

INSPECTION REPORT

**LITTLEDEAN CHURCH OF ENGLAND
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Cinderford, Gloucestershire

LEA area: Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 115631

Headteacher: Mrs Linda Hay

Reporting inspector: Janet Watts
1945

Dates of inspection: 26 – 28 November 2001

Inspection number: 242732

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior
School category: Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils: 4 to 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Church Street
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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Paul Harper

Date of previous inspection: 17 March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1945	Janet Watts	Registered inspector	English	<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>The school's results and achievements</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
			Art and design	
			Geography	
			History	
			Physical education	
			Religious education	
			Equal opportunities	
			English as an additional language	
11094	Ian Blair	Lay inspector		<p>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
10367	Norma Myers	Team inspector	Mathematics	<p>How well are the pupils taught?</p> <p>How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to the pupils?</p>
			Science	
			Information and communication technology	
			Design and technology	
			Music	
			Foundation Stage	
			Special educational needs	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Littledean C of E Primary School is smaller than average. There are 77 boys and girls aged from four to eleven. Most of the pupils come from the village, which is situated in the Forest of Dean. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with identified special educational needs and Statements of Special Educational Need is very high. There are 33 pupils on the special needs register and five pupils with Statements. There are about a third more boys than girls on roll. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language. Attainment on entry is below average. The school has experienced a period of considerable turbulence, with two acting headteachers in post during the last two years and a very high turnover of teaching staff, particularly affecting one class. A permanent headteacher who took up her appointment in September 2001 is now in post.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an improving school. The very positive, clear-sighted leadership of the recently appointed headteacher is refocusing the school and directing it firmly towards the achievement of higher standards. The good quality of the teaching and provision for the youngest pupils in the Foundation Stage gives them a good start. The quality of teaching of the other pupils is sound overall. Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for and make good progress. Standards are still not as high as they should be for average and more able pupils, especially in some aspects of English and mathematics. The school provides sound value for money.

What the school does well

- The new headteacher is already bringing a sense of renewed purpose to the school. Under her most capable, very positive and clear-sighted leadership the school is well placed to improve and raise standards further. She is working particularly hard to improve communications with parents and listen to their views.
- Provides good teaching and learning opportunities for the youngest pupils, those in the Foundation Stage. They receive a good start to their schooling.
- Those pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Provision for these pupils is good. They are especially well supported by the learning support staff who are exceptionally talented and whose efforts have a direct impact on pupils' progress.
- The quality of pastoral care is good. Staff know the pupils well as individuals and value them. Effective strategies are being developed to help pupils improve their behaviour. Pupils' personal development is supported very well.
- The range and quality of extra-curricular activities are very good, especially for a small school.

What could be improved

- The standards attained by all pupils in writing, speaking skills and aspects of mathematics.
- The standards and quality of provision for information and communication technology.
- The quality of teachers' marking, which comments too little on how pupils might improve their work, and what they need to do to achieve this improvement.
- The level of challenge and teachers' expectations of the more able pupils, which are often too low.
- The roles and delegated responsibilities of subject managers, who do not focus sharply enough on monitoring the standards pupils attain in subjects or the quality of teaching.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 1997. Improvement overall has been barely satisfactory; lack of progress in implementing the key issues since the previous inspection has been due mainly to the circumstances of the school. There have been improvements in the quality of teaching in Years 3 and 4. Standards in music have improved at Key Stage 2. Standards in, and provision for, information and communication technology have improved little and attainment is still below average. Assessment procedures and common planning formats are now in place for English, mathematics and science. All pupils have individual targets for literacy and numeracy. Governors are supportive and are more aware of their strategic role. Members of the governing body do visit the school regularly and monitor subject areas, but many of the governors are very recent appointments. Overall, the monitoring of the work of the school still lacks rigour.

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	C	B	A
mathematics	A	C	C	A
science	A	E	E	D

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

The school's detailed results are not published in Part C as the number of pupils in the relevant age groups is below ten. As it is a small school, results fluctuate widely, which is to be expected. In 2001, there were few pupils in Year 6 who experienced difficulties with learning. These pupils achieved well and all reached the expected standards in English and mathematics though results were below average in science. In the current Year 6, a significant proportion of pupils is on the school's register of special educational needs. These eleven-year-olds are attaining average standards in reading and listening and science. They are below average in writing, handwriting, speaking and aspects of mathematics, especially mental arithmetic and problem solving. In the other subjects they attain average standards with the exception of information and communication technology (ICT), where

standards are below average. The current seven-year-olds in Year 2 attain average standards in reading and with their listening skills. They attain average standards in science. They can do simple mathematical calculations, but standards attained are generally low. Attainment in speaking, writing and mental arithmetic is below average. In the other subjects they attain average standards except in ICT, where standards are below average. It was not possible to make a judgement on standards in geography. Across the school, those pupils with special educational needs make the best progress; they achieve well. More able pupils do not achieve as well as they might, because not enough is expected from them; there are few pupils who attain the higher-than-expected Level 5 at age eleven. The school has rigorous target setting processes and individual pupils are now beginning to benefit from individual target setting; it is starting to help them to assess their own progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Sound; most pupils enjoy coming to school though there are a few whose attitudes to school are immature.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory; the good strategies for managing pupils' behaviour are proving helpful to many pupils who have significant behavioural problems.
Personal development and relationships	Good; most pupils show respect for others and relationships between pupils and adults are good.
Attendance	Satisfactory and in line with the national average.

Pupils' relationships with the teaching and pastoral support staff are often very good. The school is working very positively to help its pupils mature into responsible adults. Support for their personal development is being enhanced, for example through the new school council, for which pupils take a good deal of responsibility.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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.

Teaching is always at least satisfactory. It is good in nearly six out of ten lessons and very good in a few lessons. The best teaching is of the youngest and of the oldest pupils. As a consequence of the good teaching, the youngest pupils in the reception class often make good progress. By the time they enter Year 1 they are often attaining average standards for their age, despite entering school with below average attainment. Progress is less rapid in Years 2, 3 and 4. The teaching of these pupils in the middle years is satisfactory but the organisation of the pupils into such a wide age band means that work is not always well matched to the needs of the older or higher-attaining pupils in the class. The teaching of the oldest pupils in Years 5 and 6 is often good and relates directly to the progress they make. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is satisfactory overall. Teachers have a good knowledge of the structure of the literacy hour and the daily mathematics lesson and the skills of literacy and numeracy are satisfactorily taught. Learning support staff are well managed by the teachers and make a most positive impact on the progress of slower

learners. The level of challenge and teachers' expectations of the more able pupils are not high enough. Teachers' comments when marking work do not always focus enough on what pupils should do to improve.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good for the Foundation Stage and satisfactory for Key Stages 1 and 2. The curriculum is broad but the balance requires review; some lessons are too long.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good, a significant strength of the school. Teachers and support staff have a high level of skills.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall; provision for spiritual, moral and social development is good; the pupils' cultural development is soundly developed, though too little emphasis is placed on preparing pupils for life in a multi-cultural, ethnically diverse society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Sound overall; procedures for monitoring pupils' behaviour are very good, as is the quality of pastoral care. Monitoring of academic standards is satisfactory.

The recently appointed headteacher is making every effort to foster the school's partnership with parents, who are pleased with developments so far. The quality and range of extra-curricular activities are very good, especially given the size of the school. Some are designed specifically to support underdeveloped aspects of the curriculum, for example, drama club and sporting activities. Few helpful links are made between literacy and numeracy to enhance pupils' skills in other subjects. Effective links established between Littledean and other primary schools in the area have been particularly supportive of developments in science. The school has a strongly inclusive philosophy and all pupils receive their full entitlement to the curriculum.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Sound overall; the headteacher is giving very positive, supportive leadership and a strong sense of direction to the school. Leadership and management roles of other staff are not yet delegated appropriately and do not focus enough on monitoring standards and the quality of teaching.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory; governors are supportive and visit the school regularly, often observing what is happening in classrooms. The systems for reviewing and monitoring the curriculum are not yet rigorous enough.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Not yet satisfactory; new procedures are being put in place but there is too little evaluation of the standards attained and the quality of teaching.
The strategic use of resources	Sound; the school uses its available resources particularly well to support those pupils with special educational needs but less effectively to target the needs of the more able.

There are only just sufficient teachers to meet the needs of the pupils and the curriculum. Accommodation is good; it is cared for well. The position of the library, in a regularly used corridor, does not help to foster the use of information books. Resources for learning are satisfactory with the exception of those to support information and communication technology. Governors and staff are aware of the need to apply the principles of best value but currently there are too few processes to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the quality of education provided.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The staff are approachable. • The school expects children to work hard and do their best. • The teaching is good. • The school is helping their child to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication about their child's progress. • Standards of behaviour. • The quality and amount of homework. • Extra-curricular activities. • Continuity in the leadership of the school and the staff.

The inspectors agree with many of the views expressed by parents, both positive and negative. There can be no doubt that the turbulence and changes over the past two years have limited the development of the school and had a detrimental effect on it. Inspectors are optimistic that the new headteacher can bring about the required changes for the better, including improved communications with parents and carers.

Whilst the behaviour of some pupils is still a cause for concern, the school's good strategies for managing pupils' behaviour are beginning to have a positive impact. The quality of extra-curricular activities is judged to be very good. Homework is now given regularly but as yet there is no agreement about increasing the amount given and about the school's expectations as the pupils get older.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The attainment of children under five on entry to school is below average. Pupils often have underdeveloped communication and co-ordination skills, and their mathematical ideas and vocabulary are below average. By the time they are aged five and enter Year 1, they have made good progress and many are achieving well and attaining nearly average standards. Progress is satisfactory in Year 2, but not quite as rapid as in the preceding years. Pupils achieve steadily through Years 3 and 4, and then often make good progress in Years 5 and 6. The best progress made by pupils is consistent with the best teaching.
2. As the number of pupils in each age group is so small it is not possible to compare the school's results at age seven and eleven with other schools. As the cohort size is below ten, the school is not required to publish its results. There are no noticeable differences in the achievements of boys and girls, but there are more boys than girls on the school's register of special educational needs. In 2001, all of the Year 6 pupils attained the nationally expected Level 4 in English, mathematics and science; few of these pupils had learning difficulties. The school has very rigorous target-setting procedures, involving detailed analysis by the local education authority link adviser, the headteacher and the chair of governors. The 2002 targets for the current Year 6 have been set, sensibly, at a lower level (60 per cent to attain Level 4 in English, 53 per cent to attain Level 4 in mathematics). There is a much larger proportion of pupils with learning difficulties in the current Year 6. Inspection findings substantiate that these pupils are making good progress, given their previous attainment. This is as a consequence of good teaching and support.
3. The current seven-year-olds and the eleven-year-olds are attaining average standards in reading and listening but they are attaining below average standards in writing and speaking. Seven-year-olds are able to do simple calculations and use money, but their ability to calculate mentally is below average. Eleven-year-olds know about the four rules of number, but their investigation skills and their speed and ability with mental arithmetic are below average. Seven and eleven year old pupils are attaining average standards in science and in religious education. Standards of literacy and numeracy are broadly satisfactory. Pupils attain below average standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and their level of skills is unsatisfactory. More able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently and could achieve more; few pupils in the school attain the higher Level 5 by the age of eleven.
4. Across the school, pupils with special educational needs make good progress in nearly all subjects, apart from ICT. Provision for, and the teaching of, these pupils are good. The school, using outside agencies where appropriate, properly assesses their complex needs.
5. In the other subjects, pupils aged seven and eleven are attaining broadly average standards. It was not possible to make a judgement on standards in geography. Standards are broadly similar to those reported in the previous inspection, although in mathematics they have declined and in science and music they have improved.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

6. Pupils' attitudes towards the school are generally satisfactory. They are happy to be in school and show a keenness to come each morning. This is mainly because they find

the school environment congenial, and this atmosphere and pupils' response to it make a significant contribution to their social development. This is reinforced by their enthusiasm for the extra-curricular activities on offer. In some lessons, however, there is a lack of commitment to learning which has a tendency to hold back pupils' academic progress. This is less apparent where the teaching is good and a steady pace is maintained.

7. Most pupils are very well behaved both in the classroom and elsewhere around the school. For example, they show respect for and pay attention to teachers and other adults and there is a noticeable absence of litter and graffiti around the premises and the grounds. There is, however, a small minority of pupils with behavioural difficulties. Fortunately, these pupils are well supported by the staff so the impact of their occasional bad behaviour on the learning process is minimal. There were eleven fixed-term exclusions in the year prior to the inspection. Although this is very high for a primary school of this size, it relates to the troubled period prior to the arrival of the present headteacher and hence is of marginal relevance to the school as inspected. There have also been two fixed-term exclusions in the current term which were applied for appropriate reasons. Some parents expressed concern about standards of behaviour in their responses to the questionnaire, although those who have been in the school very recently have reported that behaviour has improved. Taking into account the much calmer atmosphere which now pervades the school, pupils' behaviour is judged to be satisfactory.
8. Relationships amongst pupils, and between them and staff, are good. The school operates as an orderly community and this creates an atmosphere, which is conducive to good learning. It is also one which is free from bullying or other forms of oppressive behaviour. No instances of such behaviour were observed, nor were any reported to the inspectors. As pupils progress through the school they increasingly take on responsibility both for their own learning and for contributing to the smooth running of the school. By the time they reach Year 6, most have achieved an agreeable level of maturity. For example, they can converse easily yet respectfully with adults and some play active roles on the newly formed school council. The school has a fully inclusive approach to pupils with special educational needs, who are seen as an important and integral part of the whole school community. Overall pupils' personal development is judged to be good.
9. Although attendance in the recent troubled years dropped below the 90 per cent level, it is now comparable with the national average and so is satisfactory and enables pupils to take advantage of the school's provision. Attendance is consistently satisfactory across the year groups and unauthorised absence is very low. Pupils generally arrive punctually for school, and lessons start on time. There is occasional latenesses, mainly due to transport problems, but it is usually only by a few minutes and does not have any significant impact on pupils' learning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

10. All teaching is at least satisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Teaching is good or better in nearly six out of ten lessons, including a small amount of very good teaching. The best teaching is in the Foundation Stage and in Years 5 and 6. The very good teaching is especially lively and motivating, with high expectations for all pupils. Imaginative strategies engage pupils' interest and attention very well, for example, playing a phonic bingo game, driving Vic's van' in literacy, or creating a sequenced routine of asymmetrical shapes during physical education. In lessons that are just satisfactory, expectations of what more able pupils can achieve are too low and pupils are not made aware of how much they are expected to complete in a given time.
11. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is good. Staff have good knowledge of how young children develop and good expertise in developing children's language. There is exceptionally good teamwork, including excellent links with the nursery, and all adults are committed to the children in their care. The co-ordinator's professional skills inform teaching successfully and provide a framework to support high expectations of what children can achieve from the outset. Children's learning needs are closely assessed and work is consistently matched to them.
12. The quality of teaching for pupils with special needs is good. The school has an exceptionally talented team of support staff who expect high standards from these pupils, for behaviour and academic achievement. Teachers are fully involved in writing individual education plans which clearly outline the way the curriculum is to be modified to meet identified needs. Some targets are still too wide ranging to be measured accurately; the school is aware of the need to review the formulation of individual education plans.
13. The main strengths in teaching lie in the way teachers have adopted an outward-looking approach, becoming involved in a range of local initiatives to improve both teaching and learning after a period of considerable upheaval. For example, all teachers plan and provide a good investigative approach to science as a result of involvement in the local cluster focus on science. All teachers use a good variety of strategies to foster learning, for example, practical work on circuits in Year 1 or testing predictions about the relationship between height and foot length in Year 4. Well-structured lessons, generally good organisation and clear instructions make sure pupils know what they need to do.
14. Good detailed planning in literacy and numeracy supports these lessons well. Lessons remain well focused and the levels of challenge are well matched to the needs of lower ability and average pupils. The school has put into place some innovative setting arrangements to increase the challenge for some higher achieving pupils in literacy and numeracy but most teachers do not expect enough from these pupils. All staff have appropriate expectations for behaviour and manage pupils with respect for the individual. Most pupils are confident, friendly, and polite and behave sensibly. Learning support workers are deployed well. They are fully informed involved with planning and contribute effectively to pupils' learning through small group and individual work. The school's inclusive philosophy means that all pupils are valued by staff.
15. Teachers' subject knowledge is satisfactory. The school has dealt well with an acknowledged lack of expertise in music, by using a published scheme that has been well resourced. Teachers have undertaken national information and communication technology training but are unable to put these teaching skills into practice as there are

too few computers. Homework is now given but there is no planning for an increase in the amount of homework pupils receive as they move up the school.

16. The overall quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. There is still some inconsistency in expectations of pupils' learning, which are higher in the Foundation Stage and upper juniors than they are in the middle years. Teachers are increasingly aware of opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills in other curriculum areas. Too many pupils still present work untidily in their books. The quality of marking is unsatisfactory. It is erratic in some classes and rarely tells pupils what they must work on to improve, or how the teachers comments relate to achieving their individual targets.

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

17. The curriculum offers pupils a broad range of learning opportunities with sound emphasis on personal choice and responsibility that prepares them well for secondary school. At the time of the last inspection the curriculum had satisfactory breadth, balance and relevance. This is still broadly the case. All statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and the local Agreed Syllabus for religious education are met. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is good, with a varied and rich range of activities to support learning.
18. The school is aware of inconsistencies in curriculum provision as a result of the recent amalgamation of year groups. It is currently undertaking a whole-school review of the balance of the curriculum provided for each year group because the two-year rotation of topic themes was thought to be no longer tenable. Some lessons, notably science, are rather long and pupils' interest starts to wane. Very recently the school has been informed that additional funding, to employ a fifth teacher will be available. In a small school, where teachers have three or four subjects to manage, roles and responsibilities are not yet sensibly delegated. A helpful action plan identifies which curriculum policies and schemes of work are in need of review and work on this action plan has commenced. Curriculum provision in information technology is recognised as unsatisfactory and a very comprehensive action plan is in place to improve subject provision.
19. The curriculum has strengths. The quality and range of learning opportunities through practical experience are good. Pupils make puppets in design and technology, which help their understanding of history; they apply mathematical skills in bread-making, estimating and measuring ingredients carefully. The national strategies for learning in literacy and numeracy are now part of the school's curriculum and form a firm base for English and mathematics provision. Recent innovative changes in planning and provision for science are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' learning. Aspects of health education are suitably incorporated into science and physical education. Pupils have an understanding of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and learn about making informed choices about their own lives. Sex education is addressed adequately and a programme of drugs education is planned. The planned curriculum ensures that all pupils, regardless of gender, ability or cultural background receive their full entitlement; curriculum provision is inclusive.
20. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. They are exceptionally well supported. Teachers and support staff liaise very effectively to provide a well-modified curriculum for these pupils. Some, but not all, individual education plans provide clear, well-structured targets. The implementation of Statements of Special Educational Need

is very good indeed, because all support staff know these pupils really well and are prepared to be flexible in their approach.

21. Opportunities for extra-curricular activities are very good. They enrich the curriculum and make a significant contribution to social and cultural development. Considering the small size of the school, a very good range of activities is provided, including music tuition, drama activities with a link school, a range of sports and a homework club. There are very good links with other primary schools and these have had a positive impact on curriculum opportunities, for example, in science. Very recently the school has re-established links with a local secondary school to ensure the smooth transfer of pupils to their next stage of education.
22. The previous report identifies the school's ethos as caring and having a positive effect on pupils' personal development. This ethos has been maintained. The curriculum offers good opportunities for pupils to develop the spiritual, moral and social aspects of their lives. There is sound provision for cultural development. The social and moral development of pupils with special educational needs, including those with behavioural difficulties, is promoted particularly well by close and effective adult support.
23. Provision for spiritual development is good. Pupils are given sensitive opportunities for reflection in some subjects. For example, in science they think about why light 'sort of passes through' some materials; they express surprise as one small bulb lights up a large area in a model house. Pupils' self esteem is nurtured, and aesthetic awareness is raised through poetry, art, music, and the variety of activities which comprise the collective act of daily worship. There is a spiritual dimension to much of the school's most effective teaching, for example through experience of joy in physical education and a sense of wonder in the best science lessons.
24. There are strong links between moral and spiritual education, reflecting the school's Church of England status. Staff provide good role-models. When pupils do misbehave, reproof is immediate and effective but still reflects good intentions. The school has its own rules, which are referred to in classes and assemblies. Good behaviour is publicly rewarded and there are known and reasonable sanctions for persistent incidences of unacceptable behaviour.
25. Pupils have good opportunities to develop social skills. Staff develop pupils' skills very successfully, encouraging pupils to work co-operatively wherever possible. From an early age, teachers encourage pupils to use their initiative and to work independently. They learn to work co-operatively in almost all of their lessons, with particular success in investigative science. Community links help develop a sense of citizenship and staff provide pupils with varied opportunities to participate in visits and the many extra-curricular clubs.
26. The provision for cultural development is sound. The religious education curriculum helps pupils to appreciate, and understand in depth, Christianity and other major faiths. Through drama, music appreciation, singing, dance, history, geography, design and technology and art, pupils are led to appreciate and value a range of cultures. The school recognises that it needs to do more to make pupils aware of the rich contribution made by other cultures to music, literature and the arts, and to prepare pupils for life in a multi-cultural society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

27. Overall, the school discharges its duty of care towards its pupils effectively. It provides a safe and generally secure environment in which pupils can feel at ease and hence good education can flourish. For example, there are clearly marked emergency exits from all teaching areas and fire drills take place regularly. There were no significant health and safety concerns noted by the inspectors. There is an adequate number of staff with first aid qualifications and pupils are well supervised in the playground at break and lunch times.
28. The arrangements for child protection are satisfactory. The headteacher is the 'named person'. She has not yet received any formal training nor has she undertaken this role in her previous appointments. However, she has built up an effective network of contacts in the local education authority and social services on whom she can call for advice and support as necessary. All staff have been fully informed about the signs to look out for, and about the action to take, through the staff handbook. There is now a good policy in place and this is an improvement since the previous inspection.
29. There are very good strategies in place to promote sensible behaviour. They include an appropriate system of rewards and sanctions, which is most effective and well understood by pupils. Behaviour management is actively focused on the small minority of pupils who have difficulties in this area. Here the headteacher takes a leading role and was observed using her skills to good effect in calming disruptive pupils. The school has clearly identified where the problems lie and is tackling them well and with vigour. Procedures for promoting good attendance are satisfactory. Registration takes place at the beginning of both morning and afternoon sessions and registers are generally marked accurately. The importance of good attendance and punctuality is impressed on parents, and reasons for absence are rigorously pursued. As a result, unauthorised absence is very low.
30. All members of staff know their pupils very well and as a result there is a good level of pastoral care. Support and guidance for pupils' academic progress are good. Provision to support personal development is very good. Staff are good role-models for pupils. The procedures for the induction of new pupils are good. This is mainly due to the close proximity of the nursery which most pupils attend before entering the school. Liaison with other pre-school institutions in the area is also good. Transfer arrangements to the main receiving secondary school are satisfactory. They include a day visit by pupils in Year 5 and the occasional use of facilities at the secondary school, such as computers and the swimming pool, by pupils in Year 6.
31. The school has sound systems in place to identify and assess the needs of pupils who require extra support, in line with the requirements of the Code of Practice. All requirements within the Statements of Special Educational Need are fully met.
32. Assessment procedures in the core subjects are developing well and are used to identify curricular targets. Pupils' progress is beginning to be more carefully tracked and monitored. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. In the foundation subjects and religious education, there are few agreed whole-school assessment procedures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

33. Parents are understandably concerned over the disruption to their children's education caused by the uncertainty of the past two years. They are cautiously optimistic that the new headteacher will restore the good reputation of the school. They already speak highly of the aura of calm and orderliness which she has introduced since her arrival.

