

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JOHN'S R.C. PRIMARY SCHOOL

BANBURY

LEA area: Oxfordshire

Unique reference number: 123181

Headteacher: Mr Kevin O'Connor

Reporting inspector: Mr Martin North
17018

Dates of inspection: 28-31 January, 2002

Inspection number: 241995

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4-11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Avocet Way Chatsworth Drive Banbury
Postcode:	OX16 9YA
Telephone number:	01295 263740
Fax number:	01295 264029
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Laurence Keane
Date of previous inspection:	24.11.97

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
17018	Martin North	Registered inspector	Science; Information and communication technology; English as an additional language.	What sort of school is it? The school's results and the pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught?
A13485	Paul Widdowson	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with its parents?
20326	Peter Clark	Team inspector	Mathematics; Physical education; Special educational needs.	How well is the school led and managed?
28007	Fiona Ruddick	Team inspector	English; Geography; History.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
22788	Susan West	Team inspector	Foundation Stage; Art and design; Design and technology; Music; Equal opportunities.	

The inspection contractor was:

NES Education Services Ltd
Linden House
Woodland Way
Gosfield
Nr. Halstead
Essex CO9 1TH

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PART A SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is an average size voluntary aided Catholic primary school serving mainly the south east area of Banbury and some surrounding villages. There are 137 boys and 139 girls on roll aged between 4 to 11, the vast majority of whom come from white UK backgrounds; very few come from other ethnic backgrounds or have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special needs is below the national average; only two pupils have statements of special educational needs. Children's attainment on entry is broadly average with very few disadvantaged by their background.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school with good leadership. Overall, good standards are attained across the curriculum, although standards in science in both key stages are just below those expected nationally. There are strengths in the quality of teaching which is generally good with some very good features. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- There is good leadership by the head and governors;
- The overall quality of teaching is good and so the quality of children's learning is good;
- Its pupils' standards of behaviour and attitudes to school are very good;
- The school provides very good spiritual, moral and social development;
- It has good links with parents and constructive partnerships with the community;
- It has significantly improved information and communication technology (ICT);
- The school's provision for extra-curricular activities is very good.

What could be improved

- The balance of time between subjects to meet national recommendations for Key Stage 2;
- The role of the co-ordinators in monitoring and promoting standards;
- The strategic roles of members of the senior management team;
- Standards in science, and those for higher attainers;
- The planning for learning through structured play in the Foundation Stage and use of assessment to inform planning.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been good improvement since the school was last inspected in November 1997. The quality of teaching in the lower Key Stage 2 classes has improved significantly and the provision of information and communication technology has been developed considerably. Limited progress has been made on extending decision making for children in the Foundation Stage.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	A	A	D	E
mathematics	B	B	D	E
science	C	A	D	E

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

Overall by the end of the foundation stage the majority of children are achieving well in line with expectations for their age and many beyond that. Compared with all schools, standards at the age of seven are well above national averages for reading and writing and above national averages for mathematics and close to national averages for science. Standards compared to similar schools are above for reading and writing and similar for mathematics and just below for science. By the end of Year 2 pupils achieve the national expectations for art and design, geography, history, information and communication technology (ICT) physical education and music, and achieve above average standards in design and technology. The results for eleven-year-olds showed a significant drop in 2001 compared with national averages and with similar schools for English, mathematics and science. By Year 6 pupils' standards are in line with the national expectations for geography, history and physical education, above them for art and design, and ICT and well above expectations for music and design and technology. Speaking and listening are well developed across the school in all stages. Apart from the sharp dip in 2001, the trend in improvement of performance over time for both key stages has been a little below the national trend but attainment has been much higher than that found nationally. The school has ambitious, but realistic targets set for 2002 for mathematics and English, and is in line to reach them. Overall pupils achieve well in both key stages, other than in science. Progress in this subject is limited because not enough time is spent on the subject but pupils make progress in lessons.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes to school, are keen to come and persevere with their work and are enthusiastic.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is very good throughout the school and on many occasions excellent both on the playground and in classes. This supports them making good progress overall.

Personal development and relationships	Very good relationships exist in the school and pupils take good advantage of the many opportunities offered to achieve very good personal development.
Attendance	The standards of attendance are good and pupils are punctual.

This aspect is a significant strength of the school. It functions as a welcoming community where individuals value and respect each other. This reflects in the very positive attitudes seen, that enable the pupils to be very effective learners and so make progress.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Good	Good

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

No unsatisfactory teaching was seen and there are examples of good teaching in all parts of the school. The quality of teaching of English and mathematics is good throughout the school and effective use is made of the literacy and numeracy strategies. There is good classroom management and discipline throughout the school. Planning is usually effective. The best lessons have a good range of strategies to meet the needs of all pupils but this is not consistent throughout the school. Pupils’ learning is good overall particularly in English and mathematics as they sustain their efforts, work collaboratively and are able to discuss their work with understanding.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is satisfactory overall with some aspects that require improvement but it broadly fulfils statutory requirements. The amount of teaching time is below the minimum national recommendation so the allocations of time for each area of study are not sufficient to ensure the full expectations of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. This has an adverse affect on standards in science in particular.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Overall this is satisfactory. Some of the support given is good but targets for these pupils are not always precise enough.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Appropriate provision and consultation are made for the very small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language.
Provision for pupils’ personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	This aspect is a significant strength of the school. Pupil’s personal development is promoted through a good range of opportunities for pupils to show responsibility. The school’s ethos supports their spiritual, moral and social development. Their cultural development could be enhanced by greater awareness of other cultures.

How well the school cares for its pupils	There are suitable arrangements in place for the care and well-being of pupils who are known well by their teachers and other staff.
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The school works well in partnership with its parents. There is insufficient time for the non-core subjects so some aspects in history, geography are not meet fully. The school cares well for pupils and overall makes suitable arrangements for tracking and reporting their individual progress.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	There is good leadership overall and the headteacher has successfully established a very strong ethos where all are valued. Aspects of the co-ordinators' role need further development. The strategic role of the senior management team needs to be developed to ensure good curriculum development.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors play a good role in shaping the direction of the school. They know the school well, fulfil their statutory functions and are effective.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has emerging worthwhile practice in self-evaluation and recognises the need to develop this further to gain in depth knowledge of its performance to bring about further improvement
The strategic use of resources	Overall there is satisfactory management and use of resources. The school has done very well to improve significantly the standards of accommodation and provision for ICT.

There are suitable numbers of qualified staff for the school, although teachers' knowledge in some subjects needs further development. There is good leadership for the pastoral life of the school. There is insufficient rigour in monitoring aspects of curriculum provision. Governors and the head are well aware of best value principles that are applied to benefit the school, particularly in the provision of accommodation and technology equipment.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour is good. • The quality of teaching is good. • Children achieve good standards. • The school promotes good attitudes and positive values. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision for pupils with special educational needs. • The range of extra-curricular activities. • Communication with parents. • Consistency in setting homework.

The extent of response to the questionnaires was very good with two-thirds of parents responding and the meeting with parents was extremely well attended with over a hundred present. The inspectors

strongly agree with the parents' views on the elements that please them most, other than standards in science, which the inspection team feels need improvement. In the questionnaires, very few parents [less than ten] expressed views on what they would like to see improved. The inspectors do not agree with parents' views on the need for improvement in homework, extra-curricular activities or communication. They do agree that, although pupils with special needs often make good progress, provision for these children could be made even better by use of more precision in setting learning targets for individuals.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Most children enter the Reception with average attainment. By the time they move into Key Stage 1 almost all will have met the Early Learning Goals expected for their age. In communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and physical development, many will have exceeded these targets; almost all children make good progress.

2. The school's standards were well above the national average and above those of schools with a similar background in national tests in reading and writing in 2001 for pupils at the age of seven. However, fewer pupils achieved above the national average than in similar schools. In tests for pupils aged eleven, the school's results were below the national average and well below those of similar schools. The results at Key Stage 2 were also well below those of schools which had performed similarly in the Key Stage 1 national tests four years previously. The number achieving above the expected level was well below the national average. This represents a considerable dip from the 1998 to 2000 test results for eleven-year-olds which showed the school to be consistently well above the national average. The scrutiny of work during the inspection indicates that the measures the school has put in place to regain the previous high standards are bearing fruit. At both key stages, there is a significant number of pupils whose work is above the expected level, particularly in the middle years of Key Stage 2. However there are still some who do not achieve this expectation. There is clear evidence that many pupils make good progress in developing all the skills connected with learning in literacy as they move through both key stages. Pupils generally have a very good attitude to work and most are keen to do their best.

3. Standards in mathematics for pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are above the national average. The downward 'blip' in results last year has been tackled through precise target setting and careful assessment and now standards reflect a similar upturn, as in the years previous to 2001. When compared to schools with a similar social background, results for pupils in Year 6 reflected levels of attainment well below expectations. In Year 2, national test results indicated standards above schools nationally and broadly in line with similar schools. The previous inspection judged standards to be above the national average. During the three years prior to the 2001 national tests in mathematics, standards were well above those nationally. This rise in standards, with the exception of last year's depressed national test results, has been achieved by good teaching and improving the quality of teachers' planning, based on good use of national guidelines. Over time, this represents a good improvement in mathematics.

4. Since the school was last inspected in November 1997, standards achieved in science have varied and dipped overall. In 2001 the teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 indicate standards are close to national averages but the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels is below that found nationally. The 2001 national tests for Key Stage 2 show a significant decline in standards. The school recognises this and improvement initiatives in the assessment and target setting since September 2001 are having a positive impact so there is recent improvement and standards are now on the way back to be close to national averages in both key stages. The school is celebrating the year of science with various activities that should help to underpin its initiatives.

5. In art and design at the end of Year 2 standards overall are in line with expectation and steady progress is made. At the end of Year 6 the standards pupils achieve are above expectation for their age and good progress is made. This judgement indicates an improvement in standards in Key Stage 2 since

the last inspection. However, there was insufficient evidence of three-dimensional work presented for scrutiny for a judgement to be made on this area of the art and design curriculum throughout the school.

6. The standards of work in design and technology are above expectations for pupils at the end of Year 2 and well above expectation for pupils at the end of Year 6. This shows a good improvement since the last inspection when standards met the expectations for pupils' ages. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and very good progress by Year 6.

7. At the ages of seven and eleven the standard of pupils' work in geography and history is broadly in line with the expectation for each age group. In Key Stage 2, many pupils show a depth of understanding above what could be expected when discussing their work orally but this is not always evident in their written work. In ICT the standards attained and pupils' progress in both key stages are good. In music there was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on the standards attained in composing, performing with instruments during lesson time or listening to and appraising music. Standards in singing were above expectation by the end of Year 2 and well above by the end of Year 6. Music was seen as a strength of the school at the last inspection. It continues to be so and standards in singing have risen. In physical education, standards for most seven- and eleven-year-olds meet those expected nationally.

8. Pupils with special needs make at least satisfactory progress and often good progress and there is no significant difference in the rate of progress between boys and girls. Only a low proportion of pupils have significant special educational needs. Individual pupils who receive specific targeted support make sound progress overall against prior learning levels. The main focus of pupils' individual education plans is literacy and numeracy. These plans, written by individual class teachers, are generally clear, but of variable quality. The school is aware that this is an area for further development, so that with detailed targets, progress over time for each individual pupil will be easier to determine.

9. As yet higher attaining pupils in some classes do not achieve as well as they should. This is recognised by the school and challenging targets have been set for the proportion of pupils to achieve above the national expectations. Setting and improved assessment procedures have been put in place to help the school achieve its targets.

10. There is good use of speaking and listening across the curriculum and some very effective use of ICT to support pupils' learning in mathematics, history, geography, art and design and for those with special educational needs. Mathematics is used well in design and technology but not sufficiently in other subject areas.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, have very good attitudes towards the school which impact significantly on their good learning. Pupils are keen to come to school and find the work interesting and challenging. In lessons they are attentive and concentrate well on the tasks they are given. Consequently their learning is enhanced and they work productively in the time given. They share ideas and work well collaboratively in pairs and in small groups. Pupils readily engage in discussion and answer questions enthusiastically, which enables teachers to assess what they know and understand. At lunchtime many pupils enjoy a wide range of extra-curricular activities and this contributes well to their personal development.

12. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into the life of the school, for example taking part in the sporting teams, and are accepted by other pupils. Most enjoy their time in school and

work very hard. Those whose concentration is short are helped to stay on task by appropriate, sensitive guidance from support staff.

13. Behaviour is very good. In the classrooms pupils settle quickly and listen carefully to instructions. They show respect for property and handle resources carefully and sensibly. Pupils move around the school in an orderly manner and this is particularly evident when they come into the school where they are required to change their outdoor shoes. In the playground the pupils are very well behaved, particularly as they have no play equipment available to them. They are lively and boisterous but there is no evidence of rough or aggressive behaviour, isolation or harassment. They are well supervised and play well together. Behaviour at lunchtime is very good. The atmosphere is friendly and social and the pupils are orderly and well mannered. There have been no exclusions.

14. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong and are well aware of the school rules and the standards of behaviour expected of them. Pupils are involved in establishing their own class rules and fully understand the need for a code of conduct. They see the school rules as being necessary and fair. They consider the impact of their actions on their classmates and develop good respect for the feelings and beliefs of others. For example, the decision of the School Council to initiate litter patrols around the school was taken because the children thought it unfair that the caretaker should be responsible for picking up pupils' rubbish.

15. Relationships between pupils and adults in the school are very good and pupils feel secure to approach staff with any problems or concerns they may have. Very good relationships also exist between pupils. The school is a caring community which values its members and encourages pupils to integrate well both at work and at play. This is very evident in the playground where the Year 6 pupils help supervise the children in the infants' playground. This establishes very good relationships between the older and the younger pupils which enhances social development within the school.

16. Pupils' personal development is very good. All pupils have individual classroom responsibilities and elect two pupils each term to the School Council. The council meets on a regular basis and has discussed ideas on how boys and girls can share the playground sensibly. It persuaded the Governing Body to refurbish the outdoor climbing frames so that they are safe to use. The council also decides on the charity to be supported by money raised at the Christmas concert. Pupils in Year 6 volunteer to sit on the editorial committee of the recently introduced school magazine Eagle Eye. Year 6 pupils attend a residential centre where they are involved in a range of outdoor activities that develop team spirit, independence and self-confidence. This also greatly enhances their personal development and further encourages good relationships within the school. The good social opportunities given for pupils to show initiative and responsibility promotes self-confidence and independence and gives pupils a sense of ownership of the school.

17. Attendance at the school is good with a rate of attendance above the national average. The school has a very low rate of unauthorised absence. Pupils come to school on time and good attendance and punctuality has a positive impact on their attainment and progress. The school monitors and promotes attendance suitably.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

18. Overall, the quality of teaching is a strength of the school and has improved since the last inspection. The quality of teaching was never less than satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and some teaching here was good. Teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 is mainly good with some examples of very good teaching.

19. Teaching of English, mathematics is good overall in both key stages with examples of very good teaching. In both key stages the teaching of science, art and design, and information and

communication technology and physical education is good. In history, the teaching is mainly good with some examples of outstanding practice. It is not possible to make judgements about the quality of teaching in design and technology as no lessons were taught during the inspection period. It was only possible to see a very small number of lessons in geography, and music but the quality of the teaching seen was very good for that small sample.

20. In the good lessons teachers mainly have high expectations of their pupils and set challenging tasks for them. The classroom management allows pupils to learn in a variety of styles and often for them to work collaboratively. This is when higher order learning is developed as pupils have a chance to organise their inquiries and ways of solving problems at levels that are relevant for their age. Pupils are also given the opportunities, as in a very good geography lesson to question assumptions. In the good and very good lessons a range of teaching approaches is used as in an outstanding history session, when drama was used to great effect so pupils could become 'Victorians' and gain insight into the life of a schoolchild at that time. In these good sessions, teachers use questioning techniques well to illicit responses from the pupils that shows the pupils' depth of understanding and prior knowledge.

21. A good science session to develop pupils' understanding of magnetism was seen. A significant amount of time was well spent, in a way that engaged the pupils' interest, to establish what pupils already knew so the subsequent work could be pitched at the right level to ensure their good progress. The teacher pretended to be a visitor from Mars who knew nothing about magnets and drew a great deal from the pupils about their knowledge of magnets. In the best lessons very good use is made of the knowledge teachers have about their pupils' achievements to help them set various levels of tasks around a common theme so pupils are getting the right level of challenge for their stage of development. A very good example was seen in a mathematics session for older pupils on problem-solving using money. In this session a variety of tasks was set for different groupings and there was excellent use of the learning support assistant and ICT plus other resources to ensure pupils, whatever their stage of mathematical development, made very good progress.

22. In the lessons where teaching is satisfactory, pupils sometimes sit gathered round the teacher for longer periods than necessary listening to expositions that are over-long and some lose full engagement. In some lessons it is clear that teachers are not always totally confident about the full detail of the subject and this results in objectives set for the sessions which are not always precise enough to help the teachers judge what the pupils ought to have learnt and have understood. Sometimes the teaching approach limits the extent of progress from being better than satisfactory, as it does not allow for sufficient pupil involvement in the task. This occurs when the teacher directs the pace of the lesson to be the same for all. This happens more on occasions when there are whole-class group activities and there is little planned in the way of extension tasks for the more able or to support for those with learning difficulties.

23. Generally, teachers plan well and the school has adopted useful strategies to manage the unavoidable issue of split-age classes. Where the planning takes full account of what pupils know already, then the teaching is usually challenging at the right level and results in lessons that have a lot of pace. The pace is also maintained by setting realistic time limits for tasks and also by the extent of refocusing of sessions as they develop. In an ICT session it was very clear to the teacher that the pupils were making rapid progress with the challenging tasks set. A pause was created in the session so the teacher through suitable questioning, could gauge what had been learnt. Armed with the knowledge gained, the tasks for the pupils were reset at a higher level of challenge that resulted in even better progress being made during the session.

24. Overall, marking is good. Teachers usually monitor the sessions well, making suitable interventions and providing helpful commentaries and explanations to individuals and small groups of pupils.

Sometimes these are recorded on the pupils' work and sometimes written feedback is given in the form of targets for the pupils to achieve in order to improve their work.

25. Good use is made of homework to extend the knowledge pupils have and to help them practice their skills.

26. The quality of teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good overall. In English and mathematics, teachers generally meet the needs of pupils well, providing well planned activities linked to targets designated in their individual education plans. Classroom support assistants and supporting adults play an important and very successful part in ensuring pupils with special educational needs benefit from a range of appropriate activities. However, in a few lessons observed, for example in science, pupils with special educational needs completed the same work as other pupils, rather than attempting an easier task based on the same work to promote better, clearer understanding. Work in these lessons is planned without direct reference to individual targets in education plans, and this slows progress. The school recognises that this is an aspect of planning to be improved, along with the identification of more challenging activities for higher attaining pupils.

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

27. Broadly the statutory requirements of the curriculum are met satisfactorily but there are some aspects that do not fully satisfy requirements. The school provides a satisfactory range of learning opportunities for children in the Reception class in most areas of the curriculum. The basic skills in literacy and numeracy are generally well taught in Key Stages 1 and 2. Records of pupils' progress are kept and schemes of work are in place for each subject. For pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2, there is a satisfactory range of different activities and learning opportunities in school and information technology facilities have recently been improved. The time allocated for teaching pupils in Key Stage 2 is at present below the recommended minimum. As a result, the impact of generally good teaching is diminished which in turn affects standards, especially in subjects other than English, mathematics and science. This is in part due to the fact that there has been a greater emphasis on teaching literacy and numeracy recently as the national strategies for these were implemented. Now that these are well bedded in, the school is aware of the need to review and revise this shortage of time to ensure a more appropriate breadth and balance in the curriculum. This would benefit some classes by introducing a wider variety in the course of the day where at present this is sometimes lacking.

28. There are a few issues concerning equal opportunities. There is some evidence that insufficient challenge is given to higher attaining pupils at each key stage to ensure they reach their full potential. This was borne out in last year's national test results for Key Stages 1 and 2. In some cases this is because pupils do not produce the expected volume of work for their age group, as they have insufficient time to complete the tasks, even though the quality of the teaching has been good. A number of pupils miss out on a significant amount of the last session each day as they have to leave class early to catch their buses home. No pupils with special educational needs are at present disapplied from the National Curriculum. The school is inclusive of pupils whatever their gender, background, ethnic origin or ability.

29. The provision of extra-curricular activities is very good; it includes sport, music, drama, gymnastics and languages. There are frequent out-of-school trips to places of interest, visits abroad and an annual outdoor activities residential camp for Year 6. These add greatly to the curriculum. The school has an impressive sporting record in competitions and matches against other schools. There are many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and show initiative throughout the school. There are many instances of older pupils supporting and helping younger ones.

30. The provision for personal social and health education is good. There is no formal policy for this aspect, as the school feels that these areas are amply covered in all the other policies they have. All year groups have 'circle time' where issues arising can be discussed. The school's sex education policy is appropriate and, in addition, the views of parents are sought through questionnaires that ensures pupils are taught in accordance with the majority of parents' wishes. The school has an effective drugs education policy that is currently being amended in line with general concerns about this issue. Plans are in the draft stage to bring in a mobile teaching unit staffed by experts to the site for half a term at a time. The plan is to share the cost of this facility with the neighbouring primary school.

