

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Ladygrove Park Primary School**

Didcot

LEA area: Oxfordshire

Unique reference number: 131904

Headteacher: David Burrows

Reporting inspector: Michael J Cahill  
19623

Dates of inspection: 5 – 8 February 2001

Inspection number: 230829

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

© Crown copyright 2001

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Avon Way  
Didcot

Postcode: OX11 7GB

Telephone number: 01235 519235

Fax number: 01235 512658

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Captain John Flood

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Michael Cahill 19623	Registered inspector	Foundation Stage Mathematics Design and technology Information and communication technology Music Physical education	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
Helen Barter 9052	Lay inspector		Attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Margaret Handsley 19117	Team inspector	Special educational needs Art and design Geography History Religious education Science	How well is the school led and managed?
Sanchia Pearse 4787	Team inspector	Equal opportunities English as an additional language English	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

TWA *Inspections* Ltd  
5 Lakeside  
Werrington  
Peterborough  
Cambs  
PE4 6QZ

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

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

## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>10</b>
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM AND SUBJECTS</b>	<b>27</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school opened in April 1999 with pupils in all year groups except Year 6. Most of the pupils had previously been taught in special classes housed on the site of a neighbouring school. There are now 195 full time pupils on roll (116 boys and 79 girls) taught in eight classes, one of which includes both Year 5 and Year 6 pupils. At the time of the inspection three of the 16 children in the reception class were less than five years of age. Fifty-two children, ages three and four, attend the nursery for either the morning or the afternoon session. There are 49 pupils on the school's register of special educational need, including one child with a full statement. At 22 per cent the proportion of pupils on the special educational needs register is close to the national average. The attainment of most pupils on entry to the school is around the national expectation. Sixteen pupils are entitled to free school meals; at 8.1 per cent this is well below the national average.

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

The school has already demonstrated its effectiveness in raising levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy as pupils move through Key Stage 2 and in achieving standards in reading and writing at seven which are in line with national expectations. The school provides very good accommodation and is developing an appropriate curriculum that is already enriched with a good range and quality of extra-curricular activities. The governing body, headteacher and staff work well together to enable the school, at this early stage in its development, to provide sound value for money.

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

- The headteacher, with the governing body and senior staff, provides good leadership directed at improving pupils' achievements and the quality of education provided.
- The quality of teaching is high and pupils make good progress; there is good provision for those with special educational needs.
- The Foundation Stage provides pupils with a very good start to their full-time education.
- The school successfully promotes good attitudes to learning and there are good relationships between members of staff and pupils.
- There is very good provision for the health, safety and welfare of the pupils.
- The school uses its resources, including new technology, effectively and provides pupils with a high standard of accommodation.

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

**The school has reached the stage in its development where the need to take action in the following areas has been recognised:**

- Formalising the management structures in line with the needs of a large school.
- Developing consistency in the management of behaviour throughout the whole school day.
- Developing the organisation of the curriculum and the timetabling of its teaching.

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

Since the school opened less than two years ago, much has been achieved. The governing body, headteacher and staff have won the confidence of parents and established effective links with them. Financial planning, in line with agreed priorities for development, is securely established. A strong and harmonious staff team has been quickly built. The school is recognised by pupils and parents as caring, welcoming and responsive. This foundation, combined with the sense of common purpose among governors, headteacher, staff and parents, provides a good basis for further development.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7-year-olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
Reading	n/a	D	C	E
Writing	n/a	E	C	D
Mathematics	n/a	D	D	E

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

In 2000, the number of pupils in Year 6 was too small for conclusions to be drawn about the school's performance. However, more than half of those entered achieved the national standard of Level 4 in each of English, mathematics and science. Schools are described as similar when they fall into the same band with respect to the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. Last year, 2000, the school was at the top of the lowest category (0 to 8 per cent), now it is at the bottom of the next category (8 to 20 per cent). A comparison of the 2000 results for Key Stage 1 with this group leads to Reading - C, Writing - C, Mathematics - E. It should be noted that the pupils entered for tests in 1999 had spent only a few weeks at the school while none of those entered in 2000 had spent the whole of their previous full-time education at Ladygrove Park.

Inspection evidence based largely on the work of the present Year 2 shows that standards in English, mathematics and science are broadly in line with national expectations. Most pupils read accurately and write independently in simple sentences. They listen attentively to their teachers and each other, although speaking skills are slower to improve. On the basis of lessons and work seen during the inspection, the oldest pupils in Key Stage 2 are working at levels in line with national expectations in English, mathematics and science.

In both key stages, attainment is in line with national expectations in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, music and physical education. In religious education, standards are in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. In several subject areas, including art, history and information and communication technology, there are already examples of work that are of above average standard. The school keeps good records of pupils' progress in all subjects and sets realistic targets for improving standards. Pupils now in the Foundation Stage are on track to achieve above national expectations at the end of it.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good; pupils enjoy coming to school and are interested and enthusiastic about the opportunities provided for them, including the extra-curricular activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory; most pupils behave well in lessons although a few find this difficult. In the playground and around the school behaviour is sometimes less well controlled.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory; pupils are beginning to show respect for others' feelings and values in lessons and most have good relationships with their teachers. Relationships between pupils are satisfactory although some forget that their actions have impact on others.
Attendance	Satisfactory; attendance is in line with national averages although there is an increasing pattern of term-time holidays. Punctuality is good.

The good relationships between pupils and the adults in the school community are an important strength of the school.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Good	Very 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 standard of teaching was at least satisfactory in all lessons observed. Three-quarters of lessons were good or better, of which nearly one-third were very good or excellent. This is high quality teaching and is the main reason for pupils' positive attitudes to learning and for the good progress that they make as they move through the school.

The teaching of English, including the skills of literacy, is never less than satisfactory in any of the three key stages. The literacy-focused lesson with children in the reception class was judged to be excellent. In Key Stage 1, 50 per cent of lessons were of a good standard. In Key Stage 2, 83 per cent of lessons were good or better, including 50 per cent that were very good. In mathematics, including the National Numeracy Strategy, teaching is also never less than satisfactory. All of the lessons in Key Stage 2 were judged to be very good and three-quarters of those seen in Key Stage 1 were good or very good.

From the time that they enter the school in the nursery or reception class children are very effectively encouraged to work together or, when it is appropriate, to work independently. Throughout the school, pupils show a real interest and enthusiasm for their lessons and gain in confidence in their own ability to learn. In more than three-quarters of the lessons observed, pupils' attitudes and behaviour were good or better. Pupils' progress in individual lessons was good or better in 73 per cent of the lessons observed. Most pupils are developing good work habits, although some do not take enough care with the standard of presentation. Older pupils, in particular, maintain their concentration and interest well.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory in Key Stages 1 and 2, where the school teaches all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. The quality of the extra-curricular clubs is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good; this is well organised and teachers and learning support assistants plan carefully together to meet individual needs. As a result pupils make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Teachers are aware of the few pupils who are learning English as an additional language and provide appropriate support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Sound; the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral and social development through good assemblies and in lessons. Provision for cultural development is also sound, but there are too few opportunities for learning about other cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Teachers know their pupils well and offer them good levels of care. The school has good procedures for keeping track of the progress of individual pupils. This helps to set priorities and targets for improvement.

The school is developing its partnership with parents well. Parents are pleased with what the school provides, including a satisfactory level of information about their children's progress and the running of the school. Particular strengths of the curriculum and care provision are the regard for the health, safety and welfare of pupils, the academic assessment, support for pupils with special educational needs and the extra-curricular activities.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership of the headteacher is good. He has successfully established a new school and built a strong team of staff in a relatively short period of time. He and senior staff work effectively together, sharing vision and educational direction for the all-round development of the school. Their management of the school is sound.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is experienced, committed and supportive of the school. Governors discharge their statutory and other responsibilities well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The governing body, headteacher and senior staff effectively review the work of the school as it develops and grows. They take action to strengthen areas of weakness, in the curriculum for example, enabling pupils to make good progress.
The strategic use of resources	The school plans carefully within its budget and uses existing resources well. Specific grants, such as those to support pupils with special educational needs, are spent well. The school actively seeks to obtain the best value for money.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory, although the provision of resources inevitably lags behind the increasing roll. The school uses new technology well and the financial control and school administration are strengths. There are good arrangements for the induction of new members of staff and for professional development. The standard of accommodation is very good.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The views of the 66 parents who returned completed questionnaires and of the 12 who attended the pre-inspection meeting with members of the inspection team were taken into account.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>Teaching is good and teachers have high expectations of their children's work.</li> <li>They find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems.</li> <li>Their children like school and are making good progress.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The amount of homework.</li> <li>The information that they receive about their child's progress.</li> <li>The range of extra-curricular activities provided.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with the positive views of parents. The amount of homework set is appropriate for the age of pupils and the range and quality of extra-curricular activities are good. The school provides parents with satisfactory information about children's progress in their reports, at open evenings and more formal consultation meetings with teachers. Teachers are always happy to see parents to discuss their children's progress.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

#### **THE SCHOOL'S RESULTS AND PUPILS' ACHIEVEMENTS**

1. Children are assessed on entry to the nursery and demonstrate a range of attainment that is in line with national expectations. Further assessments are carried out in the first half-term of full-time education, when children are over five years of age. Results are then above the national average and in line with the county average. Most pupils in the school did not spend their early years at Ladygrove Park and there is incomplete information on their attainment at the age of five.
2. The school's 2000 national test results show that at the end of Key Stage 1 pupils' attainment was in line with the national average in reading and writing and below it in mathematics. However, if note is taken only of the proportion of pupils who achieved the national standard of Level 2 the school's results are average in reading, well above average in writing and above average in mathematics. It is the small proportion of pupils who achieved the higher Level 3 that depress the overall results. Teacher assessments of work in science were above the national expectations, in terms of the proportions achieving and exceeding Level 2. When compared with those of pupils at similar schools the results at Ladygrove Park are well below average in reading and mathematics, below average in writing and in line with the average in science. Results in 2000 represent an improvement on those achieved in 1999 at the end of the school's first term of operation.
3. Inspection evidence indicates that levels of attainment are in line with national expectations for seven-year-olds in art, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, music, physical education and religious education. Pupils make satisfactory progress. Taking into consideration the attainment of the pupils now in Year 2, attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is judged to be in line with the national average in English, including literacy, mathematics, including numeracy, and science, although the proportion of pupils expected to achieve the higher Level 3 remains low.
4. The school entered only eight pupils for national tests in 2000; little can be deduced about past or present standards from this information, except that more than half of the pupils achieved the national standard of Level 4 in English, mathematics and science.
5. Inspection evidence shows that the attainment of the current Year 6 pupils is in line with the national average in English, including literacy, mathematics, including numeracy, and science, and that pupils make good progress throughout the key stage. Levels of attainment in art, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, music, physical education and religious education are in line with national expectations for their age group. Pupils make progress that is always at least satisfactory. There are examples in most subjects of work in one or other year groups that is better than the expectation for pupils of their age nationally. For further details of pupils' progress and achievements in the subjects of the National Curriculum see paragraphs 91 - 166.
6. At its present stage of development the school still has pupils in Key Stage 2 who have attended one or more other primary schools. Attainment varies greatly from year group to year group. In the light of this, the school has set realistic targets for these pupils in terms of national test results at the end of Key Stage 2 and is taking appropriate action towards achieving them. In particular, the systematic tracking of pupils' progress, the provision of

extra support in literacy and a focus on writing are well considered strategies that are already bearing fruit.

7. Pupils with special educational needs are well known to their teachers and supported by them and by learning support assistants. They make good progress in relation to their targets, but their attainment remains below national expectations. The small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language also make good progress and their attainment is in line with their peers.

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

8. Pupils have good attitudes to school and are interested and involved in the activities provided for them in the classroom and in after-school clubs. There is a positive atmosphere in the school and this contributes well to pupils' attitudes to school life and to their learning. Pupils' behaviour, their personal development and relationships with one another are satisfactory, although there are some younger pupils in the school who display challenging behaviour, which sometimes disrupts the flow of lessons.
9. In the questionnaires, nearly all parents say that their children like coming to school and most agree that the standard of pupils' behaviour is good. They feel that the school has high expectations of their children and that this helps their children to be positive about their learning and to become mature and responsible. At the parents' meeting before the inspection, some of the small number of parents who attended said that the children do not behave well all of the time and that there is some bullying, but that teachers help them to learn to get on and deal very quickly with any upsets. Parents say that all the children seem to know and get on well with each other.
10. Pupils' attendance at school is satisfactory. There is only a small incidence of unauthorised absence when parents forget to inform the school about reasons for absence. However, the school knows that there is an increasing trend of term-time holidays which is pushing the levels of authorised absence above the national average and which is likely to have an impact on overall attendance levels over time. Pupils' punctuality is good. They are very keen to come into school at the start of the day and settle quickly in their classrooms for registration and morning activities.
11. Pupils' good attitudes to school mean that most are keen to do well. When they are provided with interesting work and activities, they are enthusiastic and involved in what they are doing. In the classroom there is a positive atmosphere, which encourages pupils to work and behave well. Pupils concentrate on their tasks, maintain good levels of interest and listen well to their teacher. They are keen to participate in discussions and to answer questions. They concentrate well and become engrossed when carrying out research, for example when pupils in Year 6 use computers to find information in an encyclopaedia program. Most pupils work hard and productively when required. They are enthusiastic, for example when taking part in interesting science experiments, and older pupils take the opportunity to review each other's work sensibly and seriously.
12. Overall, pupils' behaviour throughout the school is satisfactory. In lessons, teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, manage pupils well and, as a result, behaviour is usually good. Pupils try their best, work hard and co-operate well with each other. They respond quickly to instructions and are careful with the school's resources. Teachers work hard to maintain control in lessons and to manage any potentially disruptive behaviour. This is usually successful and pupils quickly settle back to work. There are a few pupils in the school, however, who have very challenging behaviour, which is not successfully addressed and which teachers find hard to manage. Although there have

been no exclusions from the school, some of these pupils are removed from the classroom when their behaviour disturbs the lesson and other pupils' learning.

13. Although behaviour in the classroom is mostly good, there are some aspects of pupils' behaviour when they are out of lessons that are less satisfactory because the school's behaviour policy does not set clear enough guidelines for acceptable behaviour in all areas of school life. Some older pupils are noisy and sometimes misbehave when they are waiting to go to lunch. Noise levels are high in the dining hall. In the playground, most pupils get on well and share balls and toys, but there are incidents of 'playfighting'. There is friction between some pupils and some unkindness towards others. When pupils line up to go back into class, some run across the playground and grass and there is some pushing and pulling while they wait for instructions from staff. Most pupils, however, get on well with each other and conform to the rules.
14. Pupils are making satisfactory progress in their personal development and relationships. They get on well with teachers and they try hard in lessons because they have respect for their teachers and want to please them. Pupils are learning to co-operate with each other and to share resources. They enjoy working together in activities such as science experiments where they work collaboratively and share ideas. Some pupils, however, are not sufficiently aware of how their actions affect others, for example, when they rush about in the playground or when they are unkind to others when playing.
15. Through the school's programme for personal, social and health education, pupils are learning to appreciate that others may think differently from themselves and to value their opinions. Pupils are learning to appreciate how people relate to one another and to learn the value of friendship. Most pupils respond well to the opportunities for taking responsibility, such as classroom monitor duties, taking the register to the office or helping with younger pupils at lunchtime. Their skills at displaying initiative, however, are underdeveloped.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. **The quality of teaching is high.** Of the lessons observed, 31 per cent were judged to be very good or excellent, a further 46 per cent were good, 23 per cent were satisfactory and none were unsatisfactory.
17. Examples of very good or excellent teaching were observed in all three key stages. In the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup>, five out of six lessons were good or very good. In Key Stages 1 and 2, the proportions of lessons that were judged to be at least good were 55 and 95 per cent respectively. This overall high quality of teaching makes a very important contribution towards promoting the pupils' positive attitudes towards their work and learning. In Key Stage 2, it is also the most significant factor in enabling pupils to make good progress, particularly in English, mathematics and science, and in improving the quality of pupils' learning. In Key Stage 1, especially in Year 1, teaching and learning are sometimes satisfactory rather than good because of the distracting behaviour of a small number of pupils.
18. The teaching of literacy is never less than satisfactory in any of the three key stages. The literacy-focused lesson with children in the reception class was judged to be excellent. In Key Stage 1, 50 per cent of lessons were of a good standard. In Key Stage 2, 83 per cent of lessons were good or better, including 50 per cent that were very good. In mathematics, including the National Numeracy Strategy, teaching is never less than

---

<sup>1</sup> The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three and finishes at the end of the reception class year. It is a distinct stage in preparing children for later schooling and is based on six areas of learning. These mainly refer to communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development, but also includes knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.

satisfactory. All of the lessons in Key Stage 2 were judged to be very good and three-quarters of those seen in Key Stage 1 were good or very good.

**There are a number of features common to the good or better teaching seen during the inspection and these include:**

19. **Teachers are very successful at ensuring that all pupils are included in the work being tackled.** This is achieved through good planning that provides work that is appropriate to pupils' differing learning needs and through providing adult support in class where necessary and possible. The very good partnership between teachers and learning support assistants and, on occasions, volunteer parents makes a striking contribution to the learning of all pupils. There is good support for pupils with special educational needs.
20. **The school has already established good procedures for keeping track of the progress of individual pupils as well as of year groups.** Throughout the school there are very good examples of teachers, sometimes with the help of learning support assistants, keeping useful records of the extent to which pupils have achieved their targets. This information is then used well in planning future teaching and setting further individual targets.
21. **Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and manage their classes and classrooms well.** There is a pleasant and purposeful working atmosphere in the classrooms and teachers have established and maintain good routines. It is noticeable that children in the Foundation Stage, some of whom had only been in the school for a few weeks at the time of the inspection, are very successfully encouraged to work independently and to organise themselves.
22. **The quality of the marking of pupils' work,** both during lessons and afterwards, is often very good and this has a substantial influence on pupils' learning and progress. At best, teachers have established a written as well as spoken dialogue about pupils' work. This lets the pupils know what is good (or not) about what they have done and how improvement can be achieved. This good practice also enables parents to know how their children are getting on and how they can help.
23. **Teachers use questions well throughout the course of most lessons.** In particular, there were many examples during the inspection of lessons that started with questions that provided an effective revision and consolidation of what had already been covered. This enabled pupils to be in a good position to move forward in their learning and helped teachers to adapt their approach in the light of what they found out about the level of knowledge and understanding. In the better lessons, time was carefully devoted at the end of the lesson to reviewing what had been done and this was usually carried out through well-targeted questions and sharing experience.
24. Lessons were conducted at a good pace with teachers using an appropriate mix of whole class, group and individual work as well as a good balance of practical, written and speaking and listening tasks. These methods maintained pupils' interest and attention well. There was particularly good practice in some classes in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 of setting time targets for the completion of tasks within the lessons.

#### **Areas for further improvement**

25. Where teaching was less stimulating or successful, although still satisfactory, the reason often was the absence of some of the above qualities. In some lessons with younger pupils in Key Stage 1, for example, the eccentric or attention seeking behaviour of a small number of pupils had a negative affect on the learning of everybody. Although most

morning lessons in literacy and numeracy proceed largely as planned, behaviour in less tightly structured areas such as music and physical education is less well controlled.

26. The school recognises the need to implement agreed whole-school policies on rewarding and encouraging good behaviour and for all teachers to be consistent in their expectations of work and behaviour. It also plans to extend its programme of classroom observation by subject leaders in order to promote the sharing of the elements of good practice in planning and teaching that were observed in all classrooms.
27. Teachers plan conscientiously within the school's agreed framework and make full use of the national strategy materials for literacy and numeracy. Where some daily planning can be improved is in more precisely defining what pupils are going to know or be able to do or understand better by the end of the lesson. When this is done and shared with the pupils, the focus of the lesson is sharper and assessment is more directly related to the learning targets set.

### **Learning and progress**

28. As a result of the high quality teaching pupils show a real interest and enthusiasm for their lessons and gain in confidence in their own ability to learn. In more than three-quarters of the lessons observed, pupils' attitudes and behaviour were good or better. Pupils' progress in individual lessons was good or better in 73 per cent of the lessons observed. These figures very closely match the proportion of teaching that was judged to be good or better.
29. Most pupils are developing good work habits, although there is some inconsistency throughout the school in expectations relating to standards of presentation. Pupils use resources independently when required to do so and work well together on tasks. Older pupils, in particular, maintain their concentration and interest well.
30. Pupils with a statement of special educational need are supported very well. Other pupils with special educational needs have good individual education plans and are well supported in lessons. Good and well-organised provision enables these pupils to make good progress throughout the school. The very small number of pupils who are learning English as an additional language also make good progress.
31. **Homework** is regularly set and is making an important contribution to raising standards. The inspection team agrees wholeheartedly with the vast majority of parents who said that the quality of teaching is good and who are happy with the amount of homework set. Further information about teaching and the learning and progress of pupils can be found in each of the subject sections (paragraphs 91– 166).

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

32. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage, in the nursery and the reception class, is good. There is a rich and varied range of activities and this encourages good learning across all the recommended areas.
33. The school provides a satisfactory range of learning activities for pupils in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. There is an appropriate emphasis on developing literacy and numeracy skills. Science provides a sound balance of learning opportunities. The school makes good use of the information and communication technology suite. The local education authority's agreed syllabus for religious education is followed appropriately and pupils benefit from learning about a range of religions and from exploring ideas related to faith and the spiritual side of life. The school is establishing satisfactory transfer arrangements

with the secondary schools and has good links with other local primary schools. Children in the nursery and reception class are well prepared for school at the age of five through their learning activities and through joining in with whole-school assemblies and school events.

34. The school is in the process of adopting and evaluating the recent guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority in the foundation subjects<sup>2</sup>. There is already a satisfactory balance of subjects, with schemes of work developing as the school grows. However, timetable organisation often results in a lack of daily balance when young pupils spend much of the morning on meeting the highly structured and largely sedentary requirements of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and the afternoons on the other areas of the National Curriculum. Because of the way that the school has grown, some classes have not been taught some subjects in some terms. The school is actively reviewing its organisation of the curriculum.
35. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support both from the teachers and learning support assistants in the school and from the special educational needs advisory teacher, who visits the school for one day a week. The learning support assistants work in a clear and focused way with pupils and help them make good progress towards their individual targets. Teachers and learning support assistants plan carefully together and modify work according to individual and group need. However, the planning of support for some pupils whose special educational needs are in the area of emotional and behavioural difficulty is less well considered.
36. There is a growing range of high quality after-school clubs. The clubs are well attended. For example, the recorder club has four different groups working at different levels. Pupils learn about notation and music theory as well as preparing for performances. The netball club involves both girls and boys and demands a high level of energy, whilst developing appropriate ball skills and learning the rules of the game. The science club involves pupils in practical activities, which they thoroughly enjoy, as do the pupils who regularly attend the maths club.
37. The school is aware of equality of opportunity issues; in particular the potential under-achievement of pupils from unsettled home backgrounds. More than half of the pupils have recently moved into the area and some have already had experience of several schools. The school is working to improve the relative performance of girls and boys. A child in a wheelchair is well integrated into the nursery and reception class. There are also good examples of pupils who are placed in classes appropriate to their needs rather than their age for short periods in order to help them settle.
38. Personal, social, and health education is an identified priority in the school. There is a good programme of specific personal, social, and health education lessons that cover relevant topics in a sensitive way. The lessons allow pupils to think about difficult issues in a safe and secure atmosphere.
39. The school is developing sound links with the community through school events and through local industry and individuals providing support. There are plans to develop this aspect further.
40. There are good daily acts of collective worship that, along with religious education lessons, help towards a sound spiritual development for pupils. Themes are carefully planned to reinforce the school's values. They encourage pupils to reflect and set good standards of behaviour and a sense of respect. As yet, there is a lack of planned spiritual

---

<sup>2</sup> The foundation subjects are art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education.

development across the curriculum, although teachers pick up on opportunities spontaneously as they arise.

41. Every classroom has a good display of agreed classroom rules that are referred to regularly. This establishes a clear moral code within the classrooms. In discussion, in personal, social, and health education lessons, pupils show that they understand right from wrong. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 discuss conflict resolution and are involved in devising a questionnaire to find out about bullying in the school. There are also visits from the local police to talk about such issues as vandalism.
42. The school rightly places a high priority on social development. Pupils take responsibility for duties around the school, including older pupils supervising younger ones at lunchtimes. They are encouraged to take initiative, for example in organising *Blue Peter* appeals. The school has already established regular educational visits for each year group, with a residential field trip planned for the summer term 2001. These make an important contribution to the pupils' social and personal development.
43. There is a sound range of activities and educational visits that promote pupils' cultural development. Visitors to the school include local historians, puppeteers, a storyteller and a dramatist. The school is aware of the need to learn more about a range of cultures that are not naturally represented in the school. Pupils who have lived abroad are encouraged to share their experiences and the school is actively trying to establish European links. For example, starting in September 2001, the school will become part of the Comenius project, which links schools from different countries.
44. Overall, the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is sound.
45. **The school has made a good start in: -**
  - establishing the core subjects of English, mathematics, science, religious education and, especially, information and communication technology;
  - making good provision for pupils with special educational needs;
  - developing good quality clubs and educational visits.
46. **The school has identified the need to develop further: -**
  - provision for the foundation subjects;
  - the balance of the school day, particularly in Key Stage 1.

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

47. The school provides pupils with a caring and secure environment and this has a positive impact on their learning and their lives at school. Staff know pupils well, have good knowledge of their physical, emotional and intellectual development and provide sound educational and personal support and guidance through the monitoring of their academic performance and personal development.
48. In the questionnaires completed before the inspection, parents said that the school works closely with them so that they feel comfortable in discussing any worries or concerns that they may have about their child's progress and welfare. At the meeting, parents reported that teachers and the headteacher know their children very well. Parents of children who are new to the school say that teachers help their children to settle well, especially if they are upset or finding it difficult to join a new school. Most parents feel that standards of behaviour are good and that although there is some bullying, incidents are dealt with quickly. Parents of the oldest pupils in Key Stage 2 are aware that their children have discussed issues related to bullying in personal and social education lessons.



49. There are very good procedures in place to ensure pupils' health, safety and well-being. As the school grows and develops, it is systematically reviewing and updating its policies relating to health and safety, accidents and emergencies. There is good expertise on the governing body to ensure that regular checks and risk assessments are carried out on the school buildings and that statutory requirements are met in all areas of health and safety procedure. The school building is kept clean, tidy and well maintained so that staff and pupils work in a safe and pleasant environment.
50. All staff have a good understanding and awareness of pupils' lives outside school and there is very good provision for dealing with any matters relating to child protection. The designated child protection co-ordinator has had up-to-date training in matters relating to pupils' welfare and shares this information regularly with staff. The school is well supported by outside agencies where there are concerns about a pupil's well being. There is a satisfactory number of staff trained in first aid, who give caring and sympathetic support to pupils who are unwell or who hurt themselves. The school has identified a need for more members of staff, including midday supervisory staff, to be trained in first aid. All accidents are recorded and carefully monitored as the school building is relatively new and there are a few areas that have been identified as being possible hazards.
51. The procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are satisfactory. Teachers complete registers correctly and a computerised attendance program is used well to monitor individual attendance patterns and to identify where there are any concerns. The school knows that levels of authorised absence have risen, to a large extent because of the number of holidays taken in term-time, and regularly reminds parents of the importance of regular attendance. It has started to award certificates for those pupils who achieve 100 per cent attendance, although recognises that this is difficult to achieve, particularly for younger pupils, and is considering more realistic shorter-term targets to aim for.
52. Staff know pupils well and support their personal development through the school's programme for personal, social and health education. There are good opportunities for pupils to discuss issues relevant to their lives at home and school in class discussions. The school has identified that, as more pupils join the school, there is a need to assess and monitor their personal development more formally and to include pupils more fully in evaluating their own personal development and academic progress.
53. The school's behaviour policy shows a good commitment to the positive promotion of behaviour but it does not make sufficiently clear what the acceptable standards are in all areas of school life. It also does not contain specific guidelines to help teachers to achieve a consistent approach to managing pupils' different kinds of behaviour both in and out of the classroom. In this respect, the procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are unsatisfactory. In the classroom, teachers have good skills for managing the normal range of pupils' behaviour and for dealing with any upsets. They use good strategies in their classes for rewarding achievement in work, attitudes and improved behaviour, for example with the award of class points, stars and stickers, although these systems are not consistent across the school. However, the procedures for supporting pupils' behaviour, which are effective for most pupils who are co-operative and well behaved, are less successful with those pupils with more complex difficulties and whose behaviour is more seriously challenging.
54. Outside the classroom, the rules for behaviour are not sufficiently well established. The behaviour policy is not explicit enough in setting out how pupils are to behave - for example, when lining up for lunch, eating in the dining hall and playing outside - and it does not help staff to reinforce with pupils what is or is not an acceptable standard of behaviour. The school deals satisfactorily with isolated incidents of bullying and keeps

careful records of any incidents that occur between pupils, the action that is taken and the outcome of any meetings with pupils and parents.

