

INSPECTION REPORT

MARSH GIBBON FIRST SCHOOL

Marsh Gibbon, Bicester

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 110411

Acting head teacher: Louise Metherell

Reporting inspector: Grace Marriott
3574

Dates of inspection: 14th – 17th January 2002

Inspection number: 230292

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 - 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Castle Street Marsh Gibbon Bicester Oxfordshire
Postcode:	OX27 0HJ
Telephone number:	01869 277268
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	David Field
Date of previous inspection:	March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3674	Grace Marriott	Registered inspector	Mathematics, science, history, music, religious education, information and communication technology, equal opportunities	The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How good are curricular and other opportunities?
19653	Elizabeth Dickson	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
3678	Jo Harris	Team inspector	Foundation stage, English, art, geography, design and technology, physical education, special educational needs	How well is the school led and managed?

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Marsh Gibbon is a small, voluntary controlled Church of England First School near Bicester. It has 97 pupils on roll with almost equal numbers of boys and girls. Pupils come from the village itself and a fairly wide surrounding area. The children come from reasonably advantaged backgrounds and no families claim free school meals. There are no children from ethnic minorities. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below average. Most of these children have moderate learning difficulties and none has a statement of special educational need. In most years groups the children started school with broadly average knowledge, skills and understanding but the current Year 1 class was above average overall. The secondment of the previous head teacher last year to support another school was initially expected to be short term but lasted for over a year.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Marsh Gibbon is a successful school. It is providing its pupils with a good education in a lively and supportive atmosphere. The ethos promotes respect for others, very good attitudes towards work, and very good behaviour. Standards are above average in English, mathematics and science, very good in music, and at least average in all other subjects. The teaching is good overall. The acting head teacher has provided very good leadership and has been very well supported by the staff and governors. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are above average
- The teaching is good overall
- The pupils have very good attitudes to school: they work and behave very well
- The Foundation Stage (Reception) gives children a good start
- Music makes an outstanding contribution to the life of the school
- The school and parents work very closely together to support children's education

What could be improved

- The outdoor facilities for the Reception Class limit the range of activities which can be planned
- The monitoring of teaching and learning at a senior level needs to be more structured
- The role of subject co-ordinators in monitoring standards and learning needs to be stronger
- The assessment of work in subjects such as history, geography, information and communication technology, religious education, art, design and technology is not yet systematic enough

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 1997. Since then it has continued to improve. The trend in results of the national tests taken in Year 2 has been upwards. There have been major improvements to the buildings with the provision of two new classrooms, which means that the school is able to teach in single age group classes. The facilities for information and communication technology (ICT) are much better and this means that computers are now used much more regularly and effectively in lessons. In relation to the issues raised in the previous report, the amount of investigative work has increased in both mathematics and science. The school has adopted the national guidelines for subjects and staff are working to ensure that these meet the specific needs of the school. The amount of administrative support has increased, however, the governors are very much aware that they have not been able to provide a separate school office and staff room because the new classrooms were given priority.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 in National Curriculum tests.

**Similar schools means those with a similar proportion of children entitled to free school meals*

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			*similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
reading	A*	B	A	A
writing	A*	A	A*	A*
mathematics	C	A	A	B

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

The table shows that compared with schools nationally, and with similar schools, the results in the Year 2 national tests in 2001 were well above average in reading and in the top five per cent of schools nationally in writing. In mathematics, results were well above the national average and above average compared with similar schools. The results have improved since the last inspection, particularly in mathematics. In 2001 both boys and girls did well, but the boys did significantly better than boys did nationally.

The attainment of the children who have been in the Reception Class since September 2001 is above average in all areas of learning and they are achieving well. They are mostly confident speakers, with almost all happily contributing some news during a circle time. They have a wide vocabulary and enjoy discussing issues. Children of all abilities enjoy looking at books and the highest attainers are already reading simple stories accurately. They are also beginning to 'write' at this stage though mostly by writing over the teacher's writing. Most of the children count and use numbers to ten confidently, some beyond. They recognise coins and count money, using simple addition. They also know the names of shapes such as circle, triangle, square and rectangle.

Standards are above average overall in English and science, well above average in mathematics, and all pupils are generally achieving well. The differences between previous test results and the current standards reflect the special educational needs in each class and the differences in attainment on entry. Year 2 for example, has more pupils with special educational needs than other classes. Standards in speaking and listening are well above average in all year groups. Pupils have a wide vocabulary and speak confidently in a variety of situations. They enjoy reading and standards are above average overall and well above average in Year 1 and Year 3. Standards in writing are similar and by Year 4 most writing is grammatically accurate and correctly punctuated. In all year groups pupils have very good skills in mental mathematics. They are quick and accurate, using a variety of methods when working things out in their heads. They are not quite as confident in applying what they know in unfamiliar situations. In science, pupils acquire good practical skills. They ask good questions and can explain what they are doing and why, but their recording of work is not always as good. In music, attainment and achievement are both very good. In RE attainment is above average and pupils achieve well. In other subjects attainment is never less than average and all pupils are achieving at least a satisfactory level.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good, pupils are keen and enthusiastic learners
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave very well, they are courteous and trustworthy
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are excellent and when given the opportunity pupils show initiative and take responsibility
Attendance	Attendance is well above average and unauthorised absence is very low

The pupils' attitudes to school, their behaviour and the excellent quality of relationships are all very important factors in the school's success.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 4
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

The teaching is good. During the inspection all the teaching seen was satisfactory or better, about half the lessons were good and one in five was very good. There are no major weaknesses and the consistency in the teaching is an important factor in the success of the school. Teachers manage pupils very well and create a good working atmosphere in all classes. They are pleasant, treat pupils with respect and are consistent. They have high expectations for behaviour and attitudes and pupils respond well.

In the Reception Class the teachers plan closely and effectively together. The quality of teaching seen was good overall in each of the areas of learning. The calm approach ensures a very good relationship with the children and each child is able to participate fully and succeed in all activities. These are carefully planned and prepared, with appropriate resources ready and well used. The only relative weakness in teaching is in the use of outdoor activities and this is mainly because of the limited facilities.

In Years 1 to 4 the teaching is also good. In English, teachers provide many opportunities for speaking and listening which encourages pupils to be articulate and extends their vocabulary though whole-class sessions were occasionally rather long, mainly because the pupils wanted to contribute to discussion. As a result pupils had less time to consolidate their learning. The strong emphasis on teaching reading means that pupils read well, for pleasure as well as for information. Literacy skills are being used well in other subjects. In mathematics, the pace of work and the level of challenge in mental mathematics enables pupils to develop a good range of skills, though more practice in applying these in other subjects is needed. Science investigations are well planned and help pupils to develop good practical skills. In teaching ICT teachers are not afraid to experiment and draw on pupils' knowledge and pupils are learn to use graphics, word-processing, data handling and the Internet effectively in several subjects. The teaching of music is outstanding. The specialist teacher uses her own considerable musical skills and enthusiasm to motivate and encourage pupils to work hard and achieve very good standards.

Planning is generally good, but could include more opportunities for pupils to work independently and show initiative. At times there is an over-reliance on worksheets which do not give enough scope for independent written work and the use of the same worksheet or task for all pupils meant that lower-attainers did not always finish. However, teachers have a good understanding of, and plan appropriately for pupils with special educational needs, which means that they can join in fully in lessons. Teaching assistants are well prepared and give very good support.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced at all stages in the school.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and have good access to the curriculum

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	This provision for moral and social development is very good and for spiritual and cultural it is good
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a good level of care for pupils

The curriculum covers the requirements of the National Curriculum, religious education and the early learning goals for the Foundation Stage, though the provision for outdoor activities in Reception is not as good as other areas of learning. Music is a particular strength. Staff know pupils and their families well and monitoring of pupils' personal development is based on very good communication between staff and the very good partnership with parents. Though tending to be informal, this works well and essential information is recorded. Pupils' academic work is monitored satisfactorily in English, mathematics and science but there is not yet enough assessment in other subjects.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	The acting head teacher has provided very good leadership in a potentially difficult situation. She has been well supported by staff and has maintained the good standard of education
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors deal with their responsibilities well and are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school development plan is based on a good audit of the previous year's work and test results.
The strategic use of resources	The school budget is used carefully and effectively to support the school's educational aims

The school development plan is the result of good collaboration between governors and staff. It has sensible priorities which help to promote high standards. However, targets are not always expressed clearly enough in terms of their impact on teaching and learning. The budget is well managed, but the direct involvement of governors in this has been limited. The acting head teacher has successfully taken on considerable extra responsibility in addition to her class teaching commitment, though it has not been feasible for her to undertake the formal monitoring of teaching. Co-ordinators have made a satisfactory start to monitoring work in their subjects and recognise that this needs to be taken further. The school is well staffed with experienced and hardworking teachers and support staff who work together as a strong team. The accommodation has been much improved, though there are still deficiencies, for example the outdoor facilities are inadequate for the Reception Class, and the administrative office is still located in the staff room. Resources are good.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and make good progress • Behaviour is good • Teaching is good and expectations are high • Staff are approachable if parents have concerns • The school is well led and managed • The school works closely with parents and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside lessons

keeps them well-informed	
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The parents were extremely positive about the school and the inspection team shares the parents' confidence. The only criticism related to activities outside lessons. The range is satisfactory though limited, but the school strongly encourages children to become involved in local activities, and many do. At the parents' suggestion, the school has recently expanded its range of visits to extend children's experience.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. In 2001, the results obtained by pupils in the national tests in Year 2 were well above average in reading and mathematics and in the top five per cent of schools nationally in writing. When compared with similar schools the results were well above average in reading, very high in writing and above average in mathematics. The results have improved since the last inspection, particularly in mathematics. Both boys and girls did well compared with the national results, with the boys doing particularly well. Since the last inspection, the trend in results has been upwards, particularly in mathematics.
2. In Reception the attainment of the five children who have been in school since September 2001 is above average in all areas of learning and they are achieving well. The children understand and use the class routines and arrive happily and confidently each day. They are enthusiastic learners and keen to try new experiences. They are learning to work and play together well and usually they relate very well to each other and to adults though occasionally a few children can be over-boisterous or find it difficult to take turns and share. The four children who started school in the week before the inspection have settled in well. All children are mostly confident speakers and have a good vocabulary. They enjoy discussing issues and almost all will happily contribute some news during a circle time. All the children enjoy looking at books and the highest-attainers are already reading simple stories accurately. They are also beginning to 'write' though mostly by writing over what the teacher had written. Most of the children count and use numbers to ten confidently, some beyond. They recognise coins and count money, using simple addition. They also know the names of flat shapes such as circle, triangle, square and rectangle.
3. In Years 1 to 4 current standards are above average overall and pupils are generally achieving well relative to what they could do when they started school. The differences between the current pupils and previous years' test results reflect the proportion of pupils with special educational needs in different year groups. Attainment on entry also varies, for example when they started school, Year 1 had higher levels of attainment than other year groups.
4. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, standards are well above average in Years 1 and 3. In Years 2 and 4, they are above average in English and science, and well above in mathematics. When account is taken of special educational needs, the current standards are consistent with pupils' attainment on entry and where relevant, test results.
5. In English, standards in speaking and listening are well above average in all year groups. Pupils have a wide vocabulary and speak confidently in a variety of situations. They also enjoy reading for pleasure and for information and standards are above average overall and well above average in Year 1 and Year 3. Standards in writing are similar and by Year 4 most writing is grammatically accurate and correctly punctuated. They use these skills well in other subjects.
6. In all year groups pupils have very good skills in mental mathematics: by the end of Year 2 they add and subtract two digit numbers accurately and higher-attainers understand the principles of multiplication. Similarly in Years 3 and 4 they are quick and accurate, using a variety of methods when working things out in their heads. They are less confident in applying what they know in unfamiliar situations, for example in a science experiment they were hesitant about calculations that they could do without difficulty in mathematics lessons.

7. In science, pupils acquire good practical skills and are achieving well. They ask good questions and can explain what they are doing and why but their recording of work is not always as detailed. In music standards are very good, pupils sing tunefully and when playing instruments they listen carefully to each other and experiment to achieve the effects they want. In RE standards are above average and pupils are achieving well. In other subjects standards in all year groups are broadly in line with national expectations and pupils' achievement is satisfactory.
8. Eight pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, and none has a statement. These pupils make good progress in relation to their initial attainment, as all staff know each pupil well and discuss the most appropriate strategies to support the differing needs. Some additional support is provided by learning support assistants (LSAs), individually or in small groups and this helps to ensure success. For example, in a Year 1 design and technology lesson, the LSA worked with a small group. In the whole class plenary at the end of the lesson, one pupil shared his sliding mechanism picture with the class and was thrilled to have succeeded, jumping for joy in his enthusiasm! Throughout the school, pupils of all levels of attainment are achieving well overall, though on a few occasions higher-attainers could have achieved more and lower-attainers found the work too hard.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development throughout the school are very good, representing a major strength of the school and making a very positive contribution to the ethos and quality of learning. Pupils are keen to learn and in lessons they listen attentively to their teachers and take part in discussions with interest and enthusiasm. They settle down to work quickly and sustain concentration in their tasks. During the inspection there were many occasions when pupils showed a high level of involvement and enjoyment in lessons and were fully engaged by the teaching. For example in a Year 3 science lesson, pupils testing rocks for their hardness and permeability were fascinated to observe how much water the rocks had absorbed overnight. In a design and technology lesson, Year 1 pupils worked industriously on producing designs for a slide mechanism. They took great pleasure in sharing their ideas with the rest of the class and in listening to others' suggestions. Pupils with special educational needs enjoy school and are fully involved in all activities. All are treated with respect and kindness by staff and pupils.
10. Pupils' behaviour is very good in all situations, and enables them to enjoy their time in school and benefit from lessons. Teachers set high expectations for good standards of conduct. Pupils understand and follow orderly classroom routines. In lessons they follow instructions diligently and have the confidence to ask if they do not understand. They are tidy and take good care of their classrooms and the wider environment. There is no litter or graffiti and equipment is used carefully and returned to its rightful place. Pupils move around the school calmly and without fuss. In the playground they are lively but well controlled and play together harmoniously. At wet playtime they amuse themselves in classrooms reading, playing games, using the computers or drawing. No incidents of bullying or oppressive behaviour were seen during the inspection. There have been no exclusions in the past academic year.
11. Relationships between pupils and with adults are excellent. Pupils respond well to each other, to their teachers and to the many adults with whom they come into frequent contact. They are friendly, polite and well mannered, and follow the model set for them by teachers. They show respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. After an assembly on 'special books' pupils respected the fact that they could look at but not touch the books on display which included the Bible, Torah and Koran. At playtime they show care and concern if another pupil is hurt or

unwell. In assemblies they value the achievements of other pupils. Pupils relish any opportunities for them to undertake responsibilities. They are responsible and helpful in their classes, helping to distribute equipment and setting out apparatus for physical education. The harmony of pupils as they work and play together is a strength of the school.

12. Attendance at the school is excellent. In recent years the rate of attendance has been consistently above 96%, which is higher than the national average. There is no unauthorised absence. Pupils arrive punctually each morning and this facilitates a smooth and prompt start to the school day. Registration sessions are brisk and efficient.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

13. The quality of teaching is good overall and has been maintained since the last inspection. There are no really major weaknesses and the consistency in the teaching is an important factor in the success of the school. During the inspection all the teaching seen was satisfactory or better, about half the lessons were good and one in five was very good. Lessons are generally lively and interesting. Teachers manage pupils very well and create a good, purposeful working atmosphere in all classes. They are pleasant, treat pupils with respect and are consistent. They have high expectations for behaviour and attitudes and pupils respond well. Learning support assistants are well prepared and give very good support.
14. In the Reception Class the teaching is shared between two teachers who work alternate weeks. The teachers plan closely and effectively together sure that the teaching in each of the six areas of learning is good. Their calm approach ensures a very good relationship with the children and each child is able to participate fully and succeed in all activities. These are carefully planned and prepared, with appropriate resources ready and well used. The early stages of literacy and numeracy are well taught so that children learn to read, write and count to a good standard for their age. A good range of practical activities, opportunities for play, visits and visitors all help them to learn more about the world in which they live and to develop physical and creative skills. The only relative weakness in teaching is in the use of outdoor activities and this is mainly because of the limited facilities.
15. In Years 1 to 4 in English, teachers provide many opportunities for speaking and listening. This encourages pupils to be articulate and extends their vocabulary though whole-class sessions were occasionally rather long, mainly because so many pupils wanted to contribute to discussion. As a result pupils had less time to consolidate their learning. The strong emphasis on teaching reading means that pupils read well for pleasure and for information. Teachers make good links between English and other subjects. A very good history lesson on the Great Fire of London in Year 2 encouraged the development of literacy skills as well as extending pupils' historical knowledge and understanding.
16. In teaching mental mathematics the whole-class sessions are lively and enjoyable. The pace of work and the level of challenge enable pupils to develop a very good range of skills. Pupils enjoy the mental challenges and are keen to explain how they have worked out their answers. Pupils were not always confident when applying what they knew in unfamiliar situations and need more practice in using mathematics in other areas of the curriculum.
17. In all subjects teachers explain learning objectives well and make good use of whole-class introductions to motivate and involve all pupils. Similarly a review at the end of the lesson helps pupils to consolidate what they have learnt. Occasionally the initial sessions went on too long and did not allow enough time for pupils to practise and consolidate what they had learnt.

18. Questioning and discussion are an important part of most lessons and this helps pupils develop good knowledge, understanding and practical skills. In Year 3 a very good lesson on the Ancient Greeks the use of a range of artefacts and skilful questioning helped pupils to understand how historians draw conclusions from evidence. In a very good gymnastics lesson in Year 1 pupils were being encouraged to observe and evaluate the quality of their own and other pupils' work but this was not always a consistent feature in PE lessons. Science investigations are well planned and help pupils to develop good practical skills.
19. Music teaching is excellent. The knowledgeable and experienced specialist teacher uses her own considerable musical skills and enthusiasm to motivate and encourage pupils to work hard and achieve very good standards. Lessons are lively, very enjoyable and well structured so that pupils learn a wide range of musical skills through performing on tuned and untuned instruments, listening to music and singing. The music teacher works closely with the class teachers so that music supports and extends work in other subjects.
20. Teachers are more confident in their own knowledge and understanding of ICT than at the time of the last inspection. They are using it increasingly successfully as a tool to support the whole curriculum. Teachers are not afraid to experiment and draw on pupils' knowledge as for example, in the paired research work using the Internet in a Year 4 history lesson.
21. Planning is generally good but could include more opportunities for pupils to work independently and show initiative. For example in history and to a lesser extent in science there tends to be too much reliance on worksheets which do not give enough scope for independent written work. In mathematics the use of the same worksheet for all pupils meant that lower-attainers did not always finish. Pupils' work is marked regularly and increasingly in English and mathematics teachers are giving pupils more specific guidance on how to improve their work.
22. The quality of teaching for the relatively few pupils with special educational needs is good. Lesson plans identify specific support, if appropriate, and teachers ensure all pupils succeed, at their level, giving praise for achievements. In a Year 2 literacy lesson, for example, the teacher settled with the less able group and provided effective support, using a small white board to help with specific words, so that each pupil succeeded with writing a story ending. Specialist teacher support from the Learning Support Service is bought in by the school and is found to be very helpful in identifying need and support strategies.

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

23. The curriculum breadth and balance, which was mentioned in the last report, has been maintained and in relation to ICT the curriculum has been improved. All pupils have access to the six areas of learning in the Foundation Stage and to the National Curriculum subjects and RE in Years 1 to 4. The school has reached a sensible agreement about the coverage of the Key Stage 2 curriculum with the schools to which pupils transfer to at the end of Year 4.
24. In the Reception Class, the broad curriculum is planned well. The balance between teacher-directed and child-selected activities is appropriate and visits to places of interest as well as visitors to the school enhance the curriculum. For example, the children have been on a village walk to see key buildings and they have visited the local butcher to see how sausages are made and during the inspection, the veterinary nurse visited the class, bringing an extremely well behaved dog with her.

25. In Years 1 to 4 the school has adopted the national guidelines for subjects and co-ordinators are beginning to adapt these to meet the specific needs of the school, though some more work is needed on matching work to the specific needs of all pupils, for example through developing a wider range of materials for pupils of different levels of attainment. The national literacy and numeracy strategies have been successfully introduced and the skills are well taught in the specific lessons. Literacy skills, particularly those of speaking, listening and reading are being used extensively in other subjects, but pupils are not given quite as much opportunity to write at length. Numeracy skills are used in science and geography though there is scope to take this further, as pupils are not as confident in applying their numeracy skills in unfamiliar situations as they are in using their literacy skills. Planning in other subjects shows good cross-curricular links, for example between music and other subjects.
26. One of the school's aims for pupils with special educational needs states "We believe pupils with special educational needs have the same right of access to the full curriculum as other pupils." This is carried through in practice and teachers plan good individual support in lessons. This enables pupils to participate fully, particularly in oral work. No pupils have a statement of special educational need, but those at Stage 2 or above have individual education plans (IEPs). The class teacher draws up these plans with advice from the specialist support teacher. Most of the targets are clear and quite specific, though occasionally they are rather general and the time scale for achievement is not always identified clearly enough.
27. The school has an effective programme of personal, social and health education. This is delivered through Circle Time, topic work and through the science curriculum and helps pupils to become more knowledgeable about themselves and to learn about healthy and safe living. This includes sex and drugs education at a level appropriate to their age. Health professionals such as the school nurse and dental service support the teaching of this programme. The provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. These areas represent a major part of the success of the school in providing a good all round education for pupils.
28. Religious education and assemblies have a positive impact on pupils' spiritual development. Assemblies are an integral part of the school life and help to develop a sense of community within the school. A candle is lit at the beginning of the assembly as a focus for pupils' reflection, and the school prayer is known by all pupils and said at the end of these occasions. During the inspection pupils listened attentively and respectfully in an assembly as they learnt about the living conditions endured by children in underdeveloped countries. Through their studies in religious education of the Christian faith and the world's other major religions, pupils reflect on their own and others' beliefs. In subjects such as geography and science pupils are encouraged to think about the wonders of the world around them. Music is used effectively to promote spiritual awareness. In their music lessons pupils are encouraged to talk about how different kinds of music make them feel. The school's strong links with the church, and involvement in a number of services throughout the year, also contribute strongly to pupils' spirituality and sense of community.
29. The provision for moral and social development is very good, underpinned by the school's caring ethos. Great store is placed on the teaching of moral values, and opportunities are taken throughout the school to reinforce the difference between right and wrong. Teachers and other adults in the school set a good example and are consistent in their expectations of pupils' behaviour. Parents are supportive of the school's approach and believe it promotes high standards of behaviour. Regular fundraising activities for various charities encourage pupils to develop a good understanding of citizenship and consideration for those less fortunate than themselves.

30. The social development of pupils is promoted particularly well. There are clearly established routines within the school and good links with the wider community. Pupils are encouraged to take care of one another and there are ample opportunities for them to work together in pairs and groups and share equipment sensibly. At all levels they have good opportunities to take on a range of responsibilities such as tidying the classroom, distributing books and returning registers to the office. In physical education lessons pupils are trusted to set out and put away apparatus.
31. Cultural development is good overall. Pupils' own culture is explored effectively through studies of their local environment and visits to places of interest in the area. In geography and history they learn about life in St Lucia and the cultures of the Vikings and Ancient Greece. Music provides worthwhile opportunities for cultural development often providing links with topics in other subjects and other cultures. Pupils recently benefited from the visit of an African drum group. Stories from other cultures are told and pupils celebrate a variety of religious festivals. Different faiths are explored effectively within religious education lessons and assemblies. Art is a weaker aspect of this area, and there are limited opportunities for pupils to learn about and learn from the works of well-known artists.
32. The school's work is enriched by its links with the local community. The school is an integral part of the village. It has close links with the local church. Clergy from the church lead a school assembly each week, and the church is used for school services and as a valuable learning resource. Pupils belong to local organisations such as Cubs and Brownies. Local elderly people are invited to a Harvest Tea at the school, and a number of village residents regularly help in the school. A number of school events such as the Autumn Fair are open to the community. The good links with the village playgroup ensure pupils enjoy a smooth transition to primary school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33. The school cares for its pupils well. Through the good links made with the church and local village, the staff have established close relationships with many local families. Consequently, when children start in the Reception Class, staff have often already acquired a good understanding of a child's personal and individual needs. Teachers and other adults in the school treat pupils with respect and promote the development of their self-confidence. Parents appreciate the fact that teachers are accessible at the end of the school day for them to talk to either formally or informally about any queries or concerns.
34. The school has a clear policy for encouraging good behaviour and staff ensure that it is implemented consistently. The approach to maintaining good behaviour is one that encourages rather than punishes, although there is a clear set of sanctions in place. Staff praise pupils when they behave well and explain to them when they have done something wrong. The school is alert to the risks of bullying and there is no evidence of harassment of any kind.
35. The school monitors attendance carefully, supported by regular contact with the Education Welfare Service. A policy and procedures for child protection are in place, although the school should ensure that new staff are fully acquainted with the procedures. Health and safety receive high priority, and the governors are involved well in monitoring this area. Regular safety checks are carried out and any concerns are dealt with. Fire practices take place once a term. All staff have a first aid qualification and procedures are well-established for dealing with pupils who become unwell or injured. Pupils are well supervised and cared for by staff during the day.
36. In the Reception Class teachers assess children's progress in various ways. They evaluate lessons and make observation notes about individual children on the daily plans. A notebook has additional

records, half-yearly examples of children's work are kept in each child's special book and a new tracking sheet is being tested. The teachers recognise the need to ensure records are kept in each area of learning.