31. Overall the school has good relationships with the nursery schools from which most pupils come into the reception class. There are very good links with the secondary school to which most pupils go when they leave. Pupils have various opportunities to visit the secondary school before the end of Year 6. The teachers of Year 6 pupils meet their counterparts in Year 7 to moderate the work of their pupils that strengthens the links between the two schools. The school is also part of a local partnership of primary schools to exchange ideas and share concerns. There are very good links with the local community. The pupils in the school often visit local businesses and are involved in civic events. There are very close links with the local parish church where most of the pupils make their First Communion and Confirmation.

32. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good and the school places a strong emphasis on the spiritual and moral teachings of the Catholic faith. Spirituality is very effectively promoted through assemblies where pupils have the opportunity to express their emotions and feelings and reflect on their thoughts. In classroom morning prayers there is always a tranquil and meaningful atmosphere where there is quiet time for reflection. Candles are lit in a darkened room and pupils say their own prayers for someone special. Spirituality is also evident in many lessons, for example in art and design where pupils explore the different colours of nature, and when background music is used to create a special atmosphere in art and design lessons, prayer sessions and in the Reception class.

33. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The school places a high priority on the teaching and understanding of moral values and the ethos of the school is firmly based on the teaching of Christ. During the inspection there were some very good examples seen: in geography when environmental issues and their moral implications were discussed by pupils, in history where class discussions focused on issues such as good versus evil and the strict discipline and punishment in schools in the Victorian age. The school teaches right from wrong effectively and due attention is given to acceptance of codes of acceptable behaviour and the sharing of positive values. The pupils respond well, enjoying their work and showing care for the school. Both teachers and support staff provide good role models and encourage the children to relate well to one another and to behave courteously. World issues are discussed in assembly and the pupils support a range of charities.

34. Very good provision is made for pupils' social development during the daily life of the school. Pupils are given appropriate opportunities to take on duties and responsibilities within their own classrooms and this is extended for the older children. The School Council enables pupils from each class to take some responsibility for the way in which the school is organised and this gives pupils a sense of ownership of the school and members take their responsibilities seriously. The quality of relationships between pupils and adults is very good. The school has a caring community, values its members and encourages pupils to integrate well together both at work and at play.

35. The provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils' own cultural heritage is promoted successfully through art, dance, music and history. Pupils visit a Victorian school where they experience the realities of how children were treated in the past and they also visit the Heritage Motor Museum, the museum in Oxford and the National Gallery. The school has its own folk group and the school choir performs throughout the year within the community. The work of a wide variety of artists is promoted and the school has its own orchestra that performs at a number of school events.

The study of other cultures is covered within religious education and in some other areas of the curriculum, for example in English where pupils looked at the African myth of how light came to the world. The provision for multi-cultural education is, however, very limited and there is a lack of awareness and appreciation of cultural diversity and no planned provision within the curriculum. There is also insufficient variety of books and musical instruments from other cultures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36. The school provides a safe and caring environment for all its pupils and this creates a good atmosphere for learning. There is an effective health and safety policy. The deputy head teacher carries out regular risk assessment inspections. Any issues are reported to and monitored by the Governing Body. There are clear procedures for dealing with accidents and five members of staff are qualified in first-aid. All accidents are recorded appropriately and a copy of the report is sent to parents.

37. The school has a child protection policy and generally sound procedures for dealing with child protection issues that are discussed with the teaching staff. Not all non-teaching staff are fully aware of the designated person for child protection and the school is aware of this and addressing the issue.

38. The very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are extremely effective and create an orderly community within which good learning can take place. There is a detailed behaviour policy with a clear system of rewards and sanctions that are applied consistently throughout the school. The school has very good procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour. The headteacher deals effectively with reported incidents of bullying and pupils, parents or staff do not perceive bullying as an issue.

39. The school provides effective support and guidance for all its pupils including those with special educational needs. Police and fire service personnel visit the school and talk to pupils about personal safety. The year before last the school won a nationally organised emergency aid competition where teams of pupils had to deal with an emergency situation by administering first-aid. There is an appropriate programme of sex education for pupils in Years 5 and 6.

40. There are satisfactory procedures for monitoring the academic performance and progress of pupils. Regular assessments of pupils' work take place and a profile of achievement is kept for each child. The use of evidence books during assessment periods in the school year provides a useful portfolio of pupils' work to help teachers track pupils' achievements. There is analysis of the performance of cohorts of pupils as they pass through the school to provide information on the extent of progress made by different groups. A profile of each pupil is kept which records personal development and other aspects of their development which are not easily categorised in the main curricular subjects. This is updated termly or more often if an occasion warrants it.

41. Overall the school's policy for special educational needs embraces the principles of the Code of Practice. The school pays very good attention to social inclusion. A small proportion of pupils have special educational needs and they are well supported. Learning support assistants and specialist staff are effective in their roles and assist these pupils in making at least satisfactory and often good progress against prior levels of learning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

42. The school has an effective partnership with parents which has a positive impact on the quality of pupils' learning and the progress they make. Parents are very supportive of the school and the majority feel that their children receive a good education in a safe and caring environment where they make good progress.

43. The school provides good quality information to parents through the school brochure, regular newsletters and the recently introduced school magazine that is produced by a Year 6 editorial committee supported by a member of staff. Pupils' annual progress reports provide good information on pupils' attainment and progress and sets targets for development in English, mathematics and science. The reports also contain information on pupils' personal development.

44. There are two parent consultation meetings during the year. In the autumn term, parents are invited to discuss how their children are settling in and in the summer term they have the opportunity to discuss their children's annual report. At these meetings samples of pupils' work and their records of achievement are available for parents to see. These consultations provide sufficient opportunity for parents to be kept informed about the progress their children make. Parents are encouraged to contact staff if they have any concerns and teachers are readily available to talk with them.

45. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are given sound information. Parents are promptly informed, by respective class teachers, if their child is identified as having special educational needs. They are invited to the regular review meetings to discuss their child's progress and most attend. Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are shared with parents at regular, planned intervals and most parents sign and retain copies. There are a small number of parents who are regularly involved in the classroom where they help with reading, cooking and information and communication technology. Other parents help supervise the pupils on school trips and educational visits. The majority of parents help support their children with work at home and this contributes significantly to learning and enhances their progress.

46. There is an active Parent, Teachers and Friends' Association that raises in excess of six thousand pounds annually through a range of social and fund-raising activities. Money raised by the association has helped to pay for a parents' waiting area outside the school, security fencing and books and has significantly enhanced the facilities at the school. There are strong family links within the parish. Children sing in the church choir and mass on Sunday is attended by families from the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47. The headteacher leads and manages the school well. He is committed and hardworking, and his management of pastoral issues, including the care of staff and children, is very good. Since the previous inspection the school has made good progress in addressing all the areas of development raised. The headteacher has been instrumental in raising the quality of teaching and the standards achieved in information and communication technology throughout the school. Results in the 2001 national tests undertaken by pupils in Year 6 reflected a fall in overall standards when compared with

previous years. This has resulted in the headteacher introducing a range of procedures that has included setting specific targets for pupils and monitoring their progress towards these targets.

48. Inspection evidence confirms that standards being achieved by pupils in the current Year 6 are now back on track in English and mathematics. The school has clear insights into its strengths and weaknesses, and knows that raising standards must continue to be its number one priority. The school development plan is well focused and usefully identifies the resources that will be required. Staff are united in their determination to make the school the best it can be, and the school is well placed to continue the overall good rate of improvement.

49. The leadership and management provided by the deputy headteacher and members of the senior management team are satisfactory overall and the headteacher is aware that some organisational changes will be required to maximise on the strengths contained within the team. It meets regularly to consider strategic matters, though no written agendas or minutes are kept that could prove useful to mapping progress and supporting performance management. All co-ordinators work very hard to make improvements to their subjects. The visitor to the school quickly detects that this is a place of purposeful teamwork. This approach affects learning as pupils respond to the expectation of high standards and work hard to achieve good standards. In a bid to improve on things that are already done soundly, co-ordinators have identified the need to extend their monitoring of colleagues' lessons in all subjects, and share standards being achieved and best practice and build on the school's successes.

50. The headteacher, Local Education Authority advisers and numeracy and literacy co-ordinators have monitored the quality of teaching. From this monitoring, areas of development have been identified, and consequently the quality of teaching has improved. The school has undergone a recent change of staff, which has necessitated the appointment of newly qualified teachers, who are soundly supported on a personal level by the school. However, as some of the school's documentation is not completed or up to date, these teachers do not have the benefit of the full information about the school or pupils that they should have. For example, the staff handbook is as yet to be finalised after revisions and so currently new staff, including classroom support staff, do not know fully about child protection procedures. Most subject policies are up to date, so new teachers can refer to them about how the school would like these subjects taught.

51. The management of provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory with some good features in the preparation of individual education plans. However, the school is aware of the need to review its formal procedures for identifying pupils in need of special educational help and support in the younger age groups more closely. Records are kept and updated regularly. However, the clarity of information regarding pupils' targets in their individual education plans reflects a wide variation in quality but overall it is satisfactory. The best individual education plans identify specific teaching methods to meet the needs of particular pupils, also allocating additional adult support in a focused manner. The staff identified in the plans are committed to giving pupils as much support as possible to help them do well at school. Most learning support assistants have undertaken additional training and this positively enhances the good quality, helpful support provided. The governing body is committed to the full inclusion of all pupils with special educational needs. As and when required, the special needs co-ordinator receives non-contact time away from her class to manage certain aspects of special educational needs provision. All funds designated for special educational needs are used effectively.

52. The aims and values of the school fully embrace social and educational inclusion. The unique qualities of every pupil are valued. In its practice to be inclusive, the school development plan is produced after consultation with most interested parties, and details the development required in the most important areas. It is carefully costed and sets out most of the developments planned in a distinct

three-year period. Through effective practice and the efficient targeting of additional adult support, the school has been successful in enabling lower attaining pupils to achieve soundly. Managers are aware that the next step is to ensure consistently appropriate levels of challenge for the higher attaining pupils, so that they may reach their full potential. The special talents of some pupils are recognised and a register is maintained.

53. Members of the governing body fulfil their statutory requirements and are very supportive of the school and the work that the headteacher and staff undertake. Through a network of committees, which have appropriate terms of reference, the governors have adopted the right priorities for the school at the right time. These centre on raising standards in information and communication technology in particular. They are provided with good information by the headteacher through regular reports, and grasp the ever-growing demands made upon them in a very purposeful manner. Governors have good insights into what the school does well and what could be improved and they are still increasing their knowledge about standards, the quality of teaching and resulting progress, and about standards being achieved in similar schools elsewhere. The linking of governors to different major subject areas is a positive feature to help them develop their good understanding further. Developing systems for the monitoring of standards being achieved will assist in deciding whether the financial investment gives a good return, in terms of its effect on pupils' achievements. .