55. The school has established a good system of assessment throughout the school. The careful assessment undertaken in the Foundation Stage starts the individual tracking that continues every year in each subject area. Class teachers have detailed records of attainment for each pupil. This allows teachers to predict end of year levels and target particular areas for development. Pupils have specific learning targets, for example, in English. Pupils are well aware of these and as they move up the school they understand what they need to do to improve their standard of work. These procedures lead to a thorough analysis of individual strengths and weaknesses that teachers use well when planning lessons. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from this whole-school approach and have clear individual education plans which are used to plan work to meet their needs.
56. Another good feature of academic assessment is the detailed analysis of statutory tests and annual tests set by the school that show trends in learning. For example, the school has reacted quickly to the first year's analysis that showed writing is not as strong as reading in Key Stage 2 (see English section of this report). The school has also identified priorities for each year group through thorough annual assessment.

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

57. Effective links are developing with parents as more pupils and their families join the school. While pupils were still located temporarily at a neighbouring school, the headteacher did a lot of work to build positive relationships with parents. Meetings were held to explain how the new school would be run and the headteacher held an assembly so that pupils would know him. As a result, a good start was made in establishing a positive home-school partnership in readiness for opening and the school is now building on this as more pupils join.
58. In the time since it opened, parents have formed good views of the school. They feel that it is well led and managed and that the good teaching and high expectations of staff help their children to make good progress. Parents say that the school works closely with them and that staff deal very well with any questions or problems that they might have. Parents who attended the meeting before the inspection expressed appreciation for the open and positive relationship that they have with the headteacher who is always willing to listen to their suggestions as the school grows and develops. Inspection findings agree with parents' positive views about the school and the impact that these are having on pupils' progress.
59. Although most parents are happy with the amount and quality of homework provided, a small minority expressed concern in the questionnaire. A few parents at the pre-inspection meeting felt that pupils in Year 6 were perhaps not getting enough homework to prepare them for secondary school. Some parents say that they do not get enough information about their child's progress and, specifically, that the open evening in the autumn term is less helpful than when there is an opportunity to speak more formally to teachers at consultation meetings. There were a few criticisms of the school's provision for extra-curricular activities. Some parents feel that there are not enough opportunities for clubs for pupils in Key Stage 1, although there is a range of activities provided for those in Key Stage 2. The school is aware of these minor criticisms. It has stated its homework policy clearly for parents. It encourages parents to make contact with teachers whenever they wish to discuss their child's progress. The inspection team finds that the range of extra-curricular activities is suitable for the age of pupils and that the quality of those activities is good.

60. The school provides parents with satisfactory information in its statutory documents. The prospectus has been revised several times since the school opened as the organisation of classes and staffing and daily routines has developed. The governing body's annual report gives parents a satisfactory level of information about the school's development and pupils' achievements, although the financial statement lacks detail. Information about the school's provision for supporting those pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory, although information in the prospectus is too brief.
61. Parents receive satisfactory written information about their child's progress in end of year reports. In English, mathematics and science, parents gain a clear picture of what their children know, understand and can do and what they need to do next to improve. Reporting of pupils' progress in other subjects is more variable in quality. In the best examples, however, comments clearly indicate where pupils are gaining in knowledge and skills. Parents receive good, regular information in newsletters about activities, what is being taught in each year group and developments in school life. There is clear encouragement for parents to take the opportunity to speak to teachers about their child's progress on an informal basis as well as at the termly open evenings or consultation meetings. The school keeps parents informed about curriculum developments with specific meetings - for example, to explain the strategies for literacy and numeracy – and has planned a meeting to explain the Foundation Stage to parents.
62. As the school grows it is developing and encouraging parents' involvement in the life of the school and in their children's learning. The school's vision statement and its home-school agreement have both been developed with input from parents and show a good commitment to maintaining close links with parents. There are regular invitations for parents to attend class assemblies, plays and sporting events. They are encouraged to hear their children read regularly and many make comments on their child's progress in home-school reading diaries. Parents of children in the nursery who are new to the school are welcomed and encouraged to participate through a good booklet and a programme of induction visits. This support also continues as children progress into the reception class.
63. Some parents are helping the school to develop and make a range of 'storysacks' for use in school and eventually by parents at home with their children. A few parents also help in other classes with activities such as hearing children read or helping with art and cookery. The school is very well supported by an active parent-teacher association which has a very positive focus on the development of links between home and school through its social events, as well as raising considerable sums of money to augment the school's resources. The school recognises that there is still more work to be done in encouraging more parents to be active in their support for their children's learning and is working in close partnership with the 'Didcot Umbrella Project' to engage parents and children in family learning before they start at school.

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

64. The leadership of the headteacher is good. He has successfully established a new school and built a strong team of staff in a relatively short period of time. The value of his thoughtful and well-considered leadership is recognised by the staff, parents and the governing body alike. The headteacher and senior staff work effectively together, sharing vision and educational direction for the all-round development of the school. The school's aims and values are reflected in its everyday life, such as the emphasis on developing good relationships. Pupils are effectively encouraged to believe in their own ability to succeed. Morale in the school community is good. Equality of opportunity is built into

aspects of the school's provision, for example tracking the attainment of individual pupils to make sure that they are making enough progress.

65. School management is sound. The headteacher and senior staff work closely together to develop the school's educational provision and share a commitment to improving standards. Senior staff make a significant contribution to the development of the school. However, the management systems are not yet sufficiently developed to meet the longer-term needs of a potentially larger than average school. The role of the subject co-ordinators is new and, as yet, underdeveloped in most subjects. Nevertheless, the school has made a good start in the co-ordination and development of English and mathematics.
66. Pupils' welfare and their progress are taken seriously and are monitored individually. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is well organised, of good quality and in line with the national recommendations. Pupils with statements of special educational need receive good quality care in line with the requirements set out in their statements. Pupils on the register of special educational needs are reviewed regularly and their provision changed in response to their changing needs. A good proportion of pupils make sufficient progress to move off the register. The small number of children learning English as an additional language make good progress as teachers take into account their individual needs when organising lessons.
67. The governing body is well organised and effective. Governors take their responsibilities seriously, working closely with the headteacher to provide support and monitor the effectiveness of the school's work. The governing body gives clear direction to the development of the school's provision. Individual governors take responsibility for subjects or aspects, such as mathematics or special educational needs, visiting school to see the provision and making sure that the governing body is kept up to date with developments. Governors have a close understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, which guides their thinking for the future, such as preparing for the Investors in People award. They monitor standards, look at test results and set appropriate targets for improvement.
68. The governing body, headteacher and senior staff, supported by the local education authority, effectively review the work of the school as it develops and grows. They take action to strengthen areas of weakness, in the curriculum for example, enabling pupils to make good progress.
69. The school gives satisfactory consideration to the principles of best value. It has consulted with parents and the local community leading up to its opening and continues to seek the views of the school community as part of its development. It seeks best value when purchasing supplies and equipment or employing services. The school is not yet up to full capacity and so there has not been a full year group of pupils that have taken national tests at the end of Key Stage 2. As a result, the school has not been able to make full and fair comparisons with national and local results in order to assess that it is making best use of the money available to it.
70. Funds received for specific purposes, such as those to support pupils with special educational needs, are efficiently managed and appropriately used. Good use is made of the resources available to the school. Governors carefully assess the school's development priorities and allocate spending appropriately. As the school develops and more pupils arrive, the main spending priority is on staffing and resourcing the school until it reaches full capacity. However, because there have been numerous difficulties in establishing the budget and strategic financial planning has been challenged by the constant changes in the school roll and its associated funding, governors have not yet been able to evaluate fully the effect of their spending decisions on pupils' attainment.

The governing body has a very good understanding of how schools are financed and has worked hard to ensure that the school receives all of the funding to which it is entitled. While the school is in a state of change, it keeps a well-balanced view on financial and educational priorities and decisions.

71. The administrative officer gives very good financial and clerical support to the governing body and ensures that the day-to-day administration of the school runs smoothly. The school makes very good use of new technology to support pupils' learning and school administration and development.
72. The school has a satisfactory number of teaching and support staff to meet the needs of the current number of pupils on roll. The procedures in place for professional development and performance management make a good contribution to the effectiveness of staff. Professional development and training, including the induction of new teachers and those teachers who are newly qualified, has a high priority in the school and is well managed. It makes a good contribution to teachers' professional confidence and expertise and so enhances pupils' learning and achievement. There are good arrangements in place for regular appraisal of support and administrative staff, who are also offered good training opportunities as part of the school's bid to gain the Investors In People award.
73. The school is housed in a new building that offers a very good standard of accommodation and is suitable for use by pupils and adults with physical disabilities. Classrooms and corridors are spacious and airy and are attractively designed. Each pair of classrooms has good facilities for 'wet' and art activities and for storage. The school benefits from specialist areas, such as for food technology, and a fully equipped computer suite for the teaching of information and communication technology. The multi-purpose hall is of a satisfactory size for the planned number of pupils on roll. There are plans in place to develop the outside area to provide pupils with more interesting play opportunities and an outdoor learning environment, for example, by planting trees and a wildlife area. The courtyard area provides pupils with a quiet place to play while the main playground areas are still being developed, for example, with markings. Fixed play equipment has just been installed for children in the Foundation Stage and the school has plans to install a *trim trail* for older pupils.
74. The school is still at the stage of developing its resources to teach the curriculum. While there are no significant weaknesses in any individual subject area, and the quality of the newly purchased resources across the school is good, the school recognises that many of the foundation subjects are still under-resourced. There is a large and attractive library area at the front of the school, but the book stock is currently underdeveloped.

