

## **INSPECTION REPORT**

**ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Stoke Gifford

LEA area: South Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 109228

Headteacher: Mr A R Jones

Reporting inspector: Mr M J Mayhew  
22197

Dates of inspection: 27<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> November 2000

Inspection number: 225333

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Ratcliffe Drive Stoke Gifford South Gloucestershire
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P Day
Date of previous inspection:	November 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Mr M J Mayhew 22197	<i>Registered inspector</i>	Music; Physical education.	How high are standards? Teaching; (Attainment and progress).
Mr J McGarry 19730	<i>Lay inspector</i>		How high are standards? Links with parents; Care of pupils; (Attitudes, behaviour).
Dr P Lowe 11901	<i>Team Inspector</i>	English; Geography; History.	Assessment.
Mr M Ward 20463	<i>Team Inspector</i>	Mathematics; Art.	Equal opportunities; How good are curriculum opportunities? Staffing, accommodation and resources.
Mr I Beck 7741	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science; Religious education.	Special educational needs; Leadership and management.
Mrs C Worthington 20609	<i>Team Inspector</i>	Under Fives; English as an additional language; Information and communication technology; Design and Technology.	Spiritual, moral, social, cultural development; Efficiency.
Mr D Hughes 20444	<i>Team Inspector</i>		

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is situated to the north of the city of Bristol, in a large area of comparatively new housing. The school serves a very wide area, occupied mainly by privately owned housing, although a number of pupils live in council-owned housing. Since the previous inspection, the school has grown by over 100 pupils to its current roll of 525 boys and girls aged from four to eleven. Six new classrooms were added in 1998 to accommodate the rising numbers. Five per cent of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, a proportion which is below the national average. Ten per cent of pupils are on the school's register for special educational needs, seven per cent lower than at the time of the last inspection. Six pupils are assigned Statements of Special Educational Needs. Fifteen pupils speak English as an additional language. Assessments of children when they enter the reception class show that their attainment in reading and writing, and their social skills, are slightly below what might be expected for their age. When the children enter the school their mathematical skills match expectations.

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

St Michael's is a very effective school in which pupils learn well and achieve high standards in English, mathematics and science. The quality of education provided is very good. This includes the high quality of teaching. The school is very well led and managed, and there has been a very good level of improvement since the time of the last inspection. Pupils have very good attitudes to their learning, and their behaviour is good. When account is taken of all these factors, as well as the broadly average pupil unit costs, the school gives very good value for money.

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

- Pupils make very good progress, and achieve well.
- The school is very well led and managed.
- A large proportion of teaching is very good or excellent.
- Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is particularly effective.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is excellent.
- The partnership with parents is of a high standard and is very effective in supporting and promoting pupils' learning.
- There is very good provision for pupils' moral and social development.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to their learning.
- There is very good quality and range of learning opportunities.



## WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- There are no key aspects of the school's provision that require special attention to effect improvement.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the school's previous inspection in 1996, there has been a very good level of improvement. The school has successfully dealt with the issues raised at that time. Standards attained at the end of Key Stage 2 in English, mathematics and science have risen to above or well above national expectations. Most pupils now meet national expectations in information and communication technology at the end of both key stages. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is now excellent, and the very good progress these pupils make has done much to raise the overall standards attained by the school. Sufficient time and resources are given to subject leaders and heads of departments to monitor the quality of teaching and learning, and to make recommendations for improving the curriculum and the way in which it is taught. Their effectiveness is reflected in the high quality of teaching seen in the course of this inspection. The curriculum is planned very well, in a way that takes into account the needs of each pupil. There are improved systems for training teachers new to the school.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				<i>Key</i>
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	D	C	A	C	<i>well above average</i> A
mathematics	C	D	A	B	<i>above average</i> B
science	D	D	A	B	<i>average</i> C
					<i>below average</i> D
					<i>well below average</i> E

Pupils learn at a very good rate during their time in the school. Children in the Foundation Stage make very good progress, with the result that, by the time they leave the reception classes, most children exceed the nationally recommended early learning goals. At the end of Key Stage 1 in Year 2, most pupils achieve above national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics, although their achievement is higher in reading and mathematics than it is in writing. The school's test results in English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 2 are on an upward trend. The results of the last statutory tests at Key Stage 2 in 2000 were very high, and exceeded the school's targets. Results were well above the average when compared with those of all schools nationally. When compared with those of similar schools nationally, results were above the averages for mathematics

and science, and matched the average for English. Inspectors' judgements confirm that pupils currently in Year 6 are likely to attain similarly high results in all three subjects in 2001. The school has implemented the recommendations of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies very well. Excellent provision for pupils with special educational needs ensures that these pupils make very good progress and achieve well.

In information and communication technology, most pupils reach satisfactory standards at the end of both key stages. Pupils make good progress in religious education. By the age of 11, most pupils exceed the expectations of the local Agreed Syllabus for religious education. Pupils make good progress and achieve well in nearly all foundation subjects.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good; pupils enjoy coming to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good; most pupils behave well both in lessons and in activities around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Very good; pupils value and respect each other's opinions. They relate well to their peers, their teachers, and other staff.
Attendance	Satisfactory; broadly in line with the national average. Attendance levels are lowest in the summer term because many pupils take holidays at this time of year.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	very good	very good	good

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

The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is never less than very good. In the rest of the school, teaching is good overall, and ranges from satisfactory to excellent. It is satisfactory in 12 per cent of lessons, good in 42 per cent, very good in 36 per cent, and excellent in 10 per cent. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is never less than good, and there is some excellent teaching in both key stages. These judgements represent a significant improvement on those made at the previous inspection, when there was a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. Teachers have consistently high expectations of

pupils to behave well and to achieve high standards. They know their pupils' capabilities very well. This is because they use the results of the very good assessment procedures to plan interesting work for pupils of all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs. There is good quality teaching of literacy and numeracy skills.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The curriculum is broad and relevant. It is planned very well and provides a good range of learning experiences. Very good emphasis is placed on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, and there are many occasions for pupils to practise these skills in other subjects. The school makes very good use of the local and wider community to enhance the quality of the curriculum. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities for pupils in Key Stage 2.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Excellent. The proportion of pupils on the school's register for special educational needs has reduced dramatically because of the very carefully programmed support given to them. They make very good progress towards meeting the targets set in their individual education plans.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The rate of learning by these pupils matches that made by their peers, because provision for them is good.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good; and provision for their spiritual and cultural development is good.
Partnership with parents	The school's partnership with parents is very effective in promoting pupils' learning. Many parents and other adult volunteers work alongside teachers; their work is highly valued and contributes well to pupils' learning.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There are good procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' well being. Behaviour and attendance are monitored very well. Very good procedures for assessing pupils' progress help teachers to plan the next steps in pupils' learning.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher's leadership is outstanding. He has a clear overview of the school and of what needs to be done to maintain and improve the high standards. The deputy headteacher and other members of the management team support him very well. The work of the management team has had a major impact on the improvement in the quality of education and the raising of standards across the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body discharges its duties effectively. Governors are very well informed about the work of the school. They make important decisions, which are based on sound and reliable information, often gathered from first hand evidence. With the help of the senior staff, the governors have managed successfully the rapid growth in school size.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school development plan is a very good document which gives a firm basis for the staff and governors to measure the school's effectiveness. Pupils' performances in tests are analysed and compared with both local and national averages. The results of the analyses are used as a basis for setting new targets and planning the means to achieve them. The monitoring of teaching and learning is firmly established and its outcomes contribute well to pupils' learning. The principles of best value are well understood and regularly applied.
Staffing, accommodation and learning resources	There are sufficient and appropriately qualified teachers and support staff to meet the demands of the curriculum. There is a good range of learning resources, although there are some shortages for information and communication technology. The accommodation is of good quality and is adequate to teach the National Curriculum.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its resources efficiently. The headteacher and governors make sensible decisions to ensure that best value is obtained from the available finances.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like coming to school, learn well and are helped to become mature and responsible;</li> <li>• The teaching is good and children are well behaved;</li> <li>• Parents feel welcome in the school and feel comfortable to approach the teachers when they have concerns;</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed;</li> <li>• The school expects their children to work hard.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of work given for their children to do at home;</li> <li>• The information that parents receive about their children's progress;</li> <li>• The range of out-of-school activities provided.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with the positive views of parents. The amount of homework given to pupils is appropriate and is effective in extending pupils' learning. Information of very good quality is given to parents about the school and their children's progress. The school provides a good range of out-of-school activities in which all pupils have the opportunity to take part, although the popularity of some activities means that some pupils have to join a waiting list.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Assessments of children soon after they begin school in the reception classes show that most have levels of literacy and social skills below what is expected, although their mathematical skills are about what they should be for children this age. Children make very good progress in the area of language and literacy because of the excellent use of a structured reading programme in the reception classes. In all other areas of learning, children learn well in the Foundation Stage, with the result that nearly all achieve the early learning goals by the time they begin Key Stage 1 work of the National Curriculum. Most children exceed the goals for language and literacy, mathematics, and creative and physical development. Their often very good rate of progress is directly attributable to the high quality teaching they receive in the reception classes.
2. The previous inspection judged standards at the end of Key Stage 1 to be average in English, mathematics and science. Currently, standards in these subjects are above national expectations, with the greatest improvement made in reading. In English overall, standards have the potential by the end of this academic year to be well above expectations.
3. In the statutory tasks and tests taken by pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2000, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 2, or above, in reading was well above the national average, both in comparison with all schools and with schools in similar situations. A very high proportion of pupils reached the higher than expected Level 3. In the same tests in writing, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected Level 2, and above, was close to the national average, but below the average when compared with similar schools nationally. Inspectors confirm that, with the measures already taken to improve writing, current Year 2 pupils have the potential to reach above expected levels in the 2001 tests.
4. In the mathematics tests for pupils at Key Stage 1 in 2000, the proportion reaching the nationally expected Level 2, and above, was well above the national average. As in reading, results were well above the national average in comparison with those of similar schools, and the proportion reaching the higher Level 3 was very high. The inspection confirms that pupils currently in Year 2 achieve above national expectations, but they are likely to achieve well above expectations by the time they come to take the statutory tests in 2001.
5. In science, in the year 2000 statutory assessments by teachers at Key Stage 1, the proportion of pupils reaching expected and above expected levels was well above the national average for all schools, and above the average for similar schools. Inspection findings confirm that pupils achieve at least the expected Level 2, but that most achieve above this level.
6. Trends in each subject over the past four years show an overall substantial rise in standards at this key stage, where results have consistently been above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.

7. In the statutory tests taken by eleven year olds at Key Stage 2 in 2000, the proportions achieving the expected Level 4, and above, in English, mathematics and science were above the national averages. When all pupils' scores are taken into account, the average score in each subject was well above the national average for all schools. In English, it matched the average for all similar schools, and exceeded the averages in mathematics and science. In each of the subjects, the proportion of pupils scoring at the higher than expected Level 5 was above the national average.

8. Trends over the past four years to 2000 show an overall rise in standards, although there was a dip in 1998. The inspection judgement is that pupils achieve above expectations in English, mathematics and science, but that attainment in English at Key Stage 2 is likely to be well above average for pupils currently in Year 6.

9. Standards in speaking and listening are generally good throughout the school. There is a clear, planned scheme for the teaching of speaking and listening skills. Significant factors that contribute to pupils' confidence and the good standards are the good opportunities given to pupils for discussion, and the way in which teachers ask pupils to describe reason and method.

10. The rise in standards at both key stages is due to a number of factors. Firstly, the quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. Teachers plan their lessons more carefully, paying full regard to the levels of attainment of each pupil. Secondly, the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is now excellent, a great improvement on the last inspection. There are now far fewer pupils on the school's register for special educational needs. This is because these pupils make great strides in their learning, many achieving at least the nationally expected levels of attainment by the end of Key Stage 2. Thirdly, the school has implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies very well, with consequent improvement in pupils' reading, writing and number skills. Nevertheless, the school appreciates that there is still much to do to improve pupils' writing skills further, and there are a number of helpful initiatives already in place to achieve this target. For example, teachers model correct writing for pupils in literacy lessons, and there is a concerted effort by all staff to ensure that pupils have more opportunities to write at length, both in English and in other subjects. Indeed, some notable examples of pupils' writing were seen in religious education.

11. It is in reading that the school excels, based on the very good learning experiences that begin in the Foundation Stage. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are confident readers, who read aloud fluently and expressively. They fully understand what they read and can talk with considerable confidence about the stories, poems and non-fiction books they have read. They continue to learn at a very good rate in Key Stage 2, by the end of which they show a deeper understanding of significant ideas, themes, events and characters in a range of texts.

12. Over their time in the school, pupils learn well and make very good progress, particularly in English. They learn to apply their literacy and numeracy skills to other subjects because teachers give them many opportunities to do so.

13. Since the last inspection, there has been improvement in information and communication technology standards at Key Stage 2. Previously, standards at Key Stage 2 were below national expectations. Pupils' achievement at the end of both key stages now meets national expectations. Following the acquisition of new hard-and software, better training of staff, and the work of the subject leader, provision is better than it was. However, there are still too few computers available for all pupils to experience sufficiently all the requirements of the National Curriculum. The school is aware of this, and of the need for pupils to practise and use their skills more, both in information and communication technology and in other subjects. The school has firm plans to remedy the situation.

14. In religious education, pupils make good progress and meet the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils at Key Stage 2 exceed expectations.

15. At Key Stage 1 in design and technology, geography, history, music, art and physical education, pupils achieve above expectations for their age. They reach satisfactory knowledge and understanding of music at Key Stage 2, and achieve well above expectations for their age in design and technology. Pupils make good progress and achieve well in all other foundation subjects. In both key stages, the relatively few pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve standards that match those of other pupils in the school.

16. Across the school, pupils with special educational needs make very good progress towards meeting the targets set in their very good individual education plans.

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

17. Pupils' attitudes to learning, and their relationships, are very good. Behaviour is very good and attendance is satisfactory. These judgements match those made at the previous inspection. The great majority of pupils enjoy their schooling and arrive in good time, keen to get on with their work. Pupils express interest in all aspects of the curriculum and respond with determination to the many learning opportunities they are given. There is little time wasted in settling down to daily tasks.

18. Children under five in the reception class show few qualms as they leave their parents and become quickly absorbed in the stimulating activities provided for them. As they grow and move from class to class, pupils soon adapt to routines. They realise the high expectations of their behaviour and the need to work hard. Pupils generally work with enthusiasm under minimal supervision. They respond well when they are asked to carry out administrative tasks, such as taking registers to the office. Older pupils sensibly take on more responsible jobs, for example controlling an overhead projector in assemblies. Most pupils smile readily and have the confidence to discuss their work with visitors.

19. Most pupils behave very well. Indeed, the standard of behaviour has a positive effect on the learning environment. Pupils know what is expected of them and respond well to the rewards and sanctions explained in the behaviour and discipline policies. On a very few occasions, some pupils become noisy and disruptive in lessons, but most teachers employ very good strategies to control them and to refocus them on their work.



20. Pupils with special educational needs also have very good attitudes to learning. They want to make progress and work hard to do so, with considerable success. They respond well to the many opportunities given for raising their self esteem and confidence.

21. Pupils mix well and relate to each other in a friendly and collaborative way. They respect other people's feelings, values and beliefs. There is no evidence of any racist or sexist attitudes in the school; neither was any evidence of bullying detected. Pupils in discussion revealed that, if there was any bullying, it would be reported to either to their class teacher or the headteacher in the knowledge that firm action would be taken immediately.

22. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. They take much responsibility for classroom routines. They distribute books, tidy up after lessons, and hold doors open for classmates. They carry out these tasks effectively and willingly, often acting on their own initiative. However, there are limited opportunities for them to exercise whole school responsibilities. There are no particular roles for the older pupils to contribute to the day-to-day organisation of the school, although independent learning skills are generally well developed. Nevertheless, pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 show a genuine pride in their school. All pupils show respect for property and other people's possessions.

23. Pupils' level of attendance is broadly in line with the national average and is satisfactory. There is very little unauthorised absence. A significant proportion of authorised absence recorded is due to the taking of holidays during the summer term. This is mainly because of the special employment circumstances operating in the school's catchment area. There are no recorded exclusions from the school.

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

24. The teaching of the under fives and other children in the Foundation Stage is consistently very good. The teachers, nursery nurses and members of the support staff have a clear understanding of the needs of young children. All members of staff have suitably high expectations of what children should achieve and how they should behave. Children make very good progress in language and literacy skills because of the teachers' excellent use of a structured phonic programme. Consequently, children very quickly learn to read and write, and most exceed the early learning goals for language and literacy by the time they begin Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum in Year 1.

25. Teaching is good across the school, with a significant proportion of very good and excellent teaching. This results in pupils making very good progress over their time in the school. Teaching is satisfactory in 12 per cent of lessons, good in 42 per cent, and very good or excellent in 46 per cent. Indeed, out of the 82 lessons observed in the inspection, no fewer than eight lessons were judged excellent. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. These judgements represent a significant improvement on those of the previous inspection when there was some unsatisfactory teaching, and the proportion of good and very good teaching was smaller than it is now.

26. The last inspection noted that the teaching of pupils with special educational needs was not as good as it should be, and that teachers were not sufficiently aware of these pupils' needs. The school has dealt very well with this issue. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is of the highest order. The skilled support and monitoring work of the special needs co-ordinator fully ensures that all teachers give the right time and attention to the needs of these pupils, with the result that they make very good progress. Indeed, there are many examples of the removal of pupils from the school's special educational needs register because they have made such good strides in their learning. This factor alone has had a significant impact on the improvement in the school's overall standards at the end of both key stages.

27. There has been a significant change in the teaching staff since the last inspection. There has also been an improvement in the way in which the management of the school monitors the effectiveness of teaching, again an issue raised previously and dealt with very well. Induction procedures for new teachers are effective, and the staff share and employ teaching strategies that work well. This is why there are now so many good and very good quality lessons.

28. Nearly all parents who responded in the questionnaire agreed that teaching is of good quality and that the school expects their children to work hard. In nearly all lessons, teachers expect, and get, a high level of interest and a good pace of working from their pupils. In those cases where pupils' concentration or behaviour flags, a glance or a short reminder is all that is necessary in most classes for the teacher to have total concentration from all pupils. However, in a small number of lessons the teacher does not ensure that all pupils listen to instructions, and those who do not either become disruptive or are unsure about what they have to do. For example, this happened in a Year 5 physical education lesson. Some pupils became too noisy, the pace of work slowed, and learning was not as good as it could have been.

29. The teaching has many strengths, most of them common to all teachers. The most important of these is the way in which teachers plan their lessons for all subjects, ages of pupils, and pupils' different levels of attainment. There are a number of reasons why planning is a strength. Firstly, the management structure places all teachers in teams, which continuously monitor and review the curriculum and its effectiveness. Secondly, teachers plan in groups for their lessons, and evaluate how effective the lessons are in taking pupils' learning forward. Thirdly, because lesson planning is so detailed and well structured, teachers know exactly what it is that they want to teach, and invariably make this clear to the pupils. Fourthly, teachers use the results of assessments very well to plan lessons that match individual pupils' prior levels of attainment. The corporate approach and good liaison between teachers also helps to ensure that they have sufficient subject knowledge because they share their knowledge and expertise.

30. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is very good, particularly in Key Stage 1, where half of the literacy lessons are very good or excellent, and seven tenths of numeracy teaching is very good. Most teachers apply the format of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies to other lessons. They use the introductions to lessons well to promote pupils' interest and to recall previous knowledge through careful questioning. For example, in an excellent Key Stage 1 music lesson the teacher used the first part to establish with pupils what they had learned, and also introduced new knowledge about musical notation. Teachers use the last part of literacy and numeracy lessons well to discuss

and confirm with pupils what they have learned. However, this is not always the case in all lessons, and some finish abruptly because the teacher has run out of time.

31. All teachers have very good relationships with their pupils, because they consistently apply the school behaviour policy and usually have high expectations of pupils to work hard and achieve. This makes all pupils feel secure. They respond well to their teacher's comments of praise and invariably try harder.

32. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and often write comments that give pupils guidance on how to improve their work. However, pupils' mathematics work is more often simply ticked. All teachers regularly give pupils work to do at home, in accordance with the school homework policy. This is a good way to further the school's partnership with parents.

33. Teachers make very good use of classroom assistants, learning support assistants and volunteers. They always include in their planning the role they want support staff to play in lessons, with the result that the latter have an important impact on pupils' learning.

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

34. The quality and range of learning opportunities are very good for pupils under five in the Foundation Stage, and promote their learning very well. Good planning prepares children to achieve the early learning goals, and the school meets its statutory requirements to teach all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. There are aspects of the information and communications technology programme which do not receive sufficient attention, but the school is aware of this and is addressing the issue by purchasing new hardware and software. Previously, the subject as a whole did not receive enough time or attention. This situation has improved.

35. The school provides a good range of learning opportunities for all its pupils, through a broad, varied and stimulating curriculum which plays an important role in the generally high standards reached. The curriculum is supported and enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities, educational visits and visitors to the school. In effect, the curriculum promotes a very good learning environment, an improvement on that found previously. There are appropriate amounts of time given to each subject, both specifically and when aspects of one subject are taught in another. For example, pupils in Key Stage 1 extend their scientific knowledge of levers in design and technology lessons.

36. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is excellent, and focuses on their individual needs within the framework of the whole curriculum. Precise targets identified in their individual education plans help to meet these pupils' needs. Class teachers regularly review plans in close consultation with the special educational needs co-ordinator and parents. All teachers follow closely the recommendations of the plans.

37. The school has very successfully introduced the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. Planning and monitoring of the teaching of literacy and numeracy is effective. The previous report noted that curriculum planning lacked coherence because of a shortage of schemes of work for each subject. This weakness has been removed. Sound schemes of work now support the teaching of all subjects. The schemes are based on recently introduced nationally agreed guidelines, adapted to meet the needs of the pupils.

38. There is good provision for pupils' personal development. 'Circle' time sessions follow very well the guidance of a policy and scheme of work for personal, social and health education. There are good policies for sex and drug education. The time allocated to assemblies is justified by the positive impact they have on the attitudes of the majority of the pupils towards the school, and on their behaviour and personal development. A Year 3 class assembly exemplified this extremely well when the subject of arguments was illustrated in a lively, informative and thought-provoking way.

39. The school timetable pays good attention to English, mathematics and science, and to the efficient use of support staff. For example, those pupils with special educational needs receive their full entitlement to the curriculum, and pupils who speak English as an additional language receive good support. Consequently, all pupils have equality of access and opportunity to the curriculum. This aim for full pupil inclusion is specified in all school policies, and fully achieved.

40. The planning of the curriculum is very carefully carried out to meet the needs of all pupils. The standard of planning makes a very positive impact on the quality of teaching. Under the guidance of subject leaders, teachers regularly discuss the work done, the plans for the coming week, and the individual achievements of pupils. To stimulate further interest, parents are given a list of the topics to be taught each half term. The homework policy is followed consistently. Homework substantially reinforces and extends learning in school.

41. There is a good range of after-school clubs for all pupils in Key Stage 2. These clubs attract a large number of pupils. Activities include football, netball, hockey, art, gymnastics, science, recorders, and choir. Visits outside the school range from walks within the local environment by the reception classes to a Year 6 residential visit to Portsmouth. They give pupils insight into real life situations, and help them develop social attributes and awareness of the wider world. The school has good links with the local church, and pupils become involved in activities in the community, for example through entering local music competitions. Good use is made of available parents, a vicar, visiting theatre groups, and volunteers from local firms to help pupils in their learning, such as in cooking or reading activities. There are constructive links with nearby schools. Pupils have the opportunity to move to one of several secondary schools at the age of 11. There are satisfactory links with all of these.

42. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good overall, and is a true reflection of the school's aims to develop personal, moral and spiritual values, and to show respect for others. There was a similar judgement made at the time of the previous inspection.

43. Provision for spiritual education is good. Pupils take part in daily collective worship, at which they often recite the school prayer. Agreement has been made with non-Christian families about prayers acceptable to them in the weekly 'recommendation' assemblies, and so all feel the spiritual experience of assembly at least weekly. The school teaches pupils about religious beliefs and values, which they respect, as shown by their regard for a fellow pupil fasting for Ramadan. They learn about rangoli patterns for Diwali, which represent different emotions. Spirituality is inherent elsewhere in the school, but is not specifically planned as part of the curriculum.

44. The school provides very well for pupils' moral education. There is a strong moral code, based on Christian principles and enforced throughout the school from reception onwards. The caring ethos is almost tangible, for example as when an older boy picked up a younger one who had fallen over, and when Year 6 pupils designed play shelters for the youngest children in the school. The school fosters honesty, fairness and respect for others. Pupils and parents say that any bullying is dealt with promptly and effectively. Pupils have drawn up their own rules of behaviour, which they follow in lessons, and in the dining hall and playground.

45. Provision for social development is very good. Children are always encouraged to think about others, and about their social responsibility in the world, for example when considering the famine in Ethiopia in a whole school 'Africa Week'. Pupils themselves often initiate support for children's television charity appeals. They support various charities, such as 'Cancer Research' and 'Christian Aid'. Social responsibility is satisfactorily encouraged, such as when the reception class pupils take registers back to the school office, and others stack lunch boxes. However, there is no decision-making forum, such as a school council, to discuss whole school issues. All adults in the school are very good social role models. They are polite, courteous, and value the pupils' contribution to lessons. Pupils work extremely well in groups, for example during design and technology lessons and in teams in physical education.

46. Provision for cultural education is good. British culture is promoted by looking at the history of the country's growth, particularly in those years within living memory of grandparents, one of whom visited the school to speak to the pupils about the post war years. Other visits from theatre groups, and participation in performances and music competitions, serve to enrich pupils' cultural development. Some pupils use the Internet to discover aspects of other cultures, for example the part played by musical instruments in representing other cultures and customs of the world. Religious education lessons also teach pupils about different ways of life. However, the school does not take enough advantage of the opportunities presented by nearby, multi-cultural Bristol to prepare pupils for adult life in a culturally diverse society.

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

47. The school cares for its pupils well. All teachers know their pupils well and relate positively to them. Detailed procedures are in place for child protection. The deputy headteacher is the named person and has received correct training. The school has adopted the local area child protection committee's code of practice, and has scheduled a complete revision of the school's child protection policy in spring 2001. The school intends that the proposed revision will take account of the need for further training, as advised by the statutory body.

48. There is good provision for the health and safety of pupils and staff. Lunch and playtime breaks are well supervised. Accidents, injuries and illness suffered by pupils, however minor, are dealt with in a caring and supportive way. Pupils become aware of health matters in lessons that are part of a good personal, social and health education programme. For example, pupils from the reception classes onwards learn about the benefits of a healthy eating lifestyle. Pupils are taught to be aware of the dangers of drugs. Police and other experts regularly visit the school to talk and give advice about health and safety, drug abuse prevention and road safety.

49. The health education programme includes instruction in sex education. The governing body has declared that it will monitor the progress of its sex education policy and will publish its findings in its annual report to parents. The governing body fully supports sex education in a whole-school context. In effect, the school provides sex education within topic approaches to science and religious education.

50. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are good. Attendance, registration, and related procedures comply with statutory requirements. There are systematic procedures to deal with any unauthorised absence. Consistently good attendance is encouraged and rigorous follow-up procedures are in force to investigate unreported absences.

51. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good. Teachers' very high expectations of good behaviour have a good effect. Pupils know the rules, and they receive awards for good behaviour and/or improvement. The school has a policy for promoting good behaviour for the benefit of all. A fair but firm disciplinary policy, well understood by pupils and staff, complements this. However, a few parents feel that there is some inconsistency amongst teachers about the close following of disciplinary procedures. There was no evidence found to support this view. The school's anti-bullying policy has been effective in deterring any outbreaks of bullying.

52. The school's policy for equality of opportunity is clear and specific. It supports the need to provide equally for all pupils and staff through a fair and carefully managed learning environment. For example, those pupils who have special educational needs are identified at an early stage. Their needs are fully met through the precise and focused targets set in their individual education plans. Teachers' lesson planning always takes full account of these pupils' needs, as well of the needs of other pupils. Support is directed well to those pupils who need it.

53. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are very good. The last inspection report pointed to the need for consistent practice in assessing and recording pupils' progress in all subjects. The school has fully addressed this issue.

54. Teachers formally assess children when they enter the Foundation Stage, and they identify those who have difficulty with learning letter/sound matches, blending and breaking down words into constituent sounds. These children are given immediate help by teachers, nursery nurses and parents, working in partnership.

55. All pupils take the statutory National Curriculum tests and assessments at the ages of seven and eleven. Data from these tests are used well to help teachers plan future work and to ensure that the needs of individual pupils are addressed. In addition, pupils take the optional National Curriculum tests in English and mathematics in Years 3, 4 and 5. Teachers regularly assess pupils' reading progress and their acquisition of scientific knowledge, understanding and skills.

56. As pupils progress through the school, teachers collate the results of formal tests and build up an academic profile of each pupil. Pupils' performance in the statutory tests at the age of seven is used to predict what level they may reach at the age of eleven. The use of this and other assessment data to guide curriculum planning is very good. For example, analysis of the 2000 National Curriculum test results confirmed that the significant improvement in standards in reading and spelling were not matched in writing, and that relatively few pupils were achieving the higher levels. This led to adjustments in planning, designed to improve pupils' writing skills.

57. Teachers regularly update individual reading and writing records. These provide information to set future targets to raise standards. The information gained from assessment is used very successfully to highlight strengths and weaknesses of individuals and groups of pupils. A good target for the year 2000-2001 is to develop assessment, record keeping, monitoring and evaluation procedures, including the use of computers to collate and analyse pupils' performance further.

58. Procedures for assessing pupils' personal development are sound, though largely informal. They are based on teachers' observations and their own knowledge and understanding of individuals. Teachers generally use praise satisfactorily to build pupils' self esteem and to give them confidence to achieve in all aspects of their work. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to play a part formally in their own target setting and group decisions.

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

59. The school has a strong partnership with parents, and it continues to build on this. Parents are well disposed to the school and what it has to offer their children. They are very welcome at the school and respond well to this open approach. The school successfully encourages parents to become involved in their children's learning, and keeps them well informed about the way their children are taught in lessons. For example, many parents learn

about the methods the school uses to teach the skills of reading. They are helped in this by a videotape designed to promote support by parents at home. Parents share with their children their confidence in the school and its staff. The school consults at an early stage with parents of pupils with special educational needs. They are fully involved when the teachers draw up individual education plans and are strongly encouraged to be involved in the regular reviews about their child's progress.

60. Voluntary help in school from parents, and other volunteers from the community, is actively encouraged, especially to help pupils with their reading. For example, a local business has formed a voluntary group of its employees who regularly visit the school to hear pupils read. On one day during the inspection, no fewer than 15 parent helpers and four members from the local business were helping in a structured and efficient way. This is a very important resource for the school, and a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.

61. The school keeps parents very well informed of school matters and their children's progress. Parents receive regular and up-to-date newsletters about school activities. These are clear and well presented. Parents are given brief outlines of topics to be studied each half term. They say that this is helpful, because they can arrange family visits or reading resources to support work their children do in school. Each term, there is a formal consultation evening for parents and teachers, and these events are well attended. Parents are encouraged to talk informally to teachers at end of the school day, and many take advantage of this. Pupils' individual assessment reports are thorough, and parents can view these in greater depth during informal discussion with teachers. Annual written reports to parents about their children's progress are detailed. They give important information about work covered in the preceding year, and of the knowledge and skills pupils have learned, and they sometimes set targets for improving achievement in the succeeding year.

62. Parents know that there is a school policy on homework, and expect to become involved in their child's weekly programme of tasks to do at home. There is some disagreement amongst parents about the usefulness or amount of homework set, but the great majority are in favour of the school's approach.

63. A home/school agreement is in force, signed by parents and well supported. It clearly contributes to parental understanding of the aims and values of the school, and its routines and expectations. The parents', teachers' and friends' association continues to thrive. It organises fund raising events for the school, and parents and pupils support these events well. They are not only a welcome contribution to the school's financial resources but also provide opportunities for social contacts between staff, parents and pupils.

64. Strong links with the local community, and the school's support for local charities, also provide a valuable resource for learning and teaching. Parents who have accompanied their children to school will often stay and view assemblies. However, lack of space in the halls means that the majority of parents have too few opportunities to sample these special events, a factor which many parents regret.

65. The governing body's annual report to parents and the school brochure are both clear and easily understood documents.





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

66. The headteacher's leadership of the school is outstanding. He places a clear emphasis on raising standards and improving the quality of education at the school, and provides a very clear and accurate analysis of what needs to be done. Through his practices and adherence to policies, the headteacher successfully promotes in his staff high expectations for pupils to achieve. The deputy headteacher and other senior staff provide very strong and effective support. Individual members of the senior management team have very clearly defined roles and responsibilities, which they pursue well. The work of the team has had a major impact on the good rate of improvement made by the school.

67. The delegation of responsibilities for curriculum management is very effective. Each subject has a working party comprising key staff who have responsibility for and/or expertise in the subject. Subject leaders have responsibility for raising achievement and improving the quality of teaching, whilst the subject working parties are concerned with the content of the teaching programme and resources for learning. This management arrangement is very effective in ensuring that initiatives are well planned, put into practice efficiently, and evaluated. The school very well reflects its aims and values in its work.

68. The governing body discharges its duties well, and fulfils all statutory requirements. For example, there is a very good special educational needs policy, which conforms to the Code of Practice, and a systematic programme for monitoring provision.

69. The governors regularly receive sound and reliable reports from the headteacher and other senior staff. The information invariably focuses on school development, and forms a good basis for taking decisions. For example, the governors recently took the decision to withdraw the deputy headteacher from full time classroom responsibility. This change creates a more efficient use of her time, to take a more active part in monitoring the curriculum and the quality of teaching and learning. An efficient subcommittee structure has oversight of the curriculum, property, finance and staffing. Committee members are aware of their responsibilities, and committees give regular written reports to the full governing body. Governors with specific responsibility for the oversight of literacy and special educational needs discharge their responsibilities very effectively. Their constructive contributions have contributed to the strength of the school's provision in these areas. Governors undertake regular training to give them the skills and confidence to make purposeful visits to the school. In this way, they are able to take an effective role in shaping the future of the school. Indeed, they have taken some important and difficult decisions in the light of a recent rapid growth in the school population, considerable additions to the school building, and appointment of many new members of staff. The rise in standards is a direct result of their decisions, supported very well by the work of the senior management team.

70. The governors have dealt effectively with the issues raised at the previous inspection. The governors, in conjunction with the special educational needs co-ordinator, and other staff, are to be complimented for the extent to which provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved. Provision is now excellent because of a major restructuring and training programme,

much of it promoted and supported by the co-ordinator. The achievements of these pupils have a major impact on the overall high standards reached by the school at the end of both key stages.

71. The school development plan is a very good working document, which gives a firm basis for the staff and governors to evaluate the effectiveness of the school and to make improvements. The three-year plan is short and is focused on whole school issues for improvement, such as the development of information and communication technology, the introduction of the revised National Curriculum, and staff development. It is supported by very good supplementary plans for subjects and key stage management. Teachers' subject working parties draw up these plans. They clearly identify action to be taken to raise standards, the costs, the timescale, and procedures for review and evaluation.

72. The performance of pupils in statutory and non-statutory tests is carefully analysed, compared with national and local results, and used as the basis for setting new targets and the means required to achieve them. The monitoring of teaching and learning is firmly established and is effective. Teachers are used to having observers in their classrooms and are constructively critical of each other's work. Monitoring is an area of the work of the school that has improved significantly since the previous report. All subject leaders now have regular opportunities to observe lessons, and they have been helped in this by the release of the deputy headteacher from full time class responsibility. Structured monitoring of teaching is rightly seen as important for the induction of teachers new to the school, and gives all teachers access to more effective teaching practices. The time given to monitoring is well used, and lesson observations conform to an agreed format.

73. There are sufficient teachers appropriately qualified to teach the requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education. There is a good balance on the staff between teachers who are long established and experienced, and those who are new to the school. Induction arrangements for newly qualified teachers are good, and the school ensures that newly appointed teachers are very well informed and supported. This is an improvement on the situation found previously. Currently, staff are involved in professional appraisal interviews, and the professional development of staff is good. It is linked to the school development plan, curriculum action plans, and teachers' individual professional needs. Recent training in the national numeracy strategy has contributed to a consistent understanding and approach to the teaching of this subject.

74. A significant number of general classroom assistants have undertaken a good range of relevant in-service training. They and other adult helpers are well briefed by the teachers and the special educational needs co-ordinator where appropriate, and are effective. They have a positive impact on pupils' learning and attainment, especially those pupils who have special educational needs. There is a strong sense of teamwork among the whole staff and parent helpers, who all display commitment to the school and its pupils. For example, five parents are currently involved on a long-term course to make their voluntary work in school more effective. The administrative staff ensure that the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. The last inspection report noted that the staffing of the school was satisfactory. All adults who work in school now make a very positive contribution to the quality of learning and social development of the pupils. There is a strong commitment to improve.

75. The school's accommodation is good. The main building contains adequately sized, well maintained classrooms. There is easy access to the well-stocked libraries, halls and teaching support areas. These areas are used very effectively, especially by the general classroom assistants and parents when they are working with small groups of pupils. All accommodation features enhance the teaching of the curriculum in a variety of ways, such as the use of the pond in science, and the use of the adventure play area in physical education. The building of a second hall has lightened demands on the original hall. However, there is not a room big enough to accommodate the whole school, a point made by parents at the pre-inspection meeting.

76. The stock of learning resources has improved since the previous report, especially in English and mathematics, where 'big books', set books, and published schemes have been well chosen to support the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Included in these books is the prescribed range of fiction, non-fiction, poetry and play scripts. Resources are generally of good quality and quantity, especially those for the children in the foundation stage. However, resources for information and communication technology require further additions, with respect to both hardware and software.

77. The school makes very good strategic use of its resources. It carefully links decisions on spending to its educational priorities of raising standards and providing staff development. The school's specific grants are used to very good effect for designated purposes. The money the school receives for pupils with special educational needs is spent to enhance staffing and comply with the Code of Practice procedures.

78. The principles of best value are applied in the school's use of resources, and the school pays good attention to spending in relation to standards achieved. Governors make their decisions to spend money after carefully considering all the options. Financial control and administration is effective and efficient. The school's use of new technology is good.

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

79. There are no significant issues requiring attention to effect improvements to the school. However, the governors, headteacher and staff should define in their action plan how they intend to:

- improve to a consistently high standard the way pupils present their day-to-day work;
- extend and develop pupils' skills in using information and communication technology in a wider range of subjects;
- give pupils more opportunities to take part in setting their own targets and in group decisions;
- give more opportunities for pupils to acquire deeper knowledge and understanding about our modern, multi-cultural society.

*(Paragraphs: 13, 46, 58, 76, 98, 111, 120, 123, 153 )*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	83
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	45

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

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
10	36	42	12	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)	525
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	27

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	54

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	15

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	22
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	18

### *Attendance*

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.29

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

National comparative data	5.4
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National comparative data	0.5
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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	<b>Year</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Total</b>
	2000	42	44	86

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	36	37	40
	Girls	42	43	43
	Total	78	80	83
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	90 (94)	94 (95)	97 (94)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	38	38	39
	Girls	42	42	42
	Total	80	80	81
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	93 (95)	93 (95)	94 (82)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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	<b>Year</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Total</b>
	2000	30	26	56

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	27	28	28
	Girls	24	22	25
	Total	51	50	53
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	91 (70)	89 (63)	95 (79)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	79 (78)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	23	25	25
	Girls	23	20	22
	Total	46	45	47
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	82 (75)	80 (58)	84 (77)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

*Ethnic background of pupils*

	<b>No of pupils</b>
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	5
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	4
White	410
Any other minority ethnic group	20

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

*Exclusions in the last school year*

	<b>Fixed period</b>	<b>Permanent</b>
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)	21.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.8
Average class size	29.2

#### **Education support staff:**

**YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	203

### *Financial information*

Financial year	<b>1999/2000</b>
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	£
Total income	794124.00
Total expenditure	779192.00
Expenditure per pupil	1556.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	72162.00
Balance carried forward to next year	87094.00

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	525
Number of questionnaires returned	199

### Percentage of responses in each category

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Tend to agree</b>	<b>Tend to disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
My child likes school.	71	27	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	61	34	3	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	46	3	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	41	14	3	4
The teaching is good.	60	39	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	45	42	11	1	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	25	2	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	34	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	45	45	8	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	53	43	2	2	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	42	2	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	34	34	9	4	18

## **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**

80. Children enter the reception class at the beginning of the year in which they become five. There is a phased induction period, which involves part-time attendance for the first half term of schooling. This process, and the skill and experience of the reception teachers and nursery nurses who work together very closely as a team, ensures that children settle in quickly and that daily routines are soon established. Most children at the time of entry have attended local playgroups or private nurseries. Their literacy and social skills are nevertheless below what might be expected, though early mathematical ability is about average. During their time in the reception classes their learning progresses very well, with the result that by the time they reach the end of the reception year most children have already met or exceeded the nationally recommended early learning goals. Early reading and writing skills develop particularly well.

#### *Emotional, personal and social development*

81. Children make very good progress in this area of learning. After just over a half term in the school, young children confidently carry out a range of tasks. They take registers in pairs to the office, and stack the class lunch boxes ready for children to go to lunch. They know the daily routine well. The great majority have gained sufficient independence to choose their activity from the teacher's list during play activities, and to be responsible for placing their own name next to a picture of the activity.

82. Children are very eager to learn, and they concentrate well on their activities. Their concentration spans are high for their age and they are not easily distracted from their tasks. This is a direct result of teachers' expectations and of interesting and worthwhile activities, which engage and motivate children during every lesson. Activities demand children's full attention, which they happily give because they find the work challenging and want to complete their tasks. They happily share equipment, such as computers, jigsaw puzzles, or when making shapes with pegs on boards. In 'circle' time, children show increasing confidence when talking to the class. They respect the feelings of those children who do not want to talk first. Staff direct the children very well. The caring atmosphere is one of high expectations of behaviour and manners from everyone.

#### *Language and literacy*

83. Children make very good progress in developing their language and literacy skills because of teachers' excellent use of a structured phonics programme. Half of each class at a time work intensively in small groups for about twenty minutes each day, whilst the rest are engaged in purposeful play activities. They very rapidly learn the forty basic sounds of the English language and start to build them into words, thus preparing very well for reading and writing. Parents play an important part in this area of their children's education by helping them to practise at home. A video is helpfully available to teach parents how to do this. This literacy teaching initiative has a very

marked effect on children's later attainment in statutory tests at Key Stage 1, when standards of reading and writing show improvement year on year.

84. Children's speaking and listening skills develop well. Staff make a point of regularly talking to children about their work, and increase their vocabulary daily by introducing new words during short literacy sessions and other parts of the curriculum. For example, discussions about the recent 'autumn' topic prompted the words 'prickly', 'spiky', 'rustling' and 'crushing' to describe articles on the interest tables. Children speak confidently in front of their class during the last part of lessons, and describe their work when taking part in group activities. They love to look at books and to listen to taped stories in the listening corner. They follow the story, turn pages in the right direction, and look closely at the pictures and print, which they know conveys meaning. Early writing skills develop very well as children practise writing 'in the air' and learn to write sounds. Their handwriting improves as they trace over lines already drawn for the first one or two attempts. All children recognise their names when they are written down, and many write their names correctly themselves. Through very good teaching, all children should reach, and most exceed, the early learning goals for language and literacy by the time they move into Key Stage 1.

#### *Mathematical development*

85. Mathematical skills are about average on entry to the reception classes, and children quickly strengthen these early skills and extend them. Teachers plan the daily numeracy lessons very well. Children extend number skills by counting up to 20 forwards and backwards, and use their fingers to make one more or one less than numbers up to ten. Very imaginative teaching helps children quickly to learn to recognise common shapes, such as squares, circles, rectangles, and triangles. For example, teachers use a cardboard 'wall' behind which they hide the shapes. Children wait in excited anticipation as the first part appears. The shape is cleverly disguised so that it is not possible to tell what it is until it is revealed fully. Children love to learn through games, and teachers use this approach to very good effect. For example, a game with dice moving along a card marked with shapes was very effective in supporting and extending children's learning.

86. Teachers and nursery nurses work very well together, complementing each other's work. They know the children's capabilities very well, and use similar grouping arrangements to teach mathematics as in literacy teaching. At this rate of progress, by the end of reception, nearly all children should reach the early learning goals for mathematics, and most should exceed them.

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

87. Children progress very well in this area of learning. They develop a good understanding of the world about them through very well planned activities that take place in afternoons, when the focus is on a particular aspect. The 'autumn' topic led to children classifying twigs, leaves, conkers, and snail shells into hard, soft, smooth and rough groupings. Children learn where food comes from through work about farms and drawing pictures of the animals found on a farm and creatures in the sea. They learn to distinguish between clothes suitable for hot and cold weather when they play a game about a snowman and the sun. Children choose appropriate clothing for the hot and cold 'sets' displayed on a table. They learn about the passage of time when they discuss the months of

their birthdays, and draw pictures of themselves to place in a train or hot air balloon labelled with particular months.

88. Children learn to identify parts of their bodies and label wall pictures to remind them. They learn about the world of work when they pretend to be professional staff. For example, in 'Olive's opticians' they choose attractive spectacles after having an eye test, and they pretend to have their hair cut at 'Snippit, Clippit and Curlit', the hairdressers. Most children confidently use a computer and listen to taped stories at some time during every day.

### *Creative development*

89. Children make very good progress in their creative development, thanks to many high quality experiences planned for them by their teachers. They enjoy painting and drawing. In an activity seen during the inspection, children learned to make orange paint from a mixture of red and yellow powder paints. Under the very good direction of the teacher, they quickly learned to mix the powder with water to a workable consistency. They discovered that adding more red would make the paint darker, and more yellow would make a lighter shade. In previous weeks, children had used yellow to produce an eye-catching display of yellow paintings, which contained fish, people, and an imaginative chick with four legs. Sentences children wrote to accompany the paintings included descriptions such as, 'Yellow are the smiley faces that my sister draws on invitations'.

90. Children use computers to draw houses, and proudly show off their work during 'show and tell' sessions. They look at the work of famous artists and attempt artwork in a range of styles. For example, an eye-catching display in the main hall of the school displays children's finished collages in the style of Matisse. Children develop their musical skills well under very good direction of their teachers. Singing often enhances numeracy lessons, for example when children sing and act out with great enjoyment 'Five currant buns in the baker's shop', and similar counting songs. At assemblies, they join in well with songs such as 'He's got the whole world in His hands' as they contemplate the Advent wreath. In music lessons, children learn about the value of and differences between sound and silence. All children are likely to reach this early learning goal by the time they enter Year 1, and many are well set to exceed it.

### *Physical development*

91. Physical skills develop well through a wide range of well-planned activities, which include gymnastics, games and dance, as well as play on the outdoor adventure playground. Children's movement and control of the whole body, in such activities as throwing, catching and balance, develops well. Children gain self-confidence as they learn to cross, unaided, a rope bridge on the climbing frame. Their social skills develop well when they work in pairs and small groups to play with and share balls and beanbags. A particularly enjoyable physical activity was seen as children responded very well to words and music during a tape recording of 'We're going on a bear hunt'. Some children were fully involved through whole body movement and facial expression when 'walking through a muddy river'. The teacher's very good interpretation of the tape and occasional use of praise for expression, such as 'That's a lovely scared face', motivated the children to achieve well.

92. Children develop their fine motor skills very well in using tools, such as scissors and glue sticks, when making models with construction kits and cardboard. Teachers pay very good attention to the correct way of using pencils and paintbrushes, which promotes a rapid development of skills. All children are well on the way to meeting this early learning goal by the end of reception, and most should exceed it.

## **ENGLISH**

93. In the Year 2000 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1, the proportion of pupils reaching the nationally expected Level 2 or higher in reading and writing was well above the national average in reading and close to the national average in writing. The proportion reaching the higher Level 3 was very high in reading in comparison with the national average, and close to the national average in writing. On the basis of teacher assessments, the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level or higher in speaking and listening was above the national average. The proportion achieving the higher level was in line with the national average. Attainment in reading was well above the average in comparison with similar schools, but below the average in writing. Attainment in reading has been above the national average for the last four years, with a steep rise in 1999 and a further rise in 2000. In writing, attainment has remained above the national average, with a steep rise in 1999 but a drop to 1998 standards in 2000. Standards of pupils currently in Year 2 are above the national average and, in view of the measures in place to improve writing, have the potential to be well above the national average by the end of the key stage. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection, when attainment at Key Stage 1 was in line with the national average.

94. In the Year 2000 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2, the proportion of pupils reaching the nationally expected Level 4 or higher in English was well above the national average. The performance of pupils exceeded the national average for their age group by the equivalent of nearly two terms. The proportion achieving the higher level was above the national average. Attainment in English was average in comparison with that in similar schools. Attainment in English has been above the national average for the last four years, except in 1998, when it fell below the average, and in 1999, when it was in line with the national average. It rose significantly in 2000 to well above the national average. Standards of pupils currently in Year 6 are above national expectations and, in view of the close tracking and the efforts being made to help individual pupils to progress, have the potential to be well above the national average by the end of the key stage. This represents an improvement since the last inspection, when attainment was above national expectations.

95. Pupils' attainment on entry is below the standard expected for their age with regard to the development of literacy skills. They make very good progress in speaking and listening and reading, and good progress in writing. Standards of speaking and listening are generally good throughout the school because pupils have very good attitudes to school and are attentive and interested. There is a clear, planned progression for the teaching of speaking and listening skills through word and sentence level work and shared text work in the literacy hour, and in other sessions devoted to speaking and listening. A significant factor in pupils' confidence in speaking and listening is that, in

all subjects of the curriculum, pupils are given opportunities to take part in discussions and to demonstrate methods and reasoning. In the best lessons, whole class teaching in oral work consolidates and sharpens pupils' skills and is followed by appropriately demanding extension work. In the last part of lessons, pupils evaluate what they have learnt and assess the extent to which they have achieved the aims of the lesson. There are opportunities in personal, social, health and moral education for pupils to discuss their concerns and reflect on more complex issues. Pupils throughout the school benefit from opportunities to lead assemblies and to take part in dramatic productions.

96. Pupils' attainment in reading exceeds national expectations in both key stages. In the shared reading sessions in all classes, pupils listen carefully to the teacher and are keen to read. Key Stage 1 teaching focuses on letter/sound relationships, blending and breaking down words into letter sounds, or phonemes. For example, in an extended writing lesson in Year 1, pupils counted the phonemes in adjectives they suggested to describe old and new toys, such as 'sh' 'a' 'bb' 'y', thus sharpening their skills. By the end of the key stage, most pupils are confident in sounding out words independently. They read aloud fluently and expressively. They express ideas about major events in stories, poems and non-fiction, and use more than one strategy in reading unfamiliar words and establishing meaning. They show understanding of the main features of fiction and non-fiction books and express preferences. They know how to locate books in the school library and find factual information. Reading materials are carefully graded to ensure a realistic level of challenge. Extended materials are colour coded to match the levels in the reading schemes, so that pupils can change reading books each morning and select another reading book in addition to the scheme book. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils show understanding of significant ideas, themes, events and characters in response to a range of texts. A significant majority of pupils select essential points and use inference and deduction where appropriate. The school has spent a considerable sum of money on attractive texts for use in the literacy hour. It further promotes reading skills by giving pupils opportunities to purchase books at regular book fairs.

97. Inspectors heard 54 pupils read, from across the age range and from all ability groups, and held discussions with them. This confirmed that reading is above national expectations in the foundation stage and well above national expectations in Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils benefit from the fact that there is a good range of fiction and non-fiction books in the school. The libraries and classrooms are well stocked. Many pupils also borrow books regularly from the local library. All classes have a regular library period, during which pupils select new books and confidently check their books in and out. Younger pupils read regularly to their parents at home, and the home/school reading diaries provide a useful dialogue between home and school. The support of governors, parents, members of the community and volunteer readers from a local business play a significant role in improving standards of reading in the school.

98. Writing is above national expectations at both key stages. The school has put many strategies in place to try to improve standards. Members of staff attend relevant courses and apply what they learn to their teaching in the classroom. Teachers model correct writing for pupils within literacy lessons. Colleagues observe each other's lessons and discussions are held on personal targets. Results of assessments are analysed to ensure consistent standards and progress. The emphasis on phonic work from an early age has had a significant effect on the raising of standards. Efforts continue to improve standards in writing across the curriculum. Handwriting is generally of a good quality, but there are several instances where presentation of work could be improved. There are

plans to increase the use of information and communication technology in developing literacy skills throughout the school. Evidence gleaned during the inspection suggests that pupils are making significant progress in writing and there is the potential for writing to reach well above average standards at both key stages. The emphasis is on different forms of writing, often related to the texts read during the literacy hour.

99. Pupils in Year 1 make links with history as they develop their writing skills, using complex sentences to describe old and new toys. They make progress in using non-fiction texts to find information. Pupils in Year 2 successfully write a letter of complaint warning Mrs Armitage to ride her bicycle in a safer manner, linked to their literacy text 'Mrs Armitage' by Quentin Blake. Pupils in Year 3 extend their understanding of dialogue and how it is presented, and suggest a good range of vocabulary to use in dialogue. They know when and how speech marks are used, and distinguish between narrative and dialogue. Pupils in Year 4 develop their understanding of instructional text. They evaluate it and develop their skill in writing it. Year 5 pupils read and explore the features of narrative poetry. More able pupils study Ogden Nash's poem, 'The Adventures of Isobel' and write further verses, trying to use the same rhyming patterns and structure. They investigate literal and figurative language in poems, and use metaphors and similes in composing a poem about animals. They develop their understanding of adverbs and use them to qualify verbs. Pupils in Year 6 are challenged in their work as they identify the organisational and language features of texts, and use this knowledge and understanding when writing reports.

100. Teaching is very good, overall, at both key stages. It was excellent in two lessons observed in Key Stage 1, very good in two lessons and good in three lessons. In Key Stage 2, it was very good in four lessons observed, good in five lessons and satisfactory in one lesson. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection when most teaching was satisfactory in Key Stage 1, and good in Key Stage 2. As a result of very good teaching, learning is also very good at both key stages. This represents an improvement since the last inspection, when learning was satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. Pupils' very good acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills is also the result of their enthusiasm for school and their very high level of interest and involvement in activities. This leads to the majority of pupils putting a considerable amount of intellectual and creative effort into their work. Teachers' promote very good learning through emphasising the acquisition of basic skills, such as phonics, the effectiveness of their planning, and their generally high expectations of effort, accuracy and behaviour. Teachers are supported in their efforts by pupils' interest, concentration and independence, their productivity and pace of working, their good behaviour and the quality of relationships that prevail. Pupils have a good knowledge of their own learning. Where teachers make good use of the last part of the literacy hour, pupils know what they can do, how well they are doing and how they can improve. Teachers' very good use of time and resources, including the deployment of learning support assistants, classroom assistants and voluntary helpers, helps to promote learning. This enables pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language to make very good progress commensurate with that of their peers. The emphasis that teachers place on pupils editing their own work, and the very good quality and use of continuous assessment, are also significant factors in the above average attainment.

101. The quality and range of learning opportunities are very good. The appropriate statutory curriculum is in place. The breadth, balance and relevance of the curriculum is very good. The



provision for pupils with special educational needs is excellent. The strategies for teaching literacy skills are very good and the provision for extra-curricular activities is good. There is equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. The curriculum is enriched through visits from actors and poets, regular book fairs, and opportunities for pupils to perform to an audience. Evidence of the breadth of the curriculum is apparent from displays around the school, such as acrostic poetry compiled by pupils in Year 2. Examples are 'I can hear exploding fireworks hiss, pop and bang in the midnight sky.... Roasting sausages sizzle on the barbecue. Their delicious smell fills the air.'

102. The leadership offered by the subject leader, the two co-ordinators, and other members of the working party is very good. They provide very clear educational direction for the subject and very good support for staff. The school's aims and values are reflected in the work in English. The priorities for development, with the strong emphasis on the development of phonics and writing, are appropriate. The monitoring of teaching and learning, teachers' planning, and pupils' work is very good. Regular assessment of pupils' work, analyses of test results, tracking of progress and the setting of targets have all had a significant effect on the raising of standards.

## **MATHEMATICS**

103. Standards have risen significantly since the time of the previous inspection. When compared with those of all schools nationally, results of the most recent national tests in 2000 show pupils' standards in mathematics to be well above the national average at both key stages. When compared with those of similar schools nationally, results at Key Stage 1 were well above the average; they were above the average at Key Stage 2. The proportions of pupils achieving at higher than nationally expected levels at both key stages were also well above the national average. These results represent a significant improvement on those of the previous year, notably at the higher than expected levels. Trends over time show a consistent rise in standards at Key Stage 1, and a more variable but overall rising trend at Key Stage 2. Much of this achievement is due to the consistently good quality teaching, the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, and the grouping by ability of pupils in Years 5 and 6. At both key stages, there is no difference in the performance of boys and girls. The last inspection judged that standards at Key Stage 1 were in line with national expectations, and above expectations at Key Stage 2. Current inspection evidence shows that standards are likely to be above national expectations at both key stages, although the full impact of the newly acquired textbooks and support group arrangements has yet to be realised. The inspection judges that pupils currently in Years 2 and 6 are on line to attain standards in 2001 at similar levels to the last year's results.

104. The quality of teaching is very good overall, with no unsatisfactory teaching. In Key Stage 1, teaching is very good. Of the five lessons observed, four were very good and one was good. Ten lessons were observed in Key Stage 2, of which one was excellent, two were very good, four were good and three satisfactory. This represents an improvement since the last report, when the quality of teaching was generally good. All teachers have a secure understanding and knowledge of the subject, with the result that they use questioning effectively to check and extend pupils' understanding. Invariably, the work set for pupils is appropriate to the level of attainment of each pupil. Lessons are well planned, along the lines of the numeracy strategy. A scrutiny of pupils' work, from reception to Year 6, shows a gradual progression in the teaching of all the elements of

the National Curriculum. Teachers in all lessons explain at the beginning what pupils are going to learn, and this captures their interest. Teachers' plans show how those pupils with special educational needs are to be supported, and provision for these pupils is very good. For example, there is usually very good use made of classroom support staff to work with groups or individuals. In all lessons, especially a Year 4 lesson on fractions, the teaching is lively, and conducted at a good pace. This ensures that pupils concentrate on their work and that they learn at a good rate. Invariably, teachers manage pupils well. These features of generally high quality teaching have an extremely beneficial impact on pupils' learning and achievement.

105. There are many examples of teachers using marking effectively, but there is some inconsistency in its use across the school. At best, the teacher sets targets for pupils to achieve in future work, and then uses the pupils' later success as a measure of progress. However, some teachers simply tick work and make few comments designed to improve pupils' work.

106. Most children enter the school in the reception classes with attainment that matches what might be expected of children of their age. By the time they leave the school, their attainment is well above expectations. All pupils make good or very good progress because teachers match work carefully to each pupil's level of prior attainment. For example, pupils with special educational needs make very good progress towards the targets set for them. All pupils make very good progress in the use and application of their mathematical skills and knowledge. They develop well their acquisition of numeracy skills, and a majority of pupils have a high level of skills by the time they leave at eleven. These pupils calculate answers quickly and accurately, using all four computation processes both mentally and with pencil and paper. In the mental mathematics part of a lesson, even pupils in a lower attaining Year 6 group each produced four interconnected number sentences about multiplication and division. The quality of learning is good in lessons in both key stages. In the fifteen lessons observed, learning was very good in five lessons, good in seven lessons, and satisfactory in three. A good rate of learning is achieved where the teaching is of good quality, pupils have a positive attitude, and tasks set are demanding but achievable. These characteristics were evident in nearly every lesson observed.

107. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils develop their own strategies for problem solving. Pupils of all attainment levels are competent in counting and recognising numbers. This was clearly evident in all the Key Stage 1 classes, where pupils successfully carried out mental calculations at the start of each lesson. These activities ranged from the recall of number bonds to 10 in Year 1, to counting up to 100 in 5's in the Year 2 class. Most pupils add and subtract confidently and can identify halves and quarters. They are beginning to use standard units for measuring length, mass and time correctly. They construct and interpret simple graphs, for example in the Year 2 classes, where pupils constructed 'birthday' and 'transport' graphs.

108. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils understand and apply a good range of strategies for solving mathematical problems. Those pupils with average and above average attainment, approximately nine out of ten pupils, achieve a good standard. Pupils develop well their knowledge and skills of mathematical shapes, measures, and ability to handle data. For example, pupils in Year 6 move on to investigate in some detail the properties of three-dimensional shapes.

109. There are good opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy skills in mathematics lessons, for example through displays of the 'word of the week.' There is, however, scope for more extensive use of computers in mathematics. The selection of computer programs available to support mathematics learning is satisfactory, but it needs extending. Nevertheless, examples of the use of computers are found mainly in displays. For example, pupils in Year 6 produce a variety of graphs about how they spend their time on Saturdays, and Year 2 pupils use computers to construct menus for their 'restaurants'.

110. Pupils use their numeracy skills in other subjects of the curriculum, for example in geography map work, where co-ordinates are used well, and in science to calculate and record results of investigations. There are good quality mathematical displays throughout the school. They comprise either teacher-presented information boards, or displays of pupils' work, for example symmetrical shapes drawn by Year 3 pupils, and the detailed properties of two-dimensional shapes by Year 5. Although limited in number, displays show a clear progression in pupils' skills and the use of mathematics in other subjects.

111. Pupils' attitudes towards mathematics are very good in both key stages, an improvement since the last inspection. This is because there is better planning of tasks matched to pupils' levels of attainment. The great majority of pupils listen attentively, sustain concentration, and work hard to complete tasks. In nearly all lessons seen, pupils were clearly interested and involved. They work well on their own, in pairs, and in small groups when given the opportunity. The presentation of work is generally satisfactory, but there are several examples of poorly presented work, for example when a ruler is not correctly used. Work in Key Stage 1 is usually done on printed worksheets, and this does little to encourage pupils to present their work in an orderly way.

112. The school has successfully implemented the National Numeracy Strategy. Evidence of the impact of this approach is seen throughout the school, and in the improvement of results this year. This success is due to the dedication of the staff and the very effective leadership by the subject manager, supported by the members of the subject working party. She has some opportunity to monitor the work of colleagues, and has good oversight of teachers' planning. The school uses national and commercial tests to assess pupils' development from term to term, and from year to year. The results of assessments are used well to group pupils according to their levels of attainment, and to set targets for them to achieve. There is a need to set targets that are more accurate for individuals. Educational resources are of good quality and quantity. They make a good contribution to pupils' learning.

## SCIENCE

113. The results of the statutory assessments (by teachers) of seven year olds in 2000 showed that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 2, or above, was well above the national average. Results were above the average for schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. Inspection findings show that most pupils make good progress and achieve at above expected levels, and that pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. Standards at Key Stage 1 have improved since the previous report.

114. In the Year 2000 statutory tests taken by pupils aged eleven, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 4, or above, was above the national average. The proportion reaching the higher Level 5 was well above the average. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level was also well above the performance of pupils in schools in a similar context. There is no significant difference between the performance of girls and boys. In the four-year period leading to 2000, standards have risen overall, with a particularly marked improvement between 1999 and 2000. There has been a substantial improvement in performance since the previous inspection in 1996.

115. Inspection findings confirm that, by the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils achieve levels which are at least in line with national expectations, and many achieve at higher levels. Pupils are particularly well skilled in the methods of scientific enquiry. This applies equally to pupils with special educational needs, who are often able to explain scientific principles orally which they might not be able to record accurately in writing. Higher attaining pupils are given some opportunities to extend their learning with enquiries which they undertake beyond the classroom, for example on school journeys.

116. Pupils in Key Stage 1 devise and plan their own experiments and predict results. For example, pupils in Year 2 investigate how far different toy vehicles travel when rolled down a ramp. With good prompting from the teacher, they suggest the likely effect of a different number and size of wheels, different weights of vehicle and the effect of changing the angle of the ramp. Other pupils use the prompt of a large poster to explain in detail the potential benefits and hazards of electricity in the home. They suggest simple safety measures, such as disconnecting appliances not in use and covering unguarded sockets. Pupils label the different components of a computer and understand the basic principles of hygiene. In Year 1, pupils study sources of light and carry out an enquiry into how far sound travels. They construct diagrams to help set out their data. In the reception classes, pupils look at sources of food, including food from the countryside. There is good evidence that teachers identify in their lessons links between science and other subjects. Consequently, pupils learn at an early stage how science and scientific enquiry explain a range of natural phenomena.

117. The quality of teaching was satisfactory in one third of lessons and good in the remaining two thirds. At Key Stage 2, the very firm emphasis on proper methods of scientific enquiry, and the constant reference to science in the home and in everyday life, ensures that pupils make good progress and achieve high standards. For example, pupils in Year 6 use very simple equipment to explore in detail the relationship between extension and load. With some minor exceptions, teachers use their own good subject knowledge to insist on the correct use of scientific vocabulary. Teachers use questioning and discussion well to extend pupils' knowledge and scientific understanding, and ensure that pupils revisit topics they have previously studied. For example, pupils in Year 3 deepen

their knowledge of light and sound, having previously looked at this topic in Year 1. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils were involved in a lively discussion about the properties of insulators, and learned how to record temperature accurately, display the data on a graph and draw conclusions. The teacher deliberately used some indifferent and inconclusive results to start a discussion about control factors, from which the pupils learned that experiments do not always produce the expected outcomes. In Year 5, the pupils identified and discussed the qualities of sound, despite a lack of stimulating resources to illustrate the teaching points.

118. Discussion with a small sample group of Year 6 pupils showed that they had good detailed recall of a wide range of topics from the science programme. For example, they could draw and correctly label parts of a plant, and explain the water cycle using correct vocabulary. They showed good knowledge of the functions of the major organs of the human body and their relationship to each other. They know that some materials such as water can exist in different states and that water at different temperatures can dissolve different quantities of solute.

119. Pupils' attitudes to science are very good. They are keen to talk about their work and show great interest in the subject, even when the resources are not particularly stimulating. In Year 2, pupils took part with minimal supervision in a number of different activities while the teacher gave her focused attention to a group carrying out the main activity. Pupils in Year 4 were particularly absorbed when conducting an enquiry into the rates of cooling of water, when beakers were insulated with different materials. In Year 6, pupils became animated and enthusiastic when invited to talk freely about what they had learned in science over the past two years.

120. The good rate of learning by the pupils and their high levels of achievement are largely due to good quality teaching. The teachers are knowledgeable and interested in their work and readily communicate their enthusiasm to pupils. The environment created in all classrooms is conducive to good learning, and the wall displays are stimulating. Pupils' work is valued, although the deliberate emphasis on acquiring scientific knowledge and skills through enquiry and discussion sometimes means that the quality of presentation is given a lower priority. Work is well planned. Teachers usually explain to pupils at the outset of lessons the clear and explicit aims, and structure their lessons well. The teachers know the pupils and their abilities well. They use this knowledge effectively to move pupils' learning on. This is particularly evident in group and individual work when teachers intervene to help pupils. This skill is particularly evident in the teaching of pupils with special educational needs at Key Stage 1, where the teachers have very detailed knowledge of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.

121. The formal assessment of pupils' progress is good. The school participates in the 'Astra Zeneca Scheme', which provides training in ideas for formative assessment. As the scheme develops, it will supplement and eventually replace the current end of topic assessments that already provide a good record of pupils' progress.

122. Science is well managed. The subject leader is relatively new to her role, but has already had some considerable success. She takes part in training opportunities and ensures that the benefits are passed on to other teachers. Responsibility for monitoring standards of achievement and the quality of teaching fall to the subject leader, whilst the other members of the subject working party deal with resources and planning. The senior management of the school supports the subject very well and there is a clear mechanism for reporting developments at every level.

123. There is a very good structure for curriculum development, comprising a subject working party and a programme of staff meetings. Significant curriculum developments since the previous inspection include the introduction the 'Purposeful Learning Activities for Young Scientists' scheme. The use of information and communication technology to support learning is not yet well developed beyond the use of the Internet to research topics.

## **ART**

124. The previous inspection report stated that the teaching of art was at least satisfactory. Evidence gathered from looking at pupils' recent work, and from teachers' planning, shows that the quality of teaching has improved. This evidence also shows that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, learn well in all aspects of the subject, a judgement acknowledging an improvement since the time of the last inspection. Pupils' achievements at both key stages are above those expected for their ages.

125. There were no lessons timetabled in the week of this inspection, because the art programme is taught in 'blocks' of time at specific points in the academic year. Therefore, no comment can be made on the attitude of pupils to their learning. However, pupils who take part in the very well attended after-school art clubs show enthusiasm for the subject.

126. The high quality of recently completed work in displays and collections suggests that teaching is of at least good quality. Planning documents and discussions show that teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic, and that they challenge and motivate pupils. Where teachers give clear and detailed advice about skills and techniques pupils' confidence grows, and this is evident in their work.

127. Teachers use a wide range of stimuli to interest and motivate pupils. For example, to develop their drawing skills, pupils produce simple observational drawings of leaves in the reception classes. They sketch Quentin Blake style 'Miss Braithwaite' pictures in Year 2, and produce careful drawings in Year 6 to display body movement. Pupils in Year 1 use pasta as a medium for creating collages of silver moons.

128. Work in Years 2 and 5 about famous people from history led to some attractive pictures of Henry VIII and Mother Teresa. Teachers use the work of a range of well-known artists to inspire pupils to use a range of media, techniques and styles. Examples include the work of Archinboldo in Year 2, Escher in Year 4, Andy Warhol in Year 5 and Kandinsky in Year 6. Pupils in every class

use their developing artistic techniques to support their work in other subjects, and this adds to the richness of their experiences. For example, in information and communication technology there are numerous examples of computer-generated pictures by pupils in Year 2. In history in Year 3, pupils make and decorate Egyptian masks, and pupils in Year 6 draw body action pictures in science. In the previous inspection, such evidence of the use of art in other subjects was found only in Key Stage 2.

129. Throughout the school, displays of pupils' work create an attractive visual environment. Learning is enhanced by the way that some pupils' work is displayed in areas of the school which are well away from their own classroom. For example, work done by infants is seen in junior corridors, and vice versa. In this way, pupils observe and celebrate the skills and achievements of those in other age groups.

130. There is a comprehensive policy for art, and a new scheme of work. These guide teachers well and ensure the progressive teaching of skills, knowledge and understanding. The subject leader provides effective guidance and support to other teachers. Her influence, the enthusiasm of the staff, and the good quality and range of materials have a positive impact on the teaching of the subject and the raising of standards.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

131. The standard of work is above expectations for pupils aged seven, and well above expectations for children aged 11. These judgements signify an improvement since the time of the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs show similar skills to others. They often shine in this subject because they are well motivated by its practical nature to succeed.

132. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils acquire a good range of practical skills through using the correct tools to cut and join paper, card, wood and textiles. They use simple sliding mechanisms and levers. Pupils make simple designs and evaluate their work to see if it could be improved. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils practise these skills, and extend them to include evaluation of existing products, the development of ideas through sketch designs, and the making of prototypes and final models. Products are finished very well because of pupils' good art skills.

133. Teaching seen during the inspection in both key stages was never less than good, and the standard of work seen in classes reflects this judgement. Over half of teaching is very good, and there was one excellent lesson. There are many examples of the positive effects of the teaching. For example, in a very good Key Stage 1 lesson, a group of pupils worked with a classroom assistant on moving joints and levers to make dancing teddy bears from cardboard. This delighted the pupils and enabled them to learn a great deal about the action of levers. Once shown how to make arms move, pupils used the same mechanism principles to make the legs. It was not possible to observe lessons in Year 2, but partly finished models of vehicles on wooden bases showed that good teaching had taken place. Secure joining of wood, with suitable strengthening from cardboard triangles, produced stable models with freely moving axles. The many examples of textile work from Key Stage 1 showed that teachers have high expectations of pupils' ability to stitch neatly and accurately. An 'autumn leaf' wall hanging showed particularly fine work in the leaf veins.

134. In Key Stage 2, teachers' very good knowledge of the design process results in work of well above average standard. In an excellent lesson in Year 4, pupils designed Christmas lights after making very detailed evaluations of existing products. The teacher increased pupils' knowledge by showing them how to use a construction kit to model their design. A prominent wall display reinforced pupils' scientific knowledge of circuits and materials that they could use in their final products. Pupils used a very good design sheet, which showed they had been taught well how to make top, side and bottom views of their designs. They all did this as a matter of course before setting out their own procedures for making the lights.

135. Design work of high quality is to be seen in Year 6 lessons when teachers plan carefully for a variety of 'design and make' products on the theme of 'Shelters'. Pupils are well motivated in their work. For example, they show good application and co-operation as they discuss and sketch ideas for making a play tent for young children, or a shelter for a pop concert. The final designs show imagination, and are realistic. Pupils are very well taught to consider the aesthetic appeal of their designs, their practicality, and the cost of materials.

136. Teachers use very good methods to help pupils to understand the ways in which products are designed in real life. For example, a Year 3 class took apart a cereal box, which helped them to design a mathematical 'net' to make a box for their own product, a new breakfast cereal for young children. The thoughtful design sheet prepared by the teacher had spaces for a 'net' plan, a front picture design, the product name and a free gift advertisement. The sheet gave an opportunity for pupils to practise their word processing skills, and for them to judge the impact of product packaging on the environment.

137. This is a very lively subject in the school. The subject leader's obvious enthusiasm and expertise elicits the best from the children and other teachers, with whom she discusses ideas. She monitors teachers' planning to make sure there is good use of official guidance and other supportive material.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

138. Pupils' achievement at the end of both key stages is good. This shows an improvement since the previous inspection, when achievement at both key stages was satisfactory. Pupils learn well, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is a second language. Only one lesson was observed in Key Stage 2. Judgements are based on this lesson, a scrutiny of work, teachers' long-term and medium-term planning, school documentation, current displays, photographs, and discussion with the subject co-ordinator.

139. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make good progress and use appropriate geographical vocabulary. Pupils in Year 1 successfully build on their knowledge and understanding of the world, gained in the foundation stage, to extend their understanding through the travels of 'Barnaby Bear' in Britain and abroad. Parents and children take him with them on their travels and pupils report back to the class on their return. This successfully develops their knowledge of places, physical features, the weather and methods of travel. They gain knowledge of the local area in a study of Stoke Gifford. Pupils in



Year 2 successfully compare the environment and facilities of Weston-Super-Mare with that of Stoke Gifford, using knowledge gained on a visit to the seaside resort. They extend their knowledge of the world through the study of an Indian village, which they compare and contrast with Stoke Gifford.

140. Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 2. Pupils in Year 3 continue to study the local area and further extend their knowledge of the world through a study of world weather. Year 4 pupils make links with history as they study village settlers. They competently use maps of different scales to discover where the early settlers lived. They carry out research and discover that many places have Norse and Anglo-Saxon origins, for example Slingsby ('by' meaning farm/village in Norse) and Stansted ('sted' meaning place/site in Anglo-Saxon). In the lesson observed in Year 4, pupils learned to use four-digit grid reference numbers to identify the position of places on a map. Pupils in Year 5 gain first-hand knowledge of water through a visit to a water treatment company. They also visit Weston-Super-Mare and build on the knowledge that they gained in Year 2. They survey traffic in the local high street and use their mathematical skills to present their results in graphical form. Pupils in Year 6 study mountain environments in this country and abroad, for example the Lake District and the Himalayas. They develop their understanding of rivers. They study the River Frome, taking water samples and measuring the flow.

141. Teaching was good in the lesson observed in Year 4. It is clear from an analysis of other evidence that teaching is good throughout both key stages. This represents an improvement since the last inspection, when teaching was generally satisfactory. As a result of good teaching, pupils learn well. Pupils' good acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding is also the result of their very good attitudes, their high level of interest and involvement, and their very good relationships and good behaviour. Teachers' emphasis on first-hand investigation promotes independent learning. The emphasis on effort and high standards, and on the posing of questions and seeking of answers by pupils, promotes good learning. Teachers' planning is good and the teaching methods they use help pupils to learn. The quality and use of ongoing assessment helps pupils to know how they can improve.

142. The leadership of the subject co-ordinator is good. She provides good support for staff and has a clear sense of educational direction for the subject. The priorities for development, particularly the increase in the use of information technology, are appropriate. The monitoring of teachers' planning, pupils' work and teaching and learning are effective.

## **HISTORY**

143. At the end of both key stages, pupils achieve above what might be expected for their ages. This maintains the position noted at the last inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress. During the inspection, one lesson was observed in Key Stage 1 and four lessons in Key Stage 2. Judgements are based on these lessons, a scrutiny of work, teachers' long-term and medium-term planning, the scheme of work, current displays, photographs, and discussion with the co-ordinator.

144. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils use appropriate historical vocabulary and show a developing sense of chronology. Pupils in Year 1 have some understanding of the immediate past in their grandparents' and parents' time. They show great interest in a display of old and new toys and compare their characteristics. They talk about what toys are made of, how they work, and how they have changed. Pupils use historical vocabulary such as new, newer, newest and old, older, oldest. They compare homes of today with what they were like long ago. Pupils in Year 2 explain why Florence Nightingale is still remembered and what qualities she possessed, such as courage and selflessness. They know why we celebrate 'Remembrance Day', and have a developing understanding of right and wrong, and the need to avoid fighting and arguments in their own lives. They write fluently about events such as the Great Fire of London.

145. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have a good understanding of the Ancient Greeks, invaders and settlers, the Romans, Ancient Egyptians, Tudors, Victorians, the Second World War and some aspects of recent history. Pupils in Year 3 extend their knowledge of hieroglyphics. They know that hieroglyphics were a form of communication. They are amazed that there were 700 picture signs altogether, some of which stood for whole words, that there were no symbols to represent vowels, and that some represent sounds rather than a letter. Pupils in Year 5 extend their knowledge of events that happened after 1948 in Britain. They learn that personal memories can be used to find out about the past. They act as historical detectives and gain experience in asking historical questions such as "What do I know?" "What do I want to know?" and "How do I find out?" They use their literacy skills in the form of note taking.

146. Teaching is good overall. Of the five lessons observed, teaching was very good in two lessons and good in three. These judgements match those made at the last inspection. As a result of good teaching, learning is also good, as it was at the last inspection. Pupils' good acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding is also the result of their very good attitudes, their high level of interest and involvement, their good behaviour, and very good relationships, which establish a positive ethos for learning. They put intellectual and creative effort into their work. Teachers' emphasis on the development of historical research skills promotes initiative and independent learning. Their emphasis on high standards and the effectiveness of planning and teaching methods, such as good questioning skills, promotes good learning. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, learn well. The quality and use of ongoing assessment helps pupils to progress.

147. The contribution of the community, through visits and visitors, is good. The curriculum is enriched through the residential visit to Portsmouth by pupils of Year 6, and their study of local history, including the history of the Clifton Suspension Bridge. Younger pupils compare the old and new aspects of their environment and begin to understand the concept of change. For example, to mark the new millennium pupils placed a time capsule in the courtyard, containing a tape, newspapers, children's work and photographs. The intention is to open the capsule in twenty years. Pupils broadened their knowledge through their production of a millennium display of famous people, such as Florence Nightingale, Christopher Columbus, Joan of Arc, Henry VIII and Louis Braille.

148. The leadership of the subject co-ordinator is good. The humanities working party supports her well. The priorities for development, particularly the increase in the use of information and communication technology, are appropriate.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

149. The standard of work in information and communication technology at the end of both key stages meets national expectations. All pupils make sound progress in their learning, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. This judgement reflects an improvement since the previous inspection, when standards at Key Stage 2 were judged to be below expectations. This improvement is due mainly to the installation and use of new computers, and the use of national guidance to support the development of a scheme of work.

150. In Key Stage 1, pupils in Year 2 change the colour, size and font of text during their lessons, and some attractive examples were seen. For example, pupils in Year 6 control text and graphics to write attractive newsletters for their 'Amazing News' folder. They use simple desktop publishing techniques for articles on a range of topics, such as the 'Teacher from Heaven and Hell', the 'Outbreak of hypnotism at St. Michael's', and a recipe for banana cream. They make good use of a spreadsheet to create pie and bar charts of their 'busy weekends'. There was no evidence of pupils' use of control and monitoring software, for example in design and technology or science, but such work is planned to take place later in the year.

151. Pupils of all ages enjoy working with computers and other information and communication technology equipment. They work well, either individually or in pairs. Most take a pride in what they can do. The examples of pupils' finished work display good attempts to produce quality pieces.

152. As very few lessons were observed in the subject during the inspection it is not possible to make a judgement on the quality of teaching. However, teachers are aware of how the skills in the subject can be acquired and developed through pupils using computers to support work in other subjects. For example, the recently installed school network means that pupils are eager to use the Internet, and teachers capitalise on this by setting research tasks. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 find out about musical instruments in other countries or, as part of their work in history, research information about the Ancient Egyptians. Teachers introduce new information and communication technology skills in a short lesson at the beginning of a week. Good examples of this were seen when teachers demonstrated particular skills well and made sure that all pupils understood the nature of the task, to be practised in design and technology and art lessons later in the week. Many pupils are already familiar with computers and frequently use them at home. These pupils often carry out new tasks without further explanation by the teacher. There are two computers in most classes, so there is a rota system in place to give all pupils a turn. The need for pupils to complete weekly tasks on computers sometimes causes them to miss parts of other lessons. This also prevents use of specific software in some lessons, for example the use of sensors to monitor changes in temperature during science investigations, or in geography weather studies.

153. All subject action plans rightly include the development and practice of information and communication technology skills, and the school recognises the need for further improvement in this aspect of its work. Information and communication technology is not yet used sufficiently to support work in other subjects, mainly because there are not enough computers for the number of pupils needing to use them. There is money set aside for the purchase of more computers and software, and the subject leader is enthusiastic about the further development of the subject. She and the subject working party have drawn up a useful list of skills to teach in each year group, and teachers use these well to plan their lessons. The leader monitors planning to check that the scheme is followed. The working party has put forward workable proposals for assessment, and pupils complete a classroom log to show the work they have done.

## MUSIC

154. By the end of both key stages, pupils experience a good range of musical activities to help them make good progress in this subject. Recent developments in the scheme of work are beginning to have the desired effect of raising pupils' levels of achievements to above what might be expected for their age. The school uses nationally recommended guidance, carefully supplemented by a commercial scheme of work. Additional support from the well-qualified subject co-ordinator ensures that teachers are well equipped to teach the subject.

155. The quality of teaching seen in the five lessons observed ranged from satisfactory to excellent. All teachers have good relationships with their pupils, which makes pupils comfortable and gives them confidence to take part in musical activities. This was particularly apparent in a reception class, when the teacher chose to conduct a performance lesson to only half the class, about 15 pupils. The teacher gave time to each pupil, and sensitively introduced the playing of percussion instruments. All the pupils gained confidence in keeping a rhythm set by the teacher, and their rate of learning was good.

156. By the end of the Foundation Stage, pupils have a good sense of rhythm. They sing a good range of songs in groups, keep a reasonable pitch, and sing many songs from memory, especially counting songs. Pupils in Key Stage 1 use rhythm and dynamics to accompany a chant. They use their good reading skills to follow a chant written for them on a white board, and then quickly learn to clap a difficult accompaniment. They can do this because the teacher develops their understanding carefully and clearly in small practical steps, as was seen in an excellent Key Stage 1 lesson. By the end of the key stage, most pupils are aware of different kinds of music. They sing confidently together in assemblies and classrooms. They begin to sing songs in the round, such as 'Mrs White had a fright', and play a range of simple percussion instruments to good effect.

157. Pupils in Key Stage 2 develop satisfactorily their musical skills and knowledge. They write their own lyrics and add them to the tune of a well-known nursery rhyme, such as 'Three blind mice'. This is a challenging task, because pupils work in groups and choose percussion instruments to accompany their singing. Some pupils make good progress in this

task because the teacher uses a colleague to work with a group of pupils with special educational needs. This leaves the teacher to give close attention to other groups, and to discuss with them how they can improve the quality of their performances. All pupils know that music has its own standard notation, but some higher attaining pupils develop their own format, which is easily followed by others in performance groups.

158. Pupils of all ages enjoy their music lessons, and other occasions when they take part in musical performances and learning. For example, about 50 pupils choose to be part of the school choir, which practices after school and competently produces resounding and high quality work. A similar number of pupils learn to play a tuned musical instrument, such as a recorder, violin, clarinet or flute. The school arranges instruction for these instruments, given by a visiting team of peripatetic instrumental teachers.

159. Music is rapidly becoming a noticeable quality of the school. The subject leader has identified that standards at Key Stage 2 could be better. He has proposed a number of initiatives to achieve this target, for example by introducing a better scheme of work, raising the quality of singing in Years 5 and 6, and introducing a system of assessment which will identify specifically where improvements in the curriculum and teaching need to be made. Assemblies usually promote music well, particularly when pupils listen to live music or good quality recorded music, such as when they learn to line dance in physical education lessons. Skilled members of the teaching staff often play piano, violin and guitar when pupils in Key Stage 2 enter the assembly hall, and this gives pupils the opportunity to hear music from a range of cultures.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

160. Standards in physical education have improved since the previous inspection. In both key stages, pupils reach standards above those expected nationally. Physical education is an important part of the life of the school. There is more time given to this subject than any of the other foundation subjects. Consequently, pupils take part and learn in all aspects of the subject. During the week of the inspection, there were opportunities to observe lessons in dance, games, swimming and gymnastics.

161. By the end of Key Stage 1, as a result of very good teaching, pupils have acquired good levels of basic skills in gymnastics and games. They use their imagination well to explore high and low movements, with good levels of expression and regard to the shapes they make. They clearly build on previously learned skills when they find different ways of linking their movements. When sending and receiving a ball with their feet, they dribble the ball round obstacles, using available space and accuracy of control. They understand and observe precisely the rules for getting out and putting away apparatus safely. Younger pupils develop their throwing and catching skills well because they listen closely to the teacher's clearly given instructions, and then practise with concentration. They progress well because the teacher moves their learning on in small but challenging steps.

162. By the end of Key Stage 2, all pupils have experienced a variety of activities and made good progress. This judgement applies equally to those pupils with special educational needs and those

who speak English as an additional language. Only pupils in Year 3 have swimming lessons, but by the end of the year most have made good progress and can swim the nationally recommended 25 metres for pupils aged eleven. Instruction arrangements for swimming are good because the teachers plan lessons to be given by themselves, assisted by qualified instructors, classroom assistants and volunteer parents. Because of good teaching, two thirds of pupils can already swim at least two widths unaided, and one third can swim 25 metres. In games, pupils in Year 4 take part safely in energetic outdoor activities, dodging and weaving with good levels of control and agility. Other pupils in this key stage move rhythmically to disco and line dance music. In Year 6, girls and boys alike know and perform a good range of line dancing steps. They cleverly develop sequences individually and in small groups because the teacher takes a full part and shows the pupils basic interpretative movements on which they can build.

163. Pupils of all ages have very good attitudes to their physical education lessons. They invariably listen well to their teachers, and most carry out their tasks with concentration and a will to improve. In group activities, sensible discussion produces carefully performed sequences, for example in a Year 6 dance lesson, when some pupils working in pairs devised and performed very precise sequences to an 8-beat rhythm.

164. Teaching is good overall, with lessons ranging from satisfactory to excellent. Of the lessons seen, 30 per cent were good, and over 40 per cent were very good or better. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. Teachers structure their lessons well, with suitable warm up and cool down periods. There is always good emphasis given to safety aspects. Pupils and teachers dress appropriately, thus setting professional standards. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour, but occasionally there is less progress made in some lessons than in others. This is because the teacher does not always ensure that she/he has the full attention of all pupils when giving instructions and making explanations. All teachers set good role models and, apart from swimming, take a part in the activities themselves, often giving demonstrations. Invariably, pupils make good strides in their learning because teachers emphasise the need for high quality work. Nevertheless, sometimes teachers give praise too easily, and pupils wrongly get the impression that they have achieved a successful result.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

165. The school teaches religious education in accordance with the South Gloucestershire locally Agreed Syllabus, 'Mystery and Meaning,' which is supplemented by elements of national recommendations.

166. Pupils in both key stages make good progress. At Key Stage 1 they meet the expectations for achievement set out in the syllabus. They exceed expectations at Key Stage 2. In the reception classes, religious education is taught through topics and stories, for example the story of the little boy who became a Hindu God. In Years 1 and 2, pupils study festivals of light in different faith communities. In a good Year 2 lesson, the teacher referred to the religious and cultural backgrounds of the pupils, as well as their previous learning, to draw out similarities and contrasts between the festivals as celebrated by Christians and Jews. Pupils achieved well because the teacher gave them an interesting range of activities to do and artefacts to see. They played the

'Dreidle' game, but it was not possible to light the Menorah for reasons of safety. The teacher extended pupils' learning by encouraging them to use a dictionary and an encyclopaedia, and giving them questions to discuss with known adults outside school.

167. In Key Stage 2, light continues as the unifying theme. There is some good quality work about Diwali in Year 3. Pupils are familiar with the story of Rama and Sita and know the purpose of the Diva. During group activities, good subject knowledge and challenging interventions from the teachers ensure that pupils make good progress and that achievement is high. Extended work in Year 3 with Rangoli patterns produced an interesting discussion in one lesson about the associations between colours, shapes and moods.

168. The quality of teaching is good overall, and is directly responsible for pupils' good progress. Of the six lessons observed, five were good and one was excellent. A strength of the teaching is the way in which enthusiasm for the subject is passed on to the pupils and helps them to learn. In a Year 5 lesson, the teacher presented some interesting exercises, including 'Chinese whispers', to illustrate the difference between oral and written tradition. This approach produced many thoughtful and reflective responses from pupils. In Year 6, pupils were doing good quality work on the significance and meaning of sacred texts from different religions. The teacher successfully encouraged pupils to work well together. They wrote paraphrases and explanations of a range of different texts. One group, unprompted, re-told the story of the blind men and the elephant from the point of view of the blind, and brought out the need for people to work together to achieve goals more effectively. Another group told the story from the point of view of the sighted, which set up an excellent opportunity for a discussion in a subsequent lesson.

169. The subject leader effectively oversees planning and curriculum developments. She has helped to ensure that the issue of parity with other subjects of the curriculum, identified in the previous report, has been fully addressed. Teachers throughout the school now rightly regard the subject as having equal status with the other non-core subjects. However, the recommended time allocations are not yet fully met, especially in Years 2 and 6. This difficulty is recognised, and is mitigated by ensuring that at least one 30 minute lesson is included in each class timetable each week. The subject leader has worked closely with the diocesan adviser on curriculum development in the Foundation Stage and on assessment. Work sampling to assist assessment has recently begun.

170. The school meets the needs of all pupils by ensuring that work matches pupils' levels of achievement. There is good awareness of the possibilities for including aspects of religious education in other subjects, seen as a promising area for further development. However, there is scope for further developing religious education as a vehicle for exploring moral dilemmas, and opening up discussion on a range of issues related to Christian living.

171. Resources to support teaching are satisfactory. There are some artefacts and topic boxes, and class sets of Bibles are kept centrally. There is room for updating and improving resources, especially books and artefacts to support teaching about world faiths, and the use of computers for wider research.