54. The school has satisfactory systems for monitoring its own performance in tests and is taking effective action to bring about higher standards. Data is analysed thoroughly and used to set increasingly precise targets for various pupils. A more recent development is the setting of individual targets for pupils. The headteacher is aware that a more systematic approach and rigorous monitoring of target setting in lessons and for individuals will help the school to see clearly how well it is meeting its overall targets. The monitoring of teaching by the headteacher is a regular feature. However, standards being achieved by various ability groups within the class are not recorded. Staff are ready to be drawn more precisely into the sharing of standards being achieved in order to maximise teachers' efforts to improve.

55. Financial planning is good. The priorities for the school improvement plan are fully costed and there is a suitable longer term plan linked to finance. The headteacher involves the governors in the managing of budgets through the governing body's committees, and governors are sufficiently involved in making decisions about spending. All funds, including those designated for particular use, for example, raising standards of literacy and numeracy, are well used, and such spending achieves its intentions. Governors have a good understanding of best value, and have applied it conscientiously to all spending decisions. The school spends an average amount on educating pupils; with a high allocation to staffing that is a conscious decision to keep the pupil:teacher ratio relatively low. Contingency is correctly earmarked for maintaining present staffing levels and other resource provision in relation to the school's improvement priorities. The most recent financial audit, implemented in 2000, reported that good financial controls were securely in place. The school currently provides good value for money, with the potential for this to become very good in the future.

56. The qualifications and number of teaching staff are currently sufficient to meet the needs of the school. Appraisal is well established and the school has had to do very little to bring arrangements in line with new government guidelines for performance management. The school has recently benefited from the government initiative to provide more classroom support, and classroom support assistants are deployed well. They are fully involved in most lessons. The headteacher and governors are well supported by the efficient school administrator. The site manager is cheerful, helpful and gives good advice to the headteacher regarding maintenance problems. A shared strength of all the staff is the commitment not just to high standards, but also to a calm, well ordered school community. Staff and

governors are much concerned for the development of all pupils into responsible adults, who will be ready to take their place in society.

57. The sufficiency of the accommodation is good and provides very adequately for teaching most subjects of the curriculum. The school has recently undergone substantial refurbishment of many classrooms, and the building of a further two classrooms to accommodate Year 6 pupils has further enhanced the school's good provision. All classrooms are of suitable size. Governors have decided to deploy a substantial investment into the provision for information and communication technology throughout the school that has had a direct effect on raising standards. The grounds of the school are well stocked with a wide range of shrubs and trees, providing very attractive surroundings. There is a small fenced outdoor area but there are insufficient toys to stimulate learning through play for pupils in the Foundation Stage.

58. The headteacher, staff and governors recognise that there is continued need to monitor closely and maintain the present high standards in English and mathematics, and continue to raise standards in science. The sense of a shared approach to these challenges is good and the school can celebrate its many strengths as it moves successfully towards continued further improvement.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

59. Overall the school has made good progress since the last inspection. In order to raise standards further and build on the initiatives already started in this academic year the governors, headteacher and staff should

- ◆ improve the balance of curriculum time between subjects by:
 - a) meeting as far as possible the DfES recommendations for allocations of teaching time for Key Stage 2;
 - b) using all the available curriculum time effectively;
 - c) reviewing the school day so there are no interruptions caused by children leaving before the end of sessions to catch buses.(Paras 27, 28, 35, 57)

- ◆ develop the monitoring role of the co-ordinators so that they:
 - a) have time to gather evidence of progress in their area of responsibility;
 - b) can promote higher standards;
 - c) share good practice.(Paras 49, 53, 54, 90, 99, 105, 128, 129, 144)

- ◆ develop the strategic role of the senior management team by:
 - a) establishing clear roles within the group;
 - b) ensuring that each target for action has clearly assigned responsibilities;
 - c) introducing ways in which the SMT can evaluate the effectiveness of its work.(Para 49)

- ◆ raise standards in science by:
 - a) ensuring there is adequate teaching time for the subject;
 - b) improving teachers' subject knowledge;
 - c) raising teachers' expectations of what can be achieved, particularly by the more able.(Paras 4, 27, 58, 102, 103, 104)

- ◆ develop the planning in the Foundation Stage so that:
 - a) there are clearly identified targets for the development of skills;
 - b) individual children's progress can be measured more easily;
 - c) learning through play is more structured;
 - d) children have more opportunities to make choices about their learning and to investigate, create, and discover.(Paras 57, 62, 63)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	58
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	27

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	8	22	26	0	0	0
Percentage	4	14	38	44	0	0	0

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

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)		276
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		9

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		30

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7

Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9
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Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.2
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	22	17	39

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	21	20
	Girls	17	17	17
	Total	37	38	37
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	95 (92)	97 (95)	95 (97)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	20	20
	Girls	17	17	17
	Total	38	37	37
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	97 (95)	95 (97)	95 (97)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2001	14	30	44

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	13	14
	Girls	24	22	24
	Total	36	35	38
Percentage of pupils At NC level 4 or above	School	82 (95)	80 (95)	86 (98)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	13	14
	Girls	24	21	24
	Total	36	34	38
Percentage of pupils	School	82 (96)	77 (95)	86 (98)

At NC level 4 or above	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)
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Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	7
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	1
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	256
Any other minority ethnic group	12

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.31
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.4
Average class size	25.1

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	217

Qualified teachers and support staff: Nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	N/A
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/A

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.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	524,059
Total expenditure	515,827
Expenditure per pupil	1,755
Balance brought forward from previous year	48,107
Balance carried forward to next year	56,339

Total number of education support staff	N/A
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/A
Number of pupils per FTE adult	N/A

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	276
Number of questionnaires returned	181

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	75	23	2	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	70	29	1	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	72	25	3	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	48	45	7	1	0
The teaching is good.	69	28	1	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	48	44	7	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	76	17	7	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	80	19	0	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	55	37	8	1	0
The school is well led and managed.	74	25	0	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	75	23	2	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	49	32	10	2	7

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

60. The school makes satisfactory provision for children in the reception classes. By the time they move into Key Stage 1 almost all will have met the Early Learning Goals expected for their age. In communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and physical development, many will have exceeded these targets. Almost all children make good progress

61. Parents are invited to visit before their children start school and are shown around whilst the children play. They are then invited to an evening meeting when routines and procedures are explained to them. Many of the children have pre-school experience in playgroups or nurseries. The coordinator liaises closely with these and records are sent when the children transfer to school.

62. There is no overall policy in place for the Foundation Year. The co-ordinator has recently adopted the Oxfordshire schemes of work for Early Years, consequently long-term planning is securely in place. Both teachers plan together, and this ensures parity of opportunity within the reception classes. Although medium- and short-term planning identifies what 'stepping stones' will be addressed and what activities will be covered, it does not clearly identify what children will do or what skills they will learn. Similarly, reading records, though well kept, list what books children have read and enjoyed, but do not always identify stumbling blocks and what decoding skills need to be consolidated. Oxfordshire assessment sheets are completed each term for each child and colour coding identifies the rate of progress. After baseline testing, end of year targets are set for individual children. During 'evidence week' children complete set pieces of work and these are monitored each term. However, structured on-going assessment for individual and group activities is not yet securely in place. Moreover, apart from language and mathematics, as children's work is not kept and collated, there is no ready visual gauge of achievement and progress for teachers, parents or children. During the inspection period a very limited amount of work was available for scrutiny.

63. The environment provided for children is colourful and work is carefully presented. However, generally, the two areas in the reception are not well organised, there is a wealth of work around the rooms but the organisation is such that the impact is lost. Furthermore, activity areas are not sufficiently planned to stimulate learning. For example, the mathematical development area is not clearly identified and has no resources, games or equipment through which children can investigate and discover mathematical facts for themselves. There is no language area where children may choose to learn through word puzzles, games or jigsaws or practise their writing. Although there is a very good, attractive display about Baptism, which stimulates learning, generally there are few interesting areas to further children's knowledge of the world in which they live or to enable them to feel, observe or investigate and discuss artefacts among themselves.

64. The teachers and learning support assistants in the reception area know the children well and are sensitive to their individual needs. The atmosphere is friendly and caring and is particularly appropriate for children's first introduction into school.

Personal, social and emotional development

65. Children make steady progress in this area of development. Relationships between teachers, learning assistants, parents and children are good and this is because of the welcoming atmosphere. The day starts with prayers and circle time. A candle is lit and a safe, secure setting is created.

Children watch the flickering flame and say their prayers reverently. A gentle, spiritual feeling prevails where children feel able to express their thoughts and explain their feelings.

66. As they move to group activities some children settle quickly and responsibly to their tasks, however others take more time and when instructions are unclear or tasks lack challenge, quickly become unfocused. Few children automatically clear away before moving on to another activity. Teachers promote personal and social development when there is clarity of expectation when pupils are reminded of previously established routines. For example, art overalls were handed to the first available adult, but when asked to do so children returned them to the appropriate area. In play activities children learn to work together for increasing lengths of time. For example four children at the sand tray worked as a group 'making a cake' for over twenty minutes. They enacted real life situations. One boy (the youngest) explained 'we are making a cake. Those two girls are the mummies and we two (boys) are the daddies. I think that's alright.' Once they had decided the cake was made they sang 'Happy Birthday'.

67. Almost all children take turns sensibly in both supervised and unsupervised play. Children at the paint table worked amicably side by side. Others with construction toys took turns to run their train into the siding so that another could pass. Throughout the day children are continually encouraged by the positive attitudes of the teachers and learning assistants. They know they are valued and their self-esteem is raised. Those who are reticent are gently encouraged to take part and though their friends are eager to help they too are learning to wait patiently and take their turn.

Communication, language and literacy

68. The standards children attain in communication, language and literacy skills are good. By the time they move into Key Stage 1 many will have exceeded the expectation set out in the Early Learning Goals. Almost all are able to hold conversations with suitably formed sentences and clear diction. They offer ideas and suggestions and give opinions. Many opportunities are provided for children to develop communication skills and they take full advantage of these. At the end of each morning a question time is held when children can ask each other about the interesting things they have brought in to show. They do so sensibly, taking turns and listening to the replies. In literacy sessions they listen carefully, following words and pictures and enjoying texts. Many are able to read out common words and repetitive phrases and do so with glee. All children recognise the connection between pictures and words and many begin to understand 'title' and 'author'. In free activity time children frequently choose books to read alone or to share. They settle on cushions to retell the stories, or make their own up as they go along. Four children were observed engrossed in a book with one telling the story, one pointing to the relevant pictures and two listening intently.

