

INSPECTION REPORT

PEGASUS FIRST SCHOOL

Blackbird Leys, Oxford

LEA area: Oxfordshire

Unique reference number: 123078

Headteacher Mrs J Hudson

Reporting inspector: Mr D Hardman
17794

Dates of inspection: 21st – 24th January 2002

Inspection number: 243691

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Community

School category: First

Age range of pupils: 3 to 9

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Field Avenue
Blackbird Leys
Oxford

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr A Barnes

Date of previous inspection: 6th April 2000

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
17794	Mr D Hardman	Registered inspector	Science Religious education Information and communication technology English as an additional language Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements. How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19443	Mrs N Walker	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
1951	Mrs Y Crizzle	Team inspector	Mathematics Music Foundation Stage	
21666	Mr A Margerison	Team inspector	English History	
27679	Mrs S Twaits	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
23922	Mr D Horlock	Team inspector	Physical education Geography	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Pegasus First School is a large school situated in Blackbird Leys, an area on the eastern edge of the city of Oxford. There is a broad social mix in the school and the full range of ability is represented. The school's initial assessments of pupils' attainment when they enter show that many pupils are well below the levels expected for their age, particularly in reading, comprehension and writing. There are 138 boys and 137 girls currently on roll. A further 55 children attend the nursery, some on a full time basis. There is a high proportion of pupils who have English as an additional language and an average number from minority ethnic groups. There are 115 pupils eligible for free school meals, which is well above the national average. One hundred and thirty six pupils have been identified as having special educational needs. This is well above the national average and five have statements of special educational need, which is above the national average. Most pupils with special educational needs have moderate learning difficulties or emotional and behavioural difficulties. There has been a very high turnover of teaching staff in the last two years. The school is part of a local Education Action Zone which supports a number of initiatives, focusing upon the raising of standards of achievement, teaching and learning.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Pegasus First School is a good school. Very good leadership and management by the headteacher, key staff and governors provide clear direction for future developments. Teaching is good and sometimes very good. This leads to good learning and pupils' attainment, although still below the expected level for their ages in English and mathematics, is improving. Pupils are responsible, and their personal development and relationships in school are very good. The school receives a number of grants, for example, from the Education Action Zone, which are used very well to benefit young children and other pupils' learning. As a result of these grants, expenditure is well above the national average, but the fact that pupils' attainment is improving and their National Curriculum test results are at least the same as similar schools, shows that the school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher and the quality of teamwork by the senior management team and governors are very good.
- Teaching is good and leads to good learning and improving standards.
- Pupils' attitudes are very good and their behaviour is good. Relationships and opportunities for personal development are very good. The caring, family atmosphere created in the school makes a very positive contribution to pupils' learning.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language is good and pupils make good progress.
- The provision for children in the Foundation Stage, this is the nursery and two reception classes, is good and children learn new skills quickly.

What could be improved

- The raising of pupils' attainment further by ensuring that the curriculum provides more opportunities for pupils to use their skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology in the foundation subjects (art and design, design and technology, history, geography, music).

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been good progress in dealing with the issues identified in the previous inspection in 2000. The school has given high priority to the implementation of the language intervention programme in the nursery. This is proving very successful and children's attainment is improving rapidly. For example, in discussions with the staff involved in the project called "Talk Away", there was clear evidence of the progress made by all children in speaking and listening. This is supported by the results of assessments taken at the beginning and end of the time children participated in the project and the results of improved communication skills are very impressive. The school has dealt with the issue from the last inspection about judging the effectiveness of its plans for improvement. The school's development plan now shows the criteria by which the various initiatives can be judged and the governors have formed an "Outcomes Committee" to regularly assess the progress the school is making towards its specific targets. Governors fulfil their role very well. They have taken steps to deal with the key issues identified in the last inspection and they play a full part in discussions to develop many aspects of the school both through their committee structure and in full meetings of the governing body. The school is well set to meet its challenging targets and continue to raise pupils' attainment and progress.

STANDARDS

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
Reading	E*	E	E	C	well above average above average average below average well below average very low
Writing	E*	E	E	C	A B C D E E*
Mathematics	E	D	E	C	

The table shows that in the 2001 National Curriculum tests for 7 year olds the school's results were well below national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Compared to similar schools, however, pupils' performance was average in all subjects. Inspection evidence shows that standards have improved and reflect the good teaching and learning for pupils in the school. For example, in the present Year 2, pupils' attainment is below the level expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics but in line with the expected levels for science, information and communication technology and religious education. There is a large number of pupils in each year group who have special educational needs, and although these pupils do well when compared to their previous attainment, they lower overall standards when compared with national levels. In addition, relatively few pupils reach the higher levels. The school is aware of this and is implementing a programme to raise standards further. For example, the "Read Away" project and the establishment of a "Writers' Club" during English lessons are already raising pupils' standards in this subject.

In the present Year 4, pupils' standards in English, mathematics and information and communication technology are below the level expected for their age. In science and religious education, it is in line with the level expected for their age. The higher numbers of pupils with special educational needs in the present Year 2 and Year 4 classes is also the reason why standards appear to have gone down slightly since the last inspection. The school's implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is having a positive impact on pupils' attainment. Although children enter the Foundation Stage with levels of attainment that are well below those expected nationally, they achieve well because

of good teaching and learning and their attainment improves. Although they are still below the level expected for their age, they are well prepared for the National Curriculum when they enter Year 1. The trend of pupils' attainment over time shows an improvement. The raising of standards is bringing the school closer to the national average. The school is setting realistic targets for improvement in these subjects. During the inspection, there was no significant variation noted in the attainment of boys and girls in any subject.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes to the school and their work. They enjoy coming to school and their enthusiasm for school life improves their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils know what is expected of them and their behaviour is good. Pupils are polite and courteous towards one another and adults.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development and relationships are very good. They respond very well to the school's encouragement to take responsibility for their actions.
Attendance	Attendance is below the national average. The school procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good and pupils' attendance is improving. There have been five exclusions from the school in the last year.

Pupils' very good attitudes result from the school's positive ethos and their response to the caring, family atmosphere in the school. This is a particular strength of the school. Pupils respond well to the very good behaviour management strategies employed by all staff. They are considerate of others when they move around the building, use the dining hall and play at break times.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is good and sometimes very good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching seen during the inspection. Good teaching was seen throughout the school, especially in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Teaching and learning have been observed by the headteacher and key staff and the sharing of good practice is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching throughout the school. This strategy has been successful in establishing a climate within the school where teachers are more aware of their strengths and areas for development. This has been particularly important because of the very high turnover of staff in the last two years. The school is aware of the need for this observation of teaching and learning to be extended so that all subject co-ordinators are involved.

Teachers' planning is clearly linked to the requirements of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Tasks are organised to challenge different ability groups in classes and pupils make good progress. The school uses teachers' assessments, together with the results from standardised and National Curriculum tests, to record pupils' progress. These assessments are then used effectively to set targets, for example in English and

mathematics. Standards are improving in the school and the use of assessment data, both to set achievable targets and to guide teachers' planning for the next stage of learning, is having a significant impact on pupils' attainment. However, not all teachers have high enough expectations of what pupils are capable of, and where this happens, pupils' learning slows. The teaching of information and communication technology is good and pupils' skills are improving rapidly due to the regular planned use of the well equipped computer suite and the recently introduced whole school scheme of work that gives teachers a good framework for planning lessons. However, due to the lack of opportunities for pupils to use these skills in classrooms, mainly because of shortage of equipment, their skills are not improving as quickly as they could. Learning support assistants give effective support to individuals and groups of pupils when they are working with them. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are well supported by good teaching that provides challenging activities. As a result, these pupils make good progress throughout the school.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Unsatisfactory. The school has continued to make improvements to the curriculum and teachers' planning since the last inspection. However, pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology are not used often enough in other subjects to raise their attainment further.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There are good procedures and provision for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers know the pupils very well and provide challenging activities that make a positive contribution to their attainment and learning.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. All staff work with pupils to make sure they join in all the activities available. As a result, pupils make good progress in their knowledge, understanding and use of English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good. It is satisfactory for their cultural development. Pupils' spiritual development is promoted well through assemblies. The quality of relationships makes a very good contribution to promoting the school aims.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for ensuring pupils' health, safety and welfare are very good. There are good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress.

The curriculum meets statutory requirements because all subjects are taught. The headteacher is aware that pupils' skills are not always fully used and there are very good plans for an "Integrated Project" to develop pupils' skills in cross-curricular themes using English, information and communication technology and history to start later this term. There is a very small range of extra-curricular activities although visits and visitors do give pupils a wider experience and help them learn. The school has worked very hard and skilfully over recent years to achieve its good and improving relationship with parents. As a result, parents now hold the school in very high regard and they have very positive views of most aspects of the work of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher, deputy headteacher and key staff provide very good leadership and management. They have maintained the family atmosphere during the recent changes to the building and managed the very high turnover of teaching staff very well.

How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governing body is committed to helping the school move forward. Governors make a very effective contribution to the running of the school and are committed to maintaining and raising standards further. However, they have not ensured that pupils' skills and progress are reported fully in all subjects in the two written reports given to parents.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school knows its strengths and areas for development. The observation of teaching and learning is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching throughout the school. All staff work very hard to improve their own work and the educational opportunities provided for pupils.
The strategic use of resources	The school has sufficient staff. The accommodation is very well maintained. Resources to support pupils' learning are satisfactory, except for classroom-based information and communication technology, and they are used effectively. The central library is good. The school's finances and administration procedures are good.

The headteacher and key staff provide a clear direction for future improvement. Governors are regular visitors to the school, monitor financial planning and have formed committees that are involved in all aspects of the school. They make a very good contribution to the preparation of the school development plan. Governors, the headteacher and the bursar keep a close eye on spending to ensure that they follow the principles of "best value" well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and are making good progress. • Teaching is good. • Behaviour in the school is good. • They are kept well informed about their child's progress. • They feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or problems. • The school expects children to work hard. • The school helps children to become more mature and responsible. • The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework provided. • The extra-curricular activities

Inspection findings confirm the positive views expressed by parents about the school. The inspection team agrees with parents that there is a limited amount of homework for pupils and this represents a missed opportunity to help raise standards further. They also agree that the range of activities outside lessons is very limited but the breakfast and after-school clubs, paid for by parents, do provide a valuable service to those pupils involved.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 In Year 4, pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and information and communication technology is below the level expected for their age. Although their standards in speaking and listening are in line with those expected for their age. In science and religious education pupils' attainment is at the level expected for their age. This represents good progress during their time in school because the school's assessments of these pupils' abilities when they entered the school show that they were well below the levels expected for their age and many had poor skills, particularly in language, communication and mathematics. In addition, in Years 4 and 2 a large number of pupils are on the special needs register and although they do not always reach the national average, they make good progress towards the targets in their individual plans. This also accounts for the slight fall in standards since the previous inspection. The school is going through significant upheaval because of the change of status to a primary school and the associated building work on the site. These changes have been managed very well, especially the high turnover of teaching staff. As a result, the school is well set to continue to improve standards, meet the realistic targets and implement any further changes to the curriculum. During the inspection, no significant variation was noted in the attainment of boys and girls in any subject. The trend of pupils' attainment over time shows an improvement.