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

75. **In accordance with the existing agenda for school development, the headteacher, with the governing body and staff, should:**

### **formalise the management structures in line with the needs of a large school by:**

- making more explicit the responsibility of the senior management team for planning the long term development of the school;
- reducing the load of subject co-ordination responsibilities carried by the headteacher;
- developing the role of teachers as subject co-ordinators in improving standards of attainment;  
See paragraphs 65 and 165

### **develop consistency in the management of behaviour throughout the whole school day by:**

- agreeing guidelines to help all teachers and other adults to be clear about the standard of behaviour to be expected in and out of the classroom;
- agreeing and carrying out whole-school approaches to promoting and rewarding good behaviour;
- providing whole staff training in a range of practical strategies for managing potentially disruptive behaviour;
- making sure that those pupils who have been placed on the special educational needs register because of their emotional and behavioural difficulties receive appropriate guidance;  
See paragraphs 8-14, 25-26, 35, 53 and 55

### **develop the organisation of the curriculum and the timetabling of its teaching by:**

- reviewing the allocation of time to the different subjects of the National Curriculum;
- taking note of the need for younger pupils in Key Stage 1 to experience a balance of demands on their developing skills and on their ability to sustain concentration.  
See paragraphs 25, 34 and 46

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	48
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	42

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2	29	46	23	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	195
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/a	16

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3	46

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	18
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.7
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

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

### **Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	15	11	26

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	11	14	14
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	22	25	25
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	85 (71)	96 (62)	96 (81)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	12	14	14
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	23	25	25
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	88 (62)	96 (81)	96 (81)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

### **Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2**

The school entered only eight pupils for national tests in 2000; little can be deduced about past or present standards from this information, except that more than half of these pupils achieved the national standard of Level 4 in English, mathematics and science.



### **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	1
White	173
Any other minority ethnic group	6

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

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

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

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

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.7
Average class size	24.4

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

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	135

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.0

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	50

Number of pupils per FTE adult	8.6
--------------------------------	-----

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1999/2000
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	435,997
Total expenditure	343,475
Expenditure per pupil	2,337
Balance brought forward from previous year	(22,654)
Balance carried forward to next year	69,868

Note: The school is less than two years old and the financial information includes initial set up costs and should not be taken as an accurate working budget.

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 36.7%

Number of questionnaires sent out	180
Number of questionnaires returned	66

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	40	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	52	41	5	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	36	61	2	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	42	14	0	0
The teaching is good.	61	35	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	45	38	14	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	73	21	2	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67	24	3	2	4
The school works closely with parents.	44	44	8	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	70	27	0	2	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	41	3	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	50	34	13	2	1

### Other issues raised by parents

Parents commented that the school had not been open long, but that it had made a good start.

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

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

76. The provision for children under the age of five in terms of the learning opportunities created and the high quality of teaching is a very good basis for future learning.
77. The school provides part-time education in its nursery for 52 children who are under five years of age. Most children arrive with a range of social and early learning skills that is around that expected for children of their age, although speaking and listening skills are sometimes underdeveloped. The reception class that was formed a few weeks before the inspection contained 19 children, three of whom were under five years of age and attended in the mornings only. By the time that they are five most children have made good progress and are well prepared for work at the early levels of attainment in the National Curriculum. Their progress and learning throughout the Foundation Stage are good.
78. The school has very good schemes of work securely based on the six areas of learning reported below. The teachers and learning support assistants in the Foundation Stage plan and work well together to provide children with good learning opportunities for making progress towards the appropriate Early Learning Goals<sup>3</sup>. The organisation is good. Children are encouraged to make choices and expected to tell their teacher what they intend to do. Teachers and other adults work very effectively with children and keep track of what they are doing, intervening positively to promote learning and a broad experience.

**Personal, social and emotional development**

79. Adults provide a secure and caring framework within which children learn to behave well. Most children are confident and show respect for others. When they arrive at the start of their session they confidently choose what they want to do and work and play together well. They respond well to adults and enjoy the wide range of activities offered. Children with special educational needs are well supported. Children's personal, social and emotional development is promoted very effectively through all the work in the nursery and the reception class. As a result children gain in confidence and see themselves as successful learners by the time they move into Key Stage 1. They surpass national expectations in this respect. For further examples of their development see the following sections.

**Communication, language and literacy**

80. The school emphasises the development of speaking and listening skills and children listen carefully and respond well to questions. They confidently ask questions and communicate their ideas and feelings. They also know a good range of songs and rhymes. Through role-play, for example in the home corner, they are encouraged to make up their own stories. The nursery teacher effectively used the discussion about the choice of materials for making *scary trolls* to extend vocabulary and practise speaking and listening skills. Children benefited from one-to-one work with an experienced nursery nurse who helped them to tell and dictate a story that she then wrote for them. Planned language development permeates the work of the nursery.

---

<sup>3</sup> Early learning goals - these are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They refer mainly to achievements children make in connection with the following six areas of learning: communication language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development. There are many goals for each area of learning, for example, in language and literacy pupils should be able to write their own name and other things such as labels and begin to write simple sentences.

81. The children in the reception class enjoyed going on a bear hunt, reading together with their teacher, sequencing pictures and putting the correct words with them. Children concentrated hard and read or recited with expression. When the teacher asked the children how the characters might feel when they get to the water, one pupil made a long contribution about how the dad might feel sad but the dog would not mind because her dog likes water. The teacher positively encouraged this level of extended response and allowed other pupils to build on it. Some children recognised and named individual letters; one boy recognised when something is left out and pointed to the words. This lesson was very good preparation for the Key Stage 1 literacy hour. Children are achieving in excess of the national expectation.

### **Mathematical development**

82. Children are introduced to a good range of mathematical activities that provide opportunities for sorting, matching, counting and making sets. Nursery children count together to 23 when the register is taken. One child counts the class on his own, successfully to 15 but then loses the one-to-one correspondence. His teacher immediately takes him back to where he went wrong so that he can complete the task correctly. Through this positive intervention all children are helped to reinforce their concept of counting. Children working independently on number related activities, for example with an abacus, count accurately and some write the early numerals correctly.
83. In the reception class, higher-attaining children successfully identify 'one more than' in a dice game. Pupils of average attainment recognise numbers and numerals and order them correctly. Lower-attaining pupils successfully find the numerals 1-10 around the classroom and put them into the correct order. Earlier practical work on display shows that pupils are starting to recognise and name common shapes. Levels of attainment are above those expected of children their age.

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

84. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is promoted through a good range of activities. For example, children in the nursery class enjoy experimenting with torches, mirrors and magnifying glasses attractively laid out on the science table. They use a variety of reclaimed materials to make volcanoes or other models. Through this they find out about the properties of the materials as well as improving their skills of selecting, cutting and sticking. The teacher and other adults use these tasks well to promote the developing of literacy skills and understanding through questions and conversation.
85. Children in both the nursery and reception classes are having good early experience in using computers and in other aspects of information and communication technology, including the listening station. In the nursery, for example, several children use the mouse confidently to select and use different colours and shapes in a painting program. Another child successfully identifies words that end in *it* and drags them onto the train. Children in reception, some of whom had only been in the school for a few weeks at the time of the inspection, confidently logged on to the computer, called up a painting program and successfully created pictures. They accurately selected brushes, colours and shape, rubbed out when necessary and printed their work. Some talked correctly about how they had used the *fill* command when painting ladybirds in a previous lesson. The provision of a 40-minute period of time with clear explanations and instructions from the teacher with good support from the learning support assistant promoted good progress and quality of learning. Children's attainment is above that expected for their age.

### **Physical development**

86. Children have a good awareness of space when moving around in the playground. The nursery children enjoy warming up in their physical education lesson in the hall. They are

obviously familiar with the routines of finding space and of freezing; some are very imaginative in their choice of pose. Children respond well to the rhythm of the tambourine. Their teacher and other adults use praise, support and encouragement well and all children take part.

87. Children also develop good physical control and co-ordination when using a range of tools such as pencils, paintbrushes and scissors. Most children are developing dexterity with small tools and construction equipment. Children enjoy their opportunities to play imaginatively with sand, water and dough.
88. There is good provision for outside play; the safe and secure area is of a suitable size. Children in the reception class are confident on the recently erected wooden climbing frame and some show good control on bikes. The session is also used well to promote social awareness, for example the need to look out for others when using large equipment. Physical development is at least as expected by the time the children are five and some of them exceed expectations.

### **Creative development**

89. By the time the children are five they have made good progress and reached a level in their artwork that is above expectations for their age. They are given good opportunities for exploring colour and texture and children demonstrate imagination in their work and play. Work on display, including that in response to looking at and taking about a painting by Paul Klee, is of good quality. During the inspection children painting daffodils handled a big brush and large paper well. They demonstrated good observational skills, a good sense of proportion and a good choice of colours from the limited palette provided. Children enjoy singing nursery rhymes and songs and are disappointed when other, also enjoyable, activities have eaten into singing time.
90. The effective partnership between home and school provides a firm basis for children's learning. Parents are informed about their children's progress at regular intervals both informally and formally. Parents have the opportunity to meet with the teacher to discuss on-going targets. The home-school diary is an effective means of communication. The entry assessments are repeated each term.

### **Teaching and organisation**

91. The quality of teaching is very good. It is based on a good knowledge and understanding of young children's development and their individual needs. Teachers and other adults work very well together and share high expectations of work and behaviour. They enjoy very good relationships with the children, who consequently feel secure and valued. Planning and record keeping are very good and the well-organised assessment system is used very effectively. All the activities provided are linked well to the six areas of learning. The staff rarely miss an opportunity for stimulating language and personal development.

## ENGLISH

### National test results

92. Standards in English are in line with the national average at the end of both key stages. The results of the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2000 show that pupils reach standards in reading and writing that are in line with the national average for seven-year-olds. This is an improvement from the national test results for 1999. There is, however, a lack of pupils achieving the higher levels in writing. These results are below those for similar schools and the county average, but represent a sound start in a new school, where pupils come from a variety of different educational experiences. Too few pupils entered the end of Key Stage 2 tests in 2000 for secure conclusions to be drawn from the results. However, more than half of the pupils achieved the national standard of Level 4.

### Standards and progress

93. The annual testing of each year group gives the school a clear picture of trends and highlights the strengths and weaknesses in each class. There are good strategies in place to help pupils improve their skills in English. In Key Stage 2, pupils' reading is better than writing. The school is, therefore, focussing on improving writing skills by having additional English lessons outside the literacy hours, and by the headteacher taking a group of pupils from Years 5 and 6. In consequence, there is a sound improvement in writing skills throughout Key Stage 2.
94. All pupils make good progress throughout the two key stages. They grow in confidence, in skills and in understanding. Pupils who have special educational needs benefit from good, carefully structured support. Teachers and learning support assistants plan together and use their time effectively to produce resources matched to different levels of need in order to provide good support to individuals and small groups. There is a high commitment to improving basic skills and enabling pupils to take a full part in all lessons. Teachers are aware of the specific needs of the few pupils who have English as an additional language and they, too, make good progress.