69. All are able to write their own names and many have correct letter formation and use appropriate upper and lower case. Some are writing simple sentences independently guided by a bank of common words. Others rely on the teacher to scribe their ideas for them to copy and a few still need to write over the teacher's words. Focused work concentrates on phonics and commonly used words. All children have a reading book and many are advancing quickly through the early readers. They are encouraged to take books home to share with their families and those who do so benefit from this experience. The quality of teaching is very sound with some good features.

Mathematical development

70. The standards children achieve in mathematics are good and many will exceed the expectations for their ages as they enter Key Stage 1. Mathematical concepts are built into all areas of learning. Through number games almost all are able to count to 100 emphasising the tens and then count to 100

in fives. While using counting games, matching and sorting they become familiar with numbers and their values. Higher attaining children have a sound grasp of the value of individual digits and many are able to devise and calculate simple sums counting on and counting back. Teachers concentrate well on building a good mathematical vocabulary. All children understand simple positional terms, such as 'above', 'below', 'in front', 'behind', 'under' and 'over'. Both groups are looking at measurement and children quickly recognise short and long lengths. Given a selected choice, they are able to identify shortest and longest and know that when measuring the ends of the lengths must be together. Higher attaining children are able to identify variables realising that the shortest/longest may differ when another length is removed or added. Almost all children recognise squares, circles, triangles and oblongs but they have yet to become familiar with three-dimensional shapes, such as cones, cubes and spheres. Some begin to have a concept of time by sequencing pictures of daily events. Although focused activities develop mathematical concepts well, the lack of a specific mathematics area means that children do not choose mathematical games in free activity times unless directed to do so. The overall quality of teaching in this aspect is very sound and some is good.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

71. Children enter the school with very varied experiences of the world around them; consequently teachers make every effort to provide wide and varied activities for them to experience. Very limited children's work was presented for scrutiny as children record very little work in this area of learning and any that is done is taken home. However, photographic evidence reveals that children do have many interesting and fascinating experiences and this aspect is taught satisfactorily. The children incubate and hatch chicks and their delight and awe at holding these tiny fluffy creatures is evident in their faces. They picnic in the park and visit the local shops. All experience a well chosen day out on a train journey learning about the ticket office, safety on the platform and facilities at the station, the café and the view from the engine driver's cab that suitably enlarges their understanding of the world around them. This then develops into imaginative role-play back in the classroom.

72. Children making pizzas were eager to share the experience and explain how they were kneading dough and how it felt. When adding toppings they placed the ingredients thoughtfully. Guided by the learning support assistant some were developing early research skills by looking in books to find recipes and pictures of pizzas. Children who had made boats were testing them to see if they floated or sank. Before testing, the teacher encouraged them to hypothesise and give reasons for their answers. Although both of these activities were beneficial and furthered children's knowledge and understanding there were limited opportunities for them to make choices and develop independence in decision making as all ingredients and materials were pre-selected by the teachers.

73. During religious education children have been looking at Baptism and entry into God's family. The carefully constructed display cannot fail to have instilled into the children the importance of the occasion. The display of valuable jewellery and artefacts and beautifully embroidered clothes indicates the trust teachers give the children and the values they teach through a 'hidden' approach.

74. Children have appropriate opportunities to use ICT in the class areas and in the ICT suite and show good familiarity with computers. The teaching in this aspect has a number of good features and is very sound overall.

Physical development

75. In the indoor physical education (PE) lesson observed children attained a good standard of work and their physical skills are suitably developed through very sound teaching. The children listen to instructions carefully, adhered to set routines sensibly and work hard at the activities presented for

them. The teacher selects apparatus well to provide suitable challenges at different levels and this is an example of the strength in the good teaching seen in this aspect. They take turns to climb, stretch, slide and balance moving as a group from one activity to the next sensibly. They pull and push their way up ladders across frames and down beams developing body movements well. They co-operate well, sharing the apparatus amicably and giving a helping hand when heights are daunting. In music and movement sessions they dance and mime well, thoroughly enjoying the activity yet acting sensibly. Although there is a new enclosed play area outside where children can run and play, they do not have enough opportunities to use it. There is no climbing frame, where they can stretch, twist and take necessary risks, undirected. Moreover there are not enough mobile toys of a wide enough variety to allow them to move speedily and develop awareness of space and of each other. However the teacher is aware of this and new toys and equipment are soon to be ordered.

Creative development

76. Almost all children attain a satisfactory standard in creative work and a small number develop these skills very well as the quality of teaching is very sound. Although a variety of creative activities are provided for children to experience, the limited evidence presented suggests that children are not given sufficient freedom to develop their own ideas without unnecessary direction or restriction. Consequently, much of the work on display around the rooms was of a similar nature with little evidence of individual choice of colour, materials or shape or design. For example candles, cakes and snowflakes and parrots were all virtually identical. However, children had been given the freedom to paint their favourite toys and carefully crafted elephants, engines and dolls adorned the walls of the classroom and hall.

77. Where children had drawn bicycles in observational work several drawings revealed advanced technical and observational skills for the children's ages. In a variety of cross-curricular activities small motor skills are refined and children cut and stick with increasing dexterity. Children enjoy singing and know rhymes and songs by heart. They listen well to their taped music lesson and, guided by their teacher, join in sensibly at the appropriate points. They remember a new tune quickly and sing their responses at register time melodiously. However, there was no indication that children have free access to musical instruments so that they can experiment with sounds and rhythms in activity times.

78. The Foundation Stage is managed very soundly and the co-ordinator is aware of the aspects to improve further and is committed to the development of the stage and has chosen a variety of suitable sources of advice to support her work.

ENGLISH

79. In Key Stage 1, most pupils are able to express themselves clearly and confidently when speaking. The use of language is generally good and most listen and understand well as is borne out by their answers and contributions to class discussions. Reading skills are well developed and most are able to work out unfamiliar words with little assistance but few are using their knowledge of phonetic sounds to full effect. Many read with considerable expression that shows a good level of comprehension of the text.

80. Almost all pupils begin to write in a variety of different styles, for example retelling familiar stories or making up their own, writing diaries and poems. The good level of vocabulary in their spoken work is continued on paper and often adds richness to the content. Skills in literacy are developing by frequent practice of grammatical structures and some are able to grasp such concepts as the use of alliteration to enhance effect. Some use very imaginative description to create an atmosphere. For

example one pupil in Year 2 wrote ‘The tornado turned back into the howling wind’ which immediately creates a vivid image in the mind of the reader. In most pupils’ work there is a clear narrative thread and their stories follow a neat structure of beginning, middle and end.

81. Spelling is generally accurate in commonly occurring words and pupils correctly use the name of the letter rather than the sound it makes when spelling words verbally. Many are able to correct misspelt words even when the sound may be confusing, as for example in ‘au’ and ‘aw’. Many pieces of work are neatly presented, letters are mostly correctly formed and a few begin to join their letters by the age of seven. The majority remember capital letters and full stops where required. Some begin to use apostrophes for direct speech as well as question and exclamation marks to increase the effect of their writing.

82. As they move up through Key Stage 2, most pupils improve their reading skills and many read unfamiliar texts expressively and with confidence. Speaking and listening skills continue to exceed the expectation for each age group and by Year 6, many are able to express themselves with remarkable maturity. Spelling is generally good with occasional lapses, often through carelessness. Punctuation is mostly accurate. By the age of nine most pupils are familiar with the purpose of the index, contents and glossary and can quickly differentiate between fiction and non-fiction from the style of layout. Most pupils use paragraphing to divide their writing into sensible sections.

83. By the age of eleven, most take great pride in presenting their work neatly with correctly joined handwriting. However, in the middle years of Key Stage 2, presentation is often more slap-dash and this detracts from the overall effect. Most remember to date and title their work. As they move up through the school, many become quite proficient at taking notes as a topic is being discussed which demonstrates an ability to glean the essential points. These are then developed and fed back into their writing. There is some evidence of planning and drafting work before the final copy, but this is not practised often enough through the school, to become standard procedure by Year 6. Many pupils at each age group in Key Stage 2 use humour in description or poetry to add an extra dimension, for example ‘Gran’s face is as crinkly as a plastic bag!’ The rich use of language to add depth to writing is often well in advance of what could be expected. Year 4 produced some wonderfully evocative scene-setting beginnings to stories, such as ‘In the pitch black of the night...’, ‘..where no man had dared go before...’.

84. Many used metaphor well to illustrate the fight between good and evil, for example by calling the snowdrops ‘an heroic army’ or the frost as ‘nature’s worst enemy’. However, pupils are not always able to produce work on paper that matches their verbal contributions. The range of styles in which pupils write increases appropriately as they grow older. Sentence structures become more complex and by Year 6, some are able to use grammatical devices, such as rhetorical questions to good effect. However, this high level of literacy expertise is too often offset by pupils not writing in sufficient volume to meet fully the expectation for the age group.

85. Since the last inspection there have been sound improvements in the school’s approach to literacy. The implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has been well handled and has helped to give a better structure to lessons. The quality of teaching has improved and no unsatisfactory teaching was seen. The last national tests and the evidence of present work show that the standard of reading and writing has improved at Key Stage 1. Despite last year’s dip in standards at Key Stage 2 tests, the work currently being done is above national expectations and speaking and listening skills remain very good. Most pupils work conscientiously and there is very little evidence of restlessness through inappropriate tasks being set, but the volume of work produced could be further improved. More care is taken to match the tasks set to what pupils can already do. Assessment procedures do help to inform planning but the school is aware that more work still needs to be done in this aspect. The

scheme of work follows the suggested guidelines of the National Literacy Strategy. It is now more detailed and shows more awareness for the need for a continuing building of skills. Planning is more consistent across classes in the same age group and throughout the school. Book resources have been reviewed, updated and are all now in an appropriate condition.

86. The quality of teaching is good overall and sometimes very good at both key stages. Three-quarters of the lessons observed were good or better. Planning is mostly sound and gives an effective structure to lessons. Where teaching is most successful, the enthusiasm of the teacher stimulates the pupils and increases their level of participation. Very good relationships between adults and pupils and unobtrusive class control ensure an appropriate atmosphere in which pupils can learn. The small white boards are often used well to give the teacher a chance to assess how well pupils are learning each teaching point. Their use also adds greatly to the fun of the lesson as most pupils love to show what they can do. Teachers are often good role models in the use of appropriately mature vocabulary and correct technical terminology to develop accurate language use by their pupils. Pupils are constantly challenged by probing questions which helps them to develop their reasoning powers and think more deeply about the topic under discussion.

87. Texts chosen in many lessons are often challenging for the majority of pupils but the class teacher skilfully leads pupils to a greater depth of understanding, for example in the use of Walter de la Mare's 'The Listeners' with Year 6. The tasks set for groups mostly take good account of what pupils can already do, so most are able to gain a sense of achievement when these are successfully completed. The class are usually brought together at the end of the group work session and given an opportunity to discuss what they have done which helps to consolidate their learning. Occasionally, this session is given extra value when pupils are given the opportunity to evaluate their own and others' work and discuss how this could be improved. Drama is often well integrated into lessons, both in short role-play examples and in longer full lessons which gives pupils a chance to learn in a different way and often to understand at a deeper level. Work is usually marked with many constructive comments to help pupils to improve.

88. In some lessons, teaching strategies are less effective. What the teacher wants the pupils to know by the end of a lesson is sometimes ill-defined, lacks precision and is not shared with the pupils. This makes it difficult for the teacher and pupils to assess whether the targets have been achieved. Pupils are sometimes kept too long on the carpet area and they become less attentive. The impact of the lesson is then diminished. Although tasks set for groups are usually well thought up, there is sometimes insufficient time allowed for the completion of the task. Occasionally, the task set is not appropriate for each group and little is achieved. In each of these examples, an opportunity for pupils to gain a sense of self-esteem by producing some worthwhile work is thus lost. In some lesson, the pupils are not told what volume of work is required and some will produce less than they might otherwise achieve. High attaining pupils are not, therefore, stretched to their full potential. The pace of lessons sometimes slows when too long is spent discussing one idea and some pupils switch off. Class teachers do not always take sufficient care to model good handwriting and presentation at all times. Some pupils begin to feel that presentation does not matter and as a result do not take pride in their own work.

89. The management of the subject is sound. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented well and has helped to raise standards both in teaching quality and in pupils' work. The coordinator has a clear overview for Key Stage 1 and is developing a view of Key Stage 2. Planning is monitored across the school termly but individual teachers plan across split year groups in the mid- and short-term. There are few opportunities for teachers to observe best practice in others to enable them to develop their teaching skills.

90. The scheme of work relating to the National Literacy Strategy has been well devised but the co-ordinator is aware that the policy for teaching English needs considerable updating. There are plans for this to begin very soon. Although there are spontaneous moments when pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development occurs, there is insufficient planning for this to be built into lessons. Formal assessment takes place termly. This is fed back into planning to an extent, but this needs to be more defined to enable the co-ordinator to predict what each pupil will achieve as they move up through each key stage. Informal on-going assessment enables the teachers to set targets to help pupils improve but this information is not always shared with individual pupils.

91. There are sufficient resources to teach the National Literacy Strategy appropriately. The library is pleasantly set out and the books are categorised according to the Dewey system. Pupils have library time regularly in class to help them to learn how to use this useful resource. However, the school is well aware that it is under-used as a means of developing pupils' independence of learning and research skills and plans are in place to remedy this. There are some links to other subjects, but these need further development. Information and communication technology, particularly in word processing is often used well.

MATHEMATICS

92. Since last year's sudden jolt to rising standards, the school has introduced a vigorous system of tracking pupils' attainment in order to plan more effectively on prior learning levels. Pupils are now grouped by ability in Year 6 for two days each week and additional booster classes have been introduced.

93. Since the previous inspection, the school has been very successful in placing greater focus on practical problem-solving. For example pupils were challenged to change and compare currencies when undertaking a foreign holiday. In this higher attaining group, pupils were challenged suitably when required to find more than one way of working out the answer to a given problem using paper and pencil methods. In most classes, the mental quick thinking oral sessions introducing each numeracy lesson are generally well taught and appropriately paced, using a range of practical resources to keep pupils alert and enthusiastic. However, the final session recapping on the learning is often rushed, failing to consolidate learning for some pupils.

94. Pupils in Key Stage 1 receive good teaching overall. Pupils have a good understanding of mathematics, as observed during a practical counting session involving adding pairs of numbers to make ten. Most pupils, when questioned, count up to fifty, counting accurately in fives and tens. In one Key Stage 1 lesson observed there was a good, rapid mental session, followed by a variety of appropriately challenging group tasks. Pupils rearranged a range of two- and three-digit numbers to find the smallest and largest number that it was possible to make using the same given numbers. Challenging work slowed, however, when pupils were required to record their answers in text books, duplicating already known facts. Teachers do not make good use of well displayed mathematical vocabulary that often forms part of the class maths corner. Although vibrant in colour, many displays do not reflect a range of pupils' work, especially the use of information and communication technology. This is an area for improvement. The good quality teaching that takes place in Key Stage 1 has a positive effect on the good standards achieved, and is a very effective starting point for pupils as they move upward through the school.

95. The teaching in Key Stage 2 is good overall with some very good teaching. Pupils have a very sure understanding of place value, confidently recognising millions, thousands, simple fractions, major differences between certain geometrical shapes, and the language linked to probability. The additional

use of setting pupils by ability in Year 6 twice a week positively assists pupils' attainment to higher levels. Very clear targets are set as in one lesson requiring pupils to construct simple diagrams to illustrate factors of given numbers. All pupils were able to complete at least one set of factors. In this session pupils worked very well with excellent attitudes and behaviour, totally focused on the work in hand. The very good subject knowledge of teachers assisted the rapid pace of their lessons with the higher ability group and clear instructions gave much well directed support. As a result, pupils made very good progress in their overall numerical ability. Teachers have high expectations of all pupils, including those with special educational needs who are well supported and make satisfactory progress against prior learning levels.

96. Pupils clearly enjoy mathematics and mental activities that include the use of number fans and white boards. The quality of written work is generally very good. During the practical weighing session observed in Year 3, pupils worked with enthusiasm, working very well with other pupils and adults when required, knowing what they were expected to do and making great efforts to accomplish their tasks. Pupils are always very well behaved, and, on occasions, behaviour is exemplary which enables them to concentrate very well and make considerable progress.

97. The good use of mathematics in design and technology is not shared sufficiently across other subjects. There is limited evidence of higher attaining pupils being given sufficient opportunities to devise their own methods of recording when solving problems. Analysis of pupils' work shows an over-reliance on the scheme book in Years 1 and 2. Work in some classes is directed too closely by the class teacher, with written work indicating a formal recording of answers to questions, thus reducing a more practical approach that uses a range of methods and solutions related to everyday life. Good use is made of additional adult support staff, who are generally aware of the teachers' intentions and produce additional help, especially for pupils with special educational needs. There are good examples of the effective use of ICT to support pupils' learning through the use of teaching programs for specific aspects of the subject and also in the use of graphs and spreadsheets in data gathering and interpretation.

98. The subject is well managed by the co-ordinator, who has identified weaknesses and developed a clear and detailed scheme based on national guidelines. The co-ordinator's good subject knowledge is clearly reflected in the above average standards presently being achieved by Year 6 pupils in the higher numeracy group, who have made good progress since the start of the present academic year. The school benefits from a teamwork approach and a commitment to raise standards.

99. The monitoring of teaching quality has clearly identified areas for development. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to monitor the standards being achieved in respective year groups more rigorously, linking more closely class teachers' planning and the standards being achieved by pupils in their workbooks. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is good, reflected in the standards achieved by pupils in Year 6. Developing analysis of test results undertaken by the headteacher highlights areas of relative underachievement, whether in certain aspects of numeracy or by certain groups of pupils, as they move through the school. The school is using this information to make positive interventions in order to maintain the high standards achieved. Marking gives praise to pupils, and the very best examples inform them how to improve their work. Ongoing weekly assessment information is well used, mostly to inform medium-term planning and to decide what areas of the curriculum will need revisiting.

SCIENCE

100. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are able to test hypotheses with understanding and look for relationships as in their investigations to find if out if tall people have bigger feet and bigger hands than short people. They have developed their understanding of how to classify and apply this knowledge and skill to sorting materials and giving reasons for their selection. They are aware of living and non-living objects and can also sort according to the criteria when something was alive but is no longer and things which were never alive. They were able to record their results with suitable diagrams. They have knowledge of parts of the body and their functions at an appropriate level for their age. They have studied and have sound knowledge of how things grow. In their work on the 'Three Little Pigs' they developed understanding of the properties of various materials the three little pigs used to make their houses.

101. Pupils gain knowledge and understanding of the seasons in line with their age when studying clothes. As they study foods they show understanding of the concept of change for instance when they make bread. They predict the effects of heat on common kitchen ingredients when cooking sausages and heating honey. Pupils are able to describe changes caused by physical actions when moulding materials. Results are suitably collated in various graphical formats.

102. Pupils in Key Stage 2 gain appropriate knowledge and understanding of simple electrical circuits and electrical conductivity as they explore how to make a bulb light using batteries, wire and various pieces of metal and plastic. From their work on the solar system, pupils have sound knowledge of the movement of the earth, gravity, forces and light. Pupils have further developed their understanding of properties of materials and can explore the thermal properties of given materials for use as insulators. Older pupils understand the factors that keep people healthy and have conducted some experimental work on separating solids and identification of unknown liquids. They are aware of how to construct a fair test and have knowledge of materials in line with expectations for their age, and of irreversible and reversible processes. However pupils in both key stages have little recorded work of their study and the standards of content and nature of the recorded work is well below the standards the pupils achieve when talking about science. On the evidence of recorded work, pupils make only satisfactory progress overall, but the verbal work especially of the higher attainers, shows they can make better progress. Pupils with special needs are usually supported well and make satisfactory progress for their ability.

103. The quality of teaching is mainly good, with no unsatisfactory teaching observed, and this helps pupils to make progress in sessions. All teachers have good classroom management techniques to ensure pupils make progress. On some occasions, although the teaching is satisfactory, it is clear, teachers are not totally confident in their knowledge of the subject and so then activities are selected for pupils that have confused learning objectives, even though challenging work is set. This limits the progress pupils make and the extent to which accurate judgements may be made by the teachers of the pupils' progress to achieve higher levels. In the lessons that are satisfactory, there is over dependence on the use of worksheets that require little pupil response and are certainly below the level of their verbal ability. Generally teachers plan for pupil activity in the sessions, but where there is the use of demonstration lessons in which the teacher mainly conducts the experiment and also devises the recording of results, progress is usually only satisfactory. In some lessons there is very little planned matching of tasks to the range of ability and to pupils' previous experiences. Resources are usually used thoughtfully but at times availability causes constraint in their use as when several classes were using apparatus for electrical experiments and so resources should be developed further.

104. There is a worthwhile guidance document to support planning for progression but there is insufficient guidance on the amount of time to be spent on teaching. It would appear from scrutiny of planning, timetables and recorded work that not enough time is spent teaching science and this adversely affects the standards pupils attain, given that the quality of teaching overall is good.

105. The subject is managed satisfactorily but the co-ordinator who has science expertise, has as yet very limited opportunity to monitor and evaluate the quality of science work across the school in order to influence the development of the subject. There was insufficient evidence available to judge the impact of ICT on science but use is made of data-bases, graphs and tables, and the Internet for research.

ART AND DESIGN

106. Only two lessons of art and design were observed during the inspection period. Both of these were in Key Stage 1. Other evidence was gained from scrutinising sketchbooks and photographic evidence, looking at displays, talking to pupils and teachers and looking at teachers' planning.

