

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **CONEY HILL COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Gloucester

LEA area: Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 115603

Headteacher: Mr M Allen

Reporting inspector: Mr M Thompson  
25372

Dates of inspection: 19 May– 22 May 2003

Inspection number: 247568

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: 5 -11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Coney Hill Road  
Gloucester

Postcode: GL4 4NA

Telephone number: 01452 541030

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr T Bullingham

Date of previous inspection: July 2001

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
25372	Mike Thompson	Registered inspector	Art and design Design and technology Physical education	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9468	John Arscott	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?
30853	Susan Betts	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Music	How well are pupils taught?
8839	Mike Egerton	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Mathematics Geography Religious education	
32136	Lesley Brookes	Team inspector	Educational inclusion, including race equality Special educational needs English History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Coney Hill Community Primary School is located in the Coney Hill estate on the eastern edge of the City of Gloucester, and is a member of the Gloucester Education Action Zone. Almost all of its 238 pupils are of white, UK heritage and there are none with English as an additional language. The local area is one of considerable disadvantage, and the social and economic circumstances of most of its pupils are well below average. Almost four out of ten pupils are entitled to free school meals, a proportion which is above the national average. About a third are identified as having special educational needs. These needs are wide ranging and include moderate learning, emotional and behavioural, communication and physical difficulties. Eleven pupils have statements of special educational needs, which give them a legal entitlement to extra help. This is a large number for a school of this size. Overall, the attainment of pupils on entry to the school is well below that expected for children of this age, and many have limited levels of basic literacy and numeracy. In recent years, there has been a high turnover of teachers.

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

The school is effective and provides sound value for money. The headteacher, governors and senior staff are good at monitoring the school's performance and provide clear educational direction. From a low starting point, its pupils make good progress in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science because they are keen to learn and are well taught.

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

- Standards in mathematics are above average in Year 2.
- Children in the reception classes are given a very good start to their education.
- Pupils are well taught.
- All of the staff know the pupils very well and take good care of them; pupils with special educational needs are given good quality help and make good progress.
- The school is very good at developing pupils' social skills and in raising their self esteem; pupils have very positive attitudes towards their work and are very well behaved.
- The school is well led and managed at all levels.

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

- Standards in English at the end of Years 2 and 6, and standards in mathematics and science at the end of Year 6.
- The curriculum in art and design, design and technology, geography, music and physical education, because this affects standards in most of these subjects at the end of Year 6.
- The contribution made by parents to their children's learning.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

There has been a good improvement since Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools judged that the school no longer required special measures in July 2001. The key issues for action identified in their report have been successfully addressed as follows:

- standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science have continued to rise;
- arrangements for grouping pupils for literacy and numeracy lessons have been changed;
- pupils' attendance has significantly improved.

In addition:

- the good quality of teaching and learning has been sustained;
- the school continues to be well led and managed;
- pupils' attitudes have improved and their very good standards of behaviour have been maintained.

All staff and governors are determined to raise pupils' attainment, and there is a very good capacity for continued improvement.

## 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
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	E*	E	E	C
mathematics	E*	E	E	C
science	E	E	D	B

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

For pupils in Year 6, standards in English and mathematics in the national tests for 2002 were well below average in comparison with those achieved in all schools nationally. However, when compared with the results of schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, standards were average. Although the average point score for science in 2002 was below average, the proportion of pupils achieving the national target of Level 4 was average. Results are improving. For example, three years ago, results in English and mathematics placed the school's performance among the lowest five per cent of schools nationally. When results in English, mathematics and science are taken together over the past five years, the trend in improvement overall is above the national trend. The effect of this is that the gap between the school's performance and the national average has narrowed significantly. The school came close to its realistic performance target for English in 2002 and exceeded its less ambitious target for mathematics. Inspection evidence indicates that it is on course to come close to similar targets set for this year. Particularly noteworthy is the school's 2002 performance in mathematics at the end of Year 2, which placed it among the top five per cent of schools nationally. This represents a striking improvement in comparison with its performance two years before, which was well below average.

From a low starting point, children in the reception classes achieve well. However, most do not achieve all of the nationally recommended targets for children at the end of the reception year. Nevertheless, they make good progress in each area of learning and very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development, creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world. In Years 1 and 2, pupils achieve satisfactorily overall. They make good progress in the core subjects and information and communication technology and satisfactory progress in geography, history, physical education and religious education. However, progress in art and design, design technology and music is unsatisfactory because of weaknesses in the curriculum for these subjects. By the end of Year 2, standards are above average in mathematics, average in science, geography, history, information and communication technology, physical education and religious education, but below average in English, art and design, design technology and music.

In Years 3 to 6, pupils also achieve well overall. Progress is good in the core subjects and information and communication technology, and is satisfactory in geography, history and religious education.



Progress is slow in all other subjects and, as in Years 1 and 2, this is because of weaknesses in the curriculum. Standards are average in geography, history, information and communication technology and religious education, below average in mathematics, science, art and design, design technology, music and physical education and well below average in English. Overall, pupils with special educational needs achieve well throughout the school.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	These are very good. Pupils are enthusiastic about their lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils respond to the school's high expectations of their behaviour in a tolerant and mature way.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils make very good progress in developing social skills and confidently work with their classmates.
Attendance	Attendance has improved significantly over the past year and is now satisfactory.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good	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.*

The quality of teaching, as judged through observations of lessons and a scrutiny of pupils' previously completed work, is good overall. About seven out of ten of the lessons seen were good or better, and almost one in ten were of the highest quality. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Overall, teaching is good in English, mathematics, science, geography, history, information and communication technology and religious education and is satisfactory in art and design, music and physical education. There was insufficient evidence from either lesson observations or retained work to make a clear judgement on the quality of teaching in design technology. Skills in literacy and numeracy are generally well taught. In the reception classes, all elements of teaching are very good or better and the children are given a very good start to their education. In Years 1 and 2, basic skills are well taught, and teachers are good at managing their pupils. In these classes, pupils try hard and learn satisfactorily. In Years 3 to 6, teachers generally have a good knowledge of what they have to teach, and give clear explanations to their pupils. They are good at making work interesting, and use a variety of methods to achieve this. They are also very skilled in managing their pupils. As a result, pupils show good levels of interest, sustain their concentration for long periods, and learn well. A particularly noteworthy feature of teaching in all classes is the contribution made by the teaching assistants, who work with teachers to plan lessons and provide high quality help to individual pupils or small groups during lessons. Through their support, pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all class activities. Sometimes teachers' learning objectives are not precise enough, and relate to a block of lessons rather than a specific session. Where this is the case, teachers generally do not use information about pupils' learning well enough to adjust what they are to do in the next lesson, because this has often already been planned. On occasions, teachers' introductions to lessons are too long, and the result is that there is then not enough time at the end of the session to reinforce what has been learned.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall, and very good in the reception classes. However, there is not enough time for most subjects other than English, mathematics and science. Legal requirements for the physical education curriculum for pupils in Years 3 to 6 are not fully met.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. These pupils receive effective help and have clear individual education plans.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good, and arrangements for promoting their spiritual and cultural awareness are satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils flourish within the school's caring environment.

While parents have positive views about the school, they have very little involvement in the education of their children, despite the wide range of initiatives introduced by the school. The curriculum offered to pupils in art and design, design technology, geography, music and physical education needs to be improved because it does not clearly set out the ways in which pupils' skills are to be developed as they move from Year 1 to Year 6. Consequently, teachers do not always know precisely at what level they have to teach.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	This is good. The headteacher provides clear educational direction for the school, and senior staff support him well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are enthusiastic, committed, and very well informed. They have a very clear understanding of the issues facing the school, and carry out their duties satisfactorily.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school carefully evaluates its performance and is working hard to improve standards.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its premises and equipment satisfactorily. Funding is carefully spent and good use is made of grants for specific purposes, such as special educational needs.

The school is well staffed, its accommodation is spacious, and levels of equipment are generally satisfactory. However, the library is in a poor condition and cannot be used by pupils. This prevents pupils from making better progress in developing their skills in reading and research. Principles of 'best value' are applied very well when decisions are made.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• Their children make good progress because they are well taught.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good, and the school helps their children to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• The school is approachable; it works closely with them and keeps them well informed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were no significant concerns raised by parents.</li> </ul>

- |                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| • The school is well led and managed. |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|

Inspectors' judgements support all of the positive views above.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

- 1 Attainment on entry to the reception classes is well below the levels normally expected for children of this age. Children entering the school generally have low levels of basic literacy and numeracy and under developed social skills. During their year in the reception class, they achieve well and make good progress because they are very well taught and their progress is carefully monitored.
- 2 When the broad range of subjects is considered, pupils make satisfactory progress overall as they move from Year 1 to Year 6. However, pupils make good gains in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. In English, progress is good because of the very strong focus on literacy throughout the school, and because of the schools' use of a large number of nationally funded initiatives to provide additional help for targeted pupils. These include:
  - Early Literacy Support for pupils in Year 1, through the school's membership of the local Education Action Zone;<sup>1</sup>
  - the Additional Literacy Scheme for Years 3 and 4;
  - further literacy support for Year 5, again through the local Education Action Zone.
- 3 In mathematics, the most significant factor affecting progress is the way in which numeracy sessions are taught, with teachers setting out simple, achievable objectives for separate parts of their lessons, the success of which are quickly evaluated. If necessary, elements of the lessons are revisited until pupils fully understand, and previous learning is constantly being revised. This method of teaching responds best to the learning style of the majority of pupils, since many have difficulty in remembering facts. The approach to science places a strong emphasis on practical, investigative work, which ensures that pupils need to use previously learned skills, such as 'fair testing' on a regular basis.
- 4 Pupils also make good progress in information and communication technology as a result of the considerable investment in equipment over the past few years and the leadership of the deputy headteacher, who is the subject coordinator.
- 5 In all subjects, the quality of help provided by the school's large number of teaching assistants is a significant factor in the progress made by pupils. Their work in supporting individuals or small groups during lessons ensures that the lower attaining pupils are fully included in class activities and make a useful contribution in class discussions. This helps to raise pupils' self esteem and improves their confidence. Their work is of great importance, given the fact that one in three pupils has special educational needs.
- 6 Results of the national tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 have improved greatly over the past four years. Particularly noteworthy is the dramatic improvement in standards in mathematics, which has been seen over the past few years in test results for pupils at the end of Year 2. This has occurred because the school has not only improved the proportion of pupils attaining the national target of Level 2, but it has also successfully challenged the higher attaining pupils and has significantly improved the proportion attaining the higher Level 3. The effect of pupils' very good grounding in basic numeracy is beginning to be seen as these pupils move through the school.
- 7 As a result of the strategies adopted by the school to improve standards, the proportion of pupils attaining the national target of Level 4 at the end of Year 6 has increased significantly over the past four years. The proportion of pupils attaining the national target of Level 4 has risen by 20 percentage points in English, 24 percentage points in mathematics, and 39 percentage points in

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<sup>1</sup> Education Action Zones are local partnerships of schools, LEAs, business and community organisations which work together to raise standards.

science. Overall, the school's rate of improvement has exceeded the national trend, and in recognition of this the school has received national achievement awards for the past two years.

- 8 The effect of the good teaching seen in almost all classes is diluted by a number of factors, the most significant of which are:
  - the general lack of parents' involvement in their children's education;
  - pupils' lack of general knowledge;
  - the turnover of pupils.
- 9 The school works very hard to involve parents in their pupils' education, but has had little success. Its strategies have, therefore, had to focus on compensating for the lack of support that affects many of its pupils. These strategies begin with a 'breakfast club', which starts at about eight o'clock each morning and end with a very good range of extra curricular opportunities for pupils, including supervised homework sessions. During the day, all members of staff are vigilant for pupils who appear to be distressed, and have difficulty coping because of emotional problems. The '*Time to Talk*' facility is always available for these pupils. Some of the school's initiatives have come through its membership of the Education Action Zone, such as the large number of volunteers from the local business community who come into school to hear pupils read, because many of them are not heard at home. A 'Family Learning' project involving the Education Action Zone Family Learning Team has been in place since June 2002 and has involved a small number of parents.
- 10 Pupils' general lack of life experience and basic general knowledge also affects their attainment. For instance, a number of the pupils who were heard reading had limited understanding of parts of their books, even though the text was at an appropriate level in terms of its technical difficulty.
- 11 Overall, the turnover of pupils is broadly average in terms of the numbers arriving and leaving during the course of each year. However, the nature of the turnover affects the school because a significant proportion of those joining have special educational needs.
- 12 Progress in a number of the foundation subjects<sup>2</sup> is affected by shortcomings in the curriculum. To some extent this is the result of the school's necessarily strong focus to improve levels of literacy and numeracy, which has meant that time available for a number of other subjects has been limited. In some areas, such as art and design and design technology, the national guidance which has been adopted by the school to ensure a breadth of curriculum coverage, has not yet been adapted to reflect the specific needs of the pupils. This has meant that teachers have tended to focus on the activities to be taught rather than the skills to be learned.

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

- 13 Pupils' attitudes to the school have improved since the previous inspection and are now very good. Most pupils display genuine enthusiasm for the school; they are very keen to be involved in activities and play a full part in classroom discussions. On the whole, pupils concentrate hard and work very well in lessons. Many display a very well developed sense of responsibility. This is best seen in the activities of the School Council, such as the pupils' involvement in the local Junior Neighbourhood Watch. Although teachers direct most of their work, pupils are keen to help with classroom routines. There are not many opportunities provided for independent learning, but pupils take delight in shared learning, as well as working on their own. Most pupils have a healthy attitude towards learning from their mistakes.
- 14 The very good standards of behaviour observed in lessons at the time of the last inspection have been sustained and, as a result, pupils make good progress in lessons. Pupils have been instrumental in the development of a 'Behaviour Charter' through the School Council, and almost all exercise a high degree of self discipline. For example, there is practically no need for teachers to be present at assemblies to maintain order. Some teachers are very quietly spoken, yet they can

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<sup>2</sup> Foundation subjects are those other than the 'core' subjects of English, mathematics and science.

all be heard clearly, because the levels of 'work noise' are low. Pupils are unusually courteous and respectful. Oppressive behaviour, bullying, sexism and racism are rare occurrences. There have been no exclusions during the current school year, and only one in the previous school year.

- 15 Overall, the personal development of pupils is very good. Most pupils are very aware of the impact of their actions on others and exercise a high degree of self control. Pupils can and do reflect on and discuss their behaviour, feelings and experiences, particularly during lessons devoted to developing personal, social, health, and citizenship education. In this respect the school has been identified locally as an example of 'best practice'. Pupils display great concern for those less fortunate than themselves and actively support charitable causes such as Children in Need.
- 16 Most of the pupils can talk about their own views and beliefs, and most are prepared to listen carefully to the views held by others. Classroom councils give all pupils the opportunity to generate ideas and to show initiative. Pupils also appreciate how tenacity and perseverance impacts on whether these ideas eventually arrive in front of the School Council. Amongst the most notable successes of the School Council is the scheme that provides every child with a water bottle.
- 17 The 'buddies' scheme allows the older pupils to demonstrate responsibility when looking after the younger ones. A number of pupils are active members of a first aid club. Pupils, teachers and other adults within the school relate very well to one another, and this generates a particularly welcoming atmosphere. It is also very common to see pupils helping and supporting one another in the classrooms. There are a significant number of pupils who are in the care of the local authority, and the school works hard to fill the gaps in their personal development through initiatives such as the Pupils in Partnership club.
- 18 Attendance is satisfactory. After several years of poor attendance the very latest figures show a remarkable improvement, bringing current rates in line with the national average. The level of unauthorised absences has been consistently better than the national trends, and now the percentage of authorised absences is broadly in line with the national figure. Data provided by the school shows that just 12 pupils account for 20 per cent of all absences. Procedures for registering pupils are good, and meet statutory requirements. Lateness to school and for classes is infrequent.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

- 19 The good quality of teaching observed at the time of the previous inspection has been sustained. Overall, teaching is very good in the reception classes, satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, and good in Years 3 to 6. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good.
- 20 The main strengths of teaching are:
  - the clarity of teachers' explanations and introductions;
  - the relationships between staff and pupils;
  - the contribution to pupils' learning made by teaching assistants;
  - teachers' management of their pupils.
- 21 Areas for improvement are:
  - the clarity and precision of teachers' lesson objectives;
  - the length of introductions to lessons;
  - the use of the plenary session to review learning at the end of lessons.
- 22 Teaching is good or better in about one in seven lessons and very good or better in one in three. Of the 57 lessons observed, five excellent lessons were seen and there was no unsatisfactory teaching.
- 23 The quality of teaching is very good in the reception classes, and two of the excellent lessons were seen here. This ensures that the youngest children make very good progress, and gives them a very firm base for their future learning. Other excellent and very good teaching was mainly seen in Years 3 to 6. Overall, teaching is good in English, mathematics, science, geography history,

information and communication technology and religious education. It is satisfactory in other subjects apart from design technology, where not enough teaching or samples of pupils' work were seen for a judgement to be made.

- 24 Teachers give high quality introductions to lessons. They often begin by reviewing pupils' previous learning, sometimes through careful questioning. This ensures that pupils are ready to move forward in their learning. In one very good science lesson in Year 6, the teacher used a game to probe pupils' prior knowledge of electricity. This involved one pupil supplying a word such as '*conductor*', and his or her neighbour incorporating that word into a sentence to make the meaning of the word clear. Pupils enjoyed the challenge of thinking of very difficult words and revised earlier work well. Teachers usually share the purpose of lessons with their pupils, and give clear instructions for activities. Many teachers make good use of information and communication technology, and frequently use 'interactive' whiteboards<sup>3</sup> during these initial sessions so that pupils can easily see prepared examples or worksheets, or so that the theme of the lesson can be developed. However, these introductions are sometimes too lengthy, which means that pupils do not have enough time for independent activities. Additionally, there is not sufficient time for the plenary sessions at the end of the lessons to allow the teacher to check on gains in pupils' knowledge and understanding or for pupils to reflect on what they have learned.
- 25 Teachers know their pupils very well. This knowledge means that they are aware of most of the problems that pupils might encounter during lessons and generally prepare for these well. For instance, in a Year 4 music lesson, the teacher knew that one group of pupils would find difficulty in beating time as an accompaniment to a song, so she visited this group first to give them some ideas to build on. Teaching assistants also know pupils very well. They play a part in planning lessons and are, therefore, fully aware of the purpose of the activities. They provide skilled help for pupils, and often work with small groups of pupils. Very often the smooth running of lessons depends on the timely organisation or preparation of resources carried out by the teaching assistant.
- 26 Teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach. This ensures that they deliver lessons confidently and teach basic skills competently. As a result pupils gain knowledge and skills well in lessons. For instance, in a lesson in the reception class, the teacher carefully led the children from thinking about rhyming words to recognising these in a rhyming story, so that the meaning of 'rhyme' became clear to all.
- 27 A particularly noteworthy aspect of teaching is the way teachers manage their pupils. In about nine out of every ten lessons the management of pupils was good or better. Teachers insist on a high standard of behaviour at all times. They ensure that all pupils are learning and that classroom routines are well known by pupils. As a result, pupils work effectively and without disturbance. Teachers are also good at making their lessons interesting and employ a variety of techniques to do this. For example, in an excellent Year 5 history lesson about the life of child factory workers in Victorian times, the teacher and her teaching assistant acted out an interview between a poor child and a Victorian lady. This technique enthralled the pupils and captured their imagination.
- 28 Teachers meet the needs of the pupils with special educational needs with good support and with tasks matched suitably to their needs. Teaching assistants work well with class teachers, providing pupils with an appropriate blend of help and challenge and, in the best cases, contributing well to the assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress. They ensure that pupils are helped to contribute to discussions and to produce work appropriate to their abilities. There is particular emphasis on support during the numeracy and literacy sessions. The good support means that the children are able to take a full and active part in all lessons and activities.
- 29 Teachers' lesson planning is satisfactory overall. Plans generally set out a clear structure to lessons and detail of the activities to be carried out, including those specifically targeted at lower attaining pupils. However, the objectives for the lessons are sometimes not precise enough. They

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<sup>3</sup> These are large boards on which the screen display from a computer is projected. The technology enables the user to control the images on the screen by touching it.

are sometimes weekly objectives rather than those specific to the lesson to be taught, based on an evaluation of what pupils actually learned previously.

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

- 30 Statutory requirements in relation to the National Curriculum are fully met in all subjects except physical education, where arrangements for swimming and outdoor and adventurous pursuits in Years 3 to 6 are not fully in place. In the reception classes, the curriculum is very good and provides the school's youngest children with a rich diet of interesting activities. The curriculum for religious education suitably reflects the Locally Agreed Syllabus. All pupils have broadly equal access to the curriculum and are fully included in all activities.
- 31 While an appropriate range of learning opportunities is provided, the current focus is strongly on improving pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy and this has resulted in an imbalance in the curriculum overall. At present not enough emphasis is placed on, or time allocated to, many of the foundation subjects.
- 32 The school has adopted nationally recommended guidance for most of the foundation subjects. However, this guidance has not yet been fully adapted to meet the specific needs of the school. The curriculum in many of these contains good information on the activities which could be taught, but the school has not yet clearly mapped out in all subjects the way in which pupils' skills are to be progressively developed as they move from Year 1 to Year 6. Nor is there always clear information as to precisely what the level of development of pupils' skills should be by the end of each year. Without this information, teachers have to rely on their own experience, or on support from the subject coordinators, to determine the level at which they will teach.
- 33 There is some evidence of good links between subjects being made. For example, pupils have interpreted the outline of maps in producing collages in art and design. However, the lack of an overview of the curriculum for the whole of the school means that potential links between subjects and the opportunities to make better use of time are sometimes missed. In some subjects, such as art and design and design technology, work is planned in a half term 'block' and the individual subjects are studied for only half of a term. As a result, there are lengthy periods in which pupils have little or no experience of a subject. For instance, during the period of the inspection design technology was only taught in one of the classes, because the half term focus was on art and design. Since both subjects share a single time allocation, not enough time is available for either.
- 34 The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been appropriately implemented. The impact of the numeracy strategy has been greater because of the way in which the school has adapted it to the particular needs of its pupils, with regular opportunities to practise and consolidate basic skills. However, because of the shortage of time allocated for many of the foundation subjects, pupils have limited opportunities to practise their developing skills across the curriculum.
- 35 There is a very good range of extra curricular activities available to pupils. These include sporting and musical activities as well as useful skills such as gardening, cookery and first aid.
- 36 The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school meets the requirements of the Code of Practice for the pupils it identifies as having special educational needs. Learning support assistants work effectively in classes to support these pupils and activities provide achievable challenges for them.
- 37 On the whole, the wider community has a very good impact on pupils' learning. The school tries hard to compensate for the general lack of experience and general knowledge of its pupils by organising a wide range of visits and 'enrichment' activities provided by visitors. For example, visits from a mediaeval re-enactment group, a drugs workshop, classical and jazz musicians and the local constabulary all enhance pupils' academic progress and improve their knowledge and understanding of society and the wider world. Representatives from the local community visit and



speak to pupils, and the school is committed to participation in local community events. Under the direction of their teachers, pupils use the internet to broaden their knowledge. The administrative centre of a major building society is close by, and two dozen staff come regularly into the school to hear pupils read. However, for all its value, this initiative does not have a greater impact on reading standards because it merely replaces what would normally be expected at home. The local school library service provides an extended range of books every month to encourage and support reluctant readers. Lottery funding has contributed to the range of tennis and physical education equipment. Education Authority Zone initiatives include funding to improve attendance, a parent and pupil information and communication technology club, physical education activities and a music club. Good use has also been made of opportunities for Year 6 pupils to attend the local professional rugby club's study centre.

- 38 Relationships between the school and partner institutions are very good. The relationship with the Family Centre that shares the same site is particularly strong. One of the governors is an LEA secondary school adviser and this adds to the very effective contact with the local secondary school. For example, Year 11 pupils come to hear pupils read and Year 7 tutors help to prepare Year 6 pupils for entry to the secondary school. These visits are also part of the very good induction practice developed between the two schools. The school uses its ample accommodation to good effect in supporting initiatives such as 'Booster Classes', 'Early Literacy Support' and 'Further Literacy Support.'
- 39 Overall, the provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Although spiritual moments occur frequently during most days, for example, during prayers at assembly, the school is not adept at recognising and exploiting these moments so they often escape the pupils' attention. However, there are notable exceptions, such as a Year 3 history lesson where children were enthralled by a video showing how clay pots and papyrus are made. Similarly, religious education and PHSE lessons are skilfully used to explore many themes, and most of the pupils display an awareness of and can discuss the faiths of others. Pupils are encouraged to discuss and reflect on their experiences, and this thinking enhances their spiritual development. The plenary session is rarely used as an opportunity for pupils to fully reflect on what they have learned.
- 40 The way in which the school promotes pupils' moral development is very good. The school works very hard to promote a climate of honesty, fairness and tolerance and an understanding of what is right and what is wrong. These values are reinforced in all areas of the curriculum, for example in a Year 5 literacy lesson pupils were made clearly aware of the injustice and inequalities in Victorian society as described by Charles Dickens. Equal opportunities and personal rights are well developed. This can be seen in practically all lessons where teachers make sure that every pupil has the opportunity to participate in question and answer sessions.
- 41 The very good provision for pupils' social development, noted at the time of the last inspection, has been sustained. Adults at the school provide very good role models for pupils. There are many opportunities for pupils to interact with numerous visitors to the school, such as those who hear readers. The 'buddies' scheme, classroom routines and the School Council all make significant contributions towards developing pupils' social skills. The annual residential visit to the Isle of Wight provides older pupils with good opportunities to demonstrate initiative and to take a measure of responsibility for their own actions. The way the behaviour policy and the Behaviour Charter are implemented promotes a high degree of self discipline. Relationships within the school are very good and make a considerable contribution to the school's friendly and well ordered atmosphere. Older pupils are expected and encouraged to care for the younger ones. The school is quick to recognise that some pupils have severely under developed social skills and in these cases the pupils are invited to join the PIP club, which aims to address these problems.
- 42 Overall, arrangements for developing pupils' cultural awareness are satisfactory, although some elements within this provision are good. For example, most pupils have a good understanding of their own cultural heritage through visits to places such as the Forest of Dean sculpture trail, the Cotswold Wildlife Park, and the Bristol Science Park. The school also works hard to provide pupils with opportunities to appreciate art, literature and music through specialist visitors to the school. The visit by a representative from a mosque was one of the few activities that help pupils to

appreciate the cultural diversity of British society. Except for music, the school's provision for multicultural experiences for pupils is under developed. In art and design, for instance, there is little evidence of the use of work of non western artists as a stimulus for pupils' creativity.

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

- 43 The procedures for child protection, safety and welfare are good. The school's good ethos of care includes all pupils and not just those who are socially disadvantaged. Teachers are very aware of the individual circumstances of their pupils and are quick to respond when needed. The school has a trained counsellor for children in distress. There is also a dedicated room set aside for the '*Time to Talk*' scheme where pupils are encouraged to discuss their problems. The PIP Club is a particularly good feature of the school's care and welfare provision, and is organised by one of the governors. It offers a weekly opportunity for a small number of pupils to enjoy the sort of activities which they might not otherwise experience. These have included riding, and a trip to an indoor climbing wall. Membership of the club is for pupils deemed to be in particular need: sometimes at the request of social services. Teaching assistants are heavily involved in providing such a good level of guidance and support.
- 44 Compliance with local authority child protection procedures is very well established, and there are well tried routines for recognising and dealing with child abuse. The headteacher is the designated child protection officer. The welfare of pupils on the child protection register is extremely well monitored, and staff awareness of, and training in, child protection procedures is very good. The school also helps children to protect themselves and others through training and safety initiatives organised by the local police. There are good systems for meeting the requirements of pupils with special educational needs. The large number of pupils at the school with a range of learning difficulties means that the school needs to maintain a very good working relationship with a wide variety of outside agencies, which it does successfully. This very good provision has been maintained since the previous inspection.
- 45 There is a good health and safety policy in place, and one of the governors is the designated person responsible for overseeing this provision. The school promotes awareness of health and safety issues very well and the caretaker quickly and capably resolves day to day issues. Safe working practices are regularly monitored and reviewed, and 'risk assessments' are carried out every year in conjunction with a health and safety adviser from the local authority. Arrangements for dealing with accidents are clearly set out, and several members of staff are qualified to give first aid. Although the school has a medical room, it is too far away from the central office, and so it cannot be used effectively. The school is aware of this problem.
- 46 The procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good. The school fully complies with the statutory requirements for recording and reporting of attendance. Attendance monitoring procedures have been improved since the previous inspection as a result of Education Action Zone funding to look at attendance more closely. Unauthorised absences are now followed up on the same day and, as a result, this element of attendance is better than the national average. Improving attendance remains a very high priority despite the recent turn around. Authorised absences are still too high despite appeals to parents not to condone time off from school. The school offers pupils high profile rewards for various periods of continuous attendance, and local businesses assist with sponsoring these rewards. The school has a very good working relationship with the education welfare officer.
- 47 The systems for promoting and monitoring positive behaviour are good. A comprehensive behaviour policy is firmