of events such as the forthcoming book week with its central theme of 'Books around the World'.
32. The curriculum offers equality of access for all pupils and is enriched by the contribution of the community to pupils' learning. Through visits into the locality and the welcoming of visitors in to the school the pupils' learning experiences have been broadened. For example they have seen history come to life through visits to Corinium Roman Museum, Berkeley Castle and Lydiard House (Victorians). There are good links with church groups: a range of ministers have visited the school to work with pupils in addition to the more regular visits from the local vicar who also leads some assemblies and runs an after school club. The sporting opportunities on offer are enhanced through extra-curricular clubs, inter-school sport and involvement in local and area events such as dance festivals. There are close links with the local playgroup with a well-established induction programme each autumn for new pupils. On occasions, the older pupils are able to use the more specialist facilities available at the secondary school, for example when involved with science work.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33. The school makes satisfactory provision overall to ensure its pupils' welfare, health and safety. Appropriate child protection procedures are in place and liaison with outside agencies occurs as required. The teachers know individual pupils well and are genuinely concerned about their progress. The pupils are made aware of safe practices during lessons, for example in physical education, art and practical science, and whilst moving around the school. In recent months, the school has effectively addressed a number of health and safety concerns, some of them shared by the parents. For example, it has provided more appropriate car-parking facilities. However, a number of health and safety concerns were identified during the inspection and reported to the headteacher.
34. The new headteacher has successfully introduced rigorous systems for the monitoring, evaluation and review of many aspects of school life. As a direct result, the procedures for both the monitoring and the support of the pupils' academic performance and personal development are good. The teachers track the pupils' progress conscientiously and are increasingly using a good range of information to guide their planning. This results in the teachers having a clear picture of what each individual knows and can do and leads to the setting of work that challenges every pupil appropriately. This is particularly the case in the planning of work in literacy and numeracy; it has had a beneficial effect on the pupils' literacy skills and their abilities to carry out mental calculations. Consistent, clear and high expectations throughout the school for good behaviour and a positive approach to learning characterise much of the life of the school. The evident commitment of all the staff to the wellbeing, care and personal development of the pupils helps to provide a secure and happy community in which pupils can make good progress.
35. The school now makes good use of the information gained from national test results and other test and assessment data in order to produce appropriate targets for every pupil at the school. A recent development has been the communication of these targets to the parents. This initiative is also beginning to have a positive effect on the pupils' ability to evaluate their own performance. Careful attention is given to raising the self-esteem of pupils with special educational needs. Thorough and detailed notes are maintained about each pupil's strengths and weaknesses, which are then used to set clear and appropriate targets for improvement. The targets are regularly reviewed with the child and the parent and it is clear that most pupils are making good progress.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

36. Relationships between the school and parents are satisfactory. The school enjoys the active support of the majority of parents. The headteacher and her staff are approachable and parents were observed talking to class teachers at the start and close of the school day. There are a small number of committed parents who regularly help in classrooms and accompany the pupils on trips out of school. Parental involvement in their children's work at home is good and there is strong support for home reading and homework. There is an active parent teacher association that organises events and raises funds for the school. A minority of parents did not agree that the school works closely with them and that they would not be comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems. The inspection evidence did not support these parents' views, but there would appear to be some parental resistance to changes being made by the new headteacher that could account for these negative comments.

37. Communication between the school and home is good. The school regularly sends out very informative newsletters and there are frequent communications to parents about specific events and activities. There are notice boards displaying school, community and wider educational information at all entrances to the school. The governors hold an annual meeting with parents and publish an annual report. The current governors' annual report fails to include all the statutory required information; for example, it omits information about pupils with disabilities and the professional development undertaken by the teaching staff. A significant number of the parents responding to the questionnaire felt that they were not well enough informed about their children's progress. There are ample opportunities for parent teacher consultation and the annual written reports are clear about the extent of progress made and what children should do to improve further. Parents of children with special educational needs are kept well informed and fully involved in their children's education. This year there have been some significant innovations such as coffee mornings to discuss the school's approach to meeting the needs of these pupils.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