2 In this school the Foundation Stage is made up of a nursery and two reception classes. The school's assessments of children's attainment show that many enter the Foundation Stage with levels of attainment that are well below those of most other children of the same age. They make good progress through the Foundation Stage and most of the children, including those with special educational needs or English as an additional language, are on course to achieve the standards expected by the end of the reception year in personal, social, creative and physical development. The "Talk Away" project is particularly successful in raising children's attainment in speaking and listening and the "Read Away" project is equally successful for improving reading skills. However, a significant number of children in the present year group are below the expected level in communication, language, literacy, mathematical and knowledge and understanding of the world.

3 In Year 2, attainment in speaking and listening, reading and writing is below the levels expected for their age. In the most recent National Curriculum tests in 2001, pupils' attainment in reading and writing was well below average when compared to national average. However, it was better in comparison to similar schools where it was average. In addition, pupils made good progress against their prior attainment and many reached the lower levels of what is expected which is a considerable achievement bearing in mind the large number of pupils with special educational needs in Year 2 last year. Over time, pupils' attainment is improving because of improved teaching and the successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy.

4 Inspection findings show that in the present Year 4, pupils' attainment is average in speaking and listening, but below average in reading and writing. The analysis of assessment information means the school has evidence of the good progress made by these pupils over the last four years. There are various projects undertaken by the school that are having a significant effect on the improving standards of pupils' work. For example, the school has identified more gifted writers and these pupils are in the "Writers' Club" where they receive concentrated support in small groups. The quality of discussions is very high and the use of imaginative language by these pupils in their writing is improving very quickly.

The headteacher is aware that more opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills in other subjects are needed and an "integrated curriculum" project using English, history and information and communication technology is planned for later this term.

5 In the National Curriculum tests in 2001 at the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment in mathematics was well below average. It was in line with the average when compared to similar schools. In the present Year 2, pupils' attainment in mathematics is below the level expected for their age. In the present Year 4, pupils achieve standards that are below the level expected for their age. Although their attainment is below the levels expected, all pupils make good progress when compared to their previous attainment and the overall standards compared to national averages are lowered by the large number of pupils with special educational needs. The improving trend over time reflects the positive impact of the National Numeracy Strategy and good teaching. There has been good analysis of pupils' performance in previous tests and this has resulted in the setting of clear, realistic class targets to focus on improving the weaker areas of mathematical knowledge. This process has now improved and individual targets are referred to when teachers mark pupils' work and so improve pupils' attainment further. Pupils use their numeracy skills satisfactorily in other subjects such as science and geography by, for example, creating graphs of favourite foods and using maps to trace the course of rivers.

6 In the National Curriculum teacher assessments in 2001 at the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment in science was well below average. It was in line with the average when compared to similar schools. Pupils in the present Year 2 are making good progress and are set to improve these standards and their attainment is in line with the level expected for their age. In the present Year 4, pupils' attainment is in line with the level expected for their age. This is a similar picture to that found in the last inspection. The school is improving standards and setting realistic targets to improve further. Most pupils have a clear understanding of how to conduct experiments and understand the concept of "fair test". For example, they experiment with different materials to find out which one is the best insulator. They record results carefully and come to accurate conclusions that are based on their findings. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are supported well and make good progress.

7 In Year 2, pupils' attainment in information and communication technology is in line with the level expected for their age. In Year 4, pupils make satisfactory progress in a number of aspects but do not reach expected standards overall. However, standards are rising rapidly due to the regular planned use of the well-equipped computer suite and the recently introduced whole school scheme of work that gives teachers a good framework for planning lessons. This is the same as in the last inspection. However, because pupils cannot use these skills in other lessons, mainly because there is not enough equipment in classrooms, their ability to use these skills is below that expected.

8 In music, pupils' attainment is below the level expected in Year 2 and Year 4. The school has concentrated all its efforts on the core subjects of English, mathematics, science, religious education and information and communication technology and pupils' skills in music have not been systematically developed over the last four years. The appointment of a subject co-ordinator and the use of national guidelines for music have led to an improvement in pupils' skills, and the school is well set to continue this development. It is a similar picture for history and art, especially in Year 4. Pupils' attainment is in line with the level expected in Year 2 but there has been insufficient time for the new programmes of study to raise pupils' attainment in Year 4 and it is still below the level expected for their age. In all other subjects, pupils' attainment is in line with the levels expected for their age. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language make good progress, especially in literacy skills. These pupils work at levels that are well matched to their abilities and their

previous experiences. Teachers set work, paying particular attention to the targets identified in the individual education plans. Extra support is provided for these pupils and teachers assess their work regularly and review their individual educational plans accordingly. The curricular opportunities for pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are good; all pupils are included in as many activities as possible. In addition, the very good provision for promoting pupils' social and moral development has a significant impact upon their good standards of behaviour and personal development.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9 Pupils have very good attitudes to their learning and this is an area that has improved even further since the positive picture reported by inspectors 18 months ago. Teachers are extremely skilled at managing pupils and, as a result, pupils listen carefully and they follow instructions promptly. They try very hard and even when they find the work difficult, they persevere for the duration of their lessons. A good example of this was seen in a mathematics lesson where Year 3 pupils were working on subtracting numbers such as 19 and 29 from three digit numbers such as 154. Even when lessons are less interesting and less well organised, pupils continue to pay attention. During the inspection, pupils' attitudes were never less than satisfactory at any time.

10 Pupils' behaviour is mostly good and even those pupils who present challenging behaviour respond well to the calm but firm and consistent approaches of staff. Pupils follow the school's routines and move around in a calm and orderly manner. They are polite to adults and to each other. For example, they hold doors open for others and very often pupils will thank them as they pass through. During the last full school year there were five fixed term pupil exclusions for inappropriate behaviour and so far during this school year there have been three such exclusions. These figures are low in comparison with other local schools.

11 There are very good relationships in school both amongst pupils and especially with their teachers. This is an improvement since the time of the last inspection. In lessons, pupils work very well together in pairs, they help one another and they share equipment well. They show respect for one another. For example, in discussion sessions in lessons, they allow each other time to speak, rarely interrupt and they will often applaud each other's efforts. They are very tolerant of others. For example, they show no annoyance towards any pupil who causes a disruption in their lessons, they simply appear to understand that the culprit has their own difficulties and they do nothing to antagonize them further. Outside lessons, pupils respond well to being given responsibility and carry out any tasks they are entrusted with in a sensible manner. For example, a number of Year 4 pupils act as "Playground Friends" with particular responsibility to be a friend to anyone who needs one and to make sure anyone who has an accident gets the appropriate help. However, because pupils are not often expected to select their own equipment in lessons, when they are asked to do so they are sometimes unsure of what to do and are often slow to organize themselves.

12 Parents confirm that their children are keen to attend school. Nevertheless, the school's annual attendance figure continues to be around two percent below the national average. Current registers confirm that very many pupils achieve very good and even excellent attendance, especially in the reception classes, but a significant few pupils in all other classes are very often absent and are responsible for much of the school's absence figure. However, attendance has continually improved over the past few years and extra money made available to the school through the Education Action Zone has been used to employ extra staff to follow-up persistent absentees. As a result, the school has already seen a huge improvement in the attendance of some of its pupils who previously achieved

only very poor attendance. A number of pupils across the school often arrive late in the mornings but once in classrooms, pupils settle quickly and formal lessons start on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

13 During the inspection, teaching was satisfactory or better in all lessons. It was good in 41 per cent of lessons and very good or better in a further 28 per cent. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The quality of teaching is improving and pupils' standards are rising. Some of this improvement has resulted from the observations by the headteacher and key staff who watch colleagues teach and check to ensure that all pupils are learning effectively. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been successfully implemented and they are having a positive impact on pupils' standards. The quality of teaching is having a positive impact on pupils' learning but has not yet had time to raise their attainment further by the end of Year 4. Teachers assess individual pupils' attainment and progress regularly and use their daily observations of pupils' work to set challenging tasks but evidence from pupils' work shows that this is not always consistent. For example, when marking pupils' work, teachers do not always set targets for pupils to improve, particularly in the presentation of their written work. As a result, pupils' work does not always improve as quickly as it could.

14 The quality of teaching for children in the Foundation Stage is good and sometimes very good. Strengths are seen in the quality of planning that is relevant to the needs of children who have very limited experience of the world around them. The priority given to helping children to settle, take stock of their surroundings and become familiar with the variety of interesting activities at a simple level is essential to their personal, social and emotional development. The initiatives to promote literacy skills are uniformly implemented and this is done well. Where teaching is very good, the teachers maintain children's interest and extend their concentration. For example, in a lesson exploring nature, children went outside to identify as many birds as possible. They took clip boards and the teacher ensured they used them in a scientific manner when recording, in their own way, the birds seen. The excitement and sense of awe was evident in every child's face when flocks of birds were seen over the school field. Children's learning was very good because they used a wide range of developing skills to talk about what they were seeing and making marks on the paper to record their observations. A series of assessments of children's attainment are used during their time in the Foundation Stage and the results show that most children make good progress.

15 The teaching of basic skills in English and mathematics is satisfactory. Teachers' planning is clearly linked to the requirements of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and tasks are organised to challenge different ability groups in classes. The pace of most lessons is good and teachers use the techniques of the literacy and numeracy strategies to best effect in their English and mathematics lessons. Pupils have very good relationships with teachers and adults in the classroom which help to improve the quality of pupils' learning. Teachers' expectations and their management of pupils' behaviour are very good. This was seen in a Year 4 science lesson, when pupils improved their knowledge and skills of accurate investigations using a variety of materials. They were very attentive to the teacher's introduction and gave good explanations of their findings in a previous lesson. They listened attentively to others' answers. The brisk pace of the lesson and the mature attitude of pupils led to good learning and pupils' improving investigative skills. Teachers make lessons interesting and pupils respond well. For example, in a Year 2 English lesson, pupils joined in enthusiastically with the shared enjoyment of the story *Where the Wild Things Are* and improved their knowledge of how the use of emphasis adds to the understanding of the characters' feelings. This led to some good descriptions by pupils, for example, giving

reasons for feelings when writing, "Max was feeling miserable because his mum was mad at him".