They comment favourably on a recent meeting between governors, parents and staff which she organised to discuss the future of the school. In the opinion of the inspectors, this optimism is well justified.

34. The school keeps parents well informed on their children's progress. For example, there is an annual written report on each pupil at the end of the academic year which is of very high quality. These reports are individually targeted, describe areas for improvement as well as achievements, and even give advice to parents, where appropriate, as to how they can help their children better with their work at home. There are three parents' evenings each year, the third timed to enable discussion of the annual written annual report in the final term. These meetings are well planned and effective, and parents find them helpful. All this is underpinned by the very good informal contact which takes place between teachers and parents. However, parents say that they would like more information on curriculum matters. In particular, they would find it helpful to know at the beginning of each term what is to be taught so that they can plan their support for their children more effectively. This concern was reported to the headteacher who appreciated the point and promised to address it. The governing body produces an annual report to parents on the work of the school. This is a comprehensive and 'user friendly' document which fully meets legal requirements.
35. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in review procedures. Parents have a positive view of the school's provision.
36. There is an active parent teacher association, known as the 'Friends of Littledean', which organises a programme of fund-raising and social events throughout the year. These occasions are well supported and produce helpful sums of money for use by the school. Last year, for example, this money was used to buy computers and some staging for the hall. Several parents help in the classroom on a regular basis, doing a variety of jobs under the guidance of class teachers, and this contribution is appreciated by the school. Some parents also provide valuable help as escorts on school trips. Most parents help their children with their work at home, mainly by hearing them read, though some concern was expressed over the effectiveness of the homework diaries.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

37. The leadership and management of the school are sound overall. This is similar to the position at the previous inspection. The recently appointed headteacher, in post since September 2001, is starting to provide the school with some stability after two years of turbulence, with two acting headteachers in post at different times and high staff turnover. The new headteacher is most capable, providing very positive, supportive and clear-sighted leadership and bringing a sense of purpose and calm to the school. She is working hard to improve the quality of communications with parents and has made a most successful start. The pupils respect her leadership. The staff, including the learning support workers, are beginning to develop a commitment to being a part of the team, working together to raise standards and to secure a good quality education for pupils. The aims of the school are beginning to be clearly reflected in its work, particularly in the way in which staff value and respect the pupils. The school has a good capacity to improve further.
38. The school has a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and the number of statemented pupils is high. These pupils often receive superb support from the learning support staff, who are well managed and deployed and know the pupils and understand their needs very well. As a result, pupils with learning difficulties and special educational needs make good progress. Provision for special educational needs is

good. The school has a strongly inclusive philosophy and all pupils receive their entitlement to the full curriculum. Currently, the headteacher who is also the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO), is reviewing the systems which assist the school to identify and offer support to pupils. Funds for SEN are well managed and allocated prudently. The thoughtful use of all resources result in good improvements in both behaviour and learning for identified pupils. The progress of more able pupils, whilst generally satisfactory, is not as yet as good as it should be.

39. The roles and delegated responsibilities of subject management and co-ordination have yet to be established and it is planned that all staff will receive training for these responsibilities. They have no allocated time to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in their subject and this is unsatisfactory. Staff have relatively few opportunities to gain a broad overview of standards in their subjects, although staff found it most helpful when early in the autumn term, they were given time to support each other's medium-term planning.
40. Governors are supportive though many members of the governing body are recent appointments. Some governors help in school, and others visit and observe in classrooms. Governors are beginning to undertake their strategic role well. They are keenly aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and of its priorities for improvement. Financial planning reflects the school's priorities. The school development plan is useful and sets out a clear plan for improving the quality of provision and raising standards, and is carefully costed. The committee structure has recently been revised to make the work of the governing body more manageable and to help collect information about the school more systematically. The more experienced governors are well aware of the governing body's responsibility to be constructively critical and hold the school accountable, but this aspect of the role requires developing further. Most statutory requirements are met, but a policy for performance management is not yet fully in place. Governors and staff are conscious of the need to secure best value on behalf of the pupils, but do not yet have rigorous enough systems in place to be able to track the added value which the school provides.
41. There are only just sufficient teaching staff. From January 2002, the school's organisation is to be revised and an additional teacher is to be employed to teach the Years 3 and 4 pupils. There are sufficient well trained support staff. Some of them are now deployed to provide lunchtime support for pupils and are having a most positive impact on behaviour and the quality of pastoral care. Accommodation is good and well maintained, although the lack of a proper library hinders the development of pupils' information retrieval skills. There is ample playground space but no full-size sports field on site.
42. Learning resources overall are satisfactory and those which are available are used well. The exception is resources for information and communication technology. There are too few computers because not enough machines have been purchased. As a consequence, pupils' skills in this area of the curriculum are underdeveloped and unsatisfactory. The accommodation is good; it is cared for well.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- (1) Improve standards attained by all pupils in writing, speaking and aspects of mathematics by:
 - ensuring that adequate time is allocated to each of these areas;
 - devising a planned programme to support speaking skills;

- agreeing and adopting a programme to ensure that pupils form letters correctly and are taught handwriting regularly;
 - improving the teaching of mathematical investigations and mental arithmetic;
 - assessing the pupils' progress regularly in each of these aspects of the curriculum.
(Paragraphs 3, 18, 56, 58, 60, 63, 66, 68, 84, 99)
- (2) Improve standards and provision in information and communication technology (ICT) by:
- ensuring that there are adequate computers;
 - implementing and monitoring the action plan for ICT.
(Paragraphs 3, 4, 18, 85, 86, 87, 88, 90)
- (3) Improve the quality of teachers' marking by:
- reviewing the current policy as planned;
 - agreeing a system of marking which is relevant to the subject and to the identified needs of pupils;
 - making pupils and parents aware of the school's policy;
 - ensuring that teachers' comments state clearly what needs to be improved and suggest ways in which the pupil may do this;
 - monitoring the policy rigorously.
(Paragraphs 16, 63, 68, 73, 100)
- (4) Improve the level of challenge for the more able pupils by:
- ensuring that teachers' planning states clearly the specific tasks and the level of challenge to be provided for these pupils;
 - helping teachers to have higher expectations of these pupils;
 - agreeing and implementing a policy for more able pupils;
 - ensuring that their personal targets are set sufficiently high;
 - monitoring regularly the quality of provision and the pupils' work.
(Paragraphs 3, 57, 72, 73)
- (5) Agree the delegated roles and responsibilities of subject managers; this should include:
- the ways in which they will be expected to monitor the work in their subjects;
 - the time they will be allocated to undertake these responsibilities.
(Paragraphs 18, 39, 64, 74, 77, 7, 101)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	25
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	14

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	3	11	11	0	0	0
Percentage	0	12	44	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 several percentage points.