37. In the other years, pupils' academic progress is monitored closely by means of regular testing in English, mathematics and science, and by some sampling of individual pupils' written work. The information is used well to identify particular strengths and weaknesses, and indicate areas for improvement. The system for tracking pupils' progress has not been extended to cover the other subjects of the curriculum, or provide readily accessible information on their progress as they move through the school. This makes it more difficult for teachers to build on pupils' attainment when they change classes. The marking of pupils' work, although regular, does not always include sufficient constructive comment to enable pupils to improve.
38. The school effectively uses the advice from outside agencies to support pupils with special educational needs. An agreement for an allocation of eighteen hours a year of Learning Support Service help is in place and the specialist teacher sees all pupils about whom the school has concerns. In addition, the speech and language therapy and educational psychology services provide welcome advice.
39. Pupils' personal development is monitored informally. As staff know pupils very well, this arrangement works well. Achievements both in and out of school are recognised and celebrated through awards and inclusion in the school's special achievements book.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

40. In their responses to the questionnaire, and at the pre-inspection meeting with the Registered Inspector, parents expressed strongly positive views about the school. Parents are happy to send their children to Marsh Gibbon First School and have justifiable confidence in it. They know their children enjoy school and are making steady progress. They themselves feel welcome in the school and say they are encouraged to play an active part in its life. They value the school's ethos and its openness to them. They are confident that any concerns they have will be dealt with positively and appreciate the care and support shown by the staff. The strengths in these aspects of the school's work identified by the last inspection have been maintained and built on.
41. Parents are provided with a very good range of high quality information about the school and their children's work. The prospectus is well presented and sets out detailed information. The governors' annual report to parents contains all the required information. Regular newsletters are written in a friendly tone and keep parents well informed about day-to-day matters. Parents are happy with the annual reports of their children's progress. These give them a satisfactory summary of the individual's achievements and progress in terms of the National Curriculum, as well as information on how they might improve. In the Reception Class formal discussions about children's progress are held termly, though many parents chat informally to the teacher as they deliver or collect their child, and they receive a written report at the end of the year.
42. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are initially advised informally of the school's concerns. This becomes more formal if an IEP is drawn up, and parents' support with the identified targets is welcomed.
43. A significant number of parents and other adults from the local community help in the school on a regular basis. They make a valuable and valued contribution to teachers' work in lessons. Good examples of effective support were seen during the inspection. For example two parents coached

Year 3 pupils in football and a parent offered valuable help with the youngest children, helping them with a weaving activity. Parents who help in school have good working relationships with teachers. At home parents help their children with reading and other homework. The school encourages this and provides help in the form of reading records and guidelines for homework.

44. The school regularly seeks parents' views through frequent contact, the work of the governors and through the Parent Teacher Association. The association gives strong support to the school by organising a wide range of social and fundraising events for pupils and their families. Money raised by the association in recent years has gone towards providing two classrooms, library shelving and books for the library. Parents are ready and willing to lend any practical support such as cleaning out the swimming pool and improving the school environment. There is a high level of attendance at parental consultation meetings and other meetings held at the school, reflecting parents' strong interest and involvement in their children's education. The response to the questionnaire suggested that parents were not satisfied with the range of extra-curricular activities, though this was not mentioned at the meeting or in written responses. In practice the range is limited but not unsatisfactory.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

45. The school has experienced an uncertain year. The previous head teacher was seconded to support another school, initially only for a few weeks, but the period was extended a number of times and lasted over a year. She has been appointed to a post with the local authority, and the governors are now in a position to appoint a permanent head teacher. In the meantime, the acting head teacher has provided very good leadership. In spite of the fact that she had little previous managerial experience and no formal training for the role, she has ensured that the good standard of education has been maintained. The morale of the staff has not suffered, as all have supported where possible and pulled together as a strong, united team.
46. The school has a set of aims displayed in the school and at the beginning of the school improvement plan. The five statements are fully appropriate and are being met very successfully in the life of the school. A slightly different set of aims appears in the school prospectus for the parents to share, but again these are reflected well in the school's work.
47. Each curriculum subject has an identified co-ordinator. However, a number are very new to the role and some are in an acting capacity until a new head teacher is appointed. Those who are more experienced are knowledgeable and enthusiastic, supporting colleagues well. Those who are newer to the role are planning to attend training to ensure they are up-to-date with subject developments. Job descriptions identify monitoring as part of the co-ordinator's role, but teachers have not yet been given enough specific guidance on what this should involve or training in monitoring. Quite recently, teachers were provided with some time out of their class and were able to use this time in a variety of ways to develop their co-ordinator role. This is a satisfactory start but now the school has grown in size, there is a need to formalise this and ensure good practice, for example in developing literacy and numeracy across the curriculum, is systematically shared.
48. The acting head teacher is class teaching for much of the week, she also has a large number of responsibilities. The main priority has been maintaining stability for pupils, staff and parents and in this she has been very successful. However, a consequence of this has been that it has not been feasible to undertake any formal monitoring of teaching and learning linked to agreed priorities. Both the acting head teacher and the governing body are aware that this should be a priority. They

are also aware that once a new head teacher is in place, allocation of responsibilities will need to be reviewed and rationalised..

49. Governors are very supportive and involved in school life, and are very pleased with the manner in which the school has continued to be so successful during this uncertain year. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities well. The chair is very experienced and has provided a great deal of valued support to the school during this time. The three committees, finance, personnel and premises meet termly. The full governing body meets twice a term, once to discuss the formal, business matters and once to discuss the head teacher's report, the visiting governors' report and any curriculum issues. Co-ordinators present new or revised policies for governors' approval at these meetings. Two governors a term visit the school to look in depth at a particular curriculum area and report back to the full governors' meetings. The most recent visit focused on ICT and governors were pleased with the many improvements and developments in this area. Governors are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. For example, they identify the quality of relationships, the good behaviour and attitudes of the pupils, the links with the local community, the enthusiasm for learning and the high standards. Among the weaknesses they identify the need for additional staff room space and additional facilities outdoors for the youngest children.
50. The chair of governors and the acting head teacher prepared the first draft of the school improvement plan together, and shared this with the staff and governors. Following basic information about the school, the improvement plan begins with a very useful audit of the current situation under the headings of curriculum, management, community and premises. From this, priorities for development this year are identified, under the same headings. The priorities are all appropriate for the school in the current situation, and reference is rightly made to the appointment of a substantive head teacher and the importance of maintaining stability until that time. The action plans usefully include financial implications and success criteria, identifying who will monitor and evaluate each target. However, most of these criteria refer to paperwork being in place rather than the impact on teaching and learning, though in practice, development planning is helping to promote high standards. The governors are aware of progress with the targets through the head teacher's reports and their visits.
51. Good use is made of new technology within school administration and a new computer for office use has been ordered. Any grants made to the school are used effectively, such as for pupils with special educational needs. The school submits bids to a local trust and has received donations to support the provision of additional classrooms. The school has effective financial routines, overseen by an experienced and efficient clerical assistant. The requirements of the most recent auditor's report have been addressed. The previous head teacher undertook much of the financial management herself and consequently the governors were insufficiently involved. The chair recognises the need for governors to strengthen their involvement here. At present there is a large carry-forward figure, which will enable the newly appointed head teacher act on identified priorities.
52. The school is well staffed to meet the requirements of the Foundation Stage and the National Curriculum. The previous report identified the exemplary commitment of the staff to the education of the pupils and this is still the case. Two part-time teachers work alternate weeks in the reception class and another part-time teacher comes in one day a week to teach music to all classes. This is good use of expertise and results in very high standards in this subject. The school's system of performance management was delayed, due to the head teacher's absence, but is now in place and the first cycle is almost complete. Three teaching support assistants are valued members of the team, as are the midday supervisors, administrative and cleaning staff. Pride is taken in keeping building very clean and stimulating with lively displays of pupils' work.

While the school is fortunate to have a swimming pool, a good sized field and two new classrooms, there are certain weaknesses with the accommodation. The facilities for the staff are limited and the administrative office is still located in the staff room, with the computer in the head teacher's office. In addition, the outdoor facilities for the reception class are inadequate. The enclosed area is very small and does not provide opportunities to support the children's learning in all areas of the curriculum.