107. Throughout the school pupils have opportunities to work with a wide variety of media including wax, pencil, pastel and paint. Work is carefully planned and a new scheme of work and guidelines ensures specific techniques are correctly taught. These build progressively year on year. For example, although portraiture is addressed in each year group, more attention is paid to the development of proportion, shape and detail as pupils' progress through the school. Similarly observational skills are continuously taught. Pupils in carefully draw natural objects, twigs, leaves, cones and stones. With teacher guidance, they take great care to observe the shape and texture carefully before reproducing them with drawing pencils. They add shading and colour, marvelling at the wide variety of green in nature and commenting on the yellowy brown of twigs. Pupils' observational work shows clear progression as they move through the school. They pay more attention to complicated shape and shading and produce good quality drawings of shoes and sandals. Sound attention is drawn to the progressive development of pastel techniques. Consequently, by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils produce very effective drawings of life in Pakistan, merging colours carefully to create the golden richness of the landscape and splendour of the buildings. They are guided by the work of artists like Navid Shabbir and Ghanta Ghar. Although evidence suggests that there is insufficient attention to the technique in using paint in Key Stage 1, this is addressed well in Key Stage 2.

108. Pupils study great artists and reproduce their works effectively. Pupils have looked at the works of Matisse. By the end of Key Stage 2 whilst learning about landscapes, pupils examine 'Tahitian Landscape' by Gauguin, 'Landscape from a Dream' by Nash, 'Route T'ournante' by Cézanne and works by Georgia O'Keefe and Oskar Kokoschka which enables them to achieve good standards of knowledge above that expected for their age. They look carefully at composition, contrast of shades, use of colour and perspective. They relate these principles to their own immediate environment taking digital photographs. By using a simple frame they complete their own composition first in sketchbooks in pencil and then carefully in paint. They show good knowledge and understanding of the style of painting and work with considerably control and technical skill. Throughout the school pupils are beginning to use ICT programs such as 'Paint' to illustrate many areas of work effectively. A good example of this is the Roman Mosaics created in connection with history studies.

109. The quality of teaching seen was good. Pupils are encouraged to observe closely and record carefully what they see. Tasks are appropriate and instructions are clear. Pupils are given positive support and are encouraged to appraise their work looking to see how it can be improved. Long-, medium- and short-term planning assures continuity and progression of knowledge and skills.

110. The co-ordinator has worked hard to raise standards and to ensure teachers are supported. She has liaised with staff to produce comprehensive schemes for a successful art and design curriculum. She has ensured that a good range of media and materials are readily available. Although she has no

non-contact time during which she can monitor the teaching of art and design, she monitors pupils' work by keeping a photographic record of displays and work samples.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

111. There were no design and technology lessons timetabled during the inspection period. Evidence was gained from scrutinising pupils' work, looking at displays and teachers' planning and talking to pupils and teachers.

112. Throughout the school pupils design ideas carefully for example young pupils make glove puppets and draw their ideas and label them with suggested colours and materials. Others carefully plan a design for a Christmas stocking on squared paper. They label ideas for decoration and evaluate the completed product to see how it could be improved. As pupils move through the later year groups, their work becomes more detailed and thoughtful. Models are carefully made and recorded work shows clearly that pupils spend time collecting ideas and organising their thoughts and the assembly process. Some pupils completed much research before making their own biscuits. They conducted a product analysis, as to type, appearance, taste and texture of biscuits. Also they decided for which occasion their product would be made and addressed ingredients and decoration accordingly. Later they evaluated for taste and texture and looked at how these may be improved, finally they considered what packaging would best complement their biscuit to make them attractive to the consumer.]

113. This thorough and detailed work is built upon by the end of the key stage where pupils make slippers. Their work is of a high quality and reveals much interesting and enjoyable research. They start by looking at the qualities needed for their design, comfort and appearance. Then they think more carefully about their design, how to make it original and produce a wide variety of ideas. They consider what materials are available and their quality and suitability. Once their slippers are made they evaluate them in great detail looking at the new skills they learn, the biggest problems encountered, and most importantly if their designs work. Then through effective use of ICT with a digital camera they photograph themselves wearing the finished pair. All of their recorded work is well presented and shows clear understanding of the importance of following correct procedures to produce a worthwhile product.

114. Although no lessons were observed, the detail both in teachers' planning and in pupils' recorded work indicates that pupils have very good guidance and support in design and technology lessons. Attention is paid to precision and careful assembly and pupils have opportunities to make choices and pursue individual ideas.

115. The co-ordinator manages the subject well. New schemes of work have been drawn up to guide teachers and refresher courses have been made available for teachers to consolidate knowledge and understanding of the curriculum and further their expertise. The co-ordinator works closely with a member of the governing body and a local firm who have donated resources. There is no non-contact time available to monitor teaching but the co-ordinator is aware of the high standards from looking at displays and discussing these with members of staff

GEOGRAPHY

116 In Key Stage 1, pupils learn to locate features in their immediate area and to identify them from a map. Some are able to record facts about the weather and realise that weather patterns vary throughout the United Kingdom. Most realise the importance of farming to supply our food and

understand the passing of the seasons. Some are able to write a 'diary' for a farmer's week. These diaries show that most pupils are aware that farming is a seven-day-a-week job.

117. In Key Stage 2, many pupils show a depth of understanding above what could be expected when discussing their work orally but this is not always evident in their written work. As they move through Key Stage 2, pupils begin to apply their geographical skills in a wider field. Some become aware of the effects man has on the environment and the need for us to see this as an important issue. Most understand the essential elements needed for settlements to flourish like water, transport facilities and food sources. They can then understand better the difficulties of countries like Kenya or Pakistan where these basic essentials may be variable. By Year 6, many are able to discuss government policy in Pakistan to encourage industries to move to rural locations to try to avoid mass migration to the cities. Many are able to make remarkably mature contributions to such a complex issue. They show a good grasp of the economic factors which inevitably affect any governmental decisions. Many have a very good knowledge of the geographical features that influence how man is able to exploit the landscape. Working well in groups, most are able to construct arguments for and against governmental policies in Pakistan. This level of perception is above what one might expect for the age group but only a few pupils are able to put their thoughts into writing of the same quality.

118. Since the last inspection, there have been some improvements. There is now a scheme of work which identifies the way in which pupils will build on their geographical skills year on year. Assessment procedures are included in the topics the pupils study. Care is taken to ensure that pupils do not repeat a topic, despite the mixed year groups. Standards of oral work are above the expectation for pupils aged eleven. Written work remains broadly in line with these expectations. Pupils continue to make steady progress.

119. One lesson was observed during the inspection in which the quality of teaching was judged to be very good. The pupils were stimulated to a high level of interest. A video resource was well used to give a background understanding of the subject to be discussed. This gave pupils a suitable amount of material to stimulate their arguments. From the scrutiny of pupils' work, discussion with them and the staff it would appear that the overall quality of teaching is good. Pupils obviously respond well to teacher input and enjoy their work in this subject. Most pupils are able to discuss the topics they study with a high level of enthusiasm. However, the tasks chosen for written group work are not always sufficiently challenging for higher attaining pupils and they are not given enough opportunities to develop their skills in writing. Some undertake independent research, particularly those who have access to the Internet at home but there is little evidence that this is normal practice throughout the school. In some of the work seen, there is too much reliance on worksheets – filling in missing words or place names. These sometimes have their place. They may help with factual recall but do not always develop pupils' geographic skills effectively.

120. The management of the subject is broadly satisfactory. The school is aware that there are some aspects of the subject management which now need to be reviewed. The two key stages are co-ordinated by two different members of staff. This presents some difficulties in developing a clear overview for the whole school. Because of the restrictions of time available it is seldom possible for standards of work to be monitored. Assessment is generally left to individual class teachers based on the suggestions in the scheme of work. This also includes the statutory elements as laid down in the new curriculum introduced in 2000. Planning is shared across year groups to ensure a full coverage of the programmes of study but there are few opportunities for this to be monitored. Where several year groups study the same topic, (because of the way the classes are divided), some care is taken to make sure that the older pupils are required to look at the topics in more depth.

121. The local area is used for fieldwork on a fairly regular basis from Year 1 upwards. There are some links to other subjects in the curriculum. Information technology software programmes are used for developing mapping skills and the Internet is a useful source of information. Some work is done on graphs which links to pupils' mathematics lessons and science is intertwined with studies of weather patterns. There are not strong enough links with literacy to develop pupils' ability to express their often mature ideas on paper. This would be of benefit to pupils' learning in both English and geography.

HISTORY

122. In each year group, there are a few pupils whose work exceeds nationally expected levels for that age group but also some whose work falls below this expectation. As they move through Key Stage 1, many pupils are able to understand the differences between 'then' and 'now'. Most realise that many aspects of life nowadays are different from what their parents experienced and these in turn differ from life in their grandparents' childhood. From their study of schooling over the last hundred years, many pupils gain quite a perceptive insight as to what it must have been like to be at a Victorian school. By the age of seven, the majority are able to demonstrate their understanding by very plausible performances in realistic role-play. Most are also able to identify areas which have not changed significantly like following a set timetable, learning spelling or practising handwriting. Most pupils are able to look at photographic evidence and describe clothing in different periods. Some are able to make a guess as to the use of various artefacts such as writing slates. In Year 1, a few pupils can write a message to an imaginary Victorian child giving an interesting account of modern schooling, picking out particular points that would interest someone from a different age. In addition, many pupils are able to recall facts about famous events or people from the past.

123. In Key Stage 2, most pupils build on previous learning of the past through studying other periods in history like the Anglo Saxons, Vikings, Aztecs and Ancient Greeks as they move through different year groups. Through looking at changes in the local area, many begin to realise how these have affected people's lives. By the age of nine, many pupils are able to compare and identify changes in Ordnance Survey maps produced at different times. From this some are able to make remarkably mature deductions as to what social and economic developments had caused these changes to come about. For example, quite a few pupils can see that the building of more houses indicated that there were more jobs in the area. From this some deduce that there would be more money around so the quality of housing would improve (garages, bigger gardens). In this way, many demonstrate a good grasp of the importance of cause and effect in a historical context. However, although able to discuss these matters verbally, few are able to produce a similar quality in their writing. By the age of eleven, some pupils are able to show in their writing that they can imagine the realities of life in the past, for example in Anglo Saxon times, although too many rely on factual recall rather than deductive reasoning or investigation of evidence in their written work.

124. Since the last inspection, there have been sound improvements. There is now a scheme of work in place, which includes some opportunities for assessment. Planning is done more consistently across year groups. Better use is made of the Internet to glean information and websites identified to help teachers resource their lessons. Pupils' standards in written work remain broadly in line with national expectation at both key stages. Steady progress continues to be made as pupils move up through the school.

125. It was only possible to observe three lessons during the inspection and these were generally good and occasionally outstanding. Overall judgements about the quality of teaching are based on

these, discussion with staff and pupils and scrutiny of pupils' work. The quality is mainly good with an example of outstanding practice. Where teaching works best, the enthusiasm of the teacher raises the pupils' interest and enjoyment in the lesson. Generally sound subject knowledge allows the teacher to ask probing questions and lead the pupils into a greater understanding.

126. Stimulating activities are thought up which increase the pupils' sense of fun and help them to learn more easily. An example of this was seen when a class 'became' Victorian pupils for a lesson and learnt some of the hardships of that method of education through personal experience. This was a very good use of drama as a different approach to learning. In some classes, the teacher uses mature language to give the pupils a wider vocabulary and so make it easier for them to express often remarkably mature ideas. Pupils are not kept over-long on one activity which could lead to them losing interest and the pace of the lesson is maintained. Resources are often carefully chosen to stimulate pupils' imaginations and develop their powers of observation, such as old photographs, maps or a 'Fascinating Victorian Facts' lucky dip game to add fun to factual recall. Good use is made of older people in the local area who are invited into school to tell the pupils what life was like when they were at school. This brings history alive and many pupils are motivated to ask quite searching questions.

127. Where teaching is less effective, teachers sometimes have insecure subject knowledge to stretch the pupils sufficiently. Written tasks rely too often on worksheets that greatly restrict what pupils write, both in volume and content. Overall pupils are given insufficient opportunities to write at length on a topic to show that they are developing reasoning or can see both sides of an argument. Such exercises would add to the range of their literacy skills. Sometimes the task set is inappropriate, being too easy for some and too difficult for others, and an opportunity to consolidate learning is lost. In some lessons, pupils are kept rather long on the carpet area while the topic is being discussed and they become uncomfortable. In some cases their vision is restricted and they cannot clearly see the artefact or resource. Their attention then wanders and the impact of what may well be a good lesson is lost.

128. The subject management is generally sound. The two key stages are split and each has a co-ordinator. This makes it difficult for them to collaborate as often as desirable or to gain a clear overview for the whole school. The scheme of work has recently been introduced based partly on Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines and partly on input from the Key Stage 2 co-ordinator's experience taking into account resources available. At present it covers the programmes of study for one year at a time so it is not possible to judge whether all the required areas of the new curriculum will be covered. The way in which the age groups are split in the school makes it difficult for the co-ordinators to ensure that no one age group studies the same topic twice. Years 3, 4 and 5 are by necessity covering the same topics but some care is taken in the scheme of work to make sure that the older pupils delve more deeply into these. The co-ordinators are aware that some aspects of the subject management need further development to meet the new statutory requirements.

129. At present there are few opportunities to assess the standard of pupils' work throughout the school and to compare them with what is expected for each age group. This is left to individual class teachers. Suggested methods of assessing work are built into the scheme of work. Planning is shared across year groups but there are no opportunities for the co-ordinators to monitor this across the school. Because of the recent emphasis on implementing the government initiatives in literacy and numeracy, history has taken something of a 'back seat' but the co-ordinators are aware that this needs to change. There are some cross-curricular links but insufficient use is made of literacy, numeracy and science to add an extra dimension to history and vice versa. Some use is made of information and communication technology for mapping, searching the Internet and a little amount of word processing. Good use is made of local sites of historical interest and 'living history' days that enrich the teaching of this subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

130. There has been good improvement since the last inspection as there is now a detailed scheme of work to guide teachers as they plan for the development of their pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in information and communication technology (ICT). Also, with the close co-operation and support of the head and knowledgeable governors, the co-ordinator has been able to ensure good development of the school's resources so the overall quality of them is good and enables teachers to teach the expected range of activities. Therefore, the standards attained and pupils' degrees of progress in both key stages are good. A particular strength is the application of ICT in other areas of the curriculum, as in its application as a teaching programme in mathematics and its use in English and also in art for writing drawing and finding out information in history and geography.

131. From an early age pupils have good opportunities to use computers and other forms of ICT applications including audio recorders, digital cameras and programmable toys. These experiences are built on progressively through the school and by the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have good understanding of the place of ICT in daily life, for instance talking about washing machine programmes, calculators, DVD players, and microwave cookers. They have working knowledge of the Internet and its uses in finding information and communicating with others. They are made well aware of the precautions needed in using the Internet and the teachers use safeguards to ensure pupils only access suitable material.

132. Pupils across the school have good levels of confidence using the keyboards and mouse and are able to access and use the many computer applications available to them. Eight-year-old pupils could create and send e-mails and establish address books. With great confidence nine and ten year olds create title pages using a wide range of skills including formatting, dragging, cut and paste, font selection and sizing. By the time children are 11 they use spreadsheets, input and extract data, have a wide range of word processing skills, and control a series of predicted actions on screen. They have good skills to seek and retrieve information contained on disks and through the Internet.

133. The quality of teaching across the school is usually good. Some very good role models in the use of ICT are set by teachers in lessons as they use it to produce good quality teaching resources for the pupils and show how to use equipment thoughtfully as in the careful use of video extracts in a very good geography lesson. The learning support assistants have good knowledge of the requirements for the pupils who they work with, when using computers and confidently provide very good support for them to enable those pupils to make good progress, including those with special needs. Training for teaching staff has been disrupted for circumstances beyond the school's control but it is clear staff have worked to develop their knowledge and skills to ensure their teaching is effective.

134. Throughout the school, the pupils' response to ICT is very positive and they sustain concentration, readily share information and skills with each other. They evaluate their work and try to improve the final product as when pupils were producing title pages.

135. There is emerging good practice in the management of ICT and the co-ordinator and governors have reviewed the progress made and constructed a worthwhile strategy to make fuller use of the equipment and develop parental involvement. Also a useful website has been created about the school. There is not enough management time spent on checking the range of the applications of ICT across the school or the degrees of progress made by pupils.

MUSIC

136. Only one lesson of music was seen during the inspection period. Other evidence was gained by talking to pupils and teachers, scrutinising pupils' work and teachers' planning and listening to extra-curricular music activities. Music is an integral part of the curriculum and is used effectively on many occasions, for example as background for art and design and drama lessons, for movement and dance, and to introduce a spiritual element in circle time.

137. Throughout the school pupils enjoy singing and do so with obvious pleasure. Their singing in assemblies though disciplined, is happy, with good attention to musical elements. They concentrate well on the words in their hymn books and their diction is clear. In the hymn singing pupils in the junior department sing very well indeed. They are aware of the need for good posture and attention to breathing and take preliminary warm up exercises very seriously. Following the excellent example of the teacher they form mouth shapes 'Oh', 'ah', 'la' and 'mn' to sing simple scales and repeat short musical phrases. They hold two-part exercises with ease and the teacher's expectations are very high, so is the standard of their singing. Behaviour is also excellent. All pupils pay acute attention to the facial expression and non-verbal signals from the teacher as she draws attention to dynamics, pitch and timbre. Consequently, standards improve over the lesson. All the singing is unaccompanied and pupils maintain pitch well. They move on to three- and four-part rounds which they perform splendidly. There is joyousness about their singing which makes even the exercises a pleasure to listen to.

138. Teachers' planning indicates that over the year all the musical components required by the National Curriculum take place. Year 3 pupils listen to Saint Sean's Carnival of the Animals, and then try to relate instruments to other animals. For example they suggest wood blocks for a horse and drums for a dinosaur. Pupils in Years 3/4 have been listening to 'Peter and the Wolf' and then writing a review on the use of instruments to tell the story. However, there was very limited evidence of other aspects of pupils' work. All pupils have opportunities to take part in recorder groups, choir and orchestra. Peripatetic teachers provide opportunities to learn flute, clarinet, violin, and cello. These join together to form an orchestra and accompanied by a pupil pianist they achieve a high standard of music. The recorder group heard during the inspection played competently, displaying sensitivity, good theoretical knowledge and very good technical ability, when playing a two-part Bourree by Bach.

139. The high standards achieved in the music sessions observed were due to the excellent tuition given by the music co-ordinator. Her obvious pleasure in singing and her love of music captured the pupils' enthusiasm and transferred her enjoyment to them. Although her expectations are high, she ensures success is within the grasp of every pupil and her facial expression, body language and non-verbal guidance continually support and encourage pupils to achieve well. The co-ordinator supports teachers well helping them to grow in confidence. Together with staff she has revised the music policy and schemes of work adopting elements of the new curriculum guidelines. She endeavours to create other musical opportunities for pupils by taking them out to perform and by inviting musicians into school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

140. Standards for most seven- and eleven-year-olds meet those expected, indicating that they have been maintained since the previous inspection, with very good standards being achieved in competitive games and swimming. There is no difference in the standards being achieved by boys and girls or pupils who have special educational needs.

141. Only a small number of lessons were observed during the inspection, and they were mostly games lessons. In a Year 1/2 class, pupils worked well together, enthusiastically developing their use of space. At the start of the lesson, all pupils engaged in an energetic 'warm up' activity to music. They travelled at various speeds around the hall in a variety of directions, varying their speed and the size of their steps and, on stopping, curling into a tightly formed ball. They followed instructions very well. The enthusiastic teacher and supporting adult provided them with a wide range of energetic games that involved the pupils working in teams. They showed very good co-operative skills as they endeavoured to catch the 'log' that was secured around an opposing team player. Most pupils improved their skills as a result of the group evaluation at the end of the lesson indicating what could be improved next time.

142. In Year 6, teachers and supporting adults used a range of techniques and activities to develop pupils' ball control skills that included catching the ball and, using their feet, moving it with close control around a series of spaced out cones. Pupils achieve well in most games activities when they have been systematically taught both skills and techniques. A mixed team of boys and girls demonstrated good skills in ball control and accuracy when developing their hockey skills. The supporting adults managed the lesson very effectively and enabled pupils to develop their skills considerably. The quality of teaching across the subject is good.

143. The school provides pupils with swimming tuition, which was not observed. The school reports that pupils respond well to instruction, and develop confidence in the water. By the time most Year 6 pupils leave the school, most can swim a distance of twenty-five metres using a recognisable swimming stroke.

144. The subject co-ordinator is very experienced. He is hard-working and very committed, and does some specialist teaching in the junior classes to promote good teaching and support colleagues. The updated scheme, reflecting recently introduced government guidelines, provides sound support for teachers' planning. There is an adequate supply of good, accessible resources. The school is aware of the need to develop a systematic approach to monitor the progress of pupils' individual skills as they progress through the school. The very good range of extra-curricular sporting activities, such as football, netball and cross-country, against other local schools enhances pupils' physical and social skills to a high level. Parents indicate that pupils are often commended for their sportsmanship by other schools during competitive games.