16 Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects of the National Curriculum are good. They use the correct language to develop the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the particular subject. This was particularly evident in English, mathematics and science, where specific technical language was used well. For example, in a Year 4 mathematics lesson, pupils understood the concept of multiplication and used their knowledge to solve a number of problems. Teachers use good observational assessment of pupils to build upon the areas that pupils need to develop. For example, in a science lesson in Year 2, pupils responded well to the teacher's questions by explaining how a test was fair. They knew that in an experiment using ramps and toy cars they had to make sure that each car started from the same place and was not pushed down the ramp. The teacher used the session at the end of the lesson well to reinforce pupils' learning by using cards with "fair" and "not fair" written on them. Pupils watched the demonstration of the test and held up the appropriate card when judging the teacher's actions.

17 Teachers know and manage their pupils very well and provide good support for different activities. The very good relationships between staff and pupils create a secure climate in which to learn. Teachers use their daily observations of pupils' work to set challenging tasks but this is not done consistently throughout the school. For example, most teachers include positive comments when marking pupils' work but do not consistently provide precise comments on what pupils need to do in order to improve. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language is good. All staff have a very positive attitude towards these pupils and know their strengths and areas for development well. The school ethos, characterised by high expectations of behaviour and very good relationships between adults and pupils, means that they learn personal skills well. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language learn well because of the good planning of literacy lessons and the good support they receive in lessons. Group activities are generally well planned and carefully matched to the needs of pupils. Teachers have a clear understanding of how support staff for pupils with special educational needs are used in group activities so pupils are fully involved in most lessons.

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

18 The Foundation Stage curriculum is good. It includes all the areas of learning, uses the local authority guidance well and makes good reference to the staged 'stepping stones' approach. The school profile, frequent observations and assessments in the reception classes take good account of children's attainment on entry to nursery and as they move through the Foundation Stage. The curriculum is unsatisfactory because, although the school has justifiably concentrated on literacy and numeracy, the way the curriculum is taught does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to use their skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology in the foundation subjects (art and design, design and technology, history, geography, music). The school has already identified this issue and has plans to address it.

19 The school meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum because all the subjects and religious education are taught. There are appropriate programmes in place for health and sex education. The school meets statutory requirements for collective worship and pupils meet together for assembly in classes as well as a whole school. The school has fully implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, which are starting to have a positive effect on standards. Most subjects use some of the national guidelines to guide

their planning. Some of these guidelines are newly implemented and have not yet had the effect of raising standards.

20 A high priority has rightly been given to literacy, numeracy and personal and social education, which is having a very positive effect on pupils' achievements and behaviour. Pupils are grouped within the class and work is generally planned to match their different abilities. The provision for special educational needs and English as an additional language is good. Pupils' needs are identified promptly and they make good progress due to the quality of the support provided for them. All pupils are fully included in all the curriculum activities.

21 The school provides a limited range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils attend a breakfast club, an after-school club and some attend the gym club. The nursery planned a successful night walk around the grounds that was well supported by parents. The school regularly invites theatre groups, resident artists and outside speakers who enrich the curriculum. The creative arts project that takes place annually covers themes such as "Doors" and "River Thames". This project has enriched the arts curriculum and resulted in good links between literacy, drama and art. Pupils worked together to create a totem pole carving and ceramic sculptures. Visits to the University Museum and Oxford have enlivened the curriculum and widened pupils' experiences. External funding has been used well to support museum and drama group visits to the school. Year 4 will shortly be attending a residential sports activity weekend.

22 The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. This reflects the findings at the last inspection. Pupils are identified early and there are suitable plans in place for all pupils on the register of special educational needs. These plans are reviewed three times a year by the co-ordinator and the class teachers. Although there are examples in specific classes where targets are very general and do not clearly identify what skills the pupils have to learn, overall, the targets in these plans are good. They are specific, measurable and well linked to methods to teach pupils the identified skills. The school uses the advice from external agencies well to help set targets and plan teaching methods. Teachers provide appropriate work for pupils with English as an additional language and this aims to improve their language development. All adults working with pupils with English as an additional language are enthusiastic in their approach and keen to recognise and praise success. This effectively encourages pupils and helps them develop confidence. Clear records are kept on each pupil's attainment and this information is used effectively to guide future planning and teaching. As a result of this good teaching, pupils with English as an additional language build well on their previous knowledge, skills and understanding.

23 The school has very good links with partner institutions and as a result all pupils benefit in the progress they make. The school is a member of the Education Action Zone partnership which is designed to help schools in areas of high social deprivation. As a direct result of this partnership, the school has developed its existing links with other schools and now has very good links with a group of sixteen first, middle and high schools. Teachers have received specialist training in the teaching of mathematics and English, and a number of successful teaching methods have been shared amongst the schools. In addition, through the same partnership, the school has been allocated funds to employ staff specifically to follow up pupil absences and already in a very short space of time there has been a significant improvement in the attendance of a number of individuals. The Education Action Zone initiative has made a positive contribution to the school's success in getting parents involved in supporting their children's learning.

24 Provision for pupils' personal development is very good. In particular, the school develops pupils' spiritual, moral and social understanding and awareness very well. This aspect of the school's work has continued to develop since the last inspection and has a very

positive effect on pupils' behaviour and attitudes, helping to create the positive family ethos in the school.

25 The school promotes pupils' spiritual growth very well. Whole school or class assemblies comply with requirements and are conducted with an air of reverence and reflection. They are based around themes such as "being sorry for unkind deeds" and give very consistent messages to pupils and food for thought. Music, candles and the quiet approach taken by class teachers create a calm atmosphere and help make them special times. Religious education lessons and personal, health and social education lessons contribute well to pupils' spiritual development. In many lessons throughout the school pupils are given opportunities to think about what they have done or are experiencing. For instance, when the children in the reception class went for a walk looking for wild birds, the children were amazed by the number of different birds they saw. This very effective approach encourages pupils to value themselves, each other and the world around them.

26 The very positive relationships in classes, the very good management of pupils and the enthusiasm with which many of the teachers approach their teaching help create an atmosphere in which pupils are interested in their learning. These three factors very effectively promote pupils' moral development, contributing to the significant improvements in pupils' behaviour since the last inspection. There is now a clear code of conduct in place and all staff use the policy consistently to manage pupils' behaviour. This provides pupils with a secure framework and helps even those who find it difficult to behave well to think of the effect of their actions on themselves and others. The recently introduced personal and health education programme is beginning to make a positive contribution to pupils' moral development through the opportunities it gives for them to talk about specific moral and social issues.

27 The school makes very good provision to develop pupils' social skills. The positive relationships between staff and pupils make a very good contribution because staff treat pupils as individuals and provide very good adult examples. Pupils have many opportunities to work together in lessons. For example, in the information and communication technology suite pupils often share computers, help each other and share ideas. The school encourages pupils to take responsibility. This starts with the youngest children being asked to return registers to the office and doing other jobs around the classroom. Older pupils have wider responsibilities around school such as looking after younger pupils in the playground.

28 The school makes sound provision for developing pupils' cultural awareness. Visitors are welcomed into school and pupils visit other places linked to several subjects including theatres and museums. The school is developing links with other religious centres in addition to the local Christian church and pupils study other faiths in religious education lessons. However, the opportunities for them to learn about the contribution other cultures make to their local society or through history or art and design lessons are limited.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

29 The school provides a very good level of care for all its pupils. The headteacher and all staff see the well-being of every pupil as of paramount importance. For example, there are safe routines for moving around the school and pupils are well supervised at all times. Several members of staff have first aid knowledge and pupils receive the appropriate care should they become ill or injured at school. There are regular fire drills and accurate records mean that every child can be accounted for in the event of an emergency evacuation. Health and safety inspections of the premises are regularly carried out and any remedial action is swiftly taken. The school's procedures before taking pupils on visits out of school require

teachers to give due consideration to any potential dangers and do whatever they can to ensure the safety of their pupils.

30 The school has very good arrangements to protect children from all forms of abuse. The headteacher has a very clear understanding of child protection and insists on accurate records being kept of even minor concerns. All staff know who to report to if they are concerned about a pupil. There is absolutely no hesitation on the part of the school in notifying and seeking immediate action from other professionals including social services and, if necessary, the police. The prime concern is for the safety and care of every pupil.

31 There are very good procedures to support pupils personally and to help them to develop as individuals. At the heart of this is the school's total commitment to the "Family Links Nurturing Programme". This is a system for building relationships, improving pupils' attitudes and behaviour and raising their self-esteem. One of the programme's main principles is the fair, firm and consistent approach to discipline without the use of harsh methods. Not only is it practised in school, but parents are also invited to become involved. In practice, all members of staff use the same methods of praise and discipline, they all expect the same high standards of behaviour and adults in school are never heard to raise their voices. Teachers are patient with pupils and take time to listen to what they have to say. Consequently, pupils gain in confidence and are prepared to join in discussions in lessons without fear of being humiliated should they get it wrong. Teachers know the strengths and weaknesses of their pupils very well. They understand when pupils are facing difficulties either with their learning or in their personal lives and they treat them sensitively and with kindness. As a result, the whole atmosphere of the school is one of calm where pupils feel safe and secure and valued as individuals. They want to come to school and they want to do their best.

32 The school has good procedures for assessing the learning needs of pupils with special educational needs. Although external specialists do a major part of this work, the special needs co-ordinator observes pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties and uses this and other information to set targets and to match strategies to these targets. Teachers and support staff are given strategies to help manage these pupils, which helps them develop and monitor pupils' behaviour effectively.

33 Statutory requirements for assessment are fully met. The school has good systems for assessing pupils through tests, including the voluntary and compulsory National Curriculum tests and the assessment made in different subjects. This represents a distinct improvement since the last full inspection when assessment was identified as a key issue for action. The systems in place provide information about individual pupils and the levels of attainment and progress they make in English, mathematics and science. Information gained from the study of statutory assessment and national data over a period of time is conscientiously analysed and is used effectively to identify areas of weakness and to set challenging targets for raising standards. The information is used to identify curriculum priorities that in turn are reflected in the school's development plan and used to evaluate the success of the school's initiatives in areas such as reading intervention and the impact of different mathematics resources on attainment.

34 As a result of assessment procedures, all pupils have targets for improvement and these are reviewed regularly, both informally and formally throughout the year. Teachers make regular informal assessments during lessons on which to base future planning and match work to pupils' levels of attainment. Teachers keep detailed records and in some classes these are often perceptive. However, there are no consistent methods, for example using agreed National Curriculum levels, for judging pupils' attainment and progress. There are no portfolios that provide examples of work at different levels of attainment and show

directly what pupils of different abilities can do. Similarly, although there is a whole-school marking policy in place, this is not yet consistently implemented.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

35 The school has worked very hard and skilfully over recent years to achieve its good and improving relationship with parents. As a result, parents now hold the school in very high regard and they have very positive views of most aspects of the work of the school. In particular, parents are very pleased with the ease with which they feel they can approach staff with any questions or concerns, the school's expectations of their children to work hard and the quality of teaching which their children receive. Inspectors agree with these positive views. However, a small number of parents are unhappy with the limited amount of homework set for pupils and also the limited amount of activities on offer to pupils at lunchtimes and after school and inspectors agree with these concerns, especially for pupils in Years 3 and 4.

36 As a result of the school's efforts to involve parents, there has been a marked improvement in the level of interest parents take in their children's work in school. For example, three years ago attendance at parents' meetings was virtually zero compared with almost 70 per cent of late. A few parents support their child's learning at home by listening to them read but many parents are still reluctant to become more actively involved in their child's education. Small groups of parents continue to commit to a number of projects in school such as "The Family Links Nurturing Programme", the "Read Away" and "Talk Away" projects and the "PEEP". All of these projects have significantly benefited pupils, as well as parents, particularly in their self-esteem and self-confidence.

37 Newsletters and other correspondence, as well as a high level of verbal communication, keep parents very well informed of the daily life and events of the school. In addition, class teachers provide parents with very good information about what is being taught in lessons and suggestions as to how parents can support their child's learning at home.

38 The school welcomes and encourages parents to talk to teachers on a regular and informal basis about their child's progress. In addition, there are two formal parents' evenings each year when teachers explain in detail what their child has learned and what they need to do to improve further. However, the quality of the written reports for parents is unsatisfactory. Even though reports are produced in both the autumn and the summer terms, information on what each pupil understands and can do in English, mathematics and science is often very brief. At the end of the last school year the reports contained no information for all of the eight other National Curriculum subjects other than a simple letter grade such as "2a" which is meaningless to most parents. Nevertheless, parents are pleased with how well the school keeps them informed of their children's progress.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

39 The headteacher, deputy headteacher and key staff provide very good leadership and management. Together they have maintained the family atmosphere during a difficult time of high staff turnover and the work involved in the change of status as an emerging primary school. Leadership and management have improved from good to very good since the last inspection. Governors make a very good contribution to the effective running of the school and are committed to maintaining and raising standards further. The observation of teaching and learning by the headteacher and key staff is regularly discussed with governors who are well aware of the school's strengths and areas for development. However, written reports to parents do not contain sufficient information about pupils' attainment and progress

and so the school does not fully comply with all statutory requirements. The school has worked effectively to deal with the key issues from the previous report and is well placed to maintain the strengths and build effectively upon them. The headteacher and key staff give a clear educational direction for the school which is raising pupils' standards. For example, the school has used the analysis of pupils' results in National Curriculum tests to explain the results. This information shows clearly that pupils with special educational needs perform well when compared to their previous attainment and many reach the lower levels of national expectations. However, many do not reach the higher levels and so the school's results in National Curriculum tests remain lower than average when compared to schools nationally. To their credit the school has initiated a number of projects to improve this situation, for example, the "Read Away" and "Writers' Club" and these are already having a positive impact on pupils' attainment.

40 The governing body has a very good committee structure that works very effectively to support the school. For example, the governors have created an "Outcomes Committee" which meets regularly and checks on the progress of all initiatives undertaken by the school. The roles and responsibilities of all staff have been recently reviewed because of the many teachers new to the school. The roles of the subject co-ordinators are now clearly defined but, apart from the key co-ordinators, they have no opportunities to observe and evaluate teaching and learning in their subjects. This has been recognised by the headteacher and plans are in place to develop their roles more fully. The co-ordinator for special educational needs gives very good support to staff. She gives advice and assistance to class teachers to help them write and implement pupils' individual plans. The co-ordinator also plays an important part in assessing pupils' difficulties when they are first identified as needing additional help. The current school policy is detailed and reflects the school's current practice, but the co-ordinator has a clear understanding of the 2001 Code of Practice and is preparing to review the school's policy to bring procedures and practice into line with the new requirements as soon as possible.

41 The headteacher and governors work together closely and are managing the issues brought about by the changing status of the school very well. There is clear direction for the work of the school, ensuring that strategic decisions determine the financial and educational development of the school. The school works closely with the bursar to ensure that all decisions relating to the budget are closely linked to the development plan, are manageable and that the principles of "best value for money" are applied rigorously. The school has very good plans to use the extra money received for building work associated with its changing status and the grants from the Education Action Zone are used very effectively for the benefit of all pupils. This extra money means that there was a larger than normal surplus in the last financial year, but this is already being used well, for example, to provide the extra resources for pupils moving into Year 5 in September. These extra finances are used very well for specific projects, for example, the Education Action Zone provides support for the "Breakfast Club" which is having a positive impact on pupils' attendance and the very good provision for pupils' personal development. The staff meet regularly, both formally and informally, to discuss curriculum matters and to evaluate the progress being made in all aspects of school life.

42 The headteacher, staff and governors are all involved in preparing the school development plan. This working document is fully discussed before being adopted as the action plan for future years. It is a very effective document, which clearly identifies the priorities and targets to be tackled and guides the work of the school. It takes into account the changing status of the school and educational priorities are closely linked to financial planning. These include the development of more time for co-ordinators to check on the quality of teaching and learning across the school. The school knows its strengths and areas for development and has a very good grasp on how to improve. All staff work hard to improve

their own performance and the educational opportunities presented to pupils. The school has clear targets for improvements. For example, the school is aware that further resources are required for information and communication technology to allow pupils to use their skills in classrooms and so support work in other subjects.

43 There are sufficient appropriately qualified and experienced teachers. All teachers have job descriptions and they are clear about their responsibilities and those of their colleagues. All staff are trained for the age range of pupils at this school. Staff training is linked to priorities in the school plans for the future, which has focused recently on the development of literacy and numeracy. Arrangements for performance management are in place and meet statutory requirements. The school administrative staff and bursar make a valuable contribution to the efficient running of the school.

44 Accommodation is good. There is sufficient space for the current number of pupils and the range of specialist areas in addition to classrooms allows for all aspects of the curriculum to be taught. For example, there is a large, well used hall for assemblies and physical education, as well as a large playground and field. There is a well stocked new computer suite to accommodate around 30 pupils at a time, an attractive library, as well as a number of other small areas where pupils and staff can work. All of the available space is used well. The buildings are well maintained by the caretaker and cleaning staff and there is no evidence of litter or graffiti.

45 Learning resources in general are satisfactory. They are good in English, mathematics, and science and they are used well. Of particular note is the number of books available so that in literacy lessons there are several copies of the teacher's "big book". This is especially beneficial for pupils who need extra help to follow the text and learning support assistants use these effectively to involve all pupils in learning activities. However, there are not enough resources in history to be able to teach all elements of this subject. For example, computer software is lacking and there are too few historical objects for pupils to compare changes in lifestyles. This contributes to the lower attainment in history of Year 4 pupils.

46 The school benefits from external sources of funding, such as the Education Action Zone. Money is spent wisely and is linked to the school's priorities for development. The headteacher, bursar and governors apply the principles of "best value" rigorously. There is very good leadership and management and very good relationships in school. Expenditure is higher than the national average but the quality of education provided in most classes means that the school gives good value for money.

47 WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to further improve the quality of education, standards and progress in the school, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

Raise pupils' attainment further by ensuring that the curriculum provides more opportunities for pupils to use their skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology in the foundation subjects (art and design, design and technology, history, geography, music). Do this by:

providing sufficient classroom resources to allow pupils to use their developing skills in information and communication technology in all subjects of the National Curriculum;

ensuring that teachers plan to use pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology in all subjects;

extending the observation of teaching and learning so that all subject co-ordinators can evaluate pupils' use of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills in their subject and so contribute more effectively to the raising of standards;

ensuring that the policy for marking pupils' work and setting achievable written targets, including developing pupils' independent learning skills, is fully implemented;

for a minority of teachers, raising expectations of what pupils are capable of so that the good presentation of work by some pupils seen during the inspection is extended to all classes.

(Paragraphs 4, 7, 18, 28, 34, 42, 45, 69, 72, 77, 78, 79, 85, 86, 90, 93, 94, 99, 103, 104, 106, 107, 108, 114, 122, 123)

NB This key issue has already been identified by the headteacher as the next major step forward.

In addition to the key issues above, governors should include the following issue as part of the action plan:

Ensure that the reports to parents contain sufficient information on pupils' attainment and progress in all subjects.

(Paragraphs 38, 39)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	66
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	29

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	18	27	19	0	0	0
Percentage	2	28	41	29	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	55	275
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		115

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	12	136

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	20

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.2
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	35	41	76

National Curriculum Test/Task Results	Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	29	30
	Girls	30	34
	Total	59	64
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (83)	84 (71)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)

Teachers' Assessments	English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	29	34
	Girls	31	36
	Total	60	70
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79 (83)	92 (85)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	11
Black – African heritage	6
Black – other	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	11
Chinese	0
White	198
Any other minority ethnic group	15

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	5	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.5
Average class size	22

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	20
Total aggregate hours worked per week	538

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	36
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	68
Number of pupils per FTE adult	12

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000 - 2001
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	£
Total income	805,880
Total expenditure	774,704
Expenditure per pupil	2,500
Balance brought forward from previous year	21,911
Balance carried forward to next year	53,087

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	14
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	10
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	266
Number of questionnaires returned	39

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	31	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	62	36	0	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	56	44	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	44	23	5	5
The teaching is good.	72	26	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	41	8	5	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	85	12	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	82	18	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	54	33	10	3	0
The school is well led and managed.	67	30	3	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	67	30	3	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	44	41	5	0	10

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

48 The school offers two terms of part-time and one term of full-time nursery experience. Children later transfer to the reception classes on a full time basis. During the time of the inspection, 14 new children started in the nursery part time and 23 children moved to full time arrangements. Fourteen children moved to the reception classes.

Personal, social and emotional development

49 Teaching is very good in this area of learning and helps all children to achieve well, particularly in the nursery. By the end of the Foundation Stage, all children are well on course to meet the targets in the national guidelines in their personal, social and emotional development. Many children enter the nursery with weak skills, but they respond very well to the secure and caring environment. A large part of the induction to the nursery is about how to use the different areas and the toys. There is a very good emphasis on helping children to become familiar with their surroundings. They generally enjoy working with adults and other children. Several children are still at the stage of solitary play and do not yet have the confidence to play with other children. It can be seen from those who have had more time in the nursery that children quickly become confident.

50 Throughout the Foundation Stage, children are helped to take turns, share toys, and show consideration for each other. One of the many strengths is the way in which staff and children very quickly form a harmonious group. This is because children learn well through the good relationships and the good adult examples of co-operation. Children are interested in what they do. The more confident children are keen to be involved and actively seek opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding. All adults have high expectations of behaviour and children respond well to this. The good routines and clear guidance support children in doing things for themselves, as well as being sensitive to the needs of others.

Communication, language and literacy

51 Teaching is good and particular strengths are seen in the management of children and good relationships. Children enter the nursery with poorly developed skills in this area of learning but achieve well in listening and satisfactorily in speaking. Some children in the nursery and reception classes speak clearly using full sentences well. They communicate information clearly in formal and informal situations. For example, a good response from children is seen at snack time when they speak politely to each other as they collect and pass the snacks around. They listen to an adult read and are encouraged to share their ideas. They show good interest in what the soft toy did during its overnight stay at someone's home. Some children are very keen to have their turn to take the soft toy home.

52 The role-play areas, where children are encouraged to play out their fantasies, are used well in the nursery and satisfactorily in the reception classes. In the nursery, children have a good opportunity to get to know the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears. They dress up, practise their lines and act out the part as the adult reads from a book. They remain interested in the activity for prolonged periods and eagerly return to the work. Opportunities in the reception classes lack sufficient guidance and this tends to leave children using the role play area without developing their literacy skills well.

53 Children who have difficulties in speaking are identified early and have individual education plans that generally support them well. Speech therapists give support as necessary. Children with special educational needs are catered for well. Children for whom English is an additional language are generally well catered for and they achieve in line with others in their year group because of the positive climate in which they learn and the wide range of activities available. Teachers provide a range of ways for children to become familiar with stories and books. In the nursery, a few children have been selected to develop their reading skills further in frequent and short sessions throughout the week. Children delight in these opportunities as they expand the story by adding their own ideas and develop early skills of prediction and expression well. Good examples are seen in the early morning sessions in reception classes, when children select a book, look at the pictures and pretend to read by themselves or with a friend.

54 Most children in the Foundation Stage have a limited experience of books. They are interested in stories and generally read from memory well. They know how to hold a book the right way up, to start from the beginning and to turn pages. When asked about the book they generally offer some ideas about the story or pictures. At times, they respond with enjoyment. In whole class work the repetitious phrases and rhyme support some children well in helping them to remember the lines. However, many do not pretend to read or talk about the book but sit and listen to the adult. In the reception classes, this weakness continues and a significant number do not recognise letters, words or letter sounds, even though they have been learning specific letters and key words in other activities. They avoid print because they do not consider themselves readers. Teachers provide satisfactory opportunities for very young children to make marks, draw lines and shapes to support early writing skills. Children generally hold pencils well. From samples of work it is evident that some older children produce clear and reasonably well formed letters as they write. A few children make good use of initial letters when they write a sentence.

Mathematical development

55 Teaching is good. Children have poor knowledge, understanding and skills in this area of learning when they enter the nursery. It is evident from the older children in the nursery that children achieve well over time in relation to their prior attainment. Children continue to achieve well in the reception classes, but it could sometimes be better, particularly for the children capable of higher attainment. Sometimes insufficient account is taken of what children already know and what they need to learn next to develop their skills systematically. The majority of children do not meet the levels expected for their age by the end of the Foundation Stage.

56 Young children learn the order of the days of the week and are generally confident counting from 0 to 20. They develop an early understanding of how to use a number line as they answer questions about "before" and "after". They recognise some numbers well. Children in the reception classes count confidently from 1 to 5, 1 to 10, and 1 to 20. They learn about common shapes. A few children recall the previous work and name the shapes correctly. Some children know specific mathematical terms, such as "corners", and show good understanding when describing a shape. They talk about similarities and differences well. All children behave well. However, the majority of children do not yet have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the work to engage in detailed discussions about shape.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

57 Teaching is very good in the nursery and good in the reception classes. A major strength is in the way opportunities are planned and resourced. This is successful in helping children to notice the world around them, to talk about what they see and what they know.

Most children have poorly developed skills in this area of learning when they enter the nursery. Some children quickly take an active interest in the work. Most show developing curiosity as they become more familiar with their surroundings. Most children achieve well and are well on course to meet the level expected for their age by the end of the Foundation Stage. Nursery children have good experiences of going for walks around the school and the local area. Teachers ensure children have very good opportunities to use photographs to help identify specific places and to learn about how to keep safe. Reception children learn about animal trails and how to move quietly so as not to scare the birds. Teachers encourage children to develop language and enquiry skills well as they learn about recording their findings. Through the many exciting and useful opportunities, all children are helped to develop their curiosity, knowledge and understanding and imagination well.

58 Computer-use is planned into the curriculum well and children use a computer regularly. In the nursery, children know to set the sand timer when they take a turn at the computer. They work on letter and number recognition and counting. In general, they do not explain the work but are clear about what they need to do. They develop good early mouse control. In the reception classes, children have access to the computer suite. They use graphic software to help them work on camouflage. Children respond well to the work and show good levels of concentration. In the reception classes, children learn about stories from the Bible, such as Noah's Ark. Teaching ensures that children have a clear purpose, for example, to develop language skills, when they play with the Ark toys. Children have quiet time in which to reflect. Teachers use candlelight and music to good effect. This opportunity contributes very positively to children's spiritual and personal development.

Physical development

59 Teaching is good. A strong feature is the management of pupils. Teachers make sure that rules and the reasons for them are very clear. Routines are well established and there are high expectations of behaviour. Children enter the nursery with broadly satisfactory skills in this area of learning. Lessons are regularly timetabled and include outdoor activities. They are planned to support other areas of learning and develop children's sense of safety, space, imagination and movement well. These opportunities help children to achieve well, and they are on course to meet the levels expected for their age by the end of the Foundation Stage. Children respond cheerfully to the work and treat it seriously. They use the climbing frame with developing agility and care. They enjoy playing together and are careful not to knock into each other. They use the handcart for pulling and pushing. However, the school does not have any wheeled vehicles to help children develop balance and co-ordination further.

60 Throughout the Foundation Stage, teachers provide a good range of activities to develop fine motor skills. Children handle pencils, brushes and glue sticks reasonably well. They use scissors with care and many develop cutting skills well in relation to their prior attainment. For example, they thread beads on laces and sticks and make towers using small bricks. They work with small pegs and peg boards with good concentration. Children work with malleable materials, such as playdough, and use rolling and cutting tools carefully. They enjoy the work. Very few children need support when they change for hall work. They respond well to keeping their footwear and clothing neat.

Creative development

61 Teaching is good. It is clear from teachers' planning and a wealth of photographic evidence that there is a range of interesting activities to help children achieve well in this area of learning. Most children are likely to almost meet the levels expected by the end of the Foundation Stage. A few are likely to meet them well.

62 Children enter the nursery with very limited experiences of this work. They have good opportunities to experiment with colour, shape and texture through painting and collage with paper, fabrics and other materials. In the nursery, children collect natural materials to weave. They make models, such as giant bees, and use fabric paints to make puppets. Precise skills to help children handle glue and paint are taught well. There is an appropriate emphasis on helping children to have some independence in selecting resources and organising their work once they have understood and become familiar with what is expected of them. Some good work is produced when linked to educational visits, such as the visit to Blenheim Palace and the butterfly masks. These first hand experiences stimulate children's imagination well and raise their awareness of the wider world. Reception children learn about camouflage and produce simple but effective pictures to illustrate the idea well. They make models using cardboard tubes and paper. It is clear that their cutting and making skills are at a very early stage of development. Children have some experience of music through singing rhymes and simple songs. Some children sing together well and do so cheerfully.

63 Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. The quality of teaching is now good overall with consistent high quality teaching seen in the nursery. The key issue, which was to give language development a high priority, has been addressed well. A strength is the emphasis on involving parents to support the programmes used in the Foundation Stage. The initiatives have clearly had a positive impact and help children achieve well in their personal, social and emotional development and in aspects of communication, language and literacy. The Foundation Stage co-ordinator has been in post for a few months and brings to the role considerable expertise and commitment. She has been instrumental in planning a good curriculum which is relevant to the needs of the children. The Foundation Stage staff work well together and provide good quality support. Regular meetings are held to ensure initiatives, such as language intervention, are implemented thoroughly. These are clearly effective in raising the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom.

ENGLISH

64 Pupils' attainment in reading and writing in Years 2 and 4 is below the level expected for their age. Although standards in English at seven years of age are lower than found in the last inspection, mainly because of the higher number of pupils who have special educational needs, pupils are achieving well when compared with their previous attainment, particularly in speaking and listening and reading. In the 2001 National Curriculum tests for seven year olds, standards were close to those achieved by similar schools in reading and writing, but the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, nearly 60 per cent, lowered the standards achieved against national averages. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans and in learning the skills, knowledge and understanding in English relative to their ability and prior attainment.

65 Standards in speaking and listening are below the national average by the age of seven, but the oldest pupils in the school are achieving standards close to those expected for their age, particularly in listening skills. This represents good achievement from when pupils entered Year 1 from the reception class, where speaking and listening skills were identified as being low, with many children having very restricted vocabulary. Throughout the school, teachers use the whole class teaching part of the Literacy Hour effectively to engage pupils in discussion and they constantly seek to improve both the pupils' vocabulary and ability to reply to questions with an extended answer. However, role play and drama are not used sufficiently to further extend and develop pupils' speaking skills.

66 In lessons, most pupils in Year 2 listen carefully to the teacher and respond to questions with relevant answers, but pupils do not explain or develop their ideas well enough and many still respond to questions with one word answers. For example, in a Year 2 class, most pupils found it very difficult to describe an occasion when another person had upset them and how they felt. The class teacher had to lead them through the process with pointed questions. Only two or three pupils in the group were able to give full explanations of both the events and the emotions they had. In Year 4, most pupils listen very well to their teacher and are more confident to contribute answers to direct questions in the closing sessions of literacy lessons and opening class discussions, but they have to be encouraged constantly by their teacher to answer questions in more detail. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are given good support, either by the class teacher or a learning support assistant and this enables these pupils to make good progress in lessons.

67 Throughout the school, standards in reading, as measured by the proportion of pupils achieving national expectations, are adversely affected by the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. However, although standards in reading at the age of seven and in Year 4 are below average they are improving, with most pupils achieving the standards they are capable of. This reflects the positive effect of the response the school has made to develop reading skills through, for example, the "Read Away" project. The results of this work are beginning to have an effect on the younger pupils in Year 1 and Year 2. In Year 2, pupils of all abilities enjoy reading, although lower attaining pupils are hesitant and do not recognise many words. Their understanding of how to use letter sounds so that they can work out new words is not secure, but they do use pictures in the book to try and work out the story. The higher attaining pupils read with expression, are fluent and able to work out unfamiliar words quickly.

68 Pupils in Year 4 achieve standards below that expected nationally, but they too enjoy reading. The higher attaining pupils are fluent and expressive readers. They use punctuation well and respond to questions about the characters in the book. They use a dictionary well, but their explanation of how to use the index and contents pages of non-fiction books to find information is not clear. Lower attaining pupils enjoy reading out of school, but are hesitant and lack fluency when reading aloud. They know how to use letter names and sounds to work out the unfamiliar words, but lack confidence in saying the words they work out. The specific projects such as "Read Away", have a positive effect on the rate at which pupils acquire basic reading skills and this work is supported well by group reading in literacy lessons. However, outside these sessions there is not enough emphasis placed on developing the reading skills of individual pupils, particularly in Years 3 and 4 where, apart from library books, pupils do not regularly take books home to read with parents and to practise their skills. Reading records give teachers basic information about pupils' progress, but are not always detailed enough to give good guidance on what a pupil can do and what they need to learn next.

69 Standards in writing are below the national expectations throughout the school. The school has identified this weakness, has analysed test data carefully and put in place strategies such as the "Writers' Club" for higher attaining pupils in Year 4 to address the weaknesses and standards, particularly for these pupils, are improving. In Year 1, many pupils have a limited range of words that they spell correctly so few pupils write in sentences. However, in Year 2 pupils make good progress so that by the age of seven, the majority use full stops and capital letters in their writing and organise their work in a series of short sentences that develop an idea logically. Most pupils write legibly, but the size and shape of letters is inconsistent and very few pupils tackle or are expected to write in a joined script.

70 Pupils in Year 4 write more extended passages and higher attaining pupils produce interesting pieces of work using a range of vocabulary and powerful adjectives well to capture

the interest of the reader. However, spelling is often weak amongst even the older pupils in Year 4, although they use a wider range of punctuation correctly. When working, pupils do not seem to be in the habit of checking their work thoroughly, using a dictionary regularly or getting a partner to check their work. The marking of work does not always consistently tackle weak spelling and punctuation. This often reflects the expectations of some teachers, which are higher in some classes than in others. Some teachers implement the school handwriting and presentation policy much more effectively than others. The best examples, in some classes in Years 2 and 3, give pupils clear targets and insist on high quality presentation following the school's policy and this has a positive effect upon the quality of the writing and spelling.

71 The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and is good overall with some very good teaching in Years 2, 3 and 4. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection. Teachers have good subject knowledge enabling them to use the national guidance for literacy effectively to plan lessons that, for the most part, are well matched to the various learning needs of their pupils. In the very good lessons, teachers develop pupils' basic skills very well using the text as the main focus for the lesson. For example, in a Year 4 lesson, the teacher introduced a dictionary using an exercise drawing on words from the text. A consistent strength of the teaching throughout the school is the management of pupils. Consequently, pupils' behaviour is very good and they listen very attentively during introductions and closing sessions of lessons. This helps them understand the lesson and what they have to do in the group activities.

72 Learning support assistants support pupils very well in this transition from whole class to group work activities and make sure that lower attaining pupils or pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language know what they have to do. Pupils with special educational needs also get good support from learning support assistants in whole class parts of lessons. They are helped to understand questions and follow texts which means they understand what teachers are aiming to teach them. The consistent approach to managing behaviour is also reflected in the consistent sharing of learning objectives with pupils at the beginning of lessons. This makes sure that they know what they are learning and how it fits into previous work. In the majority of lessons, group activities are well matched to the pupils of different abilities, but where teaching is satisfactory, the match is not as consistent for all pupils in the class, so these pupils do not consolidate what they have learnt in the whole class parts of the lesson. Resources for English are good and used well by teachers in lessons to involve all pupils in whole class sessions. However, they do not have sufficient opportunity to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills in this subject or in other subjects, such as history, geography or information and communication technology. The opportunities to use and apply literacy skills are too infrequent to support pupils properly in their systematic development of English in its widest sense.

73 The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The co-ordinator has been in post for less than a year, but by observing lessons and by careful analysis of National Curriculum test results is fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses in both the teaching and learning. An action plan has been drawn up with the help of the headteacher to set in place strategies to tackle these with initiatives such as the "Read Away" project and the "Writers' Club". All staff throughout the school are being well supported in their efforts to raise standards in English.

MATHEMATICS

74 In Year 2, pupils' attainment in mathematics is below the level expected for their age. In the 2001 National Curriculum tests standards were well below the national average. Few pupils reached the higher levels and this had an adverse effect on the overall school grade.

There has been a significant rise in standards over the past few years and the 2001 results are a slight improvement on the previous year. For example, the results are average when compared with similar schools. The main reason for the well below average result in the tests is the lower number of pupils reaching the higher levels and the significant number of pupils who have special educational needs, in Year 2, who achieve well compared with their previous attainment but do not reach national averages. Teacher assessments reflect the test results and show that most pupils achieve well when compared to their previous attainment.

75 Standards attained by pupils in Year 4 are below the level expected for their age. However, virtually all pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. The school has successfully established a good climate in which to learn. Pupils who have special educational needs and those pupils for whom English is an additional language achieve similar standards to other pupils in their year group. This shows good progress when compared with their previous attainment. There is no significant difference in the performance of girls and boys. No pupils have been identified by the school as gifted and talented in mathematics.

76 From a young age pupils learn number facts to 10 and use addition and subtraction in mental arithmetic well. They count accurately in 1s, 2s, 5s and 10s forwards and backwards. In Year 2, pupils continue to learn about number and use their knowledge and understanding well when they work on money problems. They know the place value of tens and units, and develop an understanding of specific vocabulary reasonably well, such as "heavy", "light" and "greater than". Older pupils learn from previous work well. They successfully use the "counting on" method to find the difference between two numbers. Pupils know how to use "partition" and "recombine" methods when they work with 2 or 3 digit numbers. They explain their working out clearly and often with good accuracy. By Year 4, pupils successfully build on previous work to further their knowledge and understanding of number. They learn how to use written methods to solve bigger addition problems and many work with three digit numbers well. From an early age pupils show an improvement in pencil control and forming numbers. There are few reversals of figures and some work is very well presented.

77 Pupils learn about shape, space and measure. Young pupils learn about a range of shapes, including octagons and hexagons. They know how to measure length using centimetres. They use balances accurately to find out about objects that are "heavy" and "light". Older pupils know halves and simple fractions and use their knowledge effectively when telling the time and working with different measurements. They handle data when they work on sorting and classifying hair and eye colour. They use tables and pie charts, sometimes using information and communication technology to support their work. Pupils generally achieve better in number than they do in the other areas of mathematics. However, they do not have sufficient opportunity to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills in this subject or in other subjects, such as design and technology or information and communication technology. The opportunities to use and apply mathematics are too infrequent to support pupils properly in their systematic development of mathematics in its widest sense.

78 Improvements since the previous inspection include a higher quality of teaching and pupils' very positive attitudes to the work. The school's high priority to raise self-esteem and to help pupils see themselves as high achievers is not as well established in pupils' written work and presentation of work in some classes. However, the quality of teaching is good with some very good features. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed. The many strengths in teaching are consistent throughout the school. Very good use is made of a commercial programme of study and the associated planning sheets. Pupils are managed

very well and lessons are well organised. Routines are well established and pupils are very clear about what is expected of them. Resources are satisfactory and well used to support pupils' learning. Teaching successfully creates a purposeful atmosphere in which pupils are motivated well. Lessons start promptly and the different sections of a lesson link well to previous work. In particular, the mental and oral work at the beginning of lessons and the discussion session at the end of lessons are used well.

79 In most lessons, teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and their explanations are clear. Their enthusiasm for the work clearly excites pupils. Pupils respond well to the activities and often show good levels of mental agility and accuracy. They concentrate well. All pupils listen and look carefully during teachers' demonstrations of how to work out a problem. This helps them know exactly what they need to do, particularly in terms of place value and presentation. Pupils often have good opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills during the introduction to the lesson. In general, opportunities for pupils to develop independence in collecting their own resources and organising how they are to work are too infrequent. In addition, there are few classroom based computers to support pupils' learning and to extend their learning in mathematics by using information and communication technology facilities such as spread sheets.

80 Assessment in most lessons is good and helps pupils to improve their work. Pupils learn through teachers' demonstration of how to present work well to help them understand what they are doing and to achieve greater accuracy. Pupils often apply this learning well in their written work during the lessons seen. However, the marking of work does not always alert pupils to their errors or encourage them to make corrections. For example, pupils who reverse figures continue to do so for many months. However, when receiving guidance from learning support assistants, in group work, they make better progress and this assistance is valuable. This usually helps most of the pupils who learn more slowly to keep up with the pace of the lesson and to maintain confidence. However, learning support assistants are not always used effectively, particularly during the introduction to lessons, and so pupils do not benefit as much as they could in these sessions.

81 The National Numeracy Strategy is effectively taught in lessons but does not contribute to pupils' learning across the curriculum as much as it should. Literacy skills are used reasonably well in speaking and listening but not as effectively in writing skills and these do not develop well through mathematics. The subject co-ordinator has been responsible for mathematics for just over a term and is also the deputy headteacher. In this short time, the observation of teaching and learning has been undertaken. This has contributed to strengthening the way in which lessons are delivered and in giving the subject leader an informed view of the quality of teaching throughout the school.

SCIENCE

82 In Year 2 and Year 4, pupils' attainment is in line with the levels expected for their age. The school has maintained standards since the previous inspection. Pupils' attainment is improving because of the focus the school has placed on the investigative and experimental aspects of science, particularly for the oldest pupils in the school. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and they make good progress. As a result, there is a good capacity for further improvement. During the inspection, there was no significant variation in the attainment of boys and girls.

83 In Years 1 and 2, pupils experiment with different materials and have a sound knowledge of the requirements for growth in plants. Pupils understand that plants need sun and water to grow and their work shows that they have a good understanding of the requirements for life. In Year 2, this work is developed well and is extended to the human life style. Pupils keep their own exercise diary for a week and recognise that a balanced diet is important for healthy growth. Pupils' work shows they record the results of their experiments in appropriate ways. For example, they write simple accounts of their experiments with forces and their comments such as, "Small pushes move light things. Big pushes move heavy things", show they understand the concept behind the experiments. They conduct simple experiments using ice to measure how quickly it melts in different locations in the classroom. Their understanding of melting is developed well when they experiment with melting butter and chocolate and describe what happens to them when they cool. They use their knowledge to record different types of materials found in the classroom and they record their favourite fruits in a graph in a good link to mathematics. In their recording of simple experiments, they sometimes make predictions and indicate why the test is fair.

84 Teachers' planning ensures that pupils cover all the science curriculum. However, the shortage of resources in the classrooms means that information and communication technology is not used as often as it could be to support and extend pupils' research and recording skills. The focus of the topic during the inspection was using different materials to test their insulating properties. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils were set the task of using different materials to wrap around containers holding some ice. By taking temperatures at set intervals, they recorded which material kept the ice cool for the longest time. Pupils in Year 3 develop their scientific knowledge and improve their skills when studying the properties of magnets. They linked this work well when experimenting to find which type of magnet was the strongest. Pupils understand the concept of a fair test and explain that only one element in an experiment is changed to make the test fair.

85 The good science teaching and the range of stimulating scientific activities contribute well to the improving quality of pupils' learning. In the lessons seen and in discussions with pupils it is clear that their attitudes and behaviour are prime reasons why their learning is improving. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject contribute to the well planned provision, such as the improving use of investigations to encourage pupils to use scientific skills in a practical way. In Year 2 work, there are good examples of how to record the results of experiments with materials, forces and the way substances change when subjected to heat. In Year 4, pupils' understanding of the human body is improved when they study the skeleton and how the heart works. Most teachers include positive comments when marking but do not consistently provide precise guidance on what pupils need to do in order to improve. This makes it more difficult for some teachers to assess how well pupils learn from their mistakes.

86 The school has responded to the latest changes in the National Curriculum and introduced new guidance for teachers. The recently appointed science co-ordinator provides good leadership and undertakes a regular audit of the subject. In conjunction with the deputy headteacher who was the previous co-ordinator, there are well established plans to continue the observation of teaching and learning and there are regular checks on teachers' planning and pupils' work to ensure that all aspects of the subject are covered. Resources for the subject are good and used well to improve pupils' learning, for example, when testing circuits, magnetic fields or how forces affect objects. However, there are few classroom based computers to support pupils' learning and to extend their independent research skills by using information and communication technology facilities such as encyclopaedias and the Internet. However, the curriculum for science covers all the required aspects and ensures that pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make good gains in learning as they move through the school. The good

attention to the use of appropriate scientific language and the use of charts and graphs ensures that science makes a positive contribution to the development of basic literacy and numeracy skills.

ART AND DESIGN

87 In Year 2, pupils' attainment is in line with the level expected for their age. Younger pupils in the school make better progress than older ones, because they are given a wider range of stimulating activities such as observational drawings, experimenting with colours, mark making with a variety of tools and model making. The support given by teachers and support staff is good and encourages the pupils to make choices and talk about their work. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language make satisfactory progress.

88 In Year 4, pupils' attainment is below what would be expected and they make unsatisfactory progress. This is mainly because the recent focus on improving pupils' basic skills has meant that they do not have a sufficiently rich and varied programme of study in art. They do not have the opportunity to refine their work, use textiles, make collages using a range of materials and experiment with print making. There is no evidence of skills such as sketching, shading, cutting and brush control being progressively built on in Years 3 and 4. Pupils have too few opportunities to discuss their views about pieces of artwork and insufficient links are made with other subjects such as literacy and information and communication technology in classrooms. Pupils have limited knowledge of famous artists by the time they are in Year 4. However, the displays of pupils' best work are sensitively displayed and reflect the value that is placed on their achievements and involvement. Pupils enjoy their art and design work.

89 The school uses some of the national guidelines for art and design, but they have not been in place long enough to raise pupils' attainment in Year 4. Information and communication technology is not used very often but Year 2 pupils have successfully used a commercial program to create interesting pictures in the style of Mondrian. Pupils in Year 1 paint portraits of special people, however their brush control is poor. In Year 2, pupils use crayons to colour cartoon illustrations and family crests. However, drawings are immature in style and often lack care in presentation. Pupils in Year 3 make effective use of pastels to create a firework effect picture and draw self portraits.

90 The annual "Creative Arts Project" is a positive addition to the art and design curriculum, providing opportunities to link poetry and drama and allow all pupils to have hands on experience using a variety of media such as clay, stone and textiles. Artists from the community work with pupils on themes such as "Father Thames". This project was very popular, it had a positive effect on pupils' attainment and resulted in a quality stone sculpture of a totem pole and a ceramic wall display. The subject co-ordinator is very new to post and the role is presently under developed. However, there are sound plans to develop the subject, for example, by undertaking a full audit of all resources and providing opportunities to observe teaching and learning and so raise standards further.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

91 Pupils' attainment in Years 2 and 4 is in line with the level expected for their ages. Pupils make satisfactory progress because the work planned in lessons develops and extends their design and technology skills. Pupils develop a satisfactory understanding of the technical language of the subject and are aware of health and safety issues. However, they do not always have the opportunity to evaluate their design and product and consider how they would improve it. Sometimes not enough time is allocated to the subject for pupils to

complete a task to an acceptable quality and links with other subjects are not always identified in teachers' planning.

92 Teaching is satisfactory and in Year 4 it is good. However, throughout the school pupils do not have the chance to develop independent learning skills by generating their own ideas for products, developing and planning what they need to do and what materials and tools they may need. Most lessons are teacher directed and this results in pupils following a "worksheet recipe" and does not allow them to try out their own ideas. There are examples of good practice in school, for example, in a good lesson in Year 4, pupils measured card accurately and used a lever to make a moving component for a storybook. Good open-ended questioning prompted pupils to consider their model, evaluate and alter their designs in the light of what they had learnt. Their independent learning was a focus of the lesson and they made good progress.

93 Although pupils have limited experience of the use of resistant materials such as wood and plastic, this is improving. For example, pupils in Year 2 use balsa wood to make a simple vehicle with a chassis and axles. They successfully draw their design from different viewpoints but their designs and finished products are often untidy and not well presented. Year 3 pupils know that air can be used to make things move and in their "Moving Monsters" project they used balloons and pneumatic systems to create a pop up figure. In Year 4, pupils carefully made a card lever that was going to be improved upon and incorporated into a moving storybook image. However, throughout the school the recording completed by pupils is often untidy.

94 Teachers' planning is satisfactory and the aim of each lesson is shared with pupils to help them understand the progress they are making. However, the use of information and communication technology in classrooms is underdeveloped, mainly because of a lack of resources. Pupils' attitudes to design and technology are good. They concentrate well, show interest and can work individually or co-operatively in pairs. Resources are satisfactory to deliver the curriculum, however there is a lack of sufficient construction kits and control mechanisms that would enhance the delivery of the subject. The co-ordinator is new to the post and has good plans to improve the role which is presently underdeveloped.

GEOGRAPHY

95 Pupils' attainment in geography in Year 2 is in line with the level expected for their age. Similarly, pupils' attainment in Year 4 is in line with expectations for their age and they make good progress. This represents continued development and improvement since the last full inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make good progress in developing geographical skills and knowledge.

96 Pupils in Year 2 develop an awareness of their immediate locality and identify features of the area in terms of land usage. This knowledge is acquired as a result of the good progress made in developing mapping skills by which pupils appreciate the distinction between physical and human geography. They are confident in recording physical and human features of a landscape with symbols and represented by keys. Pupils use these skills in drawing a plan view of a landscape, but do not use co-ordinates in work on location. Nevertheless, these skills are complemented by, and in turn enrich, pupils' study of contrasting locations, including geographical features of Oxford and an island location. Pupils express their views on the attractive and unattractive features of these different environments and this work supports the school's strategy for developing pupils' literacy.

97 Pupils' skills develop progressively in Years 3 and 4. Pupils use local maps to identify sites of recreational, educational and commercial economic activity. They use their

developing geographical understanding to focus on key physical and human features of the Australian landscape, including the Great Barrier Reef and the Sydney Opera House. Pupils have a detailed knowledge of different climatic regions. They distinguish between polar, tropical and equatorial regions in terms of climate, flora and fauna and know how animals have adapted to these different conditions.

98 Pupils show interest in their work and many respond in a lively manner, keen to share their opinions and conclusions. This has a positive impact on learning, as does the good teaching. Lessons are well planned and encourage an investigative approach to geographical studies. For example, a study of Chembakolli begins with pupils identifying key geographical questions to be considered. However, in some lessons there is not enough geographical content. For example, in Year 3, a recent volcanic eruption is used to explore the impact of physical geography on human lives. However, the resulting written work focuses on human reactions and feelings and does not examine the physical causes of volcanoes.

99 Teachers show good subject knowledge and consistent use of relevant geographical terminology, although they do not use Ordnance Survey maps enough to develop pupils' mapping skills further. Some teachers make good use of information and communication technology to make subject content and explanations more interesting. However, teachers do not plan for pupils to use computer skills in this work, such as in recording geographical data. The new co-ordinator has considerable expertise in the subject and has identified priorities in terms of resources and geographical content to ensure that standards can be raised further.

HISTORY

100 Pupils' attainment in Year 2 is close to the level expected for their age, but pupils in Year 4 are not attaining the expected levels.

101 By the age of 7, pupils know the names of some important figures from the past, such as Guy Fawkes, and can tell the story of what they did. Pupils relate these events to the present day and understand the links between them, for example, how Bonfire Night relates to Guy Fawkes and what Remembrance Day commemorates. The oldest pupils explain what they have studied and some of the activities they undertook during topics such as the Greeks. When they discuss history, pupils are enthusiastic and interested. They have positive attitudes to the subject and have clearly enjoyed the activities their teachers have planned for them. However, pupils' attainment is below that expected for their age in their understanding of how various civilizations and characters from the past have shaped the modern world.

102 The current scheme of work, based upon the national guidance, was introduced at the start of the current academic year and teachers' planning indicates that the full range of experiences in the national programme is now provided for all pupils through a series of topics. However, from talking to pupils it is clear that they do not have the chance to practise their literacy and information and communication technology skills in lessons.

103 The subject co-ordinator has only been in post for a few weeks, has had no opportunity to look at teachers' planning or any lessons, but has begun to identify the areas of development needed to raise pupils' standards of attainment. For example, the range of resources, such as artefacts, sets of relevant texts and computer software, is currently inadequate to teach the planned curriculum. The co-ordinator's clarity of vision for the future and the full introduction of the new scheme of work indicate that standards are set to improve.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

104 In Year 2, pupils' attainment in information and communication technology is in line with the level expected for their age. For the oldest pupils in Year 4, information and communication technology skills are rising rapidly due to the regular planned use of the well-equipped computer suite and the recently introduced whole school guidelines that give teachers a good framework for planning lessons, this was also the case in the last inspection. However, due to the lack of opportunities for pupils to use these skills in lessons other than designated subject lessons their ability to use these skills is below that expected.

105 By the age of 7, pupils open different programs and they control the mouse well. For example, they make shapes using lines and fill the spaces with colours to create pictures in the style of Mondrian. Pupils use a simple word processor, editing their writing at an appropriate level. Pupils have a particularly well developed understanding of how computers are used to control objects and functions. They plan a route and program the floor robot to follow that path. Lower attaining pupils need some help from a classroom assistant to do this, but higher attaining pupils design and write a route involving several turns and distances with no extra guidance.

106 By Year 4, pupils create particular shapes such as squares, octagons and random patterns by writing and entering commands into the computer. They create databases and graphs to represent the findings of surveys such as a food survey as part of a science investigation in Year 3. Poems and other examples of writing are reprinted using word processor programs. However, their ability to research using, for example, the Internet and to present their work with little guidance using a combination of different skills or methods of presentation such as graphs, text or pictures is less well developed.

107 The quality of teaching of skills in information and communication technology is good throughout the school. A major strength of the teaching is the very good management of pupils so that pupils' behaviour is very good in the suite or in the school hall, where teachers teach pupils how to use a floor robot. All teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge which means that tasks given to pupils are well thought out and instructions are clear so pupils know exactly what they are supposed to do. Support staff are used well to support small groups or individuals so that pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, get on with their work enthusiastically. This was demonstrated very well in a Year 2 lesson where pupils were learning how to program the floor robot. The classroom assistant worked with one group of pupils, enthusiastically giving them well timed guidance and help which enabled them to make very good progress in acquiring new skills and to achieve as well as the rest of their class. Teachers sometimes use other subjects, such as science or art, to provide the basis for teaching pupils new skills, but the use of information and communication technology within other subjects is unsatisfactory. This is partly due to the lack of reliable equipment in classrooms, but overall teachers do not consider enough how pupils can use computers in other subject lessons. This is having an adverse effect on the standards attained by older pupils who have developed secure skills, but are unable to improve and practise these skills sufficiently

108 The co-ordinator has only been in post since the start of the current academic year, but in a short time has made a good contribution to the direction of the subject. A scheme of work has been introduced based on the national guidance and the Oxfordshire Framework which will ensure that pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding across the main strands of the programme of study are developed steadily as pupils move through the school. A good action plan has been written to guide future developments. This plan accurately identifies the most important areas that need working on, such as improving the limited classroom-based

resources so pupils can use their skills in lessons, in addition to the two sessions each class has in the computer suite each week. Teachers use the suite well to teach subject skills and those staff who have “interactive whiteboards” in their classrooms use these effectively in lessons to show pupils what to do.

MUSIC

109 Standards attained by pupils in Year 2 and in Year 4 are below the levels expected for pupils' ages. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in some parts of lessons but their development of skills is unsatisfactory over time. This is because essential skills are not developed systematically and pupils have too few musical experiences.

110 Pupils who have special educational needs and those pupils for whom English is an additional language achieve in line with their year group. There is no significant difference in the performance of girls and boys. No pupils have been identified as gifted and talented.

111 Pupils in Year 2 know the musical terms “wooden, metal and skins” and identify the instruments within these categories correctly. They make slow, fast and loud sounds and develop an early understanding of how sounds can be made. With guidance and support they explain the work clearly. In Year 3, pupils learn about keeping a steady pulse and performing a repeated pattern. They generally know and understand that, for instance, the term “ostinato” means a repeated pattern, but barely recall work from the previous lesson. One pupil remembers the term “quaver” and another “crochet” but nothing more. They keep the pulse of music well as they tap, clap and chant. In Year 4, pupils learn how to put together a range of sounds to interpret a picture. They show developing skills in working collaboratively. Within the mixed group work there is good support from the pupils capable of higher attainment when helping others. These pupils show a good sense of maturity and interest in the work. This encourages the rest of the group to improve their concentration and remain productive throughout the activity. Some pupils are very clear about how to use the instruments. All are keen to experiment and achieve sounds which tell the story in the picture. Pupils show a good sense of creativity and imagination in this work. Pupils perform at the end of year concerts and sing well in assembly. They sing in tune and enthusiastically.

112 Pupils do not develop their knowledge and understanding of specific vocabulary well, including naming the instruments. They do not have sufficient time, in lessons, to practise in preparation for performance. Throughout the school, pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills are not developed sufficiently well to systematically build on their previous learning. The previous inspection made no mention of standards in music and since then the school has concentrated its efforts on raising standards in English and mathematics as a priority. The result is that standards in music are not as high as they should be.

113 The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Pupils are well managed, lessons are organised with appropriate resources and routines are clearly established. This helps pupils to be clear about what is expected. Lessons have a clear sense of purpose. Pupils listen carefully and concentrate reasonably well. They have opportunities to develop collaborative skills in small group work and generally make good use of these opportunities. Momentum is lost when teachers' introductions to lessons are too long when explaining the work to be covered. Pupils lose interest and this does not help them to recall work. In almost all lessons, teaching did not challenge all pupils through well graded tasks to enable them to develop essential skills systematically.

114 Some literacy skills are developed satisfactorily in music, for example, their listening skills. However, there is a weakness in developing speaking skills for all pupils and the

contribution of numeracy and information and communication technology to the subject is unsatisfactory.

115 The subject leader has been in post for just over a term. Teachers' planning is detailed but does not take sufficient account of developing pupils' understanding of the subject from a low starting point. The school improvement plan includes music as an area for development later this year. Teachers are reasonably confident in teaching the subject but would benefit from knowledge of how best to meet the needs of all pupils well. The extra-curricular music opportunities are in the very early stages of organisation.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

116 In Years 2 and 4, pupils' attainment in physical education is in line with the levels expected for their ages. Standards have been maintained since the last full inspection and pupils continue to develop their physical skills as they progress through the school.

117 In Years 1 and 2, pupils practise a variety of gymnastic movements on the floor and then transfer them safely when using apparatus. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, pupils created short sequences on the floor. They stretched, curled and moved smoothly from one shape to another. They then developed this sequence of movements when travelling along different pieces of equipment showing careful control of their bodies. These skills are developed further in Year 3. For example, pupils progressively move from balancing on larger parts of the body such as the stomach, to using smaller parts of the body such as shoulders or the head, and they use different apparatus well. Pupils in a Year 1 lesson developed good balancing skills when moving and holding beanbags in different positions. In the same activity pupils made good progress in passing skills. In all lessons pupils warm up energetically and follow instructions safely. They demonstrate a good awareness of space when moving at different speeds and when changing direction.

118 Progress in a wider range of skills continues effectively throughout the school, notably in dance activities involving the interpretation of music through movement. For example, pupils vary the speed and actions of their body movement in responding to variations in the volume and tempo of the music. Of particular note was the variation in movements of pupils' arms and legs suggesting the actions of birds in landing and flying and as the music changed from gentle to a more vigorous tempo. All pupils go swimming at some time during the year. Most pupils in Year 4 swim with confidence across the width of the pool using a float or arm bands. Several pupils remove these aids during a lesson and are successful at swimming a width using the crawl stroke. Many pupils achieve well and are close to being able to swim a width before leaving the school.

119 All pupils respond well in physical education lessons. They are enthusiastic and well behaved. They show sustained effort in lessons, carrying out instructions and persevere with tasks. Pupils show sensitivity towards each other's strengths and weaknesses. Above all they are not inhibited in experimenting with movement. This is largely due to the good organisation of teachers. Overall teachers have high expectations of the pupils, act as good examples in demonstrations and are positive when evaluating and commenting on pupils' performance. This encourages pupils to try their best in reflecting on and improving their efforts. However, in one lesson there was insufficient emphasis on correct landing skills. Some pupils are not given responsibility for handling apparatus at the start and end of lessons or, as in one lesson for a Year 3 class, there is insufficient attention given to safety aspects when pupils handle apparatus.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

120 Standards of attainment for most pupils meet the expected requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils throughout the school show satisfactory knowledge of the Christian belief and of other faiths.

121 All pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make good progress in their acquisition of knowledge and understanding of other faiths. In Year 1, pupils enjoyed a discussion about Mohammed and the importance of his message to Muslims. They listened attentively to an explanation by the teacher about the way Muslims use their prayer mats and they were very interested in the example the teacher showed them. In Year 2, pupils study Hindu celebrations as well as Christian festivals, for example, a christening. They relate these stories well to their own experiences and write about their own special events. This was linked well to discussions about people who help them. For example, one pupil wrote a special harvest prayer, "Thank you to the farmer for the yummy food". In one lesson pupils improved their knowledge of the meaning of words that feature highly in faiths such as "forgiveness" when they discussed events in their own lives when they had forgiven someone else or been forgiven themselves.

122 In Year 3, pupils extend their knowledge of other world faiths in their studies of celebrations such as Diwali, Ramadan and Eid. In lessons in Year 3, pupils study stories from the Bible and a very good lesson about Paul's journeys made pupils think carefully about how he would have felt at being put in prison unfairly. This development of empathy with people from the past helps them to understand the importance of special festivals and events to Christians. For example, one pupil wrote, "I felt terrified in the dark prison because I did not know what would happen". In Year 4, pupils have some knowledge of both testaments in the Bible. They recount stories from the Old Testament and explain parables from the New Testament including the teachings of Jesus. They understand some of the traditions from Christianity and other faiths. For example, in a lesson on Buddhism pupils understand the main feature of Buddhist beliefs and that material wealth is unimportant to them. The task given by the teacher developed a good sense of empathy with Buddhists when they had to imagine giving up all but eight of their possessions. All pupils showed respect and care for others during the discussions to decide what particular possessions they would give up. Although pupils in Year 4 explained the topics they have studied this year there was little written work in religious education from one class which represents a missed opportunity to develop pupils' creative writing skills.

123 The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory, sometimes good and occasionally very good. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, the teacher made good use of pupils' previous learning about places of worship to remind the class of the importance of symbols and stories in different religions. The lesson moved smoothly on to the way an angel visited Mohammed and told him to teach the people to care for each other more. The response of the pupils was good as the topic was well understood and useful discussion took place. Teachers show good subject knowledge and use the opportunities when they arise to teach moral values alongside religious belief. For example, many discussions take place in a circle with the lighted candle in the "Circle of Friends", providing a special atmosphere. The recently appointed religious education co-ordinator has good plans to implement the latest guidelines for the Agreed Syllabus and to evaluate the religious education curriculum during the year. The resources for the teaching of religion are adequate and are stored by themes. However, there are few classroom computers or resources by which pupils' skills in information and communication technology could be used to extend their own research in religious education.

124 Both classroom and whole school acts of worship take place regularly and these are appropriately planned and presented. They are an important element in promoting the life of the school and developing a religious and moral awareness. For example, Year 2 pupils led

an assembly for younger pupils when they shared their stories where they imagined they were looking at the world for the first time. They used phrases such as “clouds hovering above me” that showed the careful thought they had put into their descriptions. In an assembly for Years 3 and 4, the teacher used various objects that pupils selected unseen from a bag relating to his own dog. The theme that we can all be teachers was woven very well into the idea of teaching a dog certain behaviour. Pupils listened attentively and realised the importance of patience and forgiveness when trying to show an animal or person something new. These assemblies comply with the statutory requirements of a corporate act of worship.