38. Although the last inspection rated 'the pastoral leadership' of the headteacher as very good, there followed a litany of serious shortcomings. These included weak curriculum leadership, a poor school development plan and a lack of monitoring, evaluation and review of the school's work. Three years ago an interim visit by an HMI Additional Inspector found that satisfactory progress was being made in relation to these issues. In December of last year, the headteacher retired at short notice so a member of staff was asked to be acting headteacher. This teacher did a good job in moving the school forward until a new appointment could be made. A notable feature was the way that the parents were encouraged to contribute to the process by expressing their views on the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
39. Since her arrival in May, the new headteacher has carried out a rapid and accurate evaluation of the state of the school. She has been greatly assisted by the support of the previous acting headteacher and the commitment of the rest of the staff team and the governing body. Together they have agreed a vision statement for the school and a set of entirely appropriate aims. A commitment to the provision of good quality education lies at the heart of these statements, along with a determination to raise standards to a higher level.
40. The new school improvement plan is a simple but convincing account of the school's major priorities for development. It sets a brisk pace for action, but is realistic and achievable given the small number of teachers on the staff. A further and significant strength is the way that the headteacher has organised time for professional development conversations with each teacher to negotiate 'Individual Action Plans'. These plans set out in good detail what each teacher is responsible for in relation to the main school improvement plan. They include the tasks to be carried out, costs and details of how success will be measured. Equally important, they carry a commitment to providing teachers with the necessary training.
41. One of the most significant changes made since the arrival of the new headteacher, and an excellent example of her shrewd thinking, has been the reorganisation of the classes. It is possible that, properly organised, the teaching of Years 4, 5 and 6 in one class by three teachers might work extremely well. However, in practice the results of the past four years suggest otherwise. Many pupils who were achieving above average results in the Key Stage 1 tests were doing much worse by the time they left the school. The new headteacher

rapidly sized up the situation. She analysed the pupils' work, and evaluated the teaching and the space available. As a result, the youngest pupils, including the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, have benefited by being moved into the largest classroom in the main school building. Key Stage 2 has been divided into two classes, with the oldest class containing only Years 5 and 6. This class is taught by one, experienced and highly effective full time teacher. Although it is early days, by the time of the inspection it was evident that the good work in Foundation and Key Stage 1 is being sustained and that there is considerable improvement in the work in the two Key Stage 2 classes containing.

42. The last report indicated that the governing body needed to take a fuller role in checking the quality of education provided by the school. In the past, they have struggled to achieve this. For instance, last year's annual report to parents omitted important statutory information including statements about provision for the disabled and the progress of the post-OFSTED action plan. However, their role specification for the new headteacher made it very clear that they expected to appoint a candidate who would involve them in exercising their duties more fully. With the assistance of the local authority, they have achieved this in the appointment of a new headteacher who provides strong leadership through hard work and personal example. As a result, the governing body benefits from the business-like partnership that is developing between them and the staff. The notes and minutes relating to the governance of the school have increased enormously since May. A new sense of purpose is evident in the way that minutes now indicate action to be taken and the governor responsible. A governor of the month visits lessons and writes a report. The teachers make presentations at governors' meetings, and the governors' sub-groups are meeting regularly to make more efficient the full meetings of the governing body. The governing body contains a wide range of talent and expertise and is now well placed to fulfil all of its statutory responsibilities.
43. The school's financial planning is effective because it is linked closely to the priorities of the school improvement plan. Specific funds such as those for pupils with special educational needs are used appropriately. The governing body continues to have a very good oversight of the school's budget and ensures that a sensible carry forward is maintained each year in order to cover any sudden fluctuation in the school roll. The principles of best value are being applied to all major spending decisions.
44. The school grounds are spacious, attractive and designed to offer a wide range of appropriate activities for the pupils. The buildings offer less flexibility and include two demountable classrooms separate from the main block. Nevertheless space is well used and a good learning environment is sustained through attractive displays. A large, old Victorian classroom provides scope for drama and gymnastics. The school is adequately resourced, although better use could be made of the school computers. A positive development is the new library is being created in the school entrance.
45. The six adults that make up the staff team offer a good range of experience and expertise. They are working together with increasing effectiveness because they are encouraged to take on a wide range of management responsibilities. For instance, each has a responsibility for at least one subject of the National Curriculum. This involves helping to plan the curriculum, checking the quality of pupils' work across the school and will later include monitoring teaching in lessons. New staffing arrangements also mean that areas such as the organisation of special educational needs are benefiting from the specific skills and interests of key staff.

46. The nursery nurse and special educational needs assistant provide effective support in the class containing the youngest pupils. In Key Stage 2, the school secretary is usefully deployed to provide Additional Literacy Support for those pupils who need a bit of extra help. However, there is a lack of any additional, trained ancillary help in Key Stage 2 that might add flexibility to what individual teachers are able to offer in terms of group activities within their classrooms.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

47. There is clear plan of action outlined by the headteacher, staff and governing body that sets out a brisk and appropriate programme of school improvement. They should continue with its implementation in order to:
- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2.
(Paragraphs 2, 56, 63)
 - Increase opportunities for teaching the skills of information and communication technology and their use and application across the curriculum.
(Paragraphs 7, 26, 83)
 - In addition the staff should continue to implement their current strategies in demanding improvement in the poor behaviour of the small group of boys in Years 3 and 4 who occasionally disrupt the learning of others.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	22
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	3

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	27	45	27	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	78
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	11

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	15?

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.4
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	9	6	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	13	14	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87	93	100
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	13	15	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87	100	87
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	7	2	9

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	[]	[]	[]
	Girls	[]	[]	[]
	Total	[]	[]	[]
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	[] ([])	[] ([])	[] ([])
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	[]	[]	[]
	Girls	[]	[]	[]
	Total	[]	[]	[]
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	[] ([])	[] ([])	[] ([])
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	59
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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)	3.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	22.5

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	153967
Total expenditure	156747
Expenditure per pupil	2239
Balance brought forward from previous year	12000
Balance carried forward to next year	15000

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	70
Number of questionnaires returned	23

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	48	43	9	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	13	83	0	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	17	70	9	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	0	52	30	9	9
The teaching is good.	56	35	0	0	9
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	27	52	13	4	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	57	26	13	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	35	61	4	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	27	43	17	4	9
The school is well led and managed.	31	48	13	4	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	31	61	4	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	9	48	30	4	9

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

48. At the time of the inspection, there were four children in the Foundation stage, who currently attend school on a part-time basis. Most of these children have had some pre-school playgroup experience before they joined the class containing Reception, Years 1 and 2 in September. This year there are 30 pupils in total taught by two part-time teachers, a nursery nurse and special needs assistant. The attainment of the pupils on entering school is wide ranging but the school's assessments indicate that it is generally below average. The children are provided with an appropriate range of activities and make good progress in reaching the nationally agreed early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. This good progress is particularly evident in respect of literacy and numeracy skills.

Personal, social and emotional development

49. By the end of the foundation stage, these young children are securely attaining the early learning goals in this aspect of their learning. They are provided with appropriate activities and opportunities that support their interest and motivation to learn. They can sustain concentration and maintain constructive relationships with adults and other children; for example they can sit quietly for an extended period, listening to a story or awaiting their turn during a class discussion. They work productively, both individually and as part of a small group. When working as part of a large group they also behave sensibly, for example when forming lines to move to the hall or playground. The adults are sensitive to the children's needs and help them to develop a positive sense of themselves. This was seen to good effect in all the whole class sessions in which the teachers encouraged all pupils to become involved and to contribute to discussions. The children particularly enjoy opportunities to choose activities such as role-play, which allow them to develop relationships in a 'make-believe' setting.

Language and Literacy

50. The children are making good progress in the development of their language and literacy skills, and are on course to achieve the targets set in the national guidelines by the time they reach their fifth birthday. Most children can speak clearly and confidently to each other and to adults. A good range of structured play activities are provided, for example, assembling and using the class shop enhances the children's ability to develop their vocabulary and encourages them to listen and respond to each other. Their early reading skills are secure and regular opportunities to look at books raises the children's awareness of the links between letters and sounds and the significance of print. The children are acquiring a repertoire of nursery and counting rhymes which they enjoy chorusing as a group. This was seen to good effect in a mathematics session in which 'five currant buns' provided the backdrop for some enjoyable practical activities with money. Through carefully planned practical activities, such as placing objects on a tray containing initial sound cards, the pupils develop an appreciation of the link between letter shapes and sounds. They are confident in their early attempts at writing and understand that marks, letters and words convey meaning. For example, the sound tray session was effectively extended to involve pupils in accurately writing the letters they had identified.

Mathematical development

51. The children make good progress in acquiring numeracy skills and are securely on course to reach the levels expected by the age of five. The adults organise a good range of exciting practical activities for developing mathematical language and understanding. The children's confidence in counting, sorting and in other areas of mathematics is good. They enjoy counting rhymes and activities and recognise numerals from 1 to 9 and generally can count objects to ten. When engaged in whole class activities, such as counting round the class in turn, they join in confidently and accurately. They can recognise and name the basic two-dimensional shapes and use appropriate mathematical language to describe and compare items. For example, they are able to say whether a child is taller or shorter than another, and can draw a smaller circle than the one provided.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

52. During the course of the inspection, it was not possible to observe the full range of activities normally offered in a week. However, a scrutiny of the teachers' planning and children's work from last year indicates that the children develop a satisfactory awareness of the world about them by the time they complete the foundation stage. Appropriate activities that link several areas of learning are offered to the children. For example, in looking at the immediate environment they have covered work in science, history and geography. They are aware of insects that they see and can match animals with their offspring, such as tadpoles and frogs. They can identify features of their school, for example, the location of the hall, the playground and the school field. They talk about the time they were in the playgroup and recognise the passage of time between then and the present. There is very limited evidence of the use of information and communication technology to support the pupils learning.

Physical Development

53. Taken overall the children are making satisfactory progress in most aspects of this area of learning. It was not possible to observe the pupils' involvement in physical education lessons. However, observation of the children during outdoor breaks indicates that they are energetic and can control their movements well when running and skipping. The lack of a secure outdoor play area for using wheeled toys restricts some aspects of the provision. The children's confidence and independence in using small equipment such as pencils, crayons, paint brushes and glue sticks is increasing. They also have a good awareness of safety issues, for example when passing delicate, large or heavy items to each other or when setting up the shop ready for use.

Creative development

54. The children make secure progress in developing their creativity. The adults provide many good opportunities for the children to be involved in art, music, role-play and imaginative play. These experiences often effectively link learning across a range of areas. For instance, the singing of 'Five currant buns' in a mathematics session showed that the pupils sing rhythmically, remember words and keep a steady pulse when performing action songs. A role-play session involving preparation for a visit to a Victorian house enabled the pupils to empathise with life in another time. They confidently use a range of tools, equipment and materials when drawing, painting and model making. All the children enjoy opportunities to exercise the freedom to experiment with ideas and activities arising from their own imagination.

ENGLISH

55. The very small numbers of pupils in each year group requires that the statistical analysis of the results of national tests be treated with caution. Nevertheless, taken overall, the results of the past four years paint a clear and compelling picture. The standards of reading and writing at the end of Key Stage 1 have been broadly in line with the national average. The results of the tests for 2000 show a big improvement because almost every pupil reached the expected level in reading and writing, and a third exceeded this. This is better than the standards described in the last report. In contrast, when taking the average points scored by pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 over the past four years it is clear that standards have generally been below the national average and much worse than those achieved by pupils at similar schools. In 2000 very few pupils took the tests and there was a significant majority with special educational needs. Although few reached the expected levels all made reasonable progress in relation to their prior performance in the Key Stage 1 tests. The performance data suggest that by the age of eleven the boys are performing about a term ahead of the girls. However, the inspection identified no significant differences in performance, nor any imbalance in the ways that girls and boys are taught.
56. The inspection findings, and in particular the analysis of the pupils work, indicate that at the end of Key Stage 1 standards continue to be slightly above average. However, at the end of Key Stage 2 standards are clearly below average. The key to this lies in the teaching. The analysis of the pupils' work from last year shows that there was frequently a lack of challenge and that the three teachers responsible for Years 4, 5 and 6 had widely varying expectations of what the pupils might achieve. Many of the weaknesses criticised in the last report, repetitive tasks and uninspiring use of work sheets, were still in evidence at regular intervals through the year. Around May, the quality of work started to improve and there is greater consistency and detail in the marking. Nevertheless, only 60 per cent of the current Year 6 appear to be working at a level appropriate for their age. **This is a key issue for action.**
57. The reason why standards are above average at the end of Key Stage 1 is because the pupils are well taught. The teacher makes very effective use of the nursery nurse so that between them they cater for the wide range of age and ability within the class. They effectively modify the National Literacy Strategy to suit their situation. For instance, one morning started with the nursery nurse working with Year 2 on words that end in 'ow'. Meanwhile, the teacher focused upon the initial sounds of letters, playing an enjoyable game with Year 1 where they had to match objects on a tray beginning with the same sound. Later they had to pick out letters when the teacher said the sound. By the end of the lesson these pupils were gaining confidence in their ability to construct three letter words such as 'mop'.
58. A further reason why the pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 is the encouragement of a love of reading and literature. The pupils are helped to incorporate within their own writing what they gain from their reading. Last year's books show the pupils reading widely and writing in many styles for a good range of purposes. In September, most were writing simple captions in home made books on the theme 'What are you scared of?' The shape and orientation of letters was often erratic. By June most were writing at much greater length including letters in the role of a character from 'The Toad Tunnel' or lengthy personal versions of 'The Iron Child' after reading Ted Hughes' 'The Iron Man'. At this stage, their letters were formed with greater accuracy and often joined as the pupils gained greater

fluency. The current Year 2 also derives great pleasure from their reading. They are currently working on 'Mog visits the Vee Eee Tee'. Most talk readily about the central themes of the story and relate these to their own experiences of sick pets. A good number read with reasonable fluency. They all enjoy noting down key words and phrases about what it feels like to be ill at home. However, in order to extend more fully the pupils' writing skills, the teacher needs to plan a series of activities that build systematically. For instance, the jotting down of words and phrases about illness might usefully have been extended in the subsequent lesson by getting the pupils to write either a lengthier personal account or a poem, focusing on the use of adjectives.

