

INSPECTION REPORT

COLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Reading

LEA area: Reading

Unique reference number: 109779

Headteacher: Mrs Natasha Brown

Reporting inspector: Mr G. Nunn
1185

Dates of inspection: 16th – 19th September, 2002

Inspection number: 246934

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Wolseley Street
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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Joe Doak

Date of previous inspection: 10th November 1997

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1185	G. Nunn	Registered inspector	Mathematics Music	Information about the school The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well the school is led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19335	S. M. Dixon	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?
1189	S. Brown	Team inspector	Art and design Physical education Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
22157	M. Roussel	Team inspector	English Geography History Provision for pupils with special educational needs	
10053	J. Simms	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Religious education Education inclusion Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Coley Primary School is a smaller than average size primary school for pupils aged from three to eleven years. It is situated near the centre of Reading in Berkshire. The school serves a localised catchment area with pupils coming from a wide variety of ethnic, social and economic backgrounds. Pupils live in a variety of housing types. There are currently 137 pupils on roll with a further 51 part time pupils in the nursery. At the time of the inspection there were no children in the reception class as pupils are not admitted to the main school until after their fifth birthday. The number on roll has fallen since the last inspection in 1997. When they start school children's attainment is below average. In the main school 74 pupils are boys and 63 are girls. Twenty-five pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is similar to the national average. Forty-three pupils have English as an additional language with 18 being at an early stage of English acquisition. The main languages spoken, apart from English, are Punjabi, Urdu, Bengali and Cantonese. These numbers of pupils with English as an additional language are high when compared to schools of this size nationally. Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds including white, Pakistani, black Caribbean, black African, Bangladeshi, Indian and Chinese as well as several other ethnic minority groups. Over half of the pupils in the school have special educational needs which is also higher than average. The major special educational needs encompass moderate learning difficulties, emotional and behavioural problems and speech and language difficulties. Pupil mobility is also high with 8 pupils joining and 24 leaving other than at the normal time last year. The school has received the government's school achievement award for the last two years. During the course of the last year the school has undergone a period of great change at senior management level with three headteachers in nine months, the most recent being in post for only two weeks prior to the inspection.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Coley Primary School provides a sound education for its pupils. It is an improving school that has made satisfactory progress since it was last inspected, notably in raising pupils' standards in Years 3 to 6. Pupils, during these years, make good progress in many subject areas. The good quality of teaching found in Years 3 to 6 in particular, is the major reason for the good progress many pupils make. The four main areas for improvement are outlined below. Taking into account the funding available for pupils at the school, the quality of teaching they receive, the backgrounds they come from and the standards they attain, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- It enables pupils to make good progress, particularly in Years 3 to 6, in science, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT).
- It also enables its pupils to make good progress in music, physical education, art and design, history, geography and design and technology in Years 3 to 6.
- Good quality relationships exist in the school.
- Pupils are generally well cared for on a day-to-day basis.

What could be improved

- Pupils' standards in writing across the school.
- The systems for marking, assessing and recording pupils' work and progress.
- The system for monitoring pupils' work and the quality of teaching they receive.
- Pupils' attendance levels.
- The use of the accommodation and site to improve the quality of pupils' learning.
- Certain statutory requirements need to be complied with.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the last inspection in November 1997, the school has made satisfactory progress in addressing the weaknesses found at that time. Guidance is now provided in many schemes of work about the work expected from each year group. In addition, improvements have been made in the provision of extra-curricular activities. Whilst some progress has been made in the development of assessment procedures in some subject areas, more still remains to be done. More work also needs to be carried out in the planning and development of long-term strategies, to enable governors and senior managers of the school to monitor and evaluate their decisions and the effect of these on pupils' standards.

STANDARDS

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

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

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

The table shows that, when compared with all schools, pupils' standards at the end of Year 6 in 2001, were average in science, below average in English and well below average in mathematics. When compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, this school's results are very low in mathematics, in fact were in the lowest five per cent nationally, above average in English and well above average in science. Over the last four years, pupils' standards in English and science have risen but they have remained largely stable in mathematics. Pupils' standards at the end of Year 2 in 2001 were well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. When compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, pupils' standards are well below average in reading and mathematics and very low in writing. When interpreting these results, care must be taken, as in both year groups taking the national tests in 2001, there was a relatively high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and of those for whom English is an additional language.

Inspection findings show that children in the nursery make satisfactory progress and, for those who have the opportunity, in the reception class. However, as most pupils have one

term or less in the reception class, they are unlikely to attain the national required standard by the time they reach Year 1.

In Years 1 and 2 pupils make satisfactory progress in all subjects. By the age of seven therefore, pupils' standards remain below the levels expected of seven year olds nationally in these subjects. However, given their below average standards at the end of the reception year, this represents satisfactory progress, which is largely the result of the satisfactory and, on occasions, good teaching that they receive

Inspection findings also show that pupils' levels of attainment in the current Year 6 are below the expected levels in English, mathematics, geography, history and religious education. In science, music, art and design, physical education, ICT and design and technology, they attain the expected standards of work. The low standards being attained are largely due to the fact that over half the class have special educational needs or have English as an additional language. Furthermore, several pupils have joined the school in the last three years. As a result, the levels that many pupils attain are below nationally expected levels even though, given their prior attainment levels, the progress they make in all subjects is good except in religious education, in which their progress is satisfactory. All groups of pupils make unsatisfactory progress in the writing element of English; these low levels of attainment in writing are of particular concern.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory. Many pupils are interested and involved in their lessons. However, a minority have unacceptable attitudes that adversely affect the learning of others.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. Whilst most pupils behave well a number misbehave in some lessons. This affects the learning quality of other pupils.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is satisfactory. However, there are insufficient opportunities provided for pupils to take responsibility. Relationships within the school are good.
Attendance	Poor. Attendance figures are well below the national average for primary schools.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	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.

Teaching and learning are at least satisfactory right across the school and are good in Years 3 to 6. Only a small proportion of lessons were unsatisfactory. In nearly half the lessons observed, the teaching was judged to be good, being very good in a minority. These are similar proportions to those found at the time of the previous inspection.

Teaching and learning in the nursery are satisfactory overall. Staff are attentive to children's needs, focus on their learning of the basic skills and manage their children well. As a result, they make satisfactory gains in learning.

In Years 1 and 2, teaching and learning are also satisfactory overall. Basic skills, with the exception of writing, are appropriately taught, expectations are sound, teaching methods effective and lessons proceed at a satisfactory pace. The quality of marking and the use made of the assessment of pupils' work needs to be improved.

In Years 3 to 6, teaching and learning are good with a number of instances of very good practice. In the best lessons teachers have appropriately high expectations, manage their pupils well, use the time well and make effective use of learning support assistants and resources. These factors increase the rate of learning amongst pupils. Those pupils who have English as an additional language as well as those with special educational needs make appropriate gains in learning. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum is broad and balanced and pupils are provided with a reasonable range of learning experiences. Activities out of school are satisfactory. The school complies fully with the requirements of the National Curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Pupils are identified early and support is provided appropriately.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. Needs are identified early and pupils receive appropriately targeted help from qualified staff. Older pupils entering the school are assessed quickly and well integrated into their classes.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory. The school is helping pupils to know right from wrong and they are developing a set of principles to live by. Provision for personal development is not always planned for and this is a missed opportunity. Pupils are being appropriately prepared to take their place in a culturally diverse society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. The school is sensitive to pupils' needs. Weaknesses occur in the monitoring, assessment and recording of pupils' academic progress. Certain statutory requirements, related to child protection, are not in place.
How well does the school work in partnership with parents	Satisfactory. The school is keen to involve parents even more in the continuing education of their children.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The recently appointed headteacher and other senior staff have a good understanding of the needs of the school and are committed to school improvement. Their roles as well as those of subject co-ordinators are in need of review. Day-to-day administrative functions are carried out well. The school has good processes in place to apply the principles of best value to decisions made regarding major expenditure.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors are committed, enthusiastic and determined to help the school to continue to improve. Governors are keen to seek to gain value for money. Some statutory requirements are not being fully addressed.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Short-term priorities are identified well. A longer-term overview of curriculum development and evaluation is necessary.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school always looks for the best value for money and applies the principles of best value effectively. Accommodation is poor and some classrooms are too small to enable some lessons to be taught effectively. In addition, the school hall is small and restricts pupils' opportunities in physical education. Library provision is also inadequate.

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 • The school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best. • They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. • The teaching is good 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour in the school • The amount of homework their children receive • Closer working links with the school • The range of extra-curricular activities • The information they receive about their child's progress.

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views. Inspectors understand fully the concerns parents expressed in their questionnaires. However, they found that in recent times action had been taken to address pupils' behaviour and that this amongst the majority of pupils, is now satisfactory. Homework was generally found to be satisfactory but because of a large turnover of teachers last year in some classes, it had been inconsistently set. Reporting on pupils' progress was also found to be satisfactory and that the school was making several new attempts to establish closer working links with parents. Out of school activities, including visits, were found to be satisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The 2001 National Curriculum test results for eleven-year-olds show that the proportion of pupils who attain national standards (Level 4) in English is below the proportion that do so nationally. In mathematics, the school's results are well below average when compared to the national proportions, but they are similar to them in science. Similarly, the proportion that exceed the national average and attain the higher Level 5 is below the national proportion in science and well below it in English and mathematics. When the school's results are compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, they are very low in mathematics, above average in English and well above average in science. Trends over the last three years show that pupils' overall standards are rising in all three subjects, although less so in mathematics than the other subjects.

2. Whilst no comparisons with national averages were available at the time of the inspection for the 2002 cohort of Year 6 pupils, early indications show that pupils' standards have again risen in all three subjects, with the biggest rise being evident in mathematics.

3. Inspection findings show that whilst pupils' standards are still below average in mathematics and English, being particularly low in the writing element of English, nevertheless the school has taken considerable steps in its efforts to raise standards. Most notable of these has been the successful introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. In addition, 'Springboard' after school clubs were introduced, booster classes added, the local authority mathematics consultant worked with teachers and standards fund money was used to add additional resources in an effort to address the low mathematics standards. However, standards still remain low in Year 6, as a result of two significant factors. Firstly, over half of the pupils have special educational needs or speak English as an additional language. In addition, a significant number of pupils in that year group have joined the school in the last three years. As a result, a significant proportion of pupils are not attaining the national standards in English or mathematics. It is these factors that also cause the apparent fall in standards since the last inspection when, at that time, standards in English and mathematics were similar to national standards. Indeed at that time also, the proportion of pupils in Year 6 with special educational needs was lower than it currently is. Pupils' standards in science are about average.

4. The National Curriculum test results for seven-year-olds in 2001 show that in reading the proportion of pupils' attaining national standards (Level 2) is well below that proportion in writing, reading and mathematics. Similarly, the proportion exceeding national standards and attaining the higher Level 3 is well below national proportions in all three subjects. Teacher assessments in science show similar levels of attainment to those in other subject areas. Again, few pupils attain standards that are above national standards.

5. When this school's results are compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds they are well below average in reading, mathematics and writing. Over the last three years, standards in reading and writing have remained largely stable and have risen slightly in mathematics. Early indications from the 2002 National Curriculum tasks show a continuation of this trend in reading and writing, but with a significant increase in the number of pupils attaining the national standard in mathematics. This is largely due to the impact of the initiatives introduced by the school and outlined above. Inspection findings show that standards of the current Year 2 are just below average in mathematics and science, but well

below average in reading and writing. It is the low standards in writing across the school that are a major cause of concern.

6. The lower standards being attained by pupils at the end of Year 2 are again affected by high proportion of pupils who have special educational needs, as well as those for whom English is an additional language. A further factor is that, due to the local admissions policy, some pupils spend only one term or less in the reception class and, as a result, apart from their time in the nursery do not get a full curriculum. Consequently, the foundations of study are not sufficiently carefully embedded in the children prior to them having to move onto the National Curriculum Programmes of Study.

7. The attainment of children on entry to the school shows a broad spread of ability. However, their overall attainment is below average when compared to pupils of that age nationally. Children make satisfactory progress in all areas of their learning. However, because over half of these pupils only spend time in the nursery and some not at all in the reception class, they do not attain the standards expected of pupils of that age when they enter Year 1.

8. In communication, language and literacy, children begin to listen well but many have limited speaking skills. They begin to handle books competently and some are beginning to write their own names as well as recognise a few simple words. In the mathematical area of their work they are beginning to understand numbers and how many each figure represents, at least up to five. Children's knowledge of the world increases steadily and they begin to understand about places other than Reading. They are introduced to the computer and, in their creative development, begin to use a range of media, including paint. Opportunities for their physical development are also satisfactory and similar progress is made in this area as is made in the others.

9. Pupils by the end of Year 2 are attaining below average standards in English in particular, but also slightly below average standards in mathematics and science. By the age of seven, approximately two-thirds of pupils are beginning to read accurately with developing expression, an awareness of punctuation and an understanding of what they read. However, about a third are still at the early stages of reading development. These are largely pupils who have special educational needs or who have little spoken English. Writing skills are well below average with little high attainment. Similarly, spelling and handwriting are weak amongst many pupils with letters being inaccurately formed. The lack of a suitably highly structured handwriting and spelling scheme is a major factor in this area.

10. Pupils' mathematical knowledge is slightly below the national average overall, but about a quarter of pupils exceed that average. The majority of pupils accurately add and subtract numbers to 50. They are becoming confident with simple multiplication or division. They know a range of two-dimensional shapes. Pupils' numeracy skills are developing appropriately. Literacy is used to support learning in other subjects, but the pupils' limited writing skills hamper their progress in these subjects. Numeracy is also satisfactorily used to support learning in other areas of the curriculum. In science, pupils' attainment is again just below average by the end of Year 2, although a number are working at the higher Level 3 which is above the national standard. Pupils have a reasonably broad knowledge across most areas of science, particularly their knowledge of living things, life processes and of materials and their properties. They are beginning to observe carefully and to use descriptive vocabulary to good effect, although more work remains to be done in this area.

11. Pupils by the end of Year 6 are likely to have attainment levels that are below average in English and mathematics, but about average in science. Pupils read with accuracy, but their understanding of what they read is more limited. Pupils write using the correct

punctuation and know how to spell the most commonly used words. Their written work displays the use of some complex sentences. Handwriting is barely satisfactory and the presentation of work can, on occasions, be untidy. A small minority of pupils have unsatisfactory listening skills and, whilst speaking skills are improving, pupils often lack confidence in extended discussions. Pupils' literacy skills in Years 3 to 6 are improving and they are beginning to be used satisfactorily to support learning in other subjects. However, much work remains to be done to improve aspects of pupils' writing in order for average standards to be attained by the age of 11.

12. Although pupils' standards overall are below average, in some areas their mathematical knowledge is about average. Pupils have secure number skills and they solve number problems accurately, using the four rules of number. They draw and interpret simple block graphs and pictograms with reasonable accuracy. Higher-attaining pupils interpret simple line graphs accurately and work competently in numbers to two decimal places. Their main weakness is their speed of working, largely as a result of a significant number having special educational needs, and this will result in lower scores in the National Curriculum tests. Pupils' knowledge of science is about average. Scientific skills are being developed and used in a range of investigations, which promotes the learning of scientific knowledge. They have a sound understanding of physical process, materials and their properties as well as life processes and living things. Their scientific enquiry skills are appropriately developed.

13. Whilst in Years 1 and 2, pupils make satisfactory progress in all the other subjects they study. Satisfactory rather than good overall teaching means that, whilst pupils' progress is satisfactory, the levels that they attain in these subjects are still below those expected nationally at the end of Year 2. This is in contrast to the good progress pupils make in Years 3 to 6, given their prior attainment levels. In all subjects except religious education and design and technology, in which their progress is satisfactory. Indeed outcomes of the optional National Curriculum tests taken by pupils in Year 3, 4 and 5 show that the good progress made means that, when they reach the end of Year 6, many of these pupils are likely to attain nationally expected levels. This is largely due to the good and, on occasions, very good teaching pupils receive in most subjects in Years 3 to 6. Further improvements in pupils' writing standards would be likely to have an even greater impact in the levels pupils attain not only in English, but also in subjects such as history, geography and religious education. Indeed, this is further emphasised by the fact that, in the largely non-written subjects of music, art and design, physical education, ICT and design and technology, pupils do attain nationally expected levels by the age of 11.

14. Higher attaining pupils are adequately catered for, particularly in subjects such as mathematics, and the amount of progress made by this group is similar to other pupils, given their prior attainment levels. There are variations in some subject areas where work is less well planned in order to cater for their particular needs.

15. Approximately one-third of the school's pupils have English as an additional language. These pupils are well supported in classrooms, with their needs related to English language acquisition being well recognised and catered for. As a result, they are fully included in the work of each class and make similar progress to their peers.

16. Pupils with special educational needs also make similar gains in their learning to their peers, given their prior attainment levels. Appropriate support is provided and this enables them to make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2 and, as with their peers, good progress in Years 3 to 6. Individual education plans are in place, although some need to be updated in order to be more focused on current individual needs. The standards being attained by pupils with special educational needs are appropriate.

17. National test results for the past few years have been analysed, although not particularly well used to monitor pupils' overall attainment and learning. This is now improving and targets for improvement have been appropriately set in English and mathematics and shared with all concerned.

18. There is no significant difference in the rate of learning of boys and girls. The school is aware that rising attainment in writing must be its number one priority. Staff and governors are united in their determination to raise standards and the school is judged to have a satisfactory capacity to make timely improvement.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

19. Overall, pupils have satisfactory attitudes to their work. In many lessons they have good attitudes and present themselves as enthusiastic learners. This happens where the quality of teaching is good, teachers have high expectations and the tasks set are interesting and achievable. However in a significant number of lessons some pupils' attitudes are less good, they lose concentration, become restless and chatter thus slowing the pace and effectiveness of their learning. This occurs where the introduction to lessons and activities are over long, activities do not provide appropriate challenge and teachers make insufficient demands regarding good behaviour and attentiveness. Pupils can work well alone or in small groups, for example in a Year 4 science lesson where pupils worked together very well to measure, compare and record the effects of different fluids in various containers. The opportunities for pupils to develop independence, particularly in practical work, are restricted by the cramped conditions of some classrooms. In lessons where praise is used effectively it instils pride and motivation but overall praise and the celebration of good work are not provided consistently.

20. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory overall and many pupils behave consistently well. However, on occasions, inappropriate and disruptive behaviour by a small minority of pupils in some lessons has a significant impact. Where it occurs lesson pace is slowed and the learning of others is adversely affected. Bullying is rare and pupils generally behave well. Pupils understand the school rules and system of rewards and sanctions well but they feel that they are not always applied consistently or effectively. Many pupils are unhappy when unsatisfactory behaviour spoils their lessons. There have been 12 exclusions in the past year and they have been accompanied by appropriate procedures. Whilst this figure appears high, it is largely confined to a small number of persistent offenders and the school has been correct in its decision to exclude on each occasion.

21. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory and the relationships in this diverse school community are good. For the most part pupils work and play well together. They are friendly and helpful and in the main take care of each other well. Racial harmony is good and racist incidents are extremely rare. Pupils are offered some opportunities to take responsibility in the classrooms and older pupils have some duties at lunchtimes and in assembly. However there are insufficient opportunities in the school as a whole for pupils to develop aspects of citizenship. Pupils have expressed a wish for more opportunities to voice their opinions and share their ideas. They would welcome the reinstatement of the school council.

22. Attendance rates are well below the national average and are poor. In addition, unauthorised absence rates are high. Whilst many pupils have attendance rates that are satisfactory a significant number have attendance records that cause concern. For these pupils and those that take holidays during term time, there is a detrimental effect upon their learning. The school is trying hard to improve attendance rates but a small group of parents are unresponsive to the school's efforts. The majority of pupils arrive at school on time eager

to start the day but a considerable number of pupils are persistently late missing the start of the school day and the beginning of lessons. Registration time is none the less efficient and statutory requirements are met.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

23. Across the school, the quality of teaching, including that of children in the nursery and reception classes, is at least satisfactory in 93 per cent of lessons. Of these lessons, the quality of teaching is good in 42 per cent and very good in a further 7 per cent. In 7 per cent of lessons the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching in the nursery and reception classes is never less than satisfactory and, on occasions, good. Largely satisfactory teaching occurs in Years 1 and 2, although good lessons were evident. In Years 3 to 6 the quality of teaching is good overall and it is in these years that the very good teaching was observed. No one particular year group or subject was the focus for the unsatisfactory teaching. The proportions of good, satisfactory and unsatisfactory teaching are similar to those found at the time of the last inspection. The overall quality of teaching is reflected in the gains pupils make in their learning. For example, in Years 3 to 6, where teaching is good overall, pupils make good progress in their learning.

24. The teaching of literacy is satisfactory overall being better in Years 3 to 6. However, further work needs to be done to help teachers raise pupils' standards in writing. More opportunities need to be provided for pupils to experience writing for an extended period, as well as for a range and variety of purposes. Handwriting and spelling need to be systematically taught. In the best practice, teaching is lively and exciting with good use being made of texts to stimulate pupils and challenge their thinking. This ensures that pupils in these lessons make good progress.

25. The teaching of numeracy is good overall. There is an effective focus in most lessons on the development of mental arithmetic with regular, challenging questioning at the start of most lessons. Teachers encourage pupils to explain their methods of calculating solutions to problems. Lessons develop well with appropriate activities being set to match pupils' prior attainment levels. The pupils enjoy their numeracy lessons with most being well motivated by the work set. As a result, most pupils make good progress in their learning of mathematical skills and concepts, particularly in Years 3 to 6.

26. Good teaching is characterised by a variety of factors. Lessons are introduced in a way that catches pupils' imagination and gives a clear focus to the lesson. Similarly, teachers ask clear, concise questions which challenge pupils' understanding and require them to articulate their thoughts clearly.

27. Very good practice was evident in, for example, a Year 4 history lesson following a short television extract about life in Anglo-Saxon times. The teacher's good level of questioning meant that the lesson proceeded at a brisk pace and pupils made good progress in their learning about what life might have been like in that period. Such good lessons are well structured and the work set is well matched to pupils' prior attainment levels. This was particularly evident in a very good Year 6 ICT lesson where, because of the teacher's skill in matching tasks to groups of pupils, all groups made very good gains in their learning about multi-media presentations. Simple but appropriate tasks were set for pupils with special educational needs, and those pupils with English as an additional language were well supported by both their peers and by the support assistant. All were fully included in this very good lesson and made very good progress in relation to their prior attainment levels. Other characteristics of good lessons are where teachers manage their pupils well, expecting and getting good behaviour as well as managing the use of resources in such a way that enhances their pupils' learning.

28. Where teaching is less successful or unsatisfactory, lessons are not so well managed. In addition, the pace of the lesson is slow and the work given to pupils is not well matched to their prior attainment levels. As a result, pupils become bored, off-task and, on occasions, disruptive.

29. Most teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of most of the subjects they teach. However, some teachers' knowledge of music and ICT is more limited. The school is well aware of this and in the case of ICT, has taken good steps to address this, with the co-ordinator for the subject leading his colleagues through an ongoing in-service training programme.

30. Teachers' planning of pupils' work over the course of a term is good, particularly in English and mathematics. However, teachers' weekly planning needs to identify more closely what particular groups of pupils will be covering and at what level they will be working. This is in order to enable teachers to more closely match the work they require their pupils to do to their prior attainment levels. This is particularly the case for subjects other than English and mathematics.

31. The quality and use of day-to-day assessment is unsatisfactory overall. Most teachers are skilled in using questions to check and challenge pupils' thinking and understanding and most are adept at asking good follow-up questions to pupils' initial responses. However, pupils' progress is scantily recorded in many subjects and, as a result, is not used effectively to plan the next pieces of work for the pupils. Some good use is made of plenary sessions at the end of many lessons in order to assess what pupils have learned in that lesson and to further reinforce their subject knowledge and understanding. However, this is not the case in all classes and further training is needed in this area. Furthermore, the marking of pupils' work is variable, ranging from unsatisfactory, where work is poorly marked, to very good, where pupils are given a clear indication of how well they have done and what they need to do to continue to improve.

32. Pupils with special educational needs, as well as those who have English as an additional language, are well integrated into classroom activities. They are usually given tasks appropriate to their learning needs. Where relevant, these relate directly to the pupils' individual education plans, although in some cases, they need to be updated with more precise and more relevant targets set, as a matter of some urgency. Teachers give generally good support to all groups of pupils' learning needs and extra support is often given by learning support assistants. Occasionally, in some classrooms, such pupils' needs are not sufficiently catered for. This is usually where there is insufficient recognition of some of these pupils' restricted attention spans or limited English vocabulary. Overall, most groups of pupils are well taught and in the best cases, make good progress in lessons at a level commensurate with their prior attainment levels.

33. In a survey carried out prior to the inspection, a small group of parents were concerned about the work their children were required to do at home. The inspection team, however, feels that the work pupils are required to do at home is, in most cases, satisfactory and related to work that is ongoing in classrooms. They also find that greater consistency in the giving of homework is required so that both pupils and parents are well aware of the school's requirements in this area.

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

34. Among the key issues for action identified in the previous inspection were issues relating to the curriculum. Weaknesses were identified in the planning and monitoring of the curriculum and in the provision for extra-curricular activities. Since that time, many changes have occurred. In particular, there have been major staffing changes including the very recent appointment of a new headteacher. Such changes have had a bearing on the pace of development but nevertheless there have been some improvements to the curriculum since the last inspection, including planning and the provision of extra-curricular activities. The National Strategy for Literacy is soundly in place and the National Strategy for Numeracy has been well implemented. The focus on implementing these strategies and a turbulent staffing situation has meant that other aspects of curricular planning have been slower to evolve. Overall, sound provision has been maintained. Weaknesses remain in the monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum. The headteacher has highlighted this as an area to be addressed.

35. The school provides a satisfactory, broadly balanced and relevant curriculum. Provision for religious education is in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus and statutory requirements are met. The school has also introduced initiatives, such as additional literacy support, although not all teachers are clear about who should be targeted for help.

36. All subjects have policies and schemes of work which teachers use in a consistent way to guide their planning. Several policies remain in draft form, as at the previous inspection. The agreed syllabus for religious education and the national guidance for all the subjects other than literacy and numeracy, which have their own strategies, have been adopted and adjusted to meet the needs of the school. Whilst planning is satisfactory overall, work planned for the different levels of ability found in classes is not yet sharp enough. For instance, some of the higher achievers, on occasions, need more challenging work. Work is not always matched sufficiently to meet the differing needs of pupils in the class. Short-term planning is not yet clearly defined. Time allocated to subjects other than physical education is appropriate, but an over generous amount of time is allowed for physical education, particularly in the younger classes. The taught week in Years 3 to 6 is below the nationally recommended time. This has also been identified by the new headteacher and is being addressed.

37. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory, with ability grouping in literacy and numeracy targeting their needs. Pupils are given extra support within class by teaching assistants, thus helping to ensure their full inclusion in lessons. Sound procedures are in place for identifying and assessing pupils with special educational needs. Early assessment on entry to the school ensures that needs are identified early. Individual education plans are satisfactory. They contain specific and attainable targets for pupils to achieve, but little reference is made to these within planning and little use made of them in lessons. Pupils follow the same programmes of study as other pupils and their progress is reviewed on a regular basis. Most make steady progress towards their targets.

38. Provision for those pupils for whom English is an additional language is satisfactory. There are relatively few who are at an early stage of English language development and the needs of all these pupils are appropriately met, enabling them to achieve well, particularly in Years 3 to 6, and make steady progress.

39. Provision for children in the nursery is satisfactory. The curriculum provides a range of experiences relevant to the needs of the younger children and reflects the steps in learning identified in the expected standards. However, most pupils have one term or less in the reception year. This has an adverse effect on their progress. Most pupils, as a result, are unlikely to attain the standards expected in order to reach the nationally required standards by the time they start in Year 1, largely because they have missed much of the early learning experience. It does not make for smooth transition from nursery to Year 1.

40. The school's programme for personal, social and health education and citizenship is satisfactory. It includes the required emphasis upon the dangers associated with the misuse of drugs and includes provision for sex education. At present, there is no school specific scheme of work, but most teachers do recognise the importance of addressing pupils' personal development. Further development through circle time would benefit the significant minority of challenging pupils in each class, whose behaviour disrupts lessons from time to time. Increased opportunities for pupils to use initiative and independence would also strengthen these aspects of personal development.

41. Provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. There is a changing programme of clubs and activities including construction club, mural club, gardening, choir, basketball and guitar as well as an opportunity to learn to play the keyboard. These are available, but are fee-paying. Visits to places of educational interest such as Thatcham Bird Sanctuary, Katesgrove Museum, Thameswater and the Berkshire Young Musicians' Festival at the Hexagon theatre, enhance the curriculum in many areas. Visitors to school, such as the police, school nurse and a variety of theatre companies also make a positive contribution to pupils' learning.

42. Links with the local community are satisfactory. Pupils visit the local church for Harvest Festivals and as part of religious education. Links are being forged with other churches and the Salvation Army have requested the choir to sing carols. The headteacher is anxious to strengthen links with the local police and other services. 'Reading Rockets' basketball team make a valuable contribution and the fruits of this work were seen during the inspection with a keen Year 6 boy, with very good potential, being given every opportunity to develop his skills.

43. Satisfactory links have been forged with various businesses. The school is part of an education business partnership. Year 5 pupils participate in a mathematics trail with Thames Water. Links with Oracle have provided the school with computers and support. Opportunities to train using facilities at Microsoft and visits to the Oracle are further examples. A recent business contribution was the outdoor gazebo, funded by a national chain store, which provides seating and shade for pupils at break times.

44. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. Spiritual development is promoted through assemblies, religious education lessons and within the subjects of the curriculum. In assemblies some opportunities are provided for pupils to reflect and pray but a suitable atmosphere for this is not always created as effectively as it might be. The school does not meet the statutory requirement for all pupils to take part in a daily act of collective worship. In some class assemblies, time for reflection and prayer is not always given. Within the curriculum there are some spiritual moments, as seen in the nursery when children studied insects with magnifying glasses. However in the school as a whole such experiences are limited and not sufficiently included in planning. Consequently, whilst the current provision has a satisfactory impact on pupils' spiritual development, more deliberately planned opportunities would have a greater impact.

45. Pupils' moral development is satisfactory. The school offers pupils a good code of conduct and they clearly know the difference between right and wrong. Relationships within the school community are good and most pupils treat adults and each other with respect. Assemblies are used well to promote the school rules and pupils are offered opportunities to discuss moral issues in personal and social education lessons. Pupils feel that they would like more opportunities to take a role in some aspects of citizenship within the school.

46. The social development of pupils is satisfactory also. Pupils have opportunities at lunch and playtimes to play together and these occasions are generally happy and sociable. Elsewhere the school provides extra-curricula clubs and takes part in a variety of inter-school events. Within the school pupils have opportunities to serve their fellows with classroom duties and older pupils have responsibilities at lunchtimes. In the past pupils have enjoyed taking part in the playground council meetings and supporting charity fundraising but these activities have lapsed recently.

47. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. The school provides a variety of visits to places of interest to broaden pupils' horizons and enrich their lives. They learn about art in different countries and study the work of famous artists. Music lessons and assemblies offer the opportunity to listen to and take part in a range of musical styles and the school has a good variety of instruments from others counties to support this. Pupils learn about different faiths in religious education lessons but the opportunity to celebrate the diverse and rich culture represented in this school is not always taken and, as a result, opportunities for the provision to have a more significant impact on pupils' cultural development are lost.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

48. The school provides a caring environment where pupils are treated with sensitivity and respect. Those with special educational needs, as well as those for whom English is an additional language, are well cared for and supported. Pupils new to school are welcomed and settle quickly. There is a good health and safety policy that benefits from the involvement of the governing body. This is effectively put into practice. The procedures for child protection are unsatisfactory and do not meet with statutory requirements. The designated person is untrained and a significant number of adults in school are unaware of the relevant procedures to follow.

49. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development and progress are satisfactory as is the educational guidance offered to pupils. Whilst the school has no formal whole school system for monitoring and recording pupils' personal progress, it does have a variety of informal systems including lunchtime books, teachers' notes and incident records. Pupils feel that their teachers are helpful and encouraging.

50. The procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' academic progress are unsatisfactory. A variety of tests and assessments are made on a regular basis but there are no satisfactory formal systems for recording and monitoring these for the school as a whole. As a consequence the school is not able to track the progress of individual pupils efficiently. Whilst pupils are set individual targets in English and mathematics these do not extend to the other subjects of the curriculum. Targets are rarely shared with pupils and their opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning is hampered. The use of assessment to inform the planning of the curriculum is also unsatisfactory. Pupils' work is not always sufficiently well matched to individual needs and their work sometimes lacks appropriate challenge.

51. The procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are satisfactory. The school meets with statutory requirements and administrative arrangements are efficient. Absences are investigated at an early stage and this has been effective in reducing the number of unauthorised absences. An attendance award is made each week to the class with the best level of attendance and certificates are awarded by the Education Welfare Officer or improved attendance and 100 per cent attendance. This is popular with pupils. Holiday taking in term time is approached with appropriate formality but despite this a significant number of families still take holidays in term time to the detriment of their children's education.

52. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and for eliminating oppressive behaviour are satisfactory. There is an appropriate behaviour policy but not one that details the school's approach to bullying. There is some inconsistency in the application of the school's policy and the system of sanctions does not always provide sufficient immediate support for teachers and pupils in the classroom.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

53. Most parents' views of the school are satisfactory. Many parents feel that the school is approachable, has high expectations and offers good teaching. The inspection findings largely support these views. A significant number of parents are unhappy with the range of activities provided outside lessons, with the information they receive about how their child is getting on, the provision of homework and some aspects of the way the school works with parents. Some parents also have concerns about the standards of behaviour both in lessons and at lunchtimes. The inspection findings support parents' views in part. Behaviour is satisfactory and has been recognised by the school as an area for further improvement. The provision of extra-curricular clubs at present is satisfactory and improving. There is a good range of visits to places of interest to support the curriculum and enrich pupils' lives. The partnership with parents is satisfactory overall and the school wishes to build on this.

54. The effectiveness of the school's links with parents is satisfactory. At present parents are invited to class assemblies and to seasonal events and they may gain some insight into their children's learning in this way. These events are well supported. Other opportunities for parents to gain an understanding of what is taught are few at present. The school is keen to involve parents more in the life of the school and in supporting their children's education.

55. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is satisfactory. Parents are generally supportive of the school. Very few parents offer help in school but where necessary there is good support for school trips. There is an active Friends' Association that holds a variety of social and fundraising events. Funds raised have improved the environment for pupils and provided additional resources.

56. The quality of information for all groups of parents is satisfactory. The governing body's annual report is a well laid out and useful document. There are also school and nursery brochures that give information about school routines and the requirements of the curriculum. Newsletters inform parents about particular events and trips and each year group is given good information about the work that pupils will follow in the coming term. Reporting on pupils' progress is made at consultation evenings and with a written report in the spring term for Years 1 to 5 and, for Year 6, in the summer term. Although some parents were unhappy with the information about how their child is getting on, written reports do provide good information about what a child can do. Some difficulties are identified and guidance for improvement is given. However the language and terminology used is not always as accessible as it might be. Parents of children with special educational needs are provided with additional information about their child's progress and are invited to regular reviews of their child's education plans.

57. The contribution of parents to children's learning at home and at school is satisfactory. Parents want their children to do well and homework is supported well. However the provision of homework is sometimes inconsistent, in particular in classes where there have been many staff changes. Pupils feel that they are given the right amount of homework and they are given adequate time to complete it. Whilst many parents are clearly committed to their children's education, some are not as can be seen by the poor attendance records of a significant number of pupils.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

58. The previous inspection found the headteacher provided strong, effective leadership for the school with good support from the governors. It also found that statutory requirements were being met, but that there was a need to produce a longer-term school improvement plan. The school had a strong positive ethos and a good learning atmosphere.

59. Since the last inspection, indeed within the last year, the school has had three headteachers, the current one having been in post since September 2002. A small proportion of parents, in the questionnaire circulated prior to the inspection, expressed concern about the leadership and management of the school, largely as a result of this period of headteacher turnover. Inspection findings show that the current headteacher has the capability to show good leadership and has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. She is beginning to work closely with her governors and members of staff to continue to raise standards, improve the quality of teaching and give the school a clear purpose and direction. Her clear vision for the future is evident in her determination to raise pupils' standards of attainment by focusing on several key strategies. For example, the need to continue to improve standards of numeracy by the continuing successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. In addition, she recognises the need to raise pupils' standards of writing, which is identified as an area of concern, and which is to be built into the school's improvement plan as a major priority.

60. The present school improvement plan is an interim document that now needs to be developed and incorporated into the overall school strategic plan. At present, there is a lack of a programme for the review and development of the subjects of the curriculum and other aspects of school life.

61. The aims of the school, reviewed most recently in September 2002, are good. They are clearly defined and reflect a commitment to pupils attaining high academic standards and the development of a positive ethos, where there are harmonious working relationships between staff and pupils. The aims of the school underpin much of its work and life. On occasions, however, they are not always reflected in practice. For example, the lack of whole-school consistency in the marking of pupils' work and their standards of presentation, means that the practice in these two areas is variable, ranging from good in some classes to unsatisfactory in others. As a result, the highest possible standards are not, in some classes, being attained. Within school, all pupils are valued and cared for and are encouraged to develop into well-motivated and self-disciplined pupils. The school is becoming successful in its aims of promoting attitudes that help pupils develop self-confidence and increase their self-esteem.

62. The governors, even though many are relatively new, have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The major factors underpinning the governing body's decisions are the need to provide the best quality education for pupils and the need to raise educational standards. An appropriate structure of committees has been established to utilise governors' skills, although they rightly realise that some refinements are necessary.

There is a commitment to self-improvement and training, both as a whole governing body and through attendance at local authority courses. Governors' understanding of the community that the school serves is good and they are therefore well placed to act as a critical friend to the headteacher. However, they need to raise their awareness of the school curriculum and teaching by making classroom visits on a more regular basis, as well as reintroducing a system of subject co-ordinators updating them, from time to time, about developments in their individual subjects. A good working relationship is developing between the governors and headteacher and accountability and financial monitoring roles are effective. However, they are not yet fully involved in shaping the school improvement plan or in evaluating the progress the school makes towards achieving its targets. Governors understand their strategic responsibilities but this aspect of their role is underdeveloped. In addition, some statutory responsibilities are not being met relating to child protection and collective worship. The school follows the principles of best value well, very much as a result of the comparison of school performance with other schools nationally, locally and those with similar intake.

63. To assist its basic aim of raising standards, the school has collected a good range of data to enable it to monitor pupils' progress. The analysis is managed by the headteacher who is now beginning to be able to provide detailed information on every year group of pupils in the school. The information is also beginning to be used to provide realistic and challenging targets for the school, particularly in English and mathematics. This now needs to be extended in order to provide similarly realistic and challenging targets for individual pupils.

64. There are some structures and procedures in place to monitor standards and provision. Overall, these procedures are unsatisfactory. There is little monitoring of teaching in classrooms, or of the monitoring of pupils' learning by scrutinising teachers' planning and, on occasions, pupils' work in books. In addition, there is no structured plan to monitor the ongoing development of the school, where curriculum, teaching and other aspects of school life are regularly reviewed over a two or three year period. In addition, the role of the subject co-ordinator, helping and advising colleagues, as required, needs to be reviewed. Greater clarity of this role in relation to the role of the headteacher and other senior managers is also needed.

65. The management of special educational needs is satisfactory overall. Due to the changes in staffing it has not been possible to ensure continuity in the role of the special educational needs co-ordinator. However, with the appointment of the new headteacher the school is now in a position to move forward and subsequently raise the profile of special educational needs in the school. The policy has been reviewed and adapted to meet the requirements of the new Code of Practice and staff have been updated on the new requirements. However, there is an urgent need to review some pupils' targets in their individual education plans in order to set new and more relevant ones. There is a governor for special educational needs and a governors' committee for this area, which meets regularly. In addition, the governors have been proactive in making it possible to appoint enough teaching assistants for every class, in order to increase the support in the classrooms. At the present time there are no centrally based resources to support the teaching of pupils with special educational needs across the school. However, the new co-ordinator has highlighted this as an area to develop as soon as possible, in order to support all teaching staff in having the most effective teaching resources available at any time. The school is well resourced with ICT, but as yet, this is not focused effectively enough to support pupils with special educational needs.

66. The implementation of the required performance management arrangements is satisfactory. The school has recently completed the annual reviews of all staff and the setting of new objectives. However, a formalised system of lesson observations is not in place and

the opportunities to set objectives to raise the quality of teaching and learning and consequently the standards of attainment across the school, are undeveloped. This is unsatisfactory.

67. The school manages its budget effectively. The governors' finance committee are proactive in their assessing of the school's financial position for the next year and the year after. The school uses its funds well to support pupils with special educational needs, and also funds that have a designated purpose in raising standards. Spending is monitored closely by the governing body and once a month the chair of finance, finance officer and headteacher meet to review the budget. The budget is closely linked to the priorities identified by the school. The chair of the finance committee and the finance officer are particularly active in ensuring that satisfactory value for money is obtained. Overall finances are well managed and the school has good systems in place to apply the principles of best value to decisions made regarding major expenditure. The schools use of new technology is good.

68. The school's finance officer carries out the day-to-day financial administration and monitoring and spending very efficiently. The last auditor's report only contained one recommendation, which has since been addressed. Furthermore, the report was very complimentary about the systems the school has in place.

69. The school has a sufficient number of teachers and support staff to teach the pupils effectively. In addition, the governing body has been committed to ensuring, as a priority, that funding has been made available to appoint sufficient support staff to work in each classroom. However, a more efficient and effective deployment of these support staff is needed in order to gain maximum benefit to the learning of all pupils. Staff training is linked to the identified needs of the school and recent training for all staff has been in the requirements of the new Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs. The school has over the past year had a considerable turnover of teachers in some classes and this has not helped in the long-term progress pupils make.

70. Pupils who have English as an additional language are well catered for and fully included in school life. Additional support is appropriately targeted to their needs and all staff work hard to ensure that all pupils are treated equally and fairly. In this the school's procedures are effective and successful.

71. The school's accommodation is poor. Some classrooms are too small to enable the practical aspects of some lessons to be taught effectively. There is a small hall for assemblies and physical education and the dining hall is a separate building on site. The school library is inadequate as it is sited in the school hall. This is unsuitable for effective library time and for pupils to undertake reading and research when physical education lessons are being taught in the school hall. The organisation of some of the classrooms in the school does not help when lessons such as practical mathematics and science are taught. For example, this was evident especially in the Year 4 classroom where the only entrance and exit to two other classrooms is through this classroom. The governors environment committee is proactive in their monitoring of the school site and in arranging for improvements. Despite the difficulties apparent from the age of the buildings, the site manager and the cleaning staff maintain the building well.

72. The school has worked hard to provide a stimulating outside area. This consists of a large playground with two grassed areas that have been well maintained and has play equipment, a quiet area with picnic tables, a gazebo and flowering tubs. A smaller playground is used by the nursery for outside play and to allow children to play with wheeled toys in a safe area. In addition, a nature area with a pond provides a stimulating learning area for the pupils. Facilities for outside games are limited to the use of the playground area as the grassed area at the end of the playground is on a steep slope.

73. Resources for learning are satisfactory. Although there is no central computer suite, each classroom has its own computers and, to support class ICT lessons, a mobile suite of laptops are borrowed to add to the classroom computers. Most classes have their own class library and the range of books across the school are sufficient to support curriculum subjects. Funds have also been targeted at getting a range of 'big books' and shared texts to support the literacy hour. However, many of the fiction and non-fiction books are old and worn and in need of replacement. Physical education equipment is adequate, but the large equipment is old and there are limited indoor resources, such as small apparatus. Artefacts for history are improving and good use is made of the local museum service. Where such resources are well used by teachers they make a positive contribution to pupils' learning.

74. School management and leadership are, because of the changes of headteacher and staff turnover, the sum of diffuse parts. Some of these parts are good, others are satisfactory and some are unsatisfactory. Overall, leadership and management do work in the interests of the pupils and the school functions efficiently enough. That it could be even more effective is evident. The number one priority of standards as the driving force behind all that managers do, is beginning to be clearly established. The school has strengths to build on in this area and has the capability to succeed.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

75. In order to improve further the standards of work and quality of education provided, the governors, headteacher and staff, in co-operation with the local education authority should:

- (1) Raise standards in writing throughout the school by:
 - improving the quality of pupils' writing, as well as the amount and range of work pupils are expected to produce;
 - improving pupils' spelling;
 - improving the standards of pupils' handwriting and presentation skills;
 - developing further their research and study skills.(Paragraphs: 3, 5, 9, 10, 11, 13, 24, 59, 95, 96, 100, 101, 102, 103, 162)

- (2) Develop the current systems to assess and record pupils' progress by:
 - indicating more clearly the levels of attainment being reached by pupils in each subject at a particular point of time;
 - improving the quality and consistency of the marking of pupils' work so that it gives them a clear indication of what they need to do to improve;
 - making better use of the assessment carried out, in order to set pupils' targets and to enable teachers to plan more accurately the next work they want their pupils to do.(Paragraphs: 17, 31, 50, 61, 63, 106, 115, 120, 126, 130, 137, 144, 149, 152, 159, 162)

- (3) Review the current approach to the monitoring of the work of the school, pupils' work and the quality of teaching by:
 - creating an appropriate school improvement plan to enable this along with other developments to take place;
 - reassessing the roles and responsibilities of subject co-ordinators, so that they are able to check accurately the rate of pupils' learning in their subject and provide support for other teachers;
 - reappraising the roles and responsibilities of the school's senior manager with regard to the monitoring of teaching and other aspects of school life(Paragraphs: 59, 60, 62-64, 66, 106, 115, 120, 126, 131, 137, 144, 152, 159, 162)

- (4) Seek ways to promote improvements in pupil attendance levels.
(Paragraphs: 22, 51, 107.)

- (5) Seek ways to make better use of the existing accommodation and site so that the practical aspects of the curriculum, in particular, can be more effectively taught.
(Paragraphs: 19, 71, 106, 120, 126, 159)

- (6) Ensure that all statutory responsibilities related to child protection and the need for all pupils to be provided with a collective act of worship each day, are carried out.
(Paragraphs: 44, 48, 62)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	45
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	31

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	3	19	20	3	0	0
Percentage	0	7	42	44	7	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 two percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	137
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	25

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	17	56

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	43

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	24

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.2
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.9
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	17	13	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	12	15
	Girls	8	7	9
	Total	20	19	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	67 (68)	63 (76)	80 (80)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	14	11
	Girls	8	8	7
	Total	20	22	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	67 (72)	73 (80)	60 (76)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	13	11	24

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	7	12
	Girls	8	4	11
	Total	19	11	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79 (74)	46 (47)	96 (84)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	8	12
	Girls	5	4	5
	Total	15	12	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	63 (68)	50 (47)	71 (79)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	6
Black – African heritage	6
Black – other	1
Indian	1
Pakistani	19
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	1
White	92
Any other minority ethnic group	21

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	1	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 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.6
Average class size	21.1

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	174

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65
Number of pupils per FTE adult	17.7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	455 242
Total expenditure	502 819
Expenditure per pupil	2 562
Balance brought forward from previous year	54 701
Balance carried forward to next year	8 124

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5.1
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.5

Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	175
Number of questionnaires returned	50

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	54	42	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	36	52	14	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	24	52	14	6	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	40	28	2	6
The teaching is good.	42	48	4	2	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	34	36	28	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	58	34	2	6	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	46	36	4	0	12
The school works closely with parents.	32	36	26	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	30	48	10	0	12
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	34	50	6	4	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	20	20	24	8	22

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

76. Provision for children in the nursery is satisfactory. At the time of the inspection there were no children in the reception year. The sound provision found at the previous inspection has been maintained for the youngest children.

77. Early assessment information indicates that attainment on entry is below average in all areas for children of this age. They make satisfactory progress throughout the nursery, although standards remain below average by the time the children start in Year 1. This is due largely to the limited time spent in the nursery and reception classes by the majority of children, some of whom receive one term or less before moving from nursery to Year 1. In addition most children attend on a part-time basis. As a result many miss most or all of the reception year where early learning experiences are consolidated. Many find it difficult to adjust to Year 1 from the nursery and do not make the progress expected. This important factor contributes to the low standards at the end of Year 2.

78. A significant number of children in the nursery are identified early as having special educational needs. The good level of support and sound planning of the steps towards the expected levels for children in the nursery and reception classes ensures the inclusion of such children and helps them to make steady progress towards their targets in their individual education plans. Similarly, a significant minority of children have English as an additional language, some having very little English when they first start school. These pupils are well supported and quickly settle, making similar progress to others in the class.

79. Teaching is never less than satisfactory and is often good. Children are presented with a wide range of experiences enabling them to make steady gains in their acquisition of early skills and knowledge. The adults have a sound knowledge and understanding of the expected standards and plan carefully, informed through on going assessment, to meet the range of needs in the nursery. Effective team work contributes to the steady progress being made. Learning objectives in planning reflect the 'stepping stones' leading towards the expected levels for children in nursery and reception classes. Sometimes the pace is too pedestrian. Limited intervention by the adults in some of the activities, such as the role-play, results in superficial learning taking place and children 'flitting' from one activity to another too quickly.

80. The nursery is well resourced, making an effective contribution to children's learning. Resources for outdoor play have been improved since the previous inspection. There are good opportunities each day for a wide range of activities in the outdoor area, enhancing children's physical development as well as contributing to the other areas of learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

81. Children are developing confidence and self-esteem, which is promoted well by the adults. Sound teaching ensures children settle quickly in a safe and happy environment. Most children enjoy coming to school and want to learn. They show increasing skills in sharing and taking turns, for example when using the construction kits and taking turns in the home corner. The majority play alongside others. They are friendly to each other and most behave appropriately. They relate well to the adults in the nursery. A significant proportion have speech problems and many are reluctant to engage in discussion or respond to questions. When the adults intervene appropriately this promotes sharing and encourages children to engage in discussion more. Most children move confidently about the classroom, outdoor

area and into the hall for physical development activities. They select activities with increasing independence and are learning to tidy away resources at the end of the session.

82. Children who have special educational needs are identified early. They are well supported by the adults, as are children with English as an additional language, helping them to gain confidence and participate fully in all of the activities. Most children make satisfactory progress in this area of learning, but a significant proportion will not have achieved the level expected by the time they enter Year 1.

Communication, language and literacy

83. Skills in speaking and listening are below average for many children. They make steady progress in acquiring these and other literacy skills, although standards remain below the expected level for the majority when they enter Year 1. Daily discussions, stories, role play in the 'office' and home corner, as well as songs and rhymes all help to promote speaking and listening skills as well as early writing skills. For example, two boys in the home corner, both with English as an additional language, co-operated to set the table for breakfast. One boy led the conversation with the other, carrying out instructions to eat the pizza, then the cake, but saying very little. Intervention by an adult would have extended the role-play further and provided additional opportunities for dialogue. Similarly, two boys using the telephone kiosk had little purpose to their task and their play deteriorated, ending up with both boys locked in the telephone box and silly behaviour. There was little extension to language skills or to their knowledge and understanding as a result.

84. Although formal opportunities are planned for writing with the older children and those ready to transfer, not enough early writing experiences, through play, are planned for. There are missed opportunities to structure early writing tasks through the role play, by, for example, making shopping lists and taking a telephone message. Where writing skills are taught to older children this is sometimes on a one-to-one basis, in isolation from the other activities in the nursery. It is a concentrated effort prior to children transferring to the next class, and efforts are sometimes lost over the holiday period. The range and purpose for writing are fairly limited, focusing on names, news and early phonic skills. One good example of early writing was the postcards children wrote. Satisfactory teaching and good support from the adults help children to make steady progress towards the expected standards.

Mathematical development

85. Children make steady progress in this area as a result of the sound teaching and support from the adults, although standards remain below average for a significant number, by the time they start in Year 1. Teaching focuses particularly on developing the basic skills of numeracy. Children are encouraged to count and describe colours and shapes, developing and strengthening their mathematical language, skills and understanding. Daily routines such as registration provide opportunities to reinforce these skills as they count the number present. Higher attainers match basic shapes correctly. They recognise numbers to '5' and put the correct number of candles on a birthday cake. Average attainers need help when forming numbers but know the names of shapes. They understand how to make a repeating pattern. Lower attainers are limited in their understanding of mathematical language, for example not being sure of 'opposite' language such as 'in/out', long/short' and they need help to understand a repeating pattern. Many struggle with the recording aspect of numbers as they do in other writing.

86. By the time they enter Year 1 higher attainers count to '10' and beyond and write numbers to 10, although these are not always accurately formed. They begin to add two amounts, setting out a simple sum. Average attainers are less secure with number

formation, often reversing numbers. They sort and match one to one and with help add together two amounts. Higher attainers are likely to achieve the early learning goals by the time they start in Year 1.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

87. A sound range of practical experiences helps all children steadily to increase their knowledge and understanding of the world. They learn about ladybirds, bees and butterflies through their topic on minibeasts. The teacher makes good use of incidental opportunities to consolidate this learning. For example a small group of children found a wasp on the working surface. The teacher ensured that it was safe then provided magnifying lenses so that children could observe more closely. She pointed out the sting and encouraged children to comment on their observations through good questioning. Such activities also contribute to children's speaking and listening skills and to their personal development as children learn to take turns to speak and listen to each other.

88. There are well-structured opportunities for baking, linked to the topic 'houses and homes'. Children acquire a knowledge and understanding of household utensils. Most children recognise common household objects and higher attaining children use more complex sentences in their explanations. There is good use made of language such as 'soft' and 'fluffy' when making cookies. The adults encourage children to 'read' the scales and check the clock for cooking time. There is a good discussion on changes to the state of the egg after beating and the activity contributes well to many areas of learning. In design and technology, the children plan and make sandwiches, recording their ideas in some cases.

89. When discussing rooms in the home and items from each room, verbal responses are limited and immature from a number of children. For example, 'me got two' says one boy when asked about his television at home.

90. The children are learning to control the mouse with increasing skill and understanding when using the computer, although many are at a very early stage. Many can move the cursor to match one to one, or click on a toy for a visual response.

91. Children begin to be aware of the passage of time as they talk about birthdays, yesterday, tomorrow and older members of their family, as well as how things have changed. Through stories and visitors to school they learn about celebrations in their own and other cultures, such as Harvest Festival.

92. Skills overall remain below the expected level by the time the children enter Year 1, but most, including those who have English as an additional language as well as those who have special educational needs, make steady progress in their learning.

Physical development

93. Teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory. Most children make at least satisfactory progress and a good proportion are achieving standards usual for their age by the time they enter Year 1, in physical control and co-ordination when riding bikes and trikes, climbing, running and jumping. They pedal wheeled vehicles skilfully along marked roadways. A few play co-operatively and most are learning to share and take turns. They climb, balance and slide on the appropriate apparatus. Most children are confident in these outdoor activities. Finer skills such as pencil and brush control are less co-ordinated and a number of children have poor control when using pencils and scissors, for example. Most children have sound co-ordination and control of their bodies when using large apparatus, but a significant number do not have good fine control by the time they enter Year 1.

Creative development

94. Good opportunities are provided for children to paint, draw, and use collage and construction materials. As a result, children make steady progress, selecting tools such as brushes, with increasing confidence. There are some opportunities for children to express their ideas freely without over-direction. However, a lot of artwork is adult initiated with children painting as directed, for example, items for the shop and some large frieze work. Good work was seen based on Monet's 'water lilies' using pastel shades of paint on wet paper. Overall, sound teaching helps children to make steady progress in their creative development, but skills remain below average by the time children join in Year 1.

ENGLISH

95. Since the last inspection, standards in English in the National Curriculum tests have fallen to well below average in both reading and writing for Year 2 pupils and below average for Year 6 pupils.

96. Inspection findings show that pupils in the current Year 2 and Year 6 are attaining below average standards across the subject and particularly in writing. The most significant reason for this is the high percentage of pupils who are on the special education register in the present year groups as well as a significant proportion who have English as an additional language. Indeed, work samples from the previous Year 6 show that pupils in that year were attaining broadly average standards with a significant proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels. Pupils' achievement in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory and is good in Years 3 to 6, except in the writing element of the subject. Furthermore pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language also make satisfactory gains in their learning, given their prior attainment levels.

97. When pupils enter the school, many have below average levels of attainment in their speaking and listening skills. Some pupils have two terms in the reception year and, by the time they enter Year 1, have made satisfactory learning gains and are more competent and capable with the requirements of the work in Year 1. However, due to the local admissions policy, some younger pupils in this year miss the reception year altogether and have missed out on the important learning experiences of that year. They have to take on the expectations of Year 1 and this has an impact upon the standards of attainment of these pupils. Some are starting to develop an interest in books, selecting and recognising words and are beginning to develop sufficient pencil control to write letters and words, such as their name. However, pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not make satisfactory gains in their writing skills and by the time pupils reach Year 3 their speaking and listening skills are more advanced than their writing skills. Subsequently, some pupils who are quite confidently expressing what they want to say are unable to record this effectively in writing. Furthermore, the effective use of information communication technology to enable pupils to draft their writing, a strategy that can support pupils in their writing when they have difficulties in the formation of letters and words manually, is underdeveloped.

98. By the end of Year 2, pupils attain below average standards in reading. Younger pupils have an insufficient grasp of letter sounds and rarely use them with confidence to construct and read unfamiliar words. By Year 2, the pupils are starting to read their storybooks with increasing degrees of fluency but are insecure about building up words they do not know. Average and higher attaining pupils respond equally positively to fiction and non-fiction books, knowing the difference between the two and usually read a variety of texts accurately and fluently. They are keen to talk about their favourite books, describing with clarity the title, author and the content and why they like it. Reading records are kept regularly. Most pupils

take books home in order to practise reading and this is enhanced by the support of many parents in listening to them read. Those pupils who regularly take books home and read to their parents generally make better progress in their reading. The National Literacy Strategy has had a positive effect on pupils' enjoyment of reading through shared and group reading, which has helped to develop their confidence in reading aloud to others.

99. By the time pupils are at the end of Year 6, some are making satisfactory progress in reading with the higher attaining pupils reading fluently with good expression and understanding. However, there are a significant number of pupils who are on the special educational needs register in the Year 6 class and this impacts upon the overall level of attainment which as a result, is below that expected of pupils of a similar age. Pupils' library skills are at present underdeveloped and many do not yet have a clear understanding of the library classification system. This is largely because the library provision is inadequate and situated in the school hall where it is difficult for pupils to have easy access due to the hall being used for other lessons. However, some higher attaining pupils know how to use the skills of skimming and scanning and make use of indexes, contents lists and glossaries in non-fiction books for accessing information. Pupils have secure dictionary skills and are supported by a good range of dictionaries in their classrooms. Strategies are used to stimulate and encourage a love of reading, especially reinforcing the idea that reading is enjoyable and can be fun. This was observed in a whole class lesson where the teacher read to her class with expression and at a brisk pace. As a result, the class were completely absorbed in the story and thoroughly enjoyed the whole experience.

100. By the end of Year 2, pupils have not been consistently challenged in their writing and achieve below average standards. Pupils need a lot of support in their writing and, in some instances, spend too much time filling in worksheets with less time on developing their skills in writing. In addition, some tasks are not sufficiently challenging for pupils who are capable of doing more. For example, this was observed in a lesson where pupils were unaware of the objective of the lesson and what they were learning. The task for the average and higher attaining pupils was the same and lacked challenge. Pupils were required to write a word and draw a picture, with most pupils spending most of their time drawing the picture instead of developing their writing skills. Marking and assessment are insufficiently used to match work to pupils' respective needs, and insufficient attention is given to its presentation. Samples of work show clearly that pupils in Years 1 and 2 are not learning sufficiently from their mistakes.

101. Due to more challenging teaching in Years 3 to 6, pupils' writing skills begin to improve, but at a slower rate than that expected of pupils of a similar age. For example, in the Year 3 class pupils were thinking of repetitive poems and looking at possible words and phrases they could use in writing their own poems. They were composing phrases that built on the phrase "It was so quiet that I heard..." and as a class came up with some interesting phrases such as, "the small steps of a ladybird crawling on a leaf," "the air blowing in my hair" and "a spider's web breaking." However, when it came to writing these sentences a significant number found it very difficult due to their unsatisfactory writing and presentation skills. They were confidently able to speak the phrase but could not record it easily in written form. Older pupils, in particular from Year 4 onwards begin to write stories with attention to characterisation and plot. This was seen in a Year 4 class who were looking at a variety of story openings and pupils were deciding whether the opening was descriptive, raised anticipation or caused suspense. Pupils use different forms of writing appropriately, as for instance when reporting on their geographical, historical and scientific investigations. A good example of this was in a geography lesson where pupils were looking at stories that appear in a local and a national newspaper. The links with geography and literacy involved reading the articles and composing headlines and writing a brief summary on the articles.

102. Standards of handwriting are generally unsatisfactory but vary across the school. Pupils are given handwriting exercises, but samples of work show that insufficient thought is given to the pupils' presentation of their work. There are too few opportunities for pupils to re-draft their work, correct their mistakes, or to present their work in an improved form. Standards of spelling are generally below average throughout the school. Not all words used by the pupils are accurately spelt. However, when in doubt, older pupils were seen to use dictionaries readily to look up their words. Assessment is insufficiently used to match the levels of spellings to the pupils' abilities. The school gives pupils spelling lists to learn. However, there is an inconsistency in teachers' marking where some spelling mistakes, but not all, are corrected, but little evidence to show that pupils are required to practise or correct their mistakes.

103. The school has identified the pupils' weakness in writing and this has led to a school focus on the development of writing with the support of the Local Education Authority literacy consultant. Although evidence was seen across the school of improvement in writing for different purposes, with some examples of well-presented work and well-formed, neat handwriting, there is a significant number of pupils whose standards of writing are below that expected of pupils of a similar age. Where the work is better it is invariably where there is a better quality of teaching, notably where the teacher has high expectations of their pupils, and also where there is effective use of the National Literacy Strategy.

104. The quality of the teaching of the subject is satisfactory overall. The majority of teaching for older pupils is good and often good. Teachers of older pupils show a greater understanding and knowledge of the subject than the teachers of the younger pupils. Their planning and teaching methods are more effective. They have a higher expectation of their pupils. This leads to more effective learning and the good achievements of the older pupils. Motivated by the better teaching, older pupils show good positive attitudes towards their work. They work with relatively high levels of understanding, motivation, interest and enthusiasm.

105. Overall the quality of teaching for pupils in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. Samples of pupils' work in Years 1 and 2 show that teachers do not sufficiently match tasks to pupils' individual needs. Lessons seen during the inspection were never more than satisfactory. The younger pupils' attitudes are not as positive as the older ones and their work is often too teacher directed. Pupils often sit for too long on the carpet for the introductory sessions and lose interest. However, pupils work hard when given tasks, but often the tasks are too easy and unchallenging.

106. The management of English is satisfactory. Although the subject co-ordinator looks at planning and pupils' work, there have been limited observations of the teaching and learning in the classrooms. There are insufficient outcomes as a result of this monitoring to impact on standards and the quality of teaching. Most teachers plan and evaluate their own delivery of the subject. There is a satisfactory adoption of the National Literacy Strategy and this supports the delivery of the subject across the school. Assessment strategies and systems to record pupils' progress are in place but are insufficiently well developed to enable them to be successfully used to help teachers plan accurately the next work they want their pupils to do. The school has made a good attempt to improve resources for the subject and they are now satisfactory. Good use is made of the library services. The school library provision has been highlighted by the subject co-ordinator as an area in urgent need of attention. It is not central enough for whole school use and insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to use the library for independent study.

MATHEMATICS

107. At the time of the previous inspection, pupils' standards were similar to national standards at the end of Year 2. Whilst since then there has been a significant fall in standards, the school has recognised this and early indications from the 2002 National Curriculum tests are that pupils' standards are now rising again. Indeed it seems likely that whilst standards may still be below national standards this is unlikely to be by much. Inspection findings confirm this position. Other factors have also influenced the below average standards. Both the current Year 2 and last year's Year 2 cohorts contain a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, as well as a significant group who have English as an additional language. Furthermore, high absence figures and pupil mobility have an adverse effect. Nevertheless the successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and the targeting of mathematics as a major priority by the school, has helped to raise pupils' standards in spite of the adverse effects indicated.

108. In Years 1 and 2, the early mathematical skills and concepts learnt in the nursery and reception classes are satisfactorily built upon. As a result, by the end of Year 2, nearly all pupils including those with special educational needs, as well as those for whom English is an additional language, are able to add and subtract numbers to 10 and solve problems using these numbers. Many are beginning to sequence numbers up to 100 and solve simple addition and subtraction sums accurately. Money problems are tackled enthusiastically, although not all are confident in this area. Similarly, most have a good knowledge of simple two- and three-dimensional shapes, although their knowledge of the properties of these shapes is much more limited.

109. Discussions with pupils at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 show that their knowledge and understanding of the number element of mathematics is better developed than any other aspect.

110. Since the time of the previous inspection, pupils' standards, at the age of 11, which were about average, have been consistently very low. The school was most concerned with this picture. Consequently, as with pupils in Year 1 and 2, mathematics became a major focus. Additional resources, booster classes, the Springboard after school club, as well as the other initiatives indicated above, were all introduced. As a result, early indications from the National Curriculum 2002 tests, show that over three-quarters of pupils are likely to achieve Level 4 (the national average for 11 year olds) with about half attaining the higher Level 5. A scrutiny of the work of pupils who took the 2002 tests confirms these figures.

111. Within the present Year 6, well over half the pupils have special educational needs or have English as an additional language. Consequently the current 11-year-olds have, overall, below average standards. This appears to be a minor reversal for the school, as indications from the Years 3, 4 and 5 optional National Curriculum tests show that standards in these year groups are rising and are about average.

112. During their time in Years 3 to 6, all pupils regardless of ability and background, make good gains in their learning so that, by the age of 11, many pupils are competent with multiplication and division and have an understanding of place value in six-figure numbers. They are familiar with the names of various angles and are able to convert vulgar fractions into decimals and percentages. They calculate areas of irregular shapes and are confident in the multiplication of decimals, the use of approximation and co-ordinates. They are able to construct and interpret simple line graphs.

113. There are several factors that contribute to pupils doing well in the subject particularly in Years 3 to 6. Whilst in Years 1 and 2 pupils make satisfactory gains in their learning, largely as a result of the generally satisfactory teaching they receive. They make good progress in Years 3 to 6. Again this is related to the higher proportion of good and, on occasions, very good teaching evident in these year groups. Teachers are confident in their own ability to teach the basic skills of the subject, they expect and get good standards of work and much work is completed during the course of lessons. This was particularly noticeable in a very good Year 4 lesson where pupils were learning to count on and back in tens and hundreds from a variety of two and three digit numbers. Good support from learning support assistants ensured that pupils with English language difficulties, as well as pupils with special educational needs, made good progress given their prior attainment levels. Indeed this together with the teacher's own very secure knowledge of the subject and the pace injected into the lesson, ensured that all pupils made good progress.

114. The successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has also had a most positive impact on pupils' learning and, particularly in Years 3 to 6, on the standards they attain. Teachers' planning of work following the strategy's guidelines is good and the structure of it ensures that lessons proceed at a brisk pace and that much work is covered. The introductory mental mathematics session not only increases pupils' mental agility but also serves to motivate them. Indeed, as a result of this session and the teacher's often good use of appropriate 'quick fire' mental arithmetic questions, pupils look forward to mathematics lessons. In lessons, most pupils work hard and co-operate well together in group work. Pupils throughout the school enjoy the subject and most are keen to learn. They take care of the resources available to help them and are willing to share and take turns when using them. In one or two instances, the teacher's slightly over-long introduction, particularly in the main teaching activity, means that some pupils become bored and do not pay attention. As a result, less progress in pupils' learning takes place.

115. The co-ordinator and indeed the school as a whole, has a commitment to the raising of standards of pupils of all prior attainment levels. However, the role needs to be reviewed in order to enable the co-ordinator to monitor the many aspects of the subject, including teachers' planning, pupils' completed work and, if appropriate, classroom teaching. In addition there is a need to scrutinise assessment test results more thoroughly and use the results of the analysis to build a better view of the subject's strengths and weaknesses. Learning resources are satisfactory and teachers use them effectively. Some assessment procedures are in place with regular testing of pupils to inform teachers of their progress. These need to be used more effectively to better inform teachers' planning.

116. The school continues to make satisfactory progress in the development of the subject. The National Numeracy Strategy is now securely in place, pupils' standards are rising and the quality of teaching is improving. In addition, all the requirements of the National Curriculum are being met.

SCIENCE

117. Currently pupils' attainment in science, by the age of seven, is below average. In Year 2, their basic skills, particularly writing, are low and many pupils have difficulty remembering what they have learned. No science lessons were observed in Year 2, but work scrutinised shows that weak writing standards are a major factor in this low attainment. Year 1's current attainment more nearly matches the national average, though many pupils in this class are immature, having moved only recently from the nursery. These pupils are learning about the senses and can understand the aspects of hearing and sounds being explored. Given their low underlying attainment, pupils' progress and achievement in science are satisfactory during Years 1 and 2.

118. Attainment in the current Year 6 class matches the national average. Despite their continuing weak writing and the large proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the year-group, pupils' attainment in the purely scientific aspects of their work is average for pupils' at this early stage of Year 6. Pupils are developing appropriate enquiry skills and deriving pleasure from investigating new ideas, for example in their experiments with electrics, using batteries, switches and wiring to make circuits to activate bulbs and buzzers, Year 6 pupils' understanding of the concepts involved is average. They can assemble appropriate circuits and can explain why and how they work, or won't work. Pupils of all abilities can recognise and understand the scientific symbols used to represent different aspects of the circuit and use appropriate vocabulary to identify these. Pupils' attainment in Year 3 to 5 classes shows their standards to be average throughout these years, again in all but written work. In Year 3, for example, pupils are learning about the properties of materials such as plastic and metal and can explain these orally to an average level of competence. Pupils in Year 4 are learning effectively about volume and the changing shape of liquids in different containers. Work here shows average standards except in writing. Pupils' achievements in science between Years 3 and 6 are good. This is because of enthusiastic, well-planned teaching, which creates enjoyment and interest in this subject. This in turn, encourages many older pupils to extend their investigations outside the classroom, which also improves achievement.

119. Teaching of science is good. Teachers are confident in the subject and plan their lessons with care. They overcome the constraints of poor accommodation very well to ensure that pupils get every opportunity possible to become engaged in active experiment and investigation. Resources are carefully prepared and organised for lessons. These are used well to teach all the required aspects of the science curriculum. Teachers' explanations are interesting, setting objectives clearly and allowing a good length of time for pupils to experiment actively. Pupils learn most effectively in these active ways, deriving interest and enjoyment from their "discoveries", particularly as they get older. Although younger pupils do not remember their learning well, older ones can recall and use previous learning in science effectively in order to support new ideas. Teachers' class management is good, particularly in minimising the potentially adverse effects of the minority of pupils whose behaviour is unacceptable and, on occasions, threatens to deprive others of their learning. Teachers give good opportunities for pupils to discuss their speculations, predictions and findings orally. Pupils of all abilities respond well, being confident to speak about their learning. Teachers understand pupils' writing weaknesses well, so provide supporting worksheets to remind them of the lesson content. These also provide appropriate support for lower attaining pupils. Higher attaining pupils are expected to produce more written work and their books show a good balance of hand-written consolidation and supporting worksheets. Teachers' marking of work is not helpful in providing pupils with "next-steps" assessment of what they need to do to improve. Assessment is generally accurate in establishing pupils' levels in science related to national expectations, but does not provide a tool for pushing pupils to higher achievement. Recent analysis of achievement at school level shows that pupils achieve well in science and that no difference exists between the relative achievement of boys and girls, or of those for whom English is an additional language. Likewise pupils with special educational needs also do well given their prior attainment levels and learning is good.

120. Attainment in science by the age of eleven is similar to that described in the last report. It has been higher than that in the interim. Attainment by the end of Year 2 is lower than it was in 1997. Teaching of the subject, then satisfactory, has improved and is now good. Satisfactory progress has been maintained to the age of seven, but has improved between seven and eleven, except in writing, which is a common weakness in all subjects. A good new science co-ordinator is very keen and enthusiastic, but needs time to monitor teaching and standards in the subject. Accommodation is poor, limiting what can realistically

be provided. Teachers do very well to overcome this to provide a satisfactory experience for their pupils, but ICT is under-used in pupils' science curriculum.

ART AND DESIGN

121. Standards in art and design are below average in Years 1 and 2. They are average in Years 3 to 6. This is not as high as at the time of the previous inspection, largely due to staffing turbulence, the loss of a subject co-ordinator for art and design, and a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language. Nevertheless, given attainment on entry to school, pupils make steady progress in Years 1 and 2 with good progress being made in Years 3 to 6. Pupils with special educational needs make at least satisfactory progress, as do those pupils for whom English is an additional language. Good use of support assistants ensures their full inclusion in lessons and helps pupils to follow instructions and remain on task.

122. In Years 1 and 2 pupils explore a variety of materials and techniques. They use collage, paint and clay and create three-dimensional models from recycled material. In Year 1 a display of minibeasts made use of all these techniques. Pupils make clay hedgehogs adding spikes from natural twigs. They explore texture looking at Van Gogh's portrait of 'Postman Joseph Roulin' and use collage materials to express their ideas about different textures. In Year 2 pupils are introduced to Pointillism, using the computer to create their own picture in the style of Seurat. However, similar work on minibeasts to that in Year 1 is displayed on the wall, indicating some repetition between year groups. Pupils use time to express their feelings by drawing 'sad' and 'happy' lines, 'angry' and 'calm' lines. Again there is evidence of the use of the computer to extend these ideas. Pupils are introduced to the work of Rennie McKintosh and explore his feelings expressed through his work. Links are made to mathematics with symmetrical collage butterflies. There is a good focus on key vocabulary used in lessons.

123. In Year 3 the work of Andy Goldsworthy inspires collages from natural materials. Pupils use pastels well to draw fruits and seeds from observation. There are strong links with mathematics through repeat patterns using paint. Year 4 pupils create good photographic effects using the techniques of Andy Warhol with his picture of Marilyn Monroe. Using wax resist techniques they create fish and sea creatures. Pupils in Year 5 paint sunflowers well in the style of Van Gogh. While in Year 6 pupils create symmetrical patterns linked to mathematics using gummed paper. They mould clay dragons, slab pots and thumb pots and have some experience of oil batik. Inca-like facemasks make a good contribution to pupils' cultural development with multicultural links evident in their 'city scrapers' showing mosques and churches. Although not running at present, the art club has produced an interesting range of work using a good range of media, some of this work is of a high standard.

124. Teaching throughout the school is at least satisfactory and results in steady gains in learning with accelerated progress in some aspects of art and design in some classes in Years 3 to 6. Lessons are carefully planned and appropriately resourced. The national guidelines have been adopted providing a satisfactory range of learning experiences. Not enough emphasis is placed on the progression of basic skills as pupils move through the school, for example skills in clay work lack systematic development. Skills in observational drawing are not built upon effectively from the youngest pupils. Most pupils enjoy their lessons in art and design and work with interest and enthusiasm. In the best teaching, detailed planning identifies the development of skills and builds on previous learning. Learning objectives are shared with pupils and there is a good focus on artistic vocabulary such as 'sense of proportion', contributing well to literacy skills.

125. Sometimes too little opportunity is given for independence. In Year 2 and Year 6, for example, teachers gave out pencils and brushes, one by one to pupils. The expectations for pupils to take responsibility for their own workspace are too low. Often pupils did not clear away following an activity.

126. The subject has lacked leadership and direction during the recent staffing difficulties, which has impacted on standards and progress over time. There is no formal assessment in place. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning is not consistently used. Resources are adequate but the area designated as an art and design room is unexciting, lacking any displays, and organisation is limited. There is a good presence of framed artwork by famous artists around the school, but the quality of display in classrooms varies greatly. Book provision to support art and design in the library is barely adequate. Sketchbooks are in place and are used with varying success. Marking of work in sketchbooks is inconsistent and lacks any comments to help pupils improve their work. Whilst there is some evidence of pupils evaluating their own work, the practice is not widespread, missing opportunities to extend pupils' literacy skills and to enable pupils to take more responsibility for their own learning. In the past there have been good opportunities for extra-curricular art and design with a club being in place to support and enhance learning. It is planned to resume art club when a new co-ordinator is appointed. A mural club has made a positive contribution to improving areas of school such as stairways and toilets.

127. Visits to galleries and museums, such as the new gallery in the Madejski Stadium, contribute well to pupils' learning, with pupils attending workshops in the museum and gallery. The school makes sound use of the local environment particularly when focusing on buildings and landscapes. The headteacher is keen to encourage artists into school once more to work with pupils. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' social and cultural development, but a more limited contribution to pupils' spiritual development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

128. No lessons in design and technology were observed during the week of inspection so evidence was gathered from a scrutiny of pupils' work, from displays in the school, from photographs of pupils' work and in talking to pupils formally and informally.

129. Pupils' attainment by Year 2 is below average but it is in line with expectations for their underlying low skills levels. Their attainment is hindered by difficulties with drawing for the design phase of projects, because many have a poor grip on pencils and weak mathematical skills, in measuring for example. Nonetheless, some designs seen for wind-up mechanisms for model bridges by last year's Year 2, showed average levels of attainment. The making phase of projects is better, showing pupils' skills developing appropriately in key aspects such as cutting, joining, sticking and construction. Pupils made cam-mechanisms, for example, which worked effectively. Although Year 2 pupils could remember little of the design and technology that they did in Year 1, their making skills are secure and average for their age. Pupils are less able in writing, so written evaluation of work, where it exists, is below average. Evaluation remains a weakness through the years, affected as it is by weaker literacy skills through the school. Pupils talk through what they did or made, a form of evaluation, but little evidence exists of written work of this kind. By Year 6, apart from written work, pupils' attainment matches that expected for their age. Pupils in the current Year 6 spoke of their experience of making bread in Year 5, with photographs showing their attainment in this project as average. Last year's Year 6 made slippers using fabrics and hand-sewing, part of a design and technology display, which shows their making skills as being in line with those expected nationally. Again, design work and experimentation for these pupils was average. Lower in the school, Year 4 made torches to average levels of competence, having dis-assembled commercially available products, designed their own,

and made these using batteries and bulbs. Another textiles project in Year 4, making purses and wallets, showed pupils also making these artefacts competently. In general, pupils achieve satisfactorily in design and technology given their prior attainment levels.

130. The teaching of the subject is satisfactory. The arrangement of the curriculum is unhelpful though, as the subject is not taught continuously through the year, but in blocks. This means that pupils' skills with tools and materials do not develop in a systematic, continuous way. Pupils, especially younger ones, also forget their learning too readily. No assessment systems exist yet, for teachers to check this development. Teaching of the "design and make" processes is thorough, despite the poor accommodation, which greatly restricts practical subject learning. The range of aspects of design and technology, using different resources such as food, textiles, hard and pliable materials for example is satisfactory. Teachers use these well to promote good learning. They now need to pay more attention to written as well as oral follow-up evaluation aspects, to ensure that pupils fully understand the complete design-to-evaluation "loop", including the effects of any modifications they make to their original designs. Pupils' development also needs to be tracked against the levels of the National Curriculum so that they know where they are and how to improve their work.

131. Attainment has fallen somewhat since the time of the last inspection, mainly because of current pupils' low skills in other areas of their basic curriculum. Pupils' progress and the quality of teaching remain similar. The subject is managed satisfactorily, but the co-ordinator has no time for monitoring and evaluation of what is happening, especially in Years 1 and 2. Short-term planning of the curriculum needs to be strengthened so that the full effects of the discontinuity of pupils' experience in the subject are fully recognised and any adverse effects minimised.

GEOGRAPHY

132. The last time the school was inspected, standards in geography were similar to those expected of pupils of the same age. This has changed and standards in geography are now below that of pupils of a similar age. This is largely because there are a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs in both Years 2 and 6. In addition a significant proportion of the pupils have English as an additional language and this inhibits, to a certain extent, their attainment in the subject. Furthermore, the planned scheme of work is not being consistently taught throughout the school. There are some good examples of cross-curricular links with other subjects, but these links are not so successful when they are consistently being taught as a joint topic lesson.

133. During their time in Years 1 and 2 pupils of all abilities and backgrounds make satisfactory progress in the development of their geographical skills and understanding, given their below average attainment levels on entry to the school. In Year 1, for example, the teacher had planned a very interesting and effective lesson where pupils were learning their own address in conjunction with learning about their local area. Each child was given a postcard to identify where the address and messages are written. After this they were given piece of card where they were able to draw a picture on one side and then write their address on the other side. However, as many pupils were in the early stages of writing the teacher used an effective strategy of writing the outline of the address for pupils to copy. In this way she helped pupils to overcome their writing difficulties. In a geography lesson in Year 2, linked to science, pupils were looking at materials that are used in buildings in parts of Africa and the United Kingdom. The teacher had brought in some good examples of materials, such as a brick and wooden frame that the pupils were familiar with and could name. However, the links with materials used in the construction of houses in Africa was less clear to the pupils and no opportunity was given to showing the pupils where Africa was on a world map in

reference to the United Kingdom. Thus whilst pupils made satisfactory gains in their learning, opportunities were lost to make those gains even more substantial.

134. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 make good progress during the course of the four years. They have a wide range of geographical skills and concepts to learn and most are effectively taught. For example, pupils had engaged in studies on world climate zones, oceans and seas, mountains in the United Kingdom and across the world. The example of a river study demonstrated a range of work that covered rivers from their source and included pupils' understanding of terms such as 'erosion', 'transportation' 'meanders' and 'tributary'. They then used this information in their learning about local rivers. In a good Year 5 lesson pupils were identifying, on a local plan, where water could be found. Some found this task challenging and needed support in what to look for on a plan and how to identify where the sources of water were to be found. Nevertheless they persevered with their work and most achieved a lot during the course of the lesson. Good use is also made of the local area and pupils' have become involved in changes proposed to the streets in the locality of the school.

135. Pupils enjoy the subject when they are sufficiently motivated and challenged by the tasks they are set. Most have positive attitudes to the subject, although on some occasions a small number of pupils find difficulty in maintaining their concentration at an appropriate level and, as a result, become bored and complete little work.

136. Teaching overall is satisfactory with good teaching in Years 3 to 6. In the best lessons work is well planned, well delivered at a brisk pace, attention is paid to good management of the pupils and challenging questions that interest and inspire pupils in their learning are asked. However, where teaching was not so good it was due to pupils not being given tasks that are matched to the range of abilities within the class, especially higher attaining pupils. As a result, this subsequently fails to interest or enthuse them in their learning.

137. The present co-ordinator for the subject took over in January 2002 and has recently been joined by a teacher who has specialist knowledge in geography. They have just produced an action plan that charts areas in order of priority for the subject. This is a well-produced document that has identified and highlighted areas that will be addressed with the overall aim to raise standards of attainment. At present the role of the co-ordinator is unclear and greater clarification is needed if she is to be able to help support the development of the subject in the school and her colleagues' teaching of it. In addition the procedures for the assessment and recording of pupils' progress are unsatisfactory. These need further development in order to enable teachers to make an accurate assessment of what levels of understanding their pupils have so that they can more accurately plan the next pieces of work they want them to do. Resources for the teaching of the subject are satisfactory and make an appropriate impact on pupils' learning when well used by teachers to support the concepts and skills they are teaching.

HISTORY

138. The standards pupils attain at the age of seven and eleven respectively are below those expected of pupils of a similar age nationally. This is a different judgement to the last inspection when standards were in-line with that expected of similar aged pupils. The apparent fall in standards is largely due to the high proportion of pupils with special education needs in the current year groups. In addition a significant number of pupils have English as an additional language and this also impedes the levels they attain in their understanding of the subject. Furthermore, although there are examples of pupils recording work in history folders there is an overuse of worksheets, especially with the younger pupils, and this delay in developing pupils' writing skills impacts upon standards of attainment as pupils progress through the school.

139. During their time in Years 1 and 2 pupils' achievements are satisfactory so that, by the age of seven, pupils have made gains in their knowledge and understanding of the lives of people in the past; for example, by looking at the differences between a range of old and new toys and what homes were like in the past compared with today. In the Year 2 classroom pupils have their own museum of household items from the past. They are able to look at the similarities and differences of the objects and compare life today with that of time gone by. To give pupils hands-on experience of dressing-up in role and experiencing using these objects, the teacher arranged a visit to a local museum one afternoon during the inspection. As a record of their visit the teacher took photographs on a digital camera and these were on display for all the pupils to see the next day. Pupils were enthused by this and were keen to talk about what they had done and seen. Such experiences not only fire pupils' enthusiasm for the subject but the practical nature of the activity ensures that pupils have a greater understanding of what they have learnt.

140. All pupils' progress and rate of learning increases in Years 3 to 6 and good gains are made in their knowledge and understanding of a variety of historical skills and concepts. Consequently, by the age of 11 pupils have learned that the past can be divided into periods such as ancient and modern and understand the terms BC and AD. For example in a Year 3 class pupils were learning to place the Celtic and Roman periods into a chronological framework. The teacher had carefully prepared a timeline where pupils started by identifying where they were now in 2002 and then were required to mark important dates in history in order to recognise that the Celts and Romans lived a long time ago. Some pupils were confidently answering dates from previous learning and able to explain what it means to invade and settle. Such skills are well built upon in Year 4 where pupils study the Anglo-Saxon period. A short video on Anglo-Saxon life enhanced the pupils' knowledge and understanding of what it was like to live in those times, in comparison to our life today. Although no lessons were observed in Year 6 the samples of the last year's work showed some good work where pupils had studied what it was like for children living in Victorian Britain. They looked at the differences between rich and poor children, the working conditions and the schools in Victorian times compared with today. They could compare their own school that was constructed in Victorian times and the changes in the locality by studying local plans and maps. Some work involved studying a 19th century census return for the locality, identifying the information that a census return can give when learning about the lives of men, women and children in Victorian times. Such clear structures to pupils' learning ensure that good gains are made even though many pupils have a variety of difficulties in their learning.

141. All pupils enjoy the subject and, when sufficiently stimulated by the work presented to them, have good positive attitudes to the subject. They work well together and willingly take turns and share resources. They are most careful when handling historical artefacts. However, there are a few occasions when pupils' concentration lapses as a result of them being insufficiently stimulated by the lesson. By no means is this general across all pupils. However there are a few who find that maintaining their concentration is difficult. Consequently, on these occasions, they produce less work and, in the worst cases, can be disruptive of the work of others.

142. The quality of teaching of the small sample of lessons seen was satisfactory overall with some examples of good teaching for the older pupils. In the best practice the work was well planned and the purposes of the lesson were shared with the pupils. The teacher gave a clear outline of the topic being covered and the work the pupils were expected to do was well matched to their prior attainment levels. The lesson proceeded at a good pace and much was achieved by the pupils.

143. The subject co-ordinator has worked hard to develop the resources in history and has been developing a collection of artefacts to support the teaching and learning in the subject. In addition, good use is made of the local museum resources that are borrowed each term to meet the needs of the planned history curriculum. Good use is also made of the local environment with visits to a Victorian schoolroom, Reading museum and to Blake's lock. Where such resources are well used by teachers they greatly enhance pupils' learning and understanding of the subject.

144. At present the subject co-ordinator's role is underdeveloped as she has little opportunity to monitor or evaluate pupils' learning or achievement in the subject. This is unsatisfactory. Similarly procedures for assessing and recording pupils' progress in history are also unsatisfactory. These need further development in order to enable teachers to plan more accurately the next pieces of work they want their pupils to do.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

145. Pupils' attainment in the subject is below average by the end of Year 2. As in other subjects, attainment is reduced by low underlying skills in literacy in particular as well as in pupils' general understanding. These weaknesses affect their ability to use computers as effectively as most pupils of their age. No lessons were observed in Years 1 or 2 but discussion with pupils and a scrutiny of their work shows that Year 2 pupils are below average in most aspects of the subject. They use appropriate programs and develop their skills satisfactorily, given their low underlying attainment. Achievement is satisfactory during these years. In the examples seen, pupils' competence is average when producing lines or pattern with art programs, or in using the mouse to place features on a face to create amusing images. Pupils' keyboard skills are weak at this stage, which makes them unusually slow at typing information into a program through the keyboard. Year 1 pupils are more competent. They have recently made self-portraits to hang on their cloakroom pegs, using a "paint" program. Some of these show good control in using the mouse and the finished pictures are very effective.

146. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 was high last year and is on target to be in line with the national average this year. This represents good achievement for these pupils whose general attainment is low. The current Year 3 have started their year with low levels of attainment, but were achieving well in a lesson seen about e-mails. Here too, their attainment was impaired by very low literacy levels as they struggled to get words and sentences written on paper, which they would later type into the computer. Pupils did understand their prior learning about how e-mailing works though. They could recall vocabulary and the functions of the icons to average levels of competence for early Year 3. In Year 4, pupils have caught up significantly with the levels expected nationally. In a lesson seen in Year 4, most pupils could understand how to program the screen "turtle" so that they could draw out their initials on the screen using typed instructions. The constraining factor here is often pupils' weak keyboard skill, which makes their typing of simple instructions very slow and tedious. Few have a clear idea about where letters or other symbols are on the keyboard. Pupils in this lesson made good progress, with those of different abilities and ethnicity achieving equally well. The same was true in Year 6, where pupils were starting to use multi-media to design web-pages. Attainment here matches the national average, except for those elements where writing is necessary, when standards are low. The subject provides an opportunity for pupils to overcome these difficulties, through word-processing, for example, but insufficient use is made of computers in other areas of the curriculum for this to be of significant use in overcoming their weaknesses. Pupils seldom used computers in lessons other than subject specific lessons during the inspection and unusually little evidence exists of their use in other subject workbooks. During ICT lessons however, pupils do experience cross-curricular applications of computers, for instance in using spreadsheets to do mathematical

calculations. These are insufficiently used in mathematics lessons though, with little evidence of their use in mathematics books. The same is so for English. Pupils experience word-processing appropriately in ICT lessons but seldom include these texts in their English books.

147. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Evidence indicates that pupils are set to achieve well in their later Year 6 projects. Computer presentations created by the last Year 6 groups, using a commercial presentation program, were very effective. These show above average competence in pupils' use of a wide variety of media, including recording and importing music into the presentations and using digital or scanned images of their own making to support their research. Some in the current Year 6, whilst not so strong at present, are keen enough to reach similar levels. Pupils' achievements in the subject are good between Years 3 and 6.

148. The teaching of the subject is good. Teachers are confident in using the programs available and they cope well with inevitable technological "glitches" in lessons. Teachers plan pupils' work well to provide experience of a suitable range of programs and applications. They teach these interestingly, with clear explanations using laptop images projected onto a large screen, so that pupils can follow and understand what to do. Teachers allow a good length of time for pupils, in pairs and individually, to have "hands-on" experience during lessons. They use classroom assistants sensibly, particularly to oversee and support those who have to go to other teachers' rooms because of the unhelpful location of computers. This arrangement in itself is not satisfactory, because those going to other classes necessarily disturb other pupils' lessons, however quiet and unobtrusive they are. The overall availability of computers in the school, particularly for older pupils, is above average, but the location and arrangement of these resources is unsatisfactory. Most teachers have more than the usual number of PCs in their teaching rooms, but use these too infrequently. Useful additional laptops give a good degree of flexibility. Together, though, this provision does not make it possible for the relatively small, full classes to work in one room. Teachers manage the absence of a computer suite well, enabling maximum access for pupils, but at the inevitable expense of disturbing other classes. Other teachers and pupils also manage this disturbance well, but the present arrangement is not completely satisfactory. The flexibility offered by sufficient numbers of laptops to provide enough computers for a whole class, would greatly improve teachers' ability to oversee all pupils' work and ensure equality of opportunity for all. Teachers contend very well with pupils who exhibit disturbing behaviour, managing both to ensure good one-to-one help for the majority and to deal effectively with this unacceptable behaviour. Lessons mostly include opportunities for pupils to review and discuss learning. This gives them a chance to contribute their knowledge orally when it would be very difficult to write effectively about it. Opportunities for pupils to learn and practise their keyboard skills would greatly help them to type information more quickly into the computers, thus reducing their frustration in this regard. In general, though, teachers create a sense of excitement and confidence in pupils about their lessons, which now needs to be extended across the curriculum, so that pupils comprehend computers as a tool for general use in other aspects of their studies.

149. The management of the subject is good. Schemes of work are appropriate, giving pupils a satisfactory range of experiences. Teachers receive good support from the co-ordinator who now needs to take on a more pro-active role in order to be able to offer further support to his colleagues. Pupils now make good progress in their older years in the school, an improvement from the time of the last report. Attainment in Years 1 and 2 is below that described in 1997, mainly because of much weaker literacy, but by the age of 11, standards have been maintained. The quality of teaching has improved and is now satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. Assessment is urgently needed, particularly in pupils' later

years, to track pupils' skills and understanding, rather than simply to record curriculum coverage.

MUSIC

150. By the end of Year 2 pupils attain standards in the subject that are slightly below nationally expected levels for pupils aged 7. This appears to be a drop in standards since the last inspection. However, there is a high proportion of pupils in Year 2, that have either special educational needs or English as an additional language. Pupils enter the school with below average ability, but nevertheless achieve satisfactorily during Years 1 and 2. As a result, by the end of Year 2, most pupils are able to make short rhythmic patterns clapping their own name according to the number of syllables. In addition, they know the names of a number of instruments and can describe the sounds they make. They can listen to various pieces of music and make suggestions as to what they think they sound like.

151. Whilst in Years 3 to 6 pupils rate of learning increases so that by the end of Year 6 most are attaining the levels expected of 11-year-olds across the country, a situation found at the time of the previous inspection. The influence of the knowledgeable subject co-ordinator, together with the introduction of peripatetic instrumental teaching of guitars and keyboard, are significant factors in this. As a result, by the age of 11 pupils can use percussion instruments to describe mood and different images, some are adept at composition and most are willing to sing, which they do tunefully and with enthusiasm.

152. Pupils clearly enjoy the subject and respond well to the satisfactory and sometimes good teaching they receive. Pupils in Year 1 really enjoyed the opportunity to play percussion instruments in response to the music tape they were listening to. They took care of the instruments, sorted them out and carefully put them away under the clear direction of the teacher. Only a limited number of lessons were observed during the inspection but it is clear from discussions with staff that some lack confidence in teaching the subject. To address this, the good subject co-ordinator has recently updated the subject policy and has adapted a nationally produced scheme of work in order to assist her colleagues. These are supplemented by good quality tapes that help teachers teach their lessons. Resources overall are satisfactory and the school has a good supply of instruments from other cultures thus making a positive contribution to all pupils' cultural development.

153. The co-ordinator has recently begun to introduce a formalised system for the assessment and recording of pupils' progress. This needs to be completed together with a review of the co-ordinator's role in order to enable her to have more opportunity to monitor musical development within the school as well as assist her colleagues in the teaching of the subject.

154. The school makes good use of visits and visitors to the school in order to enhance pupils' musical experiences. For example the Berkshire Young Musicians Trust visits the school three times a year and many pupils join in concerts at the Lodden Valley Leisure Centre and at Reading's Hexagon Theatre.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

155. Standards of attainment are below average at the end of Year 2. They are average at the end of Year 6. Pupils make steady progress in Years 1 and 2 and good progress in Years 3 to 6. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, hampered in some classes by unsatisfactory behaviour. Most pupils with English as an additional language make steady progress as a result of sound support. The sound standards at the end of Year 6 have been maintained since the previous inspection, although standards in Year 2 are not

as high as they were then. Turbulent staffing problems, a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language and pupils moving in and out of the school affect the standards being achieved, as does poor attendance by a number of pupils.

156. An above average amount of time is devoted to physical education, particularly in the infant classes, but weaknesses in pupil management and slippage of time and pace in some classes limit the effect of additional time. Pupils cover an appropriate programme of activities including gymnastics, dance and games with pupils in the junior classes experiencing athletics, swimming and outdoor adventurous activities. Dance and games was observed during the inspection.

157. In Years 1 and 2 pupils build steadily on their early skills in gymnastics, dance and games. By the age of seven pupils travel in a variety of ways, hopping, skipping and jumping in different directions. They stretch and curl with reasonable skill but pupils in Year 2 do not always use the space with sufficient awareness. Skills in throwing and catching are not well developed for a significant number of pupils, with about a third of pupils in Year 2 throwing and catching with the expected level of skill. Skills in controlling a ball with the foot are inconsistent with a lack of awareness of the person receiving the ball in many cases. Listening skills are unsatisfactory for many pupils in Year 2 and, as a result some pupils fail to follow instructions.

158. By the age of eleven, most pupils have at least basic skills in swimming. They take part in a variety of games and work independently, with a partner or in small groups to create simple dance sequences. They know how to mirror their partner's movement and understand terms such as 'moving in canon'. Most pupils follow instructions, but the few pupils with English as an additional language are less confident, following others in the group. Most pupils move in time to the music, use good facial expression in their dance and perform contrasting movements with their partner, although some lack the confidence to perform in front of their peers. Through practice, pupils refine their performance, although skills in self and peer evaluation are not strong. In some classes, for example Year 5, the high proportion of boys, many of whom are on the special educational needs register, can lead to disruptive behaviour and thus impede attainment and progress in lessons.

159. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, but unsatisfactory teaching and learning was observed in some infant and junior classes, linked directly to some pupils' unacceptable behaviour and weaknesses in classroom management. Good teaching was observed in Year 1, characterised by the teacher's high expectations, interesting and challenging tasks, which motivate pupils well. In addition, brisk lesson pace ensures that pupils work hard and cover a lot of ground in lessons. The teacher shared the learning objectives with pupils and made clear her expectations of behaviour and rules for the lesson. Good questioning links the subject to other areas of the curriculum, such as literacy. Effective use of praise prompts pupils to try hard and improve their skills. Skills are carefully taught and systematically developed. Good use of demonstration and the involvement of pupils in self-evaluation results in pupils' improvement of skills and awareness of their own learning. By contrast, where teaching is unsatisfactory, tasks are undemanding and the pace is slow. Slippage of time due to slowness when changing limits time for pupils to engage actively in lessons. High noise levels and an inability to listen carefully results in a significant number of pupils failing to follow instructions. Behaviour in these lessons deteriorates because pupils lack self-discipline skills. Basic requests such as 'line up quietly' are difficult for these pupils to achieve.

160. The management of the subject is satisfactory. The implementation of the national guidance for physical education ensures appropriate coverage, but the policy has yet to be

completed. Resources are adequate, although hall apparatus is old and heavy, limiting opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for its organisation. The shared resources for lunchtime activities make it difficult to guarantee the good quality and condition of small equipment. The small hall limits opportunities in gymnastics for older pupils in particular. Pupils participate in a range of games such as quick-cricket, basketball, tag rugby, football and netball, taking part in local tournaments and competitions. Good links exist with Reading Rockets basketball team, Reading football team and London Irish sports. There is satisfactory provision made for extra-curricular activities, although there is no opportunity for older pupils to experience a residential visit. A limited number of parents provide assistance with swimming and other sporting activities. There is no formal assessment in place at present, in order to inform planning to meet the needs of the range of pupils in the school. Procedures for monitoring teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' personal development, particularly in their social and cultural development. Teachers work hard to ensure that all pupils are included and participate in lessons. Support staff are usually well deployed to enable this to happen.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

161. Pupils' attainment in religious education at the age of seven and at eleven is below average. This is mainly because their writing is very weak. Pupils are unable to get down their thoughts and feelings on paper with ease or accuracy, so most written work in religious education is below average. In some years, pupils show that they have learned ideas and facts for short-term recall, but the current Year 2 can remember little of their previous learning about the subject. Year 6 pupils' written work is also weak, although in the lesson seen, most pupils could talk about the relationship between life and death with appropriate competence and could relate this to the life-cycles of other creatures and plants. Year 5 pupils' lesson about Jewish traditions relating to the Passover meal, showed pupils mostly understanding, for immediate recall, the various items placed on the Seder plate, with some understanding what these elements symbolise. However, many had forgotten these names and what they represent by the time they got to drawing or writing these for the exercise following the demonstration. Most had to ask the class teacher or classroom assistant for help to remind them. Poor handwriting script and spelling greatly impeded the written task for many pupils, especially for boys and attainment was below average for Year 5. In a Year 3 lesson about symbolism, pupils could speak with average levels of competence about a special object, but again attainment was below average in writing. Given pupils' underlying low levels of attainment on entry to the school, achievement is satisfactory.

162. Teaching of religious education is satisfactory. Teachers plan and prepare lessons appropriately to ensure that the locally agreed syllabus contents are taught. Pupils experience a variety of tasks and activities in each lesson and pace is brisk, maintaining their interest. Artefacts are used well to illustrate and exemplify ideas. For example in the Year 5 lesson about the Passover, the meal-table was carefully laid with all the items symbolising various aspects of the Passover meal. The teacher's explanations of what each item represented was clear and thoughtful. Good links are made where appropriate with other subjects in the pupils' curriculum. For instance in Year 6, links with science were highlighted well in a lesson which formed the introduction to a theme about the rituals and traditions associated with birth and death. Here the teacher made natural associations with other life and death cycles effectively. Classes are managed well, ensuring that pupils with learning or behavioural difficulties have an opportunity to join in with the discussion and to contribute ideas. Pupils generally listen well to their peers and behaviour is generally satisfactory. Only in a minority of instances does the behaviour disturb the learning of religious education.

163. The very newly appointed co-ordinator has not yet monitored the subject, but knows that the policy needs to be up-dated. She has good support from the new headteacher. No assessment yet exists in religious education, which is an area for development alongside other non-core subjects. Apart from deterioration in the written aspects of the subject, religious education remains very similar to the description in the previous report. No use of ICT was observed in any aspect of pupils' work in religious education and this needs to be included in the new policy.