53. While the library is still in the corridor, it has been moved and improved since the last inspection. Resource provision is good and meets the needs of the curriculum. Particular improvements have been made with book provision recently, particularly big books, which are being used very successfully. Resources for information and communication technology are much improved as well.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The governors, acting head teacher and staff are strongly committed to the continuing improvement of the school and are already aware of the main issues for improvement:

1. Providing better outdoor facilities for the Reception Class and planning more opportunities to use the outdoor environment to support children's development in all areas of learning.
Paragraphs 14, 53, 55
2. Introducing more formal monitoring of teaching at the level of senior management with a focus which reflects whole school priorities and development needs.
Paragraph 48
3. Giving co-ordinators more specific responsibility for monitoring standards and the quality of learning in their subjects to ensure that
 - schemes of work help teachers to provide work which meets the needs of all pupils,
 - good practice, for example in developing writing and numeracy across the curriculum, is shared more formally,
 - teachers incorporate into lesson planning more opportunities for pupils to show initiative and become independent learners.Paragraphs 21, 25, 47, 69, 73, 77, 81
4. Developing the assessment of subjects such as history, geography, information and communication technology, religious education, art, design and technology, to provide teachers with a clear indication of what pupils have achieved and help them plan the next stage of learning.
Paragraph 37

The governors may wish to include the following minor issues in their action plan

1. Improving the quality of accommodation for administration and for the staff
Paragraph 53
2. Ensuring that the governing body takes a more active role in financial management
Paragraph 51

3. Ensuring that the school improvement plan is expressed more explicitly in terms of its intended impact on teaching and learning

Paragraph 50

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	32
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	19

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	6	15	11	0	0	0
Percentage	0	19	47	34	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents 3 percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	YR– Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	97
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Y R– Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	8

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	0
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.4
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence 2000-2001.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for	2001	12	17	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	12	11
	Girls	16	17	17
	Total	27	29	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (95)	100 (100)	97 (100)
	National	83 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	11	12
	Girls	16	17	17
	Total	27	28	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (100)	97 (100)	100 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

Percentages in brackets refer to 2000

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	91
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y R– Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17:1
Average class size	18

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	48

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/01
	£
Total income	269,448
Total expenditure	247,313
Expenditure per pupil	2311

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0.55
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0.55
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

97

Number of questionnaires returned

38

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	81	19	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	63	37	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	71	26	3	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	42	58	5	0	0
The teaching is good.	66	34	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	58	5	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	63	32	5	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	66	34	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	50	47	3	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	63	37	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	66	32	3	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	13	47	34	5	0

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

54. Children are admitted to the Reception Class at the beginning of the term in which they will be five. At the time of the inspection five children had been in the class since September and four had joined the class the previous week. Sixteen more will join after Easter and these children will have one term of full time education in the Foundation Stage before moving into Year 1. Induction arrangements are good. Home visits, a meeting for parents, a very informative booklet and several visits to their new class help to prepare children, and their parents, well. Inspection evidence indicates that the attainment of the children who had been in the Reception Class for a term is already above average in all areas of learning and that they are achieving well.
55. Two part time members of staff teach alternate weeks in the reception class, and plan closely together. The quality of teaching seen was all satisfactory or better and is good overall, in each of the areas of learning, as at the time of the last inspection. The teacher's calm approach ensures a very good relationship with the children and provides every opportunity for each child to participate and succeed in all activities. These are carefully planned and prepared, with appropriate resources ready and well used. The activities tend to be planned for the whole class and even though numbers are small, it would still be appropriate at times to undertake some practical activities with a small group rather than all the children together. When the teaching assistant is available, she provides very effective support. Outdoor activities are not a major feature of the work, mainly because of the limited facilities, but also because not enough are planned.

Personal, social and emotional development

56. The children understand class routines and arrive happily and confidently each day. They are enthusiastic learners and keen to try new experiences. Staff are consistent, patient and supportive in their approach and constantly encourage children to become more independent. They plan a wide range of experiences and activities to support children's personal, social and emotional development very well. The veterinary nurse's visit demonstrated that the children were learning to take turns as they investigated and used the equipment she had brought with her. In addition, the children understood the importance of being quiet and kind to animals. Most children persevere well with different activities. There were times when they became over exuberant or when they found it difficult to take turns or share, but these were few.

Communication, language and literacy

57. Most of the children listen well to the teacher and each other. When the teacher was telling them the story to accompany the focus sound 'n', they all listened attentively, enjoying the 'nose dive' adventure. They are mostly confident speakers, with all but two happily contributing some news during a circle time. They have a wide vocabulary and enjoy discussing issues. For example, they were keen to tell the visitor about their pets. Children of all abilities enjoy looking at books and the most able are reading simple stories accurately. Less able children recognise some familiar words and tell the story from the pictures. The older children were thoroughly absorbed as they listened to 'The Snow Lambs', and settled well to draw their favourite part. They all take books home to share with their parents, which has a positive impact on standards. Good teaching is helping the children learn letter sounds and names, which supports their progress with reading and writing. The children have some opportunities to write, using their own marks, but this writing is not valued

sufficiently. At the early stages, children write over the teacher's writing and later under it, but there are few examples of them being encouraged to write on their own.

Mathematical development

58. Most of the children count and use numbers to ten confidently, some beyond. This is reinforced by learning number rhymes such as 'Ten in a bed' and 'Ten green bottles'. As with other areas of learning, the teachers used a good range of activities to enable children to enjoy working with numbers and achieve well, but relatively little time was spent reviewing and consolidating what they had learnt. Pupils are beginning to learn that numbers can be made up in different ways. For example, they counted the number of skittles knocked over and the number still standing, to make a total of six. They recognise coins and count money, using simple addition. They also know the names of flat shapes such as circle, triangle, square and rectangle. They estimated how many cups of water would be needed to fill different sized buckets and used mathematical language as they saw whether their estimate was smaller or larger than the actual number.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

59. The teaching is planned to cover all aspects of this area of learning and children extend their knowledge and understanding of the world in a wide variety of ways. The tasting of different flavoured milk shakes, trying to recognise which it was when blindfolded, taught them about the importance of different senses. They observed runner beans as they grew and used magnifying glasses to look closely at spiders. The carefully planned walks in the local area are teaching them about their environment and provide good opportunities for discussion of the features they see on the way. They recognise old and new houses and are beginning to learn about time passing as good questioning and lots of encouragement helps them to discuss yesterday, today and tomorrow. Many work at the computer confidently, using a graphics program to draw themselves, showing good mouse control as they dress teddy and practising letter and number recognition. They use construction equipment to build and have explored how to make a woollen spider move down a spout. They have good understanding of the Christmas story and are learning about being a good friend.

Physical development

60. The range of activities which the teachers introduce help the children to develop good co-ordination and control of small tools and implements, for example as the children use scissors, the computer mouse and weave over and under pieces of wool. In PE the carefully planned sequence of activities mean that children learn to throw and catch, to balance a beanbag on different parts of the body as they move, and to jump into and over a hoop. The teacher was very supportive of those children who found this more difficult, which helped them to succeed. All of these activities successfully support their physical development and achieve well, but there are no facilities in the school for the pupils to practise climbing.

Creative development

61. Children to make good progress in this area. They paint, mixing colours to make different shades of green for their 'ten green bottles'. They print, make a collage of a sheep with natural wool and undertake close observational drawings. In a very good lesson, they responded very well to very skilful teaching to create a musical accompaniment for 'The Snowman', using triangles and drums. They were expected to listen and concentrate very hard to make sure they played at the

right time. They enjoy singing well-loved nursery rhymes. They use their imagination well in the role play area, currently a vet's surgery, to act in role as they care for the animals.

ENGLISH

62. Results in the national tests in reading at the end of Year 2 were well above the national average and those of similar schools in 2001. This represents an improvement on the previous year with the boys in particular, doing much better than boys nationally. In writing, results in 2001 were very high compared with all schools and with schools in similar contexts. This is also better than the previous year when results were well above average. The current Year 2 is not working at quite such a high level because the proportion of pupils with special educational needs is higher than in other classes.
63. Inspection evidence shows that current standards in Year 2 and Year 4 are above average overall and well above in speaking and listening. This is an improvement since the last inspection, particularly in writing. When pupils in Year 2 and Year 4 started school in the Reception Class their attainment was broadly average and in relation to their starting point all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are achieving well.
64. Standards of speaking and listening are well above average through the school. Pupils listen attentively in lessons to the teacher and each other. Many pupils are confident, articulate speakers with a wide vocabulary. For example, the youngest pupils suggested such action words as 'nibbled' and 'scuttled' for a rabbit's movements. They participate in class discussions enthusiastically and they use these skills to collaborate well in paired work in other subjects as well as in English. For example, Year 2 pupils questioned each other about tens and units in a mathematics lesson. In a science lesson in Year 3, pupils explored different types of rocks and stone, testing the softness of each, while in Year 4 pairs worked together using laptop computers as they researched information about the Vikings on the Internet. As at the time of the previous inspection, drama is not systematically taught.
65. Pupils enjoy reading and standards are above average at the end of Year 2 and in Year 4, well above in the other years. In Year 2, high-attaining pupils are fluent, expressive readers and are able to discuss favourite authors. Lower-attainers read quite accurately, though they are less fluent and expressive. They are able to blend sounds into syllables to work out unknown words. By Year 4, the best readers have read a wide range of books and discuss and justify their preferences well. Year 3 and 4 pupils use the school library and understand the classification system in use. Pupils confidently use non-fiction and the Internet for research and staff use books as a stimulus in different subjects. For example, 'Len Lion's Wobbly Tooth' was used very effectively to show examples of sliding mechanisms in a very good design and technology lesson in Year 1. Book areas in classrooms are quite well stocked, but some of the books are well used and worn, and the presentation does not stimulate interest in a specific author or type of book. Parents hear their children read at home regularly, and this has a positive impact on standards. A number of parents come to school to hear pupils read. This support is beneficial and much appreciated by the staff.
66. A wide range of writing is undertaken through the school. This includes imaginative stories, poems, letters, play scripts, instructions and newspaper reports. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 2 use a neat, joined handwriting style, are confident with basic punctuation and use imaginative vocabulary in their writing. Lower attaining pupils are still insecure with sentence punctuation and use less adventurous vocabulary. However, they are making good progress as they write at much greater length than at the beginning of the year. By Year 4, the more able pupils show good

awareness of different styles of writing. For example, they use an appropriate style for a newspaper report, numbered instructions for making a jumping frog, or a play script with stage directions. Pupils throughout the school word-process some of their work, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Opportunities for pupils to practise their developing literacy skills are provided in other subjects. For example, in Year 3, pupils wrote about being evacuated in the Second World War and about Anne Frank. However, in some classes, the frequent use of worksheets, particularly in history, limits these opportunities.

67. The teaching seen was good overall and there was no unsatisfactory teaching. Learning objectives are shared with the pupils at the beginning of the lessons and all teachers enjoy very good relationships with their class. Other successful features include clear instructions, good class management and purposeful questioning. For example, in a good lesson, Year 2 pupils read part of a version of the story of Cinderella together, and responded to the teacher's good questions, which engaged their interest and encouraged their predictions. Having successfully modelled writing the first few sentences of a story with the class, the pupils settled to write their own story ending. Some pupils used laptops, with good teaching assistant support, to word process their work. Year 3 pupils learnt about the power of adjectives through lively teaching. All teachers select appropriate texts to read with their class, and the pupils respond to these very positively, with great enthusiasm. For example, pupils in Year 4 enjoyed discussing how different authors have created imaginary worlds, having heard extracts from different texts.
68. In a few lessons for a variety of reasons the teaching was satisfactory rather than good. For example, sometimes the pupils were sitting on the carpet for too long or the teacher did not involve the pupils sufficiently, or pupils queued for the teacher's help with spellings while she was trying to focus on a particular group. Occasionally the activity set was not challenging enough, particularly for the more able pupils. The quality of marking varies, with all giving positive comments and the best referring to the particular objective and giving points for improvement.
69. The school has successfully adapted the National Literacy Strategy to suit its needs, retaining the key features, and uses several published schemes to support its work. Teachers' lesson planning is detailed and appropriate. Reading records are maintained regularly and pupils' writing attainment is formally assessed, with a level assigned, twice a year. There is little formal assessment of pupils' progress with speaking and listening. Many new books have been purchased recently, including some excellent big books, which the staff and pupils are thoroughly enjoying. Year 3 pupils cheered when they knew they would hear the end of 'Mr Archimedes' Bath', which linked appropriately to their history topic of Ancient Greece. The additional book provision has addressed one of the weaknesses identified in the last inspection report. The library, while still situated in the corridor, has been improved since the previous inspection. The subject is well led by an experienced, knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator who has monitored informally. However, no formal monitoring of pupils' work or learning has been undertaken.

MATHEMATICS

70. Attainment in mathematics has improved since the last inspection. The results of the national tests taken in Year 2 in 2001 were well above average compared with schools nationally and above average compared with similar schools. The pupils enjoy mathematics, work hard and are enthusiastic. The work seen during the inspection was broadly consistent with the recent test results and pupils are achieving very well compared to their attainment when they started school. Standards in Years 3 and 4 are high. Almost all pupils in Year 2 are likely to achieve Level 2 and a reasonable proportion should reach Level 3. They may not do quite as well as last year because

the year group has a much higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Year 1 pupils are working at a level that is well above average, particularly in mental mathematics.

71. Pupils are very confident and accurate in mental mathematics. In Years 1 and 2 they add and subtract two digit numbers accurately and higher-attainers understand the principles of multiplication. They could count on and back accurately in twos, fives, tens and twenties from almost any starting point with little difficulty. In Year 2 the higher-attainers understood that subtraction is the inverse operation of addition. They have a good grasp of mathematical vocabulary and use it accurately. Similarly in Years 3 and 4 pupils are quick and accurate, using a variety of methods when working things out in their heads. They can estimate accurately. In general pupils apply their knowledge well in numeracy sessions but are less confident and secure when using mathematics in other subjects. Relationships are good and pupils co-operate well with each other in paired and group work.
72. The teaching was good overall, particularly in relation to mental mathematics. The sessions at the start of lessons are being used well to develop pupils' mental agility and their ability to manipulate numbers quickly and accurately. The teachers use these sessions and the plenary at the end of lessons to build confidence and understanding. In one good lesson in Year 2 the initial whole-class explanation, skilful questioning and encouragement enabled pupils to make real progress and a number of pupils grasped quickly that doubling and halving numbers are inverse operations.
73. In all classes, teachers' planning is based firmly on the guidelines of the national numeracy strategy. As a result, lessons are generally well structured. Teachers share learning objectives with pupils at the start of the lesson and review these at the end. This helps the pupils to understand what is expected of them and check what they have learnt. The oral work is well matched to the range of attainment in the classes through targeted questions. Written work is not always as effective. The same work sheet is often used for all pupils with the higher-attainers being expected to reach the more difficult questions. However this means that lower-attaining pupils do not always finish the work.
74. The national guidelines are supplemented by additional schemes of work. Teachers are realising that these need to be adapted to suit the particular needs of a class. In the best teaching, the information gained through assessment was used to plan the next stages, in one case giving pupils more time to consolidate their knowledge than the scheme suggested. Where teaching was satisfactory rather than good this was not always the case, and in one lesson too much time was spent practising a technique with which pupils were already confident.
75. Although the teaching was never less than satisfactory, at times the first whole-class part of the lesson lasted rather too long, mainly because many pupils were keen to join in. It had the effect however of limiting the amount of time available for them to practise and consolidate what they had learnt. In another lesson, the planning did not initially take enough account of what pupils could do, but the teacher revised the lesson aims. The teachers use assessment information and test results well to help them plan suitable work and set targets. Pupils' work is regularly marked and teachers are mostly making constructive comments on how pupils can improve, though this is not always the case.
76. Resources for mathematics are good and well used. In one lesson the pupils were making good use of the number lines and other mathematical displays. The use of ICT is increasing as staff plan specifically to use computers in lessons and there were good examples of ICT being used for data-handling in all classes with spreadsheets used to create bar charts or pie charts as appropriate.

77. The mathematics co-ordinator is managing the subject effectively. She has evaluated results and observed some lessons. She recognises the need to adapt the schemes of work further and is keen to see that pupils are given opportunities to apply mathematics in investigations and practical work as widely as possible.

SCIENCE

78. In 2001 the results of teacher assessment for Year 2 showed that standards were very high when compared with other schools nationally and with similar schools. A high proportion of pupils was assessed as reaching the higher level 3 which is better than at the previous inspection. The work in Year 2 is above average, but the test results are not likely to be as good as last year, though the pupils are achieving well relative to their starting point. This reflects the differences between year groups, for example in the proportion of pupils with special educational needs. In the other year groups the pupils are maintaining a very good standard of work.
79. Practical work in science is good. In a lesson in Year 4 pupils were testing the properties of different materials to establish the difference between a solid and a liquid. They were working systematically and observing what happened carefully, though needing prompting at times to remember to record their observations. Year 3 pupils testing rocks for hardness and to see how porous they were, made sensible predictions. They then tested these, working co-operatively and enthusiastically though it took some of them a little while to realise that their energetic rubbing of a rock with sandpaper was wearing away the paper not the rock! Year 2 pupils worked carefully in an experiment where they had to describe what they could feel when blindfolded. They were sensitive to each other when talking about the similarities and differences between people. Pupils with special educational needs were generally well supported so that they could join in fully in the lesson.
80. Work in books in all year groups showed that pupils had studied different aspects of science such as electricity, growth in people and plants, and forces and friction. The recording of experiments showed that in some cases, for example an investigation into the growth of seeds in Year 2, pupils are encouraged to explain their conclusions in their own words, but this is not done consistently. At times all pupils had used the same worksheet but not all of them had been able to complete it. However there was some good work on the Year 4 visit to Didcot Power Station where the class had clearly learnt a great deal about how electricity is generated. Some of the work in science is supporting numeracy well through encouraging accurate measurement. The work in Year 1 on movement was making a good contribution to developing pupils' literacy skills as they described different movements and labelled diagrams accurately.
81. The teaching is good overall. Teachers plan suitable investigations and practical work to build on and develop pupils' scientific knowledge and understanding. They introduce appropriate scientific vocabulary well, which further develops understanding. Discussion in lessons was good, for example in Year 3 a good question and answer session prompted pupils to think carefully about the investigation and also reminded them of the need for safe working practices. Teachers encourage pupils to work independently and develop their own ideas, though some groups occasionally needed rather more direction. While pupils were working on their investigations or completing worksheets the teachers were asking probing questions about what pupils were doing and why. They were giving good support to pupils with special educational needs. The only

relative weakness in the teaching is the tendency for all pupils to have the same worksheet, which means that lower-attainers do not always finish the work. However, in the Year 1 lesson on movement, the different levels of work sheet enabled all pupils to achieve well.

82. The subject co-ordinator is managing the subject well though she has had only a limited amount of time to monitor work. This has however, been useful. The development of practical and investigative work has been a high priority and the subject co-ordinator now has good plans to develop the use of assessment. Science is generally well-resourced and the use of ICT is being extended rapidly.

ART AND DESIGN

83. Although no art lessons were seen during the inspection, evidence from displays, photographs, planning and discussions indicates that attainment by the end of Year 2 and Year 4 is close to national expectations. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. The work in art and design provides useful links with other subjects such as ICT, English, history and science.
84. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory through the school, with some good achievement in Year 1. Here, the previous term's work on self-portraits shows good development of an initial pencil drawing in sketchbooks. Pupils used a wide range of media, including paint, fabric, wool, paper and pastels to produce their portraits and some designed theirs using a computer program. The results are of a good standard. Links with the current science study of movement are leading to pupils sculpting high quality clay models, showing lifelike body movements. During the planned visit to an environmental study centre later this term, pupils will have the opportunity to use natural materials to create further sculptures. The work of different artists being used satisfactorily to stimulate pupils' imagination, for example Van Gogh's picture of Sunflowers inspired Year 4 pupils to write group poems about sunflowers and then make sunflower collages, using a variety of seeds and papers. All classes use graphics programs on the computer.
85. The range of work is not as wide as that seen in some schools. The school is currently using a nationally recommended scheme of work, but most of the teachers are not finding helpful and it is not being implemented consistently in all classes. Some of the units are not developed fully, to include all the practical activities, and in some classes, pupils are given insufficient opportunities to experiment and investigate. This is evident in the use of sketchbooks. All pupils use these, but there are few entries and little evidence of developing a variety of ideas or exploring a range of media. Resources are satisfactory, as at the time of the previous inspection. The co-ordinator is new to the role and recognises the need to adopt a new scheme of work to ensure progression in developing skills and techniques. Currently there is no portfolio of completed work, showing the range and level of work undertaken, but the recently appointed co-ordinator is beginning to collect photographs of displays.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

86. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 4 is in line with national expectations, as at the time of the last inspection. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory through the school because they develop their skills, knowledge and understanding steadily, by following the nationally recommended scheme of work. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection, when there was no scheme of work in place.

87. The activities enable pupils to develop a satisfactory range of techniques and skills, and use a good range of materials. Pupils in Year 1 had followed the topic of 'Eat more fruit and vegetables' which provided opportunities to develop practical skills and made good links with English and science. They used their senses, developing appropriate vocabulary as they felt, looked, smelt and tasted a wide range of fruits. Then they made different jellies, discovering that including pineapple or kiwi fruit stopped the jelly from setting. In Year 2, pupils had made glove puppets from different textiles, using blanket stitch to join the material. This term, as they make a coat for Joseph, they will design it using ICT and will be taught how to use different stitches. Year 3 pupils evaluated packaging and assembled their own box, using ICT to design an appropriate label for it. Year 4 drew on the work on electrical circuits in science to design and make their own torches. In the design, they identified materials they would need, what they would do to make the switch, casing and circuit. Having successfully made the torch, they evaluated their work.
88. The teaching in the one lesson seen was very good. Year 1 pupils made a moving picture by using a sliding mechanism, which they had explored the previous week. The teacher read a story with examples in and showed a number of her own ideas to the pupils, who were very enthusiastic. All concentrated well as they designed a picture, showing which part would slide, and many were very inventive. For example, one was a child going down a slide, another a dog chasing a rabbit or a racing car going along the track. The lesson was of sufficient length for the pupils' ideas to be developed in card, and very good teacher and assistant support helped all pupils to succeed.
89. The co-ordinator is very newly appointed and recognises the need for a policy for the subject. Resources are adequate for the scheme of work. There has been no formal monitoring of the effectiveness of the implementation of the scheme of work, neither is there any formalised assessment of the pupils' attainment and progress in the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

90. Only one geography lesson was observed during the inspection. However, evidence from well presented displays, pupils' previously completed work and discussions shows standards are in line with those expected nationally, as at the time of the last inspection. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory through the school as they systematically follow a nationally recommended scheme of work. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when there was insufficient guidance for teachers to ensure that pupils' knowledge and skills were built on from year to year.
91. The local environment is used well. For example, pupils in Year 1 studied aerial photographs of Marsh Gibbon, locating specific places. They wrote their own and the school addresses and drew maps showing the features they pass on their way to school. During a village walk they sketched various buildings, including the church and manor house and discussed the types of jobs and leisure facilities available locally. Pupils in Year 3 developed this as they studied how they travelled to school, how far it is and how long the journey takes. They understand the use of grid references and compass directions to locate places on maps. Their study included interpreting timetables and planning journeys with this information.
92. Pupils in Year 2 learnt about the imaginary Scottish island of Struay. They used their literacy skills as they wrote to a child there, asking for details of life on the island. The reply gave them many insights into a very different environment from their own, including types of transport and how the land and buildings are used. This knowledge is further developed in Year 4 as the pupils begin to study settlements. They show clear awareness of positive and negative features of different situations as they decide on the most suitable place to locate a farm. Previous work showed

understanding of the importance of recycling different materials in the most appropriate way to avoid increasing pollution of the environment.

93. Through these well-planned studies, pupils are developing their geographical vocabulary and using primary and secondary sources of information to describe and compare places. The work is recorded in a variety of ways and provides appropriate links with other subjects such as English and mathematics. There is too little evidence to give an overall judgement about the quality of teaching. However, in the one lesson seen Year 2 pupils enjoyed exploring a world map, locating various places they had been fortunate enough to visit on holidays. Using knowledge from their study last term, they define an island as 'a piece of land surrounded by lots of sea'. Satisfactory teaching helped the pupils locate St Lucia, which will be their focus this term, and they discussed ways of travelling there from England. This study will contribute to pupils' cultural development, and provides an appropriate contrasting locality.
94. Resources for the subject are satisfactory and are enhanced by an excellent pack of information on the local area compiled by the co-ordinator. The draft policy is helpful, with cross-curricular links identified. The subject is managed by a knowledgeable, enthusiastic co-ordinator, who recognises the need to devise end of unit assessment opportunities.

HISTORY

95. Attainment by the end of Year 2 and Year 4 is broadly average. Pupils are achieving at a satisfactory level, though with considerable strengths in oral work. They show a real interest in the subject and in all the lessons seen they were keen to learn more about the topic.
96. In Years 1 and 2 the work on famous people such as Florence Nightingale and learning about events such as the Great Fire of London introduces pupils to the use of historical evidence. They understand concepts such as 'then' and 'now', through comparing photographs of themselves as babies and 'old' and 'new' through different toys. Parents had provided a very good collection of old toys which were on display in a 'class museum'. This acted as a good stimulus for discussion. The use of stories about the Great Fire of London held the pupils' attention throughout a long session and prompted good questions.
97. In Years 3 and 4 the use of evidence is expanded further. In Year 3, a very good lesson on ancient Greece, the teacher used artefacts very skilfully to help pupils to understand how historians ask questions and use artefacts to help them draw conclusions about life in the past. The use of the Internet for research on the Vikings was extending pupils' historical knowledge and their competence in ICT.
98. The teaching of history is satisfactory overall and good in relation to oral work where links with literacy are strong and pupils are encouraged to discuss and question in some depth. Occasionally the introductory sessions last a little too long, but this is mainly because pupils are keen to volunteer ideas. Teachers use a good range of books and resources to provide information and act as a stimulus for further work. The work sheets used are generally appropriate and in some cases the expectations for written work were high. For example, the imaginative accounts of evacuation written by some Year 3 pupils showed that they had really understood what it might have been like to be evacuated. In general however pupils are not being given enough opportunity to write about people and events at length and in their own words.
99. The acting head teacher is also the humanities co-ordinator and understandably in the last year history has not had a high priority though standards have been maintained. She is however aware

of ways in which the subject can be further developed, in particular through developing the use of assessment. The policy is good and the use of the nationally recommended guidelines is ensuring that all the requirements of the National Curriculum are being met. Resources are good and are well used. Displays are attractive and informative.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

100. The expansion over the last year of the ICT facilities and the considerable increase in the access to computers that this represents, are encouraging the use of ICT across the curriculum. Pupils are able to acquire knowledge and skills more quickly and also increase their understanding of how ICT can be used in a variety of situations. All aspects of ICT are now being taught. Teachers have had access to good training, which has increased their knowledge, skills and confidence. The provision in ICT is an improvement on the position at the last inspection.
101. Attainment in ICT is average in all year groups but standards are rising rapidly and pupils are achieving well. They are generally confident users of computers, loading the relevant program and with help, saving and printing their work. They are using the Internet constructively for research. During the inspection pupils in Year 4 were observed working well in pairs supporting each other as they rapidly worked their way through menu to access the relevant information on the Vikings. Classroom displays and pupils' books and folders showed that pupils in all classes were competently using ICT in word-processing and using graphics packages. In the older classes pupils were using ICT effectively in support of data handling in mathematics.
102. The teaching of ICT is much better than at the time of the previous inspection. Teachers are planning the use of ICT much more systematically across the curriculum and for much more direct teaching using the interactive whiteboard. They are also not afraid to experiment and draw on the knowledge and skills of pupils.
103. The subject co-ordinator has put a great deal of work into ensuring that teachers have the confidence to use ICT in virtually all subjects. The success of this is clear in the higher standards and more effective teaching. Resources are good in terms of the number of computers and adequate in terms of the software.

MUSIC

104. Music makes an excellent contribution to the life of the school. All classes have a weekly lesson which is supplemented by other work with class teachers. All pupils are encouraged to participate and they learn a wide range of musical skills through performing on tuned and untuned instruments, listening to music and singing. The standard of music making is very good and pupils achieve well. Lessons are lively, very enjoyable and well structured with good links made between music and other subjects. For example, the pupils in Year 4 were learning about the Vikings through music, as well as in history. These pupils were encouraged to experiment with different instruments to accompany a song to achieve the effective they wanted. Pupils learn to write down their compositions initially using graphic notation and then using conventional notation at the appropriate time so that they learn to follow a simple score accurately. Almost all pupils in Years 3 and 4 learn the recorder and they performed very confidently to accompany the singing in one assembly.
105. Pupils' personal, social and cultural development is strongly promoted through music. They learn to take responsibility and in all classes handled the instruments with care. From the youngest children onwards they listen well to each other and the teacher and concentrate hard to ensure

that they play their part properly. Pupils are very willing to demonstrate and perform in front of the rest of the class. They evaluate their own and other pupils' work thoughtfully and sensitively.

106. The teaching of music is outstanding. The knowledgeable and experienced specialist teacher uses her own considerable musical skills and enthusiasm to motivate and encourage pupils to work hard and achieve very good standards. Lessons have a very good mix of practical activities in singing, listening to music, composing and playing instruments. These are designed to extend pupils' musical knowledge in a way that is fun, but also promotes high standards in singing and playing. Everyone has a chance to take part and their contributions are valued. Pupils perform regularly in school productions, for local people and in music festivals. Resources for music are good and include a range of instruments from different cultures. ICT is beginning to be used successfully in composition.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

107. Across the school, standards of attainment are close to national expectations. These are similar to those found at the previous inspection. Pupils of all abilities enjoy gymnastics, dance and games and make at least satisfactory progress. There is no difference in standards between boys and girls.
108. In a very good gymnastics lesson, Year 1 pupils practised rocking on different parts of their body and then rolling over. They worked hard on the apparatus, travelling over or under and jumping off, making good progress as they landed with both feet together and knees bent. Year 2 pupils worked on travelling in a straight line forwards, backwards and sideways, showing good awareness of space by carefully avoiding others as they moved. In dance lessons to taped music Year 2 pupils also enjoyed improvising lively, happy movements and slower, sad movements, with appropriate facial expressions. Pupils in Year 4 co-operated well in pairs to devise movements associated with machinery in a factory. They successfully mimed such movements as sweeping, turning levers, digging and stopped appropriately when the factory siren sounded!
109. Pupils in the Years 3 and 4 join together for a weekly games lesson. Those choosing to play football practised close ball control, dribbling round cones, prior to playing a game. Splitting into year groups for two matches enabled all the pupils to be actively involved in the resulting small-sided games. Great enthusiasm, by boys and girls, was evident and some pupils showed good skills in stopping the ball, turning with it and kicking in the desired direction. The 'Kwik' cricket games were equally as enthusiastically pursued, with three teams enabling all to be actively involved in fielding or batting. A particular feature was the good sportsmanship seen. For example, when a pupil missed a catch or threw inaccurately, none of the other pupils complained.
110. The quality of teaching seen was all satisfactory or better. Nearly all staff ensure pupils warm up appropriately prior to physical activity. In the very good lesson the work was well structured, with clear instructions and demonstrations as well as appropriate praise and encouragement. Through useful evaluations of pupils' efforts, improvement was evident during the lesson. Good teaching of games in the Years 3 and 4 enabled all pupils to be fully involved. Welcome support by two parents helped the football activities. In some lessons, there was insufficient evaluation of what pupils were achieving in order to improve the quality of their work.
111. A commercial scheme of work is followed for gymnastics through the school. In the summer, pupils use the swimming pool as often as possible, with considerable support from parents. Parents

also run some after school clubs at times, which include football, rounders and swimming. Teachers and governors have decided not to pursue competitive sports with the pupils, and the annual sports day involves fun activities for all. Resources for the subject are good apart from the lack of fixed apparatus in the hall. The co-ordinator is very newly appointed and is about to undertake some training to support her in the role.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

112. The importance of religious belief and spiritual development are implicit in all the work of the school. It was not possible to see RE in all classes but it is clear from the pupils' work, displays, assemblies and those lessons which could be observed, that attainment in RE is better than the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus in all classes and pupils are achieving well. Pupils are knowledgeable about the main beliefs and festivals of Christianity and have also had a good grounding in the beliefs of other world faiths.
113. The lessons seen and the work in pupils' books shows that a good range of moral and social issues are discussed as well as matters of faith. Pupils are being encouraged to think deeply about personal beliefs and about relationships at a level appropriate to their age and understanding. They learn to understand, respect and value other people's views. The discussions in particular are making a good contribution to pupils understanding of the importance of beliefs and customs and also to literacy. Year 4 pupils were interested in the different rituals connected with the birth and naming of a child and in Year 1 pupils could explain why some objects were particularly special to them even though they might not appear valuable to other people. Occasionally opportunities are missed for pupils to write in their own words and at greater length.
114. The teaching of RE is generally good and follows closely the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Teachers give pupils time to think about their own values and to reflect on important moral, social and spiritual issues as well as learning about the beliefs and values of others. A good range artefacts and strong links with the local church further enhance the teaching and learning. Pupils visit the church and local clergy come into school to take assemblies.
115. Assemblies are used effectively to support RE. In one good assembly the religious books of several traditions were displayed and explained. Later the same day a number of pupils were interested enough to follow this up for themselves and were looking carefully at the display and had clearly understood what they had been taught about why the books should be treated with respect.
116. The acting head teacher is currently the RE co-ordinator. The subject has not been able to have a high priority but she is strongly committed to ensuring that it plays a significant role in the life of the school and this is certainly the case.