### Speaking and listening

95. Pupils' listening skills are often unsatisfactory when they enter the school. Teachers work hard to rectify this and, by the end of Key Stage 1, pupils listen more attentively to the teachers and each other, for example during the whole-class sessions in the literacy hour. They benefit from good questioning and constant checking for understanding from the teachers. Those who attend the nursery and reception class in the school receive a good grounding in listening skills. Listening skills improve steadily as pupils progress through the school. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils respond quickly to statements and pick up on deliberate mistakes. They listen to each other and build on ideas. For example, in Year 4, pupils had a free flowing discussion about *Mr Tom's Midnight Garden* as they picked up on ideas and extended them.
96. Speaking skills are often underdeveloped in the early stages with pupils offering brief responses. Lower-attaining pupils do not know specific vocabulary and teachers consciously repeat key vocabulary and check for understanding. This happens across both key stages. For example, a group of Year 4 pupils, who were trying to describe a picture in detail, did not know the name for *pine trees* or *moss* or *fern*. Teachers are aware of the need to extend specific vocabulary and reinforce key words throughout the school day. By the end of Key Stage 2, the higher-attaining pupils express their opinions clearly and are prepared to persuade others. They give extended answers which show that they are considering the issues involved. Good examples of this occur when the pupils offer constructive criticism of each other's work. They think carefully about their choice of words in order to help rather than offend.

## Reading

97. Reading skills are better than writing skills. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils read with reasonable accuracy and show that they know how to build up the sounds in words or use the pictures for clues. The higher-attaining pupils use expression and recognise punctuation and speech. They enjoy using different voices when reading together from big books, such as *Billy Goats Gruff*, and transfer this to their own reading. Most pupils read regularly at home and receive sound support from parents. In Key Stage 2, lower-attaining pupils benefit from good additional literacy support. This is well structured and helps them catch up with the patterns and rules of reading and spelling. Most pupils read with fluency and expression and show understanding through responding to humour or description. They benefit from group reading and class readers. During these sessions, teachers encourage them to explore texts in detail and look for deeper meaning. Pupils do some work on finding information quickly and reading passages to find key facts, but this needs further development. They use reference books in the classrooms, which successfully helps extend reading skills. However, at present the non-fiction library is under-used.

## Writing

98. Pupils benefit, at both key stages, from structured handwriting and spelling lessons. Presentation is still not good, but handwriting is improving. Teachers encourage pupils to take a pride in their work and this is developing slowly. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils write independently in simple sentences. The higher-attaining pupils write short stories and enjoy trying to join ideas together, for example when retelling traditional tales.
99. The clear focus on writing in Key Stage 2 raises the pupils' awareness of the range of possible styles. They appreciate the importance of choosing words to suit the particular context. For example, pupils from Years 5 and 6 explored different ways of starting and ending stories, depending on the effect they wished to create. They enjoyed exploring endings with a twist that added to the sense of mystery or suspense. They chose words carefully to build up a sense of menace in the opening lines of their stories and commented constructively on each other's work. In Years 3 and 4, pupils rose to the challenge of finding unusual descriptive words to add interest to their writing. Year 4 pupils extended this to include their own invented unusual similes. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are aware of the need to consider the reader. The highest attaining pupils are beginning to develop a sense of style. Pupils use computers successfully to improve presentation and redraft work, and this is particularly helpful to those with lower attainment.

## Pupils and English

100. Pupils at both key stages join in activities with enthusiasm. Most co-operate with the teachers and understand that they need to move sensibly and settle quickly to work. They respond well to firm routines and high expectations, although a small minority still try to push the boundaries. At Key Stage 2, pupils start to understand that their behaviour affects their own and others' learning. They take positive criticism from the teachers and other pupils as a means of improving their work and make improvements in the light of constructive written and oral comments. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are aware of their levels of attainment and know through their personal and group targets what they need to do to improve their standards. This is having a significant effect on their personal development and attitudes to learning.

## Teaching

101. The quality of teaching is good. At Key Stage 1, it is at least sound, with half the lessons seen being good. At Key Stage 2, teaching is consistently good or better with only one sound lesson. Where teaching is very good, the pupils share the teachers' high

expectations and aims. Teaching stimulates an imaginative response within a very carefully structured and well prepared framework. All teachers know the pupils well and use the very good assessment procedures to plan future lessons. The present focus on writing in Key Stage 2 is highly successful. The impact of good teaching in this area is obvious in the recent work seen in comparison to earlier efforts. Teachers usually manage pupils well. They use questions effectively to ensure all pupils understand and are fully involved. Lessons are brisk with a very clear focus. Frequent changes of activity maintain pupil interest and concentration. Where teaching is less effective, work is not sufficiently matched to pupils' needs and appropriate classroom routines are still not fully established.

102. The teachers use the National Literacy Strategy to good effect and are receiving on-going training. The co-ordinator is well organised and enthusiastic. The good start made from the outset continues to have a positive effect on pupils' learning and standards.

### **Assessment**

103. The very good procedures for providing individual and group targets are used effectively to raise pupils' standards and plan future lessons. The analysis of annual results leads to clear priorities and strategies that all members of staff implement. There has been a good start to the monitoring of teaching and pupils' work. This also contributes to the identification of areas for improvement.

### **In summary**

104. The school is successfully implementing the National Literacy Strategy and has very good procedures for identifying particular weaknesses in skills for individuals and groups.
105. To raise standards further, the school acknowledges that there is a need to: -
- focus on the more advanced skills in reading and writing in order to extend the learning of the higher-attaining pupils at both key stages;
  - make more use of information and communication technology in a general push to raise standards of presentation;
  - establish a policy for reinforcing speaking and listening and literacy skills across the curriculum so that all teachers adopt a consistent approach;
  - increase the use of the non-fiction library in order to improve independent study skills.

## **MATHEMATICS**

### **National test results**

106. The results of the 2000 national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 indicate that that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 2 was in line with the national average. However, the proportion of pupils obtaining above this expectation was well below the national average. In each of the two years when pupils have been entered for these tests, overall results have been below the national average for all schools and well below the national average for similar schools.
107. In 2000, a majority of the small number of pupils who took the end of Key Stage 2 tests achieved the national standard of Level 4. Pupils who have so far been entered by the school for the end of Key Stage 2 tests have spent most of their primary years elsewhere.

### **Standards and progress**

108. On the basis of the work seen from the present and last school years, the inspection judgement is that standards are in line with the national average at the end of both key stages. On the evidence of the results of end-of-year tests, pupils are now making sound progress in the two years of Key Stage 1 and good progress in the four years of Key



Stage 2. Standards of numeracy are satisfactory and the school has successfully introduced the National Numeracy Strategy.

109. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, particularly when work is prepared specifically for them and when they are supported by other adults during lessons.

### **Mathematics in Key Stage 1**

110. When most pupils at present in Key Stage 1 reached the age of five their attainment was close to what is expected for their age. In the lessons seen during the inspection, progress was always at least satisfactory and was at least good in half. Pupils in Year 1 classes, for example, in two well taught lessons, benefited from brisk mental arithmetic sessions and learned about shape. In one case, the teacher had prepared a range of questions suitable for pupils at different levels of attainment and this enabled many to answer questions correctly. In the other lesson, there was good progression from counting together in ones or twos or threes to individuals identifying which numbers have been covered up on a number square.
111. The teachers had planned the lessons together and pupils benefited from carrying out well-chosen and interesting practical activities, using good quality equipment. For example, some pupils explored with their teacher which common shapes rolled down a slope and which slid. Other pupils worked with a volunteer parent to sort shapes according to whether they had straight or curved edges. Some pupils showed good spatial awareness when choosing shapes to fill in the outline of a dinosaur. In both lessons, teachers used the final part of the lesson well to consolidate the progress made. There was a good emphasis on using language, for example 'cube' and 'cuboid', correctly. A *shape walk* around the school with the learning support assistant promoted good practice in observation and naming.
112. Pupils in the two Year 2 classes were learning to estimate weight and to compare weights of different objects using balances. Appropriate practical tasks had been set by the teachers and pupils benefited from these and from the good balances and other equipment that were provided. In one class, pupils devised a range of strategies for using a balance to put three objects in weight order. The grading of tasks for groups of pupils of differing abilities was good and this promoted good learning and progress. Where pupils were given time targets for task completion they worked more quickly and recorded their findings neatly in response to their teacher's clear expectations. In both lessons, teachers were continually on the move around the room, checking and encouraging. Well-established classroom routines enabled pupils to use the resources independently and well and to work together effectively. The use of individual whiteboards in the brisk mental arithmetic sessions helped to keep all pupils' attention focused on the question and enabled teachers to assess learning. This is good practice.

### **Mathematics in Key Stage 2**

113. Pupils in Year 3 also used whiteboards confidently in their mental session, showing great willingness to offer answers. The teacher picked up on errors and made sure that pupils understood that, for example  $15+15 = (5+5) + (10+10)$ . The previous day's work on time was thoroughly reviewed using a large plastic clock and the teacher gave a very clear explanation of the different ways of writing the time, for example quarter to 3 = 2.45. An immediate check of pupils' understanding via whiteboard responses provides very good feedback to both the teacher and the pupils as to their learning and progress. The teacher provided work for groups of pupils of differing abilities and this, together with her own very good individual support and that of the learning support assistant, led to very good progress for all pupils.

114. At the end of the key stage, in the mixed-age Years 5 and 6 class, the provision of work suited to the different learning needs of groups of pupils was a very strong feature. There was also a very strong and entirely appropriate emphasis on an investigative approach - finding out about the properties of solid shapes through practical work that interests and involves the pupils. The introductory part of the lesson was a particularly effective revision of what pupils already knew about, for example hexagonal prisms, hemispheres and truncated cones. This was achieved through questions put to a chosen pupil who had a given shape in mind. Pupils demonstrated a good level of knowledge of the properties and used mathematical vocabulary correctly. Higher-attaining pupils were challenged well through questions that led them to explore whether the number of straight edges in a prism is always a multiple of three. Pupils showed a very positive attitude towards their learning, promoted by the teacher's enthusiasm and very good teaching skills.

### **Pupils and mathematics**

115. Pupils throughout the school have very positive attitudes towards their work in mathematics. They enjoy the challenge of brisk mental sessions where the demands are well matched to what they already know and can do. Because the work set is stimulating and teachers frequently use a practical approach, the vast majority of pupils behave well and concentrate on their work. These factors have a clearly beneficial affect on pupils' progress and the quality of their learning.

### **The teaching of mathematics**

116. Mathematics, including numeracy, is taught well, with the vast majority of lessons being good or very good and no lessons being less than satisfactory. All of the mathematics teaching observed in Key Stage 2 was of at least a good standard and that in Key Stage 1 was at least satisfactory, with more than three-quarters of lessons being good or very good.
117. **Important features of most of the better teaching, some of which have already been mentioned, which led to good learning and progress by the pupils, included:**
- very good questioning to find out what pupils already know and to consolidate and extend their learning;
  - high expectations of work and behaviour;
  - good use of the beginning and end of lessons for mental work and to revise and consolidate learning;
  - the very good use of practical activities to support learning;
  - good classroom organisation and management of pupils;
  - a good brisk pace to lessons with time targets set.
118. **Where mathematics teaching can be further improved:**
- implement whole-school approaches to the presentation and neatness of work;
  - adopt the best practice of setting clear time targets for tasks within lessons;
  - improve the use made of information and communication technology to support and extend learning in mathematics.

In addition, the school needs to make sure that there are planned and appropriate opportunities for using and developing mathematics in other subject areas.

## **SCIENCE**

### **National test results**

119. The attainment of seven-year-olds in 2000, as assessed by their teachers, was above the national average and in line with the average when compared with similar schools.
120. The results of the National Curriculum tests for 11-year-olds in 2000 were not reported as there were fewer than 10 pupils in the age group. The large majority of the pupils achieved the national standard of Level 4.

### **Standards and progress**

121. Inspection evidence shows pupils' attainment in the present Year 2 and in the present Year 6 to be broadly in line with the national average in all aspects of the subject
122. Pupils' achievement, compared to their prior attainment, is good throughout the school. They build on their knowledge of living things and their understanding of life processes within plants and animals, such as growth and reproduction. Their understanding of materials and their ability to observe changes develops and they correctly use a broader range of vocabulary. Pupils' understanding of the world develops as they build on their knowledge of physical processes, such as heat and sound. Pupils make good progress in developing the skills of scientific investigation and in drawing conclusions based on scientific knowledge and their experience of the world.

### **Teaching and learning**

123. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The strengths in teaching are apparent when teachers have sound subject knowledge and provide interesting activities that help the pupils understand the lesson. Pupils respond well, showing interest and involvement so that, by the age of 11, they have a satisfactory understanding of the importance of fair testing and the effects of variables on an investigation. Pupils in the Years 5 and 6 class successfully plan and carry out an investigation into sound insulation, recording their findings appropriately and drawing valid conclusions. They make appropriate use of mathematical skills to support their learning, particularly in recording and presenting information.
124. Teachers plan work to build on pupils' existing knowledge and understanding so they make sensible predictions about the outcomes of their investigations, and make sense of their findings by relating them to their existing scientific knowledge. For example, pupils know that sound travels in waves through the air, therefore an effective insulator would have to absorb the sound waves to prevent them travelling. Likewise, pupils in Year 4 use their knowledge of materials to predict the outcomes when investigating their effectiveness as thermal insulators.
125. Teachers' probing questions make pupils think and help them make good progress in understanding. For example, pupils in Year 3 make sensible and thoughtful contributions when investigating the form and function of different types of teeth.
126. The relationship between teachers and pupils is good, encouraging pupils to work hard. When lessons are well managed and have a brisk pace pupils remain interested and involved. For example, in Year 2, pupils carry out investigations within a structure given by the teacher. They make their own decisions, make observations then record and discuss their findings. Pupils relate their knowledge of forces, for example, to their experience of the world. They correctly classify living things according to observable features, such as the number of legs, and record their findings on a chart. They know the life cycle of a butterfly and can match animals and their babies. Pupils become familiar

with a range of materials and sort them out according to their properties. They gain good experience of sorting in science. This contributes to their attainment in scientific thinking.

127. Teachers support pupils with special educational needs, and those learning English as an additional language, well in lessons. They help them in a variety of ways, such as providing individual work sheets or additional adult help.
128. Less satisfactory elements of teaching are seen when lessons are planned at too low a level for higher-attaining pupils so their learning is not well enough extended. Some pupils lose interest and their chattering interrupts the lesson. In lessons that have too slow a pace, pupils lose concentration and become distracted.
129. The school is making effective use of the scheme of work for science to make sure pupils cover appropriate work at the right level for their age. The subject co-ordinator's role is new, but developing steadily. There is an established consistency in the way science is taught through the school. Regular evaluation of the curriculum allows the school to address issues such as adapting work for the mixed-age class. The school is building up a supply of suitable resources, responding to the needs of the developing curriculum. They are of good quality, but there are not enough yet for the number of pupils in the school.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

130. The school has made a good start in providing opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in information and communication technology, particularly with respect to learning to use computers. The shadow governing body and the headteacher wisely varied the original building plans to make sure that the school would have a network of computers housed in an appropriately sized room. This provision is enabling teachers to teach the necessary skills in a structured way in regular lessons. The school also makes good use of other resources, including tape recorders and floor turtles.
131. Past learning for many pupils has inevitably been patchy and there are gaps in their experience. However, much of the work seen during the inspection was of at least satisfactory standard and the majority of pupils have a level of knowledge, skills and understanding that is in line with what is expected for their age. Some pupils attain more highly, reflecting their greater interest and, sometimes, better access to computers at home.
132. The quality of teaching in the subject is good. Teachers are using the National Curriculum guidelines to support their planning and are becoming confident about using the network. The collective level of expertise in the subject is good. Pupils of all abilities are making good progress and the quality of their learning is good.
133. Pupils in Year 1 were *making the computer talk to you*. They tracked through menus with confidence and accurate use of the mouse and recognition of icons. Almost all pupils successfully listened to words and re-ordered them to make sentences; higher-attaining pupils worked particularly hard and successfully at this. The good individual support by the teacher and the learning support assistant enabled all pupils to have good access to the opportunity to learn. A small number of pupils who displayed immature behaviour and chose not to work unless closely supervised made less than satisfactory progress and hindered others.
134. Work on display indicates that pupils in Year 2 correctly use text and graphics programs to achieve the desired effect, for example making name labels in different fonts or

Christmas cards. Pupils in Year 3 have successfully used *search* and *sort* to find and display information from a database of birds.

135. Pupils in Year 4 have looked at the work of Kandinsky and then generated their own pictures in the styles of the artist. These pupils are currently developing their skills in using and constructing databases. In two lessons during the inspection, they made good progress as a result of their teacher's very good explanations and good provision of resources and appropriate tasks. Pupils demonstrated a sound level of understanding of the use of tree diagrams for sorting information. These lessons were very well presented in the classroom and provide a very good basis for subsequent work in the computer suite.
136. Pupils from Years 5 and 6 demonstrated progress at a further stage of information retrieval when they used *and* to develop complex searches for information from the world wide web related to the water topic that they are studying in geography. Pupils responded well to the challenge of reducing the number of files that were identified in response to their search criteria. Several pupils got down to less than 100, the most successful being three files for *Water around Ladygrove School*.
137. These pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 are mostly very confident and competent in their use of the computer, many having access to the web at home. They use vocabulary such as 'search engine' correctly and with understanding. The lesson proceeded at a very good pace because the teacher has very good subject knowledge and has devised strategies for making the pupils as independent as possible. For example, he had placed the worksheet that the pupils were to record their findings on into a folder from which each pupil copied it into their individual *My Work* folder. This is very good use of information and communication technology skills to promote further learning in the subject.
138. Pupils throughout the school clearly enjoy their lessons in the subject, responding well to the challenge of learning and applying new skills. Their behaviour, with very few exceptions, is good and there is an atmosphere of pleasant and purposeful learning in lessons.
139. The subject, like the school, is at an early stage of development and a good start has been made. The headteacher and staff recognise the need to use information and communication technology more in teaching and learning in other subjects. This has clear implications both for lesson planning and for the availability of computers in classrooms.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

140. Pupils achieve well and meet the standards expected in the local education authority's syllabus at the ages of 7 and 11 years. Pupils' attitudes to lessons are good. The subject supports the aims and values of the school well and makes a sound contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils.
141. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, and those learning English as an additional language, develop a positive attitude to the subject. Teachers plan carefully, with clear objectives for the lesson, so that pupils develop an appropriate understanding of the Jewish, Christian, Muslim and Hindu faiths during their time in the school. They provide interesting activities and resources, using methods such as role-play, for example, to involve pupils in the lesson and broaden their understanding of religious rites, such as baptism. Teachers build good relationships with pupils that enable them to share their thoughts and beliefs

with sensitivity, when talking about precious objects and religious symbolism for example. Pupils think hard and express their thoughts readily. Teachers use questions well to extend pupils' understanding of elements of religion which are common to all faiths, developing respect for religious values and beliefs.

142. Assemblies are used well to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of the common values of religious faiths, through a story from the Q'uran for example, which emphasise the sacredness of all forms of life. Quiet reflection is used well to develop a sense of respect for fundamental human values.
143. The school has adopted the local education authority's agreed syllabus and successfully augmented it to meet new curriculum requirements. Pupils have the opportunity to visit places of worship, such as a mosque, synagogue or Hindu temple, to enhance their learning. The school is building up a stock of good quality learning resources, but requires more books, in particular, for pupils to research and extend their learning.

## **OTHER SUBJECTS OF THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM**

144. At the ages of 7 and 11, pupils meet national expectations in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education. Pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Those with special educational needs, and pupils learning English as an additional language, receive good quality support from teachers and learning support assistants to enable them to make good progress.
145. The timetabling of lessons during the inspection meant that too few lessons were seen in most of these subjects to make a judgement about the quality of teaching and learning. However, teachers' planning shows that the schemes of work are implemented in each year group, and scrutiny of pupils' work shows that the curriculum is sufficiently well covered. Pupils demonstrate a good attitude towards their work and are usually keen to talk about their ideas.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

146. Pupils gain a good understanding of colour, learning to mix paints and extend their colour vocabulary. Pupils in Year 1, doing self-portraits, select and mix colours carefully, in paint or pastel, knowing the effect they wish to achieve. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 write with sensitivity of the effective use of colour in a still-life painting.
147. Pupils gain a sound understanding of tone, line and texture when studying good quality prints of work by famous artists, such as Goya, Cézanne and Van Gogh. They have opportunities to appreciate the work of non-European artists, such as Diego Rivera. Pupils develop observational skills well. Pupils in Year 2 paint figures with individual characteristic details. In Year 3, pupils sketch two figures in relationship to each other – these demonstrate close observation of real life models. The still-life paintings produced by pupils in Years 5 and 6 show attention to detail.
148. Pupils cover a good range of work in paint, collage, crayon, chalk, pastel and clay, which shows variety and individuality. Pupils use a computer graphics program to good effect. Those in Year 2, for example, produce work in the style of Mondrian that is very detailed and shows a good level of control. However, their skills in the control of paint, for example, are not always as good. Although pupils have experience of working in clay, three-dimensional work is currently under-represented.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

149. Pupils experience a satisfactory range of activities and media, including food, fabric and modelling materials. In Year 2, for example, pupils have designed and made puppets from felt and other materials using a range of methods for enabling movement. The finished articles are of at least sound standard and there is evidence of good early attempts at evaluation. During the inspection, these pupils were making a wheeled vehicle. They had already explored different ways of using an axle and wheels and during a well-taught lesson they made good progress in refining their ideas for attaching these to their vehicles. Pupils were totally absorbed with their work, clearly enjoying the making process and most showed a sound skill level in measuring, cutting and fixing.
150. Pupils in Year 3 were nearing the end of a unit of work on making sandwiches. It was evident from their books and from discussion in the lesson that the work had been carefully planned and organised. Good displays of work done in previous lessons helped the pupils to consolidate their learning and the content was very well linked with science work on food and health. The teacher lost no opportunity for promoting pupils' literacy skills through their accounts of what they will do, setting out a list of sequenced instructions, distinguishing carefully between *ingredients* and *equipment*. The quality of teaching was good and pupils made good progress in identifying criteria that their proposed sandwiches would have to meet, learning to make choices and anticipate the consequences. Good classroom organisation, setting time targets for each task and good interventions by the teacher, learning support assistant and parent helper promoted good learning.
151. Before the inspection, pupils from Years 5 and 6 had undertaken a substantial project on designing, making and evaluating musical instruments, largely from reclaimed materials. The work on display includes some imaginative constructions, for example frame shaker, thumb piano, kettledrum, raker and drum shaker. The constructions are of variable, but at least satisfactory, quality, reflecting the lack of previous progressive skill development. What is clear, however, is that pupils have developed a good understanding of the process of design, making and evaluating.

## GEOGRAPHY

152. Pupils gain satisfactory understanding of maps and plans and the use of keys. Pupils in Year 1 follow a simple street plan of the locality and recognise the prominent features. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 study maps on a countrywide scale in their investigation of rivers. Pupils understand the climatic differences between countries and the effects on the landscape. Years 5 and 6 pupils look for evidence of water in photographs of Egypt, recognising the significant differences between irrigated and non-irrigated land. Year 4 pupils become familiar with a hot, dry landscape in their study of Chembakolli, India.
153. Pupils develop an awareness of the geographical features of their own locality, knowing which have been created by people and how these change over time. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 carry out research to see how local amenities have changed in recent years. They become skilled in geographical enquiry, constructing questionnaires, recording their findings in tables and drawing conclusions from the information gained. They are aware of the changing nature of the area as it rapidly expands in response to demand for housing. Pupils in Year 4 study patterns of migration into the area, from their own family experiences of moving - mainly for economic reasons. Pupils become more aware of the effects of humankind on the environment and develop a sense of responsibility for it. Pupils' learning is enhanced by field studies to examine the effects of water on the landscape, for example.

154. The school is taking part in a European Comenius project. In this exciting initiative, pupils will have the opportunity to exchange information about celebrations in the area with pupils in France and Holland by e-mail, learning at first hand similarities and differences between them. This is well designed to promote good learning.

## **HISTORY**

155. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and hold pupils' interest well when recounting historical events. For example, pupils in Year 4 were engrossed by an account of the Roman invasion of Britain. The teacher's lively exposition and apt use of drama caught their imagination and effectively developed their understanding of the concept of invasion. Interesting activities, such as word games, help to stimulate pupils' thinking so as to broaden their understanding of historical processes such as invasion and settlement.
156. Teachers provide good quality, interesting resources, such as a set of Victorian artefacts, borrowed from a relative's antique shop. These caught the interest of pupils in Year 2, who worked hard to discover what objects such as a butter churn or a posser could possibly be used for. Attractive displays of artefacts, photographs and pictures provide a point of interest and are used effectively by teachers during the course of their teaching. Teachers' good class management skills ensure pupils are well organised and make good use of their time. Opportunities to develop speaking and listening are built into lessons so that pupils in Year 2 extend their thinking and learning by putting forward and developing their ideas, and responding to the ideas of others. Learning support assistants work well with pupils who need support in this, enhancing their learning and helping them to make good progress.
157. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 refine their historical enquiry skills in a variety of topics, including Ancient Egypt, The Victorians and Britain since 1948. For example, they compare and contrast life in the 1960s with life in the 1990s by carrying out research, including interviews of local people. Pupils behave well in lessons, work with interest and try hard. Pupils' learning is enhanced by visits to places of interest, such as East Hagbourne village.

## **MUSIC**

158. All teachers include regular classroom based music lessons in their planning and in most of the classes of younger children singing is a daily occurrence. Year 1 teachers, for example, are particularly effective at using songs and singing rhymes to support learning in other subjects, notably mathematics. On the whole, however, class music has a relatively low profile. The subject becomes a focus for development in 2002/3 and the co-ordinator recognises that there is a need to give it a boost through staff in-service training well before then. Resources are suitable for the present size of the school and include instruments from a good range of musical traditions.
159. A very well attended recorder club, involving four members of staff, provides a much-appreciated opportunity for music making and instrumental skill development. Because of the level of staff commitment pupils from both of Key Stages 1 and 2 are able to attend and work at the level appropriate to them. All are learning to read notation and the most advanced use a full range of notes. This is making a very valuable contribution to raising levels of attainment.
160. Christmas productions with music are already well established and the range of instrumental tuition available to pupils includes flute, clarinet, guitar and keyboards. Music plays an important part in daily assemblies through a programme of opportunities



to listen and to sing. It was noticeable that pupils sang best when encouraged to sit up straight and were accompanied by the headteacher on guitar.

161. Pupils from Year 1, in the only lesson observed, successfully followed the teacher's lead in clapping rhythms and in words and actions. They showed that they could *sing in their heads* as well as out loud. The lesson was successful in improving pupils' appreciation and creation of rhythmic patterns.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

162. The school's long term planning structure ensures that all pupils have access over time to gymnastics, games, dance and swimming. The school has already organised its first sports day and has taken part in the swimming gala for local schools. Most pupils achieve the national target of swimming 25 metres unaided. After-school clubs and the establishment of school teams for football and netball make an important contribution to raising levels of attainment. An hour-long netball practice, for example, was very well organised and run. The boys and girls who took part developed and practised skills and used them in competitive situations. They enjoyed the challenge and knew that they had improved their performance.
163. The quality of teaching in the small number of lessons observed during the inspection was good, in one case very good. Pupils and teachers dress appropriately for the lessons and this sets a good expectation of work and behaviour. Pupils in Year 2 classes benefited from well led and thorough warm up routines. They showed a good level of recall of the moves learned in previous country-dancing lessons. The lessons were well planned and proceeded at a very good pace with good teacher involvement and re-focusing when needed. The dance chosen presented the right degree of challenge and pupils made good progress in combining the discrete parts to music. In particular, they learned to promenade and there was a very good level of concentration, involvement and enjoyment.
164. Pupils in Year 3 responded well to their teacher's high expectations and clearly established routines; one pupil was firmly reminded that *the gym lesson is work*. Pupils warmed up thoroughly and then made their first attempts at moving from a three-point to a two-point balance. Initially, many were awkward or over ambitious, but as a result of clear explanation and demonstration by the teacher they made good progress in effecting the transition. Some pupils displayed good gymnastic movements and all worked well on the mats. There was evident improvement in balance and control during the lesson and the teacher skilfully led discussion that helped pupils to assess their own progress. Pupils have very good attitudes towards physical education and behave responsibly and well in lessons.

## DEVELOPMENTS

165. As the school is relatively new, the subject co-ordinators for these subjects have only recently been appointed and the co-ordination role is at an early stage of development. The school carried out an audit of pupils' attainment to establish a baseline for each subject. As a result, co-ordinators have good ideas for developing their subject provision by creating cross-curricular links, for example, and are looking for ways of developing skills more consistently as the school becomes more settled. A comprehensive curriculum policy successfully establishes a consistent way of working throughout the school. However, the development of teaching guidelines is not complete, as there has not been enough time to consider the teaching of each subject in turn. This is planned to take place in a realistic timescale.

166. The school is collecting resources to support the nationally recommended schemes of work adopted by the school. Those that have been purchased are of good quality and are used well. However, there are not enough resources yet in all subjects for the growing number of pupils. These subjects make a sound contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.