59. At the end of Key Stage 2, progress is starting to speed up. The teacher works with the class full-time. This is having a positive impact because she makes consistently high demands of the pupils in their work and behaviour. It is still possible from time to time to observe the legacy of last year in the attitude and behaviour of a tiny minority of pupils. A few children have not acquired the stamina and concentration span expected of Years 5 and 6. When lessons are challenging and tasks demanding they would rather give up than persevere. The great strength of the teaching is the way that the teacher encourages these pupils and supports them, but never drops her expectations for success.
60. It is quite clear that lively and imaginative teaching is starting to make the pupils aware of the importance of the skills of reading, writing and speaking and listening. The teacher's shrewd assessments of the pupils' needs means that she is helping them to improve the fluency of their handwriting by using brisk ten minute periods to practise skills such as horizontal joins. She knows the power of drama in helping to develop pupils' speaking skills. She makes effective use of this aspect of English in personal and social education and, most tellingly, in history.
61. The planning of the literacy lessons reveals that the teacher has excellent subject knowledge. Her enthusiasm for the subject is starting to raise the levels of pupils' achievements. For instance, she wanted the pupils to get to know the work of some significant English poets, to learn to identify some of their techniques and to try them out for themselves. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's 'The Windmill' was read aloud by the whole class and the pupils were swift to recognise the use of personification because they had learnt about this the day before and the aim of the lesson was written on the whiteboard. Throughout the discussion of the poem the teacher encouraged the correct use of technical language, such as 'stanza' and 'contextual clues'. Subsequently, she provided a range of household items and encouraged the pupils to jot down some examples of how these might be personified. There was a very good range of responses, 'The kettle bubbles and boils over in rage', and 'The Hoover feels stuffed with his dusty meal'. This work was further extended when groups of pupils had to carry out a similar process in relation to pictures of different cars and ultimately, in a subsequent lesson, create their own poems incorporating 'personification'. The reason the teacher is so successful is that she treats the pupils as if they are writers, authors and poets. Although many are currently struggling with the mechanics of writing she offers them literary models that inspire and motivate through their simplicity. As a result, they are gaining an appetite for language and the dawning of an appreciation of its power; 'I wink my eye whilst left or right I turn'.

MATHEMATICS

62. The very small cohorts of recent years make the analysis of the results of individual years unreliable. Nevertheless, when considering the four years 1996-1999 together, standards at

the end of Key Stage 1 have been above the national average and in line with results in similar schools. Standards at the end Key Stage 2 have been below both the national average and results in similar schools. The results for 2000 were in line with these trends in both key stages. A significant weakness in the 1999 and 2000 test results for eleven year-olds was the fact that no pupil managed to reach the higher levels possible.

63. The inspection findings show that standards remain above the national average at the end of Key Stage 1. Although standards are improving at the end of Key Stage 2 they remain below average overall with very few pupils working within the expected level. **This is a key issue for action.** The analysis of the pupils' work from last year shows that they have produced a good volume and quality of written mathematics in Key Stage 1 and in early Key Stage 2. However, at the upper end of Key Stage 2 the volume of the work is less and the quality lower than that expected nationally. Scrutiny of the pupils' books also indicates variation in the frequency and usefulness of the teachers' marking. In the best examples, generally in Key Stage 1, the pupils were praised for their efforts and given some indication as to how they might further improve their work. The marking higher in the school was far less systematic and helpful.
64. A major reason why standards have remained consistently above average at the end of Key Stage 1 is that the teachers have conscientiously embraced the guidance of the National Numeracy Strategy and worked hard with the pupils to make it a success. The present teacher of Years 5/6, who formerly taught Years 2 and 3, has in the short time since the beginning of term worked very hard to pinpoint the reasons for the lack of progress over time. She has accurately identified significant gaps in the pupils' numeracy skills and their confidence in applying their knowledge effectively when solving problems. The current focus upon filling these gaps and significantly increasing the speed of working is resulting in good progress in learning in lessons at the end of Key Stage 2.
65. The quality of the teaching observed across the school was good overall and on occasions was very good. The teachers knowledge of mathematics is secure and has benefited from the additional training associated with the numeracy strategy. The lessons are thoroughly planned and generally have precise objectives for learning. In the best lessons, the frequent reinforcement of the teachers' expectations and objectives for learning enables the pupils to make good progress. In addition, the teachers fine-tune the focus of the lesson in response to their assessment of the pupils' knowledge and understanding as the lesson progresses. This was seen to good effect in work with the infant class, containing Foundation Stage pupil, when the teacher skilfully pitched questions about money at different levels to engage and extend all pupils. Similarly, in upper Key Stage 2 the intended planning for the week was significantly amended after evaluation of Monday's lesson in which the pupils' knowledge and understanding of multiplication tables and their application were significantly below expectations. By Wednesday, the gaps in the pupils' knowledge and understanding were being filled and the pupils realised what they needed to do to improve their performance.
66. All the teachers try to make learning about numbers fun, and the pupils' agility in mental calculations is improving as a direct consequence. In every lesson, the teachers had a good range of lively mental 'warm-up' games that related closely to the strategies they were trying to teach. Subsequent written work reinforced this and the final plenary sessions gave the pupils a good chance to show what they had learnt. In most lessons, the speed of the children's response had quickened noticeably by the end of the session showing good gains in their levels of skill, knowledge and understanding. They clearly enjoy the challenge of the activities and speak enthusiastically about their work.

67. The school is trying to involve parents even more in their children's learning through the regular and consistent setting of homework. This is a new initiative since September and it is not possible yet to accurately judge the effectiveness of the school's efforts. However, the initial response from the parents is positive overall.

SCIENCE

68. Over the period 1996-1999 the pupils' performance at the end of Key Stage 2 has been similar to the results achieved in mathematics. The standards reached by the eleven-year-olds in the national tests have, on average, been below both the expected level and the results of pupils in similar schools. In 1999, the teachers' assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 show that standards were broadly in line with the national average. The results for 2000 were in line with these trends in both key stages with no eleven-year-old pupil managing to reach the higher levels.
69. Inspection findings show that standards remain broadly average at the end of Key Stage 1 and below average at the end of Key Stage 2. The analysis of the pupils' work from last year shows that Key Stage 1 pupils covered a good amount of interesting and relevant work across the full range of the National Curriculum programmes of study. The teacher provided opportunities for the pupils to work practically, to record their findings systematically and to benefit from helpful marking.
70. Last year's work at the end of Key Stage 2 was similarly broad but the volume and standard of the work was below that expected for pupils of this age. **This is a key issue for action.** The quality and frequency of marking was inconsistent and did not generally support satisfactory progress in learning. However, the redeployment of last year's Key Stage 1 teacher to the upper end of the school is intended to improve the quality of education offered to these pupils. It is early days yet but the available evidence suggests that pupils' progress in science throughout Key Stage 2 is improving.
71. The school has sensibly introduced the national guidance for the teaching of science. This is helping to support the teachers in planning and presenting interesting lessons that provide frequent opportunities for practical scientific investigation. This was seen to good effect in a Year 1/2 lesson in which the pupils were identifying the properties of a range of materials. The children thoroughly enjoyed the activity and were developing an appropriate scientific vocabulary with which to describe their findings. However, the pupils' written recording of their findings was not at the same level as their oral work. The teacher is aware of the need to ensure that the higher attaining children are enabled to record their findings at greater length and in more detail. In Years 3/4, a successful lesson on friction included well-organised group investigations about the 'gripability' of different footwear. This was followed by the accurate recording of findings, including measurements, by means of a writing framework that enabled the pupils to focus upon the scientific content rather than the layout of the work. In both these lessons the pupils showed interest and enthusiasm for their work. It was not possible to see science being taught at the end of Key Stage 2.

ART AND DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

72. The teaching of art is a current focus within the school improvement plan and it is evident from the good quality of the pupils' work displayed around the school that this subject is an emerging strength. By the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils are confident in their use of pencils, crayons and paint. They draw recognisable pictures of local houses and provide

their own illustrations for favourite stories. They often work together collaboratively on large scale pieces such as the current collage based on the story of 'The Little House by the Sea'.

73. By the end of Key Stage 2 the pupils have made good progress in refining their skills and techniques. The current Year 5/6 class benefits from the very good skills and subject knowledge of their teacher. It was in this class that it was possible to observe the one art lesson seen during the inspection. The classroom provides compelling evidence of how effective planning underpins the systematic development of key skills and techniques. Earlier in the term, the pupils had practised experimenting in the use of different types of line such as thick, thin, zigzag and spiral. They learnt how to vary tone in shading using different amounts of pressure on the pencil. By the time of the inspection, they had made their first attempts at drawing regular three-dimensional shapes. The lesson built extremely effectively on this previous learning. The teacher carried out a rapid review of the pupils' work before introducing her aim for the session. She made a very good demonstration of how to set about drawing a sketch of a Victorian lamp, taken from the attractive display of Victoriana that supports the current history topic. The pupils watched, rapt. The teacher sustained a commentary throughout, explaining how to use a pencil to gauge proportion, the previously learned techniques that would be useful, and above all the need to keep looking at what is being drawn. After five minutes, the pupils' silence was broken when one was heard to remark, 'Cor, Miss, that's just like Rolf Harris. The children couldn't wait to get started. They worked hard, fast and with great concentration and commitment. The guidance and support offered throughout by the teacher was very good indeed. She drew the children's attention to the good points of their sketches and always picked out one or two ways in which they might be improved. As a result, the standard of work exceeded national expectations.
74. The pupils' increasing confidence in the use of line is also having a positive effect upon the quality of their plans and drawings in design and technology. However, it was only possible to observe the teaching of design and technology in Key Stage 1. Here the pupils have been busy designing and constructing a house for a mouse. Already the majority of pupils are producing sensible plans and lists of the types of equipment and materials they intend to use. By the time of the inspection all were busy constructing houses, but several made regular reference to their plans and explained to the inspector what they were doing and any reasons they had for changing their plans. A further strength that emerged from these conversations was the positive impact of the brief walk they had made around the village. It enabled the teacher to enhance the pupils' technical language to include such words as gutters, drainpipes and chimneys. The overwhelming majority of the pupils showed that they have good co-ordination in the way they set about cutting and sticking card and paper. Most managed to create 'houses' that resembled their original drawings. Several showed good attention to detail as they finished their artefacts with coloured or glittery paper. A few of the higher attaining pupils managed to construct houses with pitched roofs.
75. A further strength of the lesson was the good level of adult help. The staff of the school benefited from the support of several parent helpers, including one who helped the pupils to make stuffed mice to go in the houses. These pupils were gaining valuable experience in learning simple stitching techniques.
76. Elsewhere, displays around the school revealed that pupils in Key Stage 2 also receive regular opportunities to extend their skills in design and technology. They were evident, for instance, in the display of different 'Iron Men' devised in response to Ted Hughes' book in the new library.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

77. The quality of the pupils' work in these subjects generally meets the expected levels for pupils of this age. The school has sensibly introduced the national guidance for the teaching of history and geography. In addition there is a well-established tradition of visits to places of educational interest and the welcoming of visitors into the school. Taken together, this has resulted in the development of interesting and worthwhile experiences in these areas of learning.
78. The analysis of the pupils' work from last year shows that the Key Stage 1 pupils covered an appropriate range of topics. Work in history and geography is often linked as pupils use maps and plans to locate features of their locality. They recognise some of the older aspects of their local area and appreciate how the land is used for a variety of purposes. Their awareness of the world beyond Siddington has been developed through a study of Britain during the Second World War. Last year's work at the end of Key Stage 2 showed coverage of a suitable range of topics. The pupils acquire a sound knowledge of the past through learning about ancient civilisations such as the Greeks and aspects of geography such as the significant impact of rivers upon the landscape. However, written evidence of the ability to investigate issues and interpret different sources of information was somewhat limited. The redeployment of last year's Key Stage 1 teacher to the upper end of the school is intended to strengthen the quality of education offered to the pupils. Early indications are that this is already happening.
79. The teachers work hard to provide interesting lessons that bring both history and geography alive for the pupils. For example, a very good lesson for the infant children involved role-play around the theme of a Victorian kitchen had the children enthralled and keen to both ask and answer questions based on accurate observation. This lesson was preparation for a forthcoming visit to a Victorian house. As a result of this lesson, the children showed a good awareness of differences between the lifestyle of today and that of the Victorian period and are thoroughly looking forward to the visit. Similarly, a very good lesson in Years 5 and 6 dealt with Victorian society and the issues of poverty and child labour. The lesson was very successful because it involved pupils asking questions of a classmate who assumed the costume and character of a young chimney sweep. This most effectively supports rapid learning. By the end of the lesson, the pupils had a good understanding of some of the attitudes of Victorian society and were able to contrast these with twenty-first century society. A good lesson in Years 3/4 following up a visit to the Corinium Roman Museum most effectively linked with personal, social education and helped the consolidation of knowledge about the Romans. The class was well supported in sharing, observing and discussing Roman artefacts. The potentially disruptive behaviour of a small number of boys was effectively countered through the provision of interesting, exciting and challenging activities.
80. The pupils are interested in their learning in these areas and talk with enthusiasm about the wide range of visits they have undertaken. However, the school should continue to evaluate the learning opportunities offered in order to ensure that there is no unnecessary repetition of topics studied particularly in the light of mixed age classes containing a wide range of abilities.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

81. Since the last inspection there has been some improvement in the school's provision for teaching this subject but the current arrangements still lack coherence. This is because the pupils are not yet receiving full access to the programmes of study outlined in the National Curriculum. The teachers are well aware that things need to improve and a sensible plan has been drawn up setting out clearly what needs to be achieved. It includes a full audit of resources, the purchase of a minimum of seven computers and the intensive training of staff through the 'New Opportunities Funding'. A good start has been made. For instance the school recently went 'online' so that older pupils can access the World Wide Web and send and receive email.
82. During the inspection, the computers in each classroom were frequently switched on and occasionally in use. For instance, in Years 5 and 6 pupils worked sensibly during a quiet reading period entering personal data onto a spreadsheet that had been prepared in advance. However, their skills and familiarity with the keyboard varied widely and were generally considerably lower than the levels expected of eleven-year-olds. In Key Stage 1, the pupils showed imagination when creating designs using the program 'Colour Magic'.
83. However, the analysis of pupils' work from last year shows that computers have not previously been used enough. For instance, few pupils appear either to compose their writing direct to screen or to save work for future editing. There is little evidence of the systematic development of the skills required for using the power of computers to make things happen or to monitor events by using sensors, for example, to track temperature over the course of a day. The reason for this is that the teachers currently lack the knowledge and confidence to identify opportunities for the more regular use of information and communication technology skills across the entire curriculum. **This remains a key issue for action that is recognised by the school and included within the school improvement plan.**

MUSIC

84. It was not possible to observe the part-time music teacher in the course of the inspection. During morning worship, the children sing tunefully, normally to pre-recorded tape. When accompanied by the skilful guitar playing of the vicar their singing assumes a greater expression.
85. The one lesson it was possible to observe involved the Year 3/4 pupils listening to the end of 'Peter and the Wolf'. This showed that they had already learnt and remembered the different instruments chosen by Prokofiev to represent the characters in the story. They could distinguish the pitch of different instruments as 'high' or 'low' and comment on their suitability. One pupil observed that she liked Peter's tune on the violins because 'It's cheerful, like him'. The teacher's knowledge was sufficient to enable her to cover these fundamental aspects. There was strength in the way she elicited the pupils' response to the music and story. However, the aim relating to analysis of the tempo of the music was less well developed.
86. Throughout the lesson, one pupil behaved very poorly and attempted to distract and disrupt the learning of his classmates. The teacher dealt with this boy extremely patiently and effectively. She distanced him from other pupils without excluding him from the lesson. She kept referring to the class rules and praised those who followed them. As a result, the lesson

progressed reasonably smoothly and satisfactory progress was made. At the end of the lesson, the teacher gave up some of her lunch break to discuss with the pupil why he was behaving poorly and what needed to be done to help him to improve.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

87. The school has extensive and well-maintained grounds containing both a large hard surfaced and grassed area. There is a Trim Track fitness course in one corner of the field and generous space for a range of team games. There is also an indoor 'hall' that is just adequate in size. This old Victorian classroom has been modified to contain a suitable range of apparatus including large gymnastics equipment. Extra-curricular sports clubs in football and hockey are organised, and the pupils represent the school in both inter school matches and area events such as a dance festival. Swimming lessons are provided at a local pool. Most eleven year-old pupils leaving school are able to swim a minimum of twenty-five metres. Several swim much further and have good water safety and survival skills.
88. It was only possible to observe one gymnastics lesson during the inspection. The quality of teaching in this Key Stage 1 lesson was satisfactory. The pupils showed that their ability to practice, refine and improve their movement both on the floor and on apparatus is in line with the level expected for their age. The teacher has a good knowledge of health and safety issues arising from the limitations of the available space. She also has a secure knowledge of good quality movement and the importance of pupils both demonstrating and observing movement. However, the focus upon safety issues and pupil demonstration was not consistently balanced with direct teaching and the improvement of performance. A good feature of the lesson was the involvement of the pupils in the preparation of the apparatus. However, when using the apparatus some pupils waited too long for their turn. The teacher is aware of the importance of a good pace and the full involvement of all pupils and is reviewing how best to utilise the apparatus within the hall.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

89. At the end of both key stages, the pupils' attainment in religious education matches the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Their knowledge increases through both key stages as a relevant range of topics is covered. The analysis of the work from last year shows that pupils in both key stages covered a good range of interesting and relevant topics.
90. At Key Stage 1 the pupils develop a sound knowledge of places of worship and sacred texts from different faiths. They have an appreciation of the differences between a church, mosque and synagogue. As well as considering the Ten Commandments they have thought about their own rules. They learn to develop respect for themselves and others.
91. By the age of eleven, the pupils extend their knowledge of Christianity and other faiths. As a result of ministers visiting the school, they have an understanding of differences between various branches of the Christian church in Britain. They build upon their previous learning about different religions and develop a secure understanding of aspects such as pilgrimage. They learn to link the rules that govern their own conduct in school to those which are adopted by adherents of all religions.
92. The teaching in the one lesson seen in Year 5 and 6 was of very good quality and supported the pupils' understanding of the Holy Trinity. The teacher made very good use of simple but most appropriate resources; a wooden triangular frame and a video. She skilfully

approached the concept of the Holy Trinity using the triangle as a corresponding figure of simplicity and strength. The pupils were next introduced to the story of 'The Prodigal Son' and watched part of the video of the story. The theme was further developed through role-play in which the pupils most effectively empathised with the feelings of the main characters of the story before returning to watch the end of the video. By the end of the lesson, the pupils had a good understanding of the concept of God the Father and how this might apply to them in their everyday life.

93. There are good links with local religious leaders and in particular with the local vicar. These links enhance the quality of the religious education curriculum, for example in developing understanding of different branches of the church and in complimenting the work undertaken with teachers in the classroom. This was seen to good effect during the inspection where the assembly theme for the week was 'Caring for our world'. It effectively fitted in with the current classroom focus on caring for each other and developing awareness of the consequences of our actions.