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)	0	77
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	14

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	33

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	92.8

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2

National comparative data	93.9
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	68
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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)	4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.3
Average class size	25.7

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	112

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0
Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0
Number of pupils per FTE adult	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7.2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7.4
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

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	11	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	2001/02
	£
Total income	222896
Total expenditure	215483
Expenditure per pupil	2798
Balance brought forward from previous year	12072
Balance carried forward to next year	19485

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	77
Number of questionnaires returned	36

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	39	44	14	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	22	64	11	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	9	49	26	6	11
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	19	33	44	0	3
The teaching is good.	43	54	3	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	31	46	23	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	56	44	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	36	61	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	37	54	6	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	29	43	11	0	17
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	31	54	3	0	11
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	9	63	14	0	14

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

43. The school makes good provision for children in the Foundation Stage. The quality of teaching is good overall and has a positive impact on children's learning. At the time of the last inspection teaching standards were also good. The school has done well to maintain these good standards during a time of considerable change.
44. Children enter Reception with skills that are below what is expected for their age. Very close links are established with the privately-run nursery. The needs of children are effectively assessed on entry to Reception and all are valued as individuals. This inclusive approach means that all children make good progress. The majority of children are on target to attain the early learning goals for the Foundation Stage, by the time they enter Year 1.

Personal, social and emotional development.

45. Overall children enter Reception with below average levels in their personal, social and emotional development. The good quality of teaching by all staff ensures children's all-round good achievement. By entry to Year 1, most children achieve the early learning goals. Children thrive in a secure, lively and colourful environment. They respond positively to school rules, and their behaviour improves. All staff are on the look-out for small improvements and reward children immediately. As a result children gain confidence in their approach to learning tasks and when talking to other children or adults. For example, when working together to build a brick tower, a confident speaker explains how a child with special needs has helped. Children receive immediate praise for their efforts. This good provision means that all children relate well to the skilled staff who fully understand the steps and support needed in the development of young children socially and emotionally. Adults provide exceptionally good role-models for children. They sit with children during activities and take evident pleasure in every achievement made.
46. Resources are well organised and accessible to children. All adults actively promote independence through insisting on high standards when using resources and when tidying up at the end of sessions. Children change independently for games, with help, but a minimum of fuss. In their outdoor activities, children successfully follow well-established routines for using resources. Some children are in the early stages of learning to co-operate, to share toys and to take turns. Provision to meet their needs is good and most children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development, as a result of good teaching and well-planned activities.

Communication, language and literacy

47. Children enter Reception with skills in communication, language and literacy which are below those expected for their age. Although most have developed sound listening skills, as a result of good learning in the nursery, some find it challenging to speak to others at length about their needs and interests. All staff place an appropriately high priority on developing children's confidence when speaking. They look at houses and tell where electricity might be used, they give explanations about the way they made toy models and talk to 'Tigger' as they make tea. By the time children enter Year 1, skills

are broadly in line with the expectations of the early learning goals. However some children are still below average in using talk to resolve disagreements.

48. Elements of the National Literacy Strategy framework are well used. Children begin to make links between letters and sounds as they learn and enjoy, for example, the actions to support learning letter sound 'v'. Action games promote learning most successfully although more could be done to link letter learning with following group tasks. Most children in Reception are able to write their name and draw themselves skilfully. Adults scribe for higher-achievers, who then write legibly, for example, when writing 'thank-you's'. Children regularly take books home to share with their family. They are excited by the opportunity to choose books from the good range available to them. The quality of teaching in this area is good and as a result most pupils make good progress and are on target to achieve the early learning goals.

Mathematical development

49. Children enter Reception with just about average skills in number. Assessments done recently show that more able children have secure understanding of numbers to ten and can also identify shapes. Most children are on target to achieve the early learning goals by the time of entry to Year 1.
50. All adults are aware of opportunities to develop children's learning about mathematics. Children are counted as part of registration activities. They sing number rhymes about nine little monkeys with evident enthusiasm, miming the actions successfully as they sing. They predict how many will be left if we send one away. With help, they sequence action pictures about getting up in the morning. This provides good opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills. Their support teacher has very high expectations of behaviour and mathematical learning. As a result, children respond and achieve well. Higher-achieving children understand the meaning of 'bigger than' and 'smaller than' and can recognise a range of simple shapes. The quality of both teaching and learning is good.

Knowledge and understanding of the world.

51. Children start school with limited understanding of the world around them. All adults working in the Foundation Stage are very aware of these standards. They work very hard to provide a range of well-planned and exciting activities to enable children to become more constructively interested in the world around them. When making items for sale in their toy shop children use a wide range of techniques confidently. They choose from a good range of exciting materials and share equipment very amicably. All adults give priority to the development of speaking skills. When looking at old and new versions of Winnie the Pooh books, children talk about their own experience of time passing. They discuss old toys and say why they look bedraggled. Good teaching leads to good learning about the way time passing brings about change.
52. Most children are confident when using construction toys. They are interested in using the computer. However, lesson planning does not include a systematic enough approach to the development of information and communication technology skills.

Physical development

53. Children's physical development is at the expected level. Within their own secure, safe and well-organised class area, children move confidently from role-play to the painting table for example. Good teaching and use of resources mean that nursery and reception groups work in close co-operation. A small secure outdoor area is well used every day so that children can develop increasing skill and control using sand, water and construction toys.
54. Children also have access to the school hall. They change independently with some taking good care to fold their clothing. The quality of teaching is good, enabling language to be very successfully developed through physical activity. Children use space confidently as they develop a dance routine explaining a simple story about toys. The quality of learning is good. All adults regularly demonstrate simple cutting skills to enable all young learners to complete tasks safely. The good range of activities planned is successful in helping children develop skills in handling simple tools, malleable materials and construction kits. Such activities support children's developing eye and hand co-ordination. Overall the quality of teaching is good and most children are on target to reach the early learning goals.

Creative Development

55. Children enjoy creative learning. Most enter Reception with a confident approach to painting, drawing or making. Good teaching enables sound progress to be made. Basic techniques are carefully and sensitively taught by adults in order to nurture a sense of wonder and exploration. For example, strongly coloured paint is always available, children know the established routines for use and care of resources, and standards in expressive painting are above average. Children create animals with playdough, investigate the sounds made by a range of musical instruments, and play the part of shopkeeper in the toy shop imaginatively. Teachers, assistants and helpers work co-operatively to help children learn most effectively. All adults use imaginative play to reinforce language skills, social skills and to structure patterns of behaviour.

ENGLISH

56. The current seven-year-old pupils are attaining average standards in reading and with listening skills. These pupils are attaining below average standards in writing, handwriting and in speaking. A similar picture is presented by the current eleven-year-olds, whose attainment in reading and listening is average but whose writing and speaking are below average. This represents a similar picture to the last inspection. As the number of pupils in each age group is very small, comparisons with other schools are unrealistic. Last year (2001) all the eleven-year-olds attained Level 4 in English (the nationally expected level for eleven-year-olds). The learning needs of the current Year 6 are very different, with a significant proportion having learning difficulties. Last year, the Year 6 group had very few pupils experiencing learning difficulties. There are no major differences in the attainment of boys and girls, though the proportion of boys in the school is very high, with about a third more boys than girls.
57. The pupils enter school with below average language and literacy skills. Due to much good teaching, they achieve well and by the end of Year 1 their attainment is close to expectations. They make satisfactory progress in Years 2, 3 and 4 but not as much as in their first year. Year 5 and 6 pupils make a lot of progress and achieve well, and sometimes very well, especially those pupils with learning difficulties and other special

educational needs. All pupils are included and receive their full entitlement to the curriculum, although more able pupils do not make as much progress as they might right across the school, as they are not always challenged enough and sometimes too little is expected of them.

58. Most pupils listen sensibly to their teacher and to each other. They listen carefully to explanations and instructions. This helps them to understand what they are required to do. They listen attentively in assemblies and understand why a quiet, thoughtful atmosphere is important. Their listening skills are better than their speaking skills. Many pupils enter school with poorly developed speech. Whilst teachers actively encourage pupils to respond to questions, and do value their replies and comments, the pupils do not always have a sufficiently extensive vocabulary so that they can easily articulate their ideas. There is no whole school programme to develop speaking skills, and pupils are not always taught to use the specific vocabulary associated with a subject.
59. The younger pupils are introduced sensitively and thoughtfully to books and they learn from an early age that books and pictures carry meaning. By the time they are seven, most pupils attain average standards in reading. These pupils enjoy books and like to read to their parents and other adults. As the school has only recently introduced a phonics programme, these skills are generally underdeveloped. However, some of those Year 2 pupils who find reading difficult have already learned and can identify the initial and last letter sound in words, so they are just beginning to make satisfactory progress with phonic skills. Eleven-year-olds are attaining average standards in reading. Pupils make appropriate progress with their reading skills through Key Stage 2. Most read accurately and are reading a book which is at the right level for their individual needs. Some of the older pupils are able to summarise what they have read or predict how a story will end. Their skills of comprehension are less developed and only a few pupils read with real expression. Whilst most of the older pupils know about the library classification system and how to find an information book, they use the library fairly infrequently. The library is situated in a narrow walkway and is not conducive to 'browsing'. Also, the space is too small to accommodate a class. This limits the pupils' experience of and knowledge about information books.
60. In all age groups, the pupils' writing skills are below average. Pupils have underdeveloped speaking skills and they are not always taught to use and extend their vocabulary; they have limited skills in committing ideas to paper, because they do not have the appropriate word to express themselves. They have received only limited tuition as to how to structure, paragraph or punctuate their writing correctly. Too little emphasis is placed on correct letter formation and pupils find recording laborious and difficult. Standards of handwriting are below average. Even by Year 6, not all pupils use a joined, legible handwriting style. Pupils take too little pride in their work and as result the presentation of their work is frequently unsatisfactory. Standards of spelling are below average, though the seven-year-olds in Year 2 are confident when using a dictionary, as are the pupils throughout Key Stage 2. Similar deficiencies in writing were noted in the previous inspection.
61. Pupils achieve satisfactorily across the school, but the best achievement is in Year 1 and in Years 5 and 6. This is directly attributable to the good teaching they receive. Pupils with special educational needs often achieve particularly well and they are very well supported by the learning support workers. These members of the team are well managed and deployed, and often highly skilled. They make an enormous contribution to the good progress of many of the pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties.

62. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with some good teaching of the older and younger pupils. Teachers have a good knowledge of the structure of the literacy hour and this, together with detailed planning, is gradually helping to raise teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve. However, the planned activities and tasks do not always challenge the more able pupils sufficiently and as a result the pupils do not make as much progress as they might. They have fairly positive attitudes to the subject and will persist even when they find the task difficult; for example, the older pupils were engaged in writing play scripts based on the tale of the Wooden Horse of Troy. Most teachers manage the pupils well and genuinely value their efforts. Expectations of good behaviour are made clear to the pupils and in most lessons pupils listen, work hard and concentrate well.
63. The school has identified writing as an area for improvement, particularly identifying writing opportunities in other subjects. Literacy skills across the curriculum are only satisfactory, because there are too few planned opportunities for these skills to be used. The school is developing some good systems for assessing pupils and tracking their progress, and pupils now have individual targets in English, which are helpfully written into the front of their exercise books. Reading records are well maintained. Whilst teachers do mark the pupils' work regularly, the comments relate mainly to what the pupil has achieved. Only rarely do comments indicate precisely what and how the pupil needs to do to improve, and some of the marking only makes cursory references to pupils' individual targets. Little use is made of information and communication technology to support English.
64. The English co-ordinator has received no training on how to manage the subject or how to monitor and evaluate standards. It is anticipated that this will happen early in 2002. Currently, her role is under-developed. As yet, there is no portfolio of written work in English to exemplify standards, though this is also part of the school's plan to improve provision and raise standards in English.

MATHEMATICS

65. Standards in mathematics at the age of seven are below average. They are below average at the age of eleven. These inspection findings indicate that standards have declined since the time of the last inspection, when they were broadly average. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, this is a school with very small numbers in any year group, so it is not possible to compare one year group with another with confidence. Secondly, the school has passed through a time of staffing turbulence which has had an impact on pupils' standards. Pupils' skills in mental mathematical are below average and pupils lack confidence when solving mathematical problems. Most pupils understand the four rules of number and can calculate reasonably well. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early and provision to meet their needs are good. As a result their learning and progress are good. Pupils who are more able are not challenged sufficiently. Some mark time, after completing tasks quickly. Their progress is barely satisfactory.
66. Standards on entry to Year 1 are only just below what is expected, reflecting the good start to mathematics that children make in their reception year. The school builds successfully on this good start in Year 1 but pupils in Year 2 do not complete enough work to maintain a consistent rate of progress. By the age of seven, pupils have an understanding of numbers to 100. In lessons, they count forwards and backwards competently, in 2's, 5's and 10's. Work done shows some are able to tackle addition problems, using two digit numbers. In lessons pupils identify halves and quarters of shapes accurately but are insecure when asked to share numbers. In a mixed age

class some children are confused as they listen to direct teaching for older pupils. Too many tasks are only partly finished and the standard of presentation is poor.

67. By the age of eleven, pupils' attitudes have improved. They make good progress in mental calculations because they learn to identify a range of strategies that work when adding two digit numbers. They are also increasingly confident as they explain how they completed each task. Standards in mental mathematics are below average but routines are now well established by a skilled teacher. As a result pupils show some enthusiasm when tackling simple problems. Good teaching at the upper end of the school means that pupils respond well to setting their own targets for addition and subtraction problems. Pupils at the lower end of the juniors work too erratically to make consistent progress. All pupils who receive support from the exceptionally able support staff in all classes make good progress. These staff manage behaviour well and clearly let pupils know what is expected in each lesson.
68. The quality of teaching is sound overall. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Three out of six lessons seen were good, all at the upper end of the juniors. Teachers have a good understanding of the numeracy hour. Mental work set at the start of lessons is well matched to pupils' needs and fully involves all pupils. For example, Year 2 click, stamp and clap as they count in 2's, 5's and 10's to 100. In good lessons pupils move on to work which challenges them and enables them to work independently. Year 6 set their own targets for adding three two-digit numbers and complete many examples. The quality of teaching and learning is good as pupils respond positively to the opportunity to become fully involved in their own learning. In lessons that are satisfactory rather than good, teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve or of the way that work is presented. Time targets are set, but very rarely are pupils clearly told how much they are expected to complete within a set time. Information technology is not well used to support data handling. Marking is often cursory and does not give pupils a clear idea of what they should do to improve from day to day.
69. The subject is now well led by a knowledgeable and outward looking co-ordinator, who is also the headteacher. She has an extremely good analysis of mathematical achievement, in the most recent national tests, to inform her monitoring of subject provision. She has a very clear picture of what has to be done and how she will bring about subject improvements. Resources are good and their conscientious use by staff is beginning to have a positive impact on raising pupils' standards at the upper end of the school.

SCIENCE

70. Standards at the age of seven and eleven, are broadly average and in line with what is expected. Standards were satisfactory at the time of the last inspection. Results in the most recent national tests were well below average for both seven and 11-year-olds. However, with very small numbers taking national tests comparisons between year group results are insecure. Last year, the school took a very active part in the local cluster focus on science. This has had a positive impact on both teaching and learning of science throughout the school and has helped to raise standards. Teachers now have a greater understanding of the science curriculum and use the available resources well. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and play a full and active role in all science lessons.
71. In the current Year 2, standards seen are in line with what is expected. Pupils know about the purpose of a skeleton. They show that they understand the concept of a scientific investigation. Pupils respond with interest and enthusiasm as they test predictions about the relationship between the height of a child and the length of his foot. They respond well to challenging questions to explain unusual results. This investigative approach gives good opportunities to develop measuring skills. Younger pupils demonstrate above average standards as they confidently complete electrical circuits. Pupils co-operate exceptionally well when challenged to include a switch in the circuit. The quality of pupils' learning in this lesson is good, and overall it is sound.
72. By the age of 11 standards are satisfactory. Pupils have completed a good range of scientific investigations. As a result they have good attitudes to the subject and are confident about carrying out tests. More could be done to involve pupils, especially those of higher ability, in the design and planning of scientific investigations. For example, Year 6 pupils work with concentration and interest as they decide whether a range of materials is translucent, transparent or opaque. However, they have had little input to deciding what approach they will use or how they will record results. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 use very good resources as they investigate the uses of a skeleton. The quality of learning in the juniors is satisfactory.
73. The quality of teaching and learning is sound. Teachers use published schemes, adapting them to the wide range of ability in each class. Their use of resources has a positive impact on pupils' learning. The majority of lessons take place in a calm, structured environment as a result of good class management, exceptionally well supported by effective learning assistants in all classes. The range of activities planned could do more to challenge higher attaining pupils and some science lessons are too long, resulting in more able pupils occasionally wasting time. Teachers' expectations of literacy standards in scientific recording are not high enough. Marking does not focus enough on the specifically scientific, and is too generalised. This is unhelpful to pupils as they are not assisted in improving the quality of their scientific thinking in their recorded work. Opportunities are missed to develop scientific vocabulary. Information and communication technology is underused because resources are limited.
74. The new co-ordinator feels very well supported by the recent cluster focus on science. This has done much to improve and inform the strength of the investigative approach that now has a positive impact on raising standards. The school uses published schemes of work and is in the process of adapting them to the flexible class situation. Resources are good and are used well to improve standards. The school is aware of the need to develop a whole school approach to monitoring and assessing the standards attained, and the quality of teaching.

ART AND DESIGN

75. Standards attained are in line with those expected nationally for pupils aged seven and 11. There were no lessons available to be observed at Key Stage 1, but work on display showed a range of colourful paintings. Pupils' sketch books show that they are beginning to experiment with pencil, colour and a range of media. The Year 5 and 6 pupils demonstrate great care and patience when decorating and exploring the use of space, both inside and outside a varied range and size of containers. They are able to use scissors with appropriate skill and work with a variety of materials. Some have a well-developed eye for pattern and colour. The paintings based on Greek vases and urns show good detail attention to detail and considerable care. In their sketchbooks, pupils in Years 3 to 6 have experimented with charcoal, pastels, and the use of pencil shading. Year 6 pupils produced detailed observational drawings of aspects of the school, working to an appropriate standard. Pupils benefit from studying the work of other artists and have recently been considering the work of the modern artist Rachel Whiteread, so adding to their understanding of the different ways in which artists and sculptors use space. Pupils' achievement including that of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. A few of these pupils make good progress in art as a result of the very good support they are given. All pupils are included in art lessons. Since the previous inspection, standards have been maintained at Key Stage 1 but declined at Key Stage 2.
76. The quality of teaching was good in the one lesson observed. Pupils are well managed, and respond well to the teacher's clear expectations of good behaviour. Learning support staff are well deployed, committed and highly effective. Pupils enjoy the subject and are pleased when they achieve a good result; they are then motivated to try even harder next time.
77. The scheme of work is scheduled for review to check that art skills are taught and learned progressively. There is little evaluation of pupils' work or the quality of teaching by the co-ordinator, and no art portfolio to exemplify standards and expectations. There are plans to link with local funding agencies so that the environment can be used more as a source of inspiration and to deepen pupils' understanding of art and design.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

78. Standards at the age of seven and 11 are broadly average. These sound standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils with special education needs are very well supported and fully included in all activities. It was not possible to see any lessons in the juniors, so judgements for seven to 11-year-olds are based on work samples, displays and talking to pupils.
79. By the age of seven, pupils design and make finger puppets successfully. They have a confident approach to the subject as a result of their good start in Reception and Year 1. Younger pupils choose carefully from a very good range of materials as they design a toy, to be sold in their toyshop. Cross-curricular links are a strength of provision in these early classes. As he works, one pupil explains clearly why he has chosen boxes of a certain shape, how he will attach wheels and the way he plans to decorate his car. Pupils also know that they will attach lights to cars, houses and torch shapes as a result of good links with science. Standards for younger pupils are above average. The overall quality of learning is good.

80. By the age of 11 pupils describe with clarity their bread-making project. They record each planning stage in a special booklet. Opportunities are given for good use of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills as they evaluate each stage of the design and making process. One pupil writes that some bread products 'go crumbly' or that she does not like chocolate-coloured bread. In discussion, pupils make it clear that they understand the safety implications of handling a range of tools. Younger pupils are concerned about the dangers of acid in batteries. The quality of learning is sound.
81. The quality of teaching reflects the sound quality of learning. Teachers plan effectively, using published schemes of work. They liaise exceptionally well with support assistants to ensure that pupils with behavioural needs are sensitively supervised, to ensure their own safety and that of other pupils. Pupils have a positive attitude to the subject as a result of interesting projects planned; good resource provision and the way teachers provide good links with other subjects. For example, puppet-making links with history studies, and toy-making links well with learning in science about circuits. More could be done to raise literacy and numeracy standards through design and technology.

GEOGRAPHY

82. There were no geography lessons available to be observed and pupils have undertaken little work in geography so far this term, as the focus has been on history. The pictorial maps of Littledean produced by the six and seven-year-old pupils show a sound knowledge of mapping skills and of the local area. There is too little evidence to make an overall judgement on standards attained at either key stage. Discussion with the co-ordinator confirmed that there is little monitoring of standards in the subject and that information and communication technology is underused.

HISTORY

83. Standards in history are in line with those expected nationally for pupils aged seven and 11. There were no history lessons available to be observed so the judgement is based on an analysis of work and discussion with pupils. Seven-year-olds are knowledgeable about the Second World War and have obviously enjoyed studying the topic. They talk with interest and enthusiasm about gas masks, the Anderson shelter, and bombing raids. They know how the bombing raids and stringent rationing affected the lives of ordinary people. The pupils visited the local war memorial and each made a poppy on which they wrote their thoughts about the visit and what it meant to them. Such visits, to commemorate events like Remembrance Day, make a sensitive and good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Eleven-year-old pupils have studied life in ancient Greece and know about the way of life in those times. They can make the link with the modern Olympic Games and the predecessors of the games in which the ancient Greeks participated.
84. Throughout the school, it is noticeable that many of the pupils do not have a sufficiently extensive historical vocabulary; this limits the progress that they make, particularly the higher attaining pupils. They know factual information but do not have the language skills to talk, for example, with empathy and understanding of the way people used to live. Pupils with special educational needs are often very well supported by learning support staff and achieve well given their ability. All pupils are included in history lessons. Standards are similar to those reported in the previous inspection.
85. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used too little to support history. The role of the co-ordinator is as yet under-developed, although she has recently attended two courses focusing on school self-evaluation in the subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

86. Standards are below average, both at the ages of seven and eleven. This is mainly because the school is very poorly resourced. In addition, discussion with pupils, reveals that a significant number do not have access to computers at home. Standards were below average at the time of the last inspection. The new headteacher has ensured that a detailed action plan for information and communication technology improvement is part of the most recent school development plan. No lessons were available to be seen. Work displayed was analysed, planning scrutinised and a discussion took place with five Year 6 pupils.
87. By the age of seven, pupils have good mouse control when using a paint program. They vary the size of the 'brush' and know how to save their work. One above average pupil has his own computer at home and this is evident in the confidence with which he approaches new tasks. A class of 27 pupils has access to only one modern computer and this severely restricts their learning opportunities. Pupils with special educational needs are given planned access to an old computer, which has reading and spelling programs appropriate to their needs. However, in terms of making progress in information technology skills, they have equal access to the few up-to-date computers with all other children. The quality of pupils' learning is well below average.
88. Eleven-year-olds have been designing their own website. They are clear about the purpose of a website. Those with unlimited access to home computers talk confidently about using the internet for research purposes, with one pupil aware that you can download information to help develop a successful approach to national tests. Pupils have very limited understanding of methods of bringing a range of information together at the end of a hypothetical survey of transport. Pupils have the impression that those who finish work first use computers. Some pupils have very low expectations of what use they could make of information technology. The quality of learning is well below average.
89. Provision is unsatisfactory as teachers do not have access to the resources they need to develop pupils' skills and understanding. Teachers plan according to published schemes of work but lack the resources to implement these plans.
90. The new co-ordinator has the knowledge and ability to develop the subject successfully. Her action plan for development of curriculum, training, resources and networking is sound. However as a class-based full-time teacher she is not always on hand to offer help and advice when the present range of old computers give problems. Teachers with less expertise are therefore hesitant to plan anything other than paired or individual computer use. Lack of resources is limiting the school's capacity to improve pupils' standards in information and communication technology.

MUSIC

91. By the ages of seven and eleven, standards in music are average overall. Singing is a strength of music making, where pupils show confidence and enjoyment. Some pupils, who receive instrumental lessons, reach standards which are above average. The school is good at identifying pupils who need extra support, especially behavioural support, to cope with music lessons. There is a good range of opportunities for pupils to be involved in musical activities outside lesson time. The choir rehearses for a Christmas production, and tuition in a range of instruments is available including violin,

woodwind and recorders. This has helped the school to improve standards in the juniors, which were below average at the time of the last inspection.

92. At seven, pupils listen carefully to music and clap, tap and sing in time to the beat. The teacher is quick to note and praise interesting variations in clapping strategies, as pupils work with concentration. When given the opportunity to use a range of percussion instruments, children do so with a lively yet sensible approach. They sing with a pleasing tone. Because the teacher is using a well-structured published scheme, lessons contain the right amount of challenge and interest for these young pupils. Pupils in Year 1 sing with evident enthusiasm a repertoire of action songs. They perform confidently with a good range of percussion instruments, listening intently to changes in the quality of sounds made.
93. A similar pattern of sound teaching and learning is seen in junior classes. No lessons were seen with 11-year-olds but they are active and enthusiastic choir members. They give a successful impromptu performance of their favourite song to their visitor. Instrumentalists play confidently and competently in assemblies and in the Christmas production. Younger pupils respond well to the challenge of playing a range of percussion instruments to accompany singing. The range of instrumental teaching available enriches the curriculum.
94. The quality of teaching and learning is sound. The school has done well to take note of a relative weakness in musical expertise and has taken effective steps to remedy this. A good scheme of work enables teachers without special expertise to teach music successfully. It has had a very positive impact on pupils' learning in two ways. Firstly, pupils cover the full programmes of study of the National Curriculum and, secondly, music making is thoroughly enjoyed.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

95. Pupils attain standards in line with those expected nationally for pupils aged seven and eleven. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. Year 1 pupils are confident and well co-ordinated when pretending to be toys, and can use their bodies and limbs thoughtfully and imaginatively whether they are pretending to be a toy car, a doll or a teddy bear. They are already becoming conscious of the need to use space sensibly and avoid each other. They work well on their own. Year 2 pupils are developing their skills and most can accomplish a forward roll to an appropriate standard. They use the apparatus to perform jumps, land correctly in a balanced position and are becoming quite poised and controlled. With the support of the teacher and the learning support worker they are learning to vary their actions and ideas appropriately. Pupils make sound progress in lessons, including those with learning or physical difficulties. Year 6 pupils are often well co-ordinated and controlled. They are able to maintain a shape or position really well, for example when they are making symmetrical and asymmetrical shapes, working as individuals or within a small group. They are learning to connect ideas confidently into sequences and patterns. Older pupils make good progress in lessons and pupils work hard and achieve well, as a result of the very good teaching they receive. It is noticeable that as they have been taught to evaluate, refine and improve their movements, they are able to apply these skills thoughtfully to improve the quality of their work.
96. The quality of teaching throughout the school is at least satisfactory. The best teaching is of the youngest and the oldest pupils, those in Year 1 and those in Years 5 and 6. In these lessons, teachers identify precisely what is good about a particular movement, or how a movement could be improved. Consequently, pupils make good progress in the

lesson. In the middle age-groups, whilst the teaching is satisfactory, not enough is made of identifying exactly what is effective and comments are too general. Teachers have suitable subject expertise and plan lessons well in terms of content and structure, but there are few effective systems in place for ensuring that pupils' skills levels are assessed or recorded. Consequently, the next teacher does not have a record of what pupils can do. Pupils are generally positive about the subject and are responsive, listen well and behave sensibly in lessons, with due attention to safety. Teachers and support staff are always dressed suitably and provide very good role-models for pupils.

97. As yet, the co-ordinator has had no opportunity to be trained how to carry out her responsibilities and the quality of teaching and standards attained are not monitored. The good range of extra-curricular sporting activities is beginning to make a significant contribution to the physical education curriculum.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

98. Pupils aged seven and eleven attain standards that are in line with expectations and consistent with the requirements of the local education authority Agreed Syllabus. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. Most pupils achieve satisfactorily across the school. The Year 2 pupils can readily identify features of the Christmas story and can recall readily the main events and characters. They show sensitivity in describing the feelings and emotions of some of the major characters, explaining that 'Joseph might have been feeling rather anxious about going on the long journey to Bethlehem when Mary was expecting a baby' or, 'Mary was very happy when the angel told her that she would have a very special son'. Pupils' verbal skills are better than their recording skills at age seven; they often find it difficult to use writing to help their understanding in religious education. The pupils had recently visited the local church, and focused on the meaning of being christened or baptised, so enhancing the understanding of Christian celebrations and the meaning of Christian ceremonies. The Year 2 pupils were quite touched when their teacher showed them a beautiful statue of Mary; such moments are indicative of the subject's contribution to the pupils' spiritual development.
99. The oldest pupils, in Years 5 and 6, are learning about the Quaker religion and its founder, George Fox. Some pupils could confidently make links between Quaker beliefs and compare them with their earlier work on the 'Fruits of the Spirit of God.' The planned curriculum also introduces pupils to other world religions and widens their understanding of cultural diversity. Overall, though, the pupils' listening skills are better than their speaking skills; often they do not have a sufficiently extensive vocabulary to use to describe their feelings or articulate their knowledge and understanding.
100. Across the school, teaching is satisfactory overall. The Agreed Syllabus provides helpful content and supports teachers' subject knowledge. Teachers genuinely value pupils' verbal responses during lessons, so that this gives them confidence to try. Teachers' good questioning skills mean that they are able to elicit the level of pupils understanding and question them further to probe whether there is more that the pupil can offer. The pupils' recorded work shows that they take too little care with the presentation and they do not always take pride in their work. The teachers mark the work, but comments are general, and do not focus enough on the religious education content and understanding.
101. The co-ordinator has purchased some artefacts and resources of real quality and parents also contribute and lend resources. It is helpful that the co-ordinator teaches the subject to age groups other than her own as it helps her to gain something of a

whole school view. Overall though, monitoring of the subject and its assessment requires development.

102. Good use is made of support staff, whose understanding of the learning and emotional needs of the pupils with whom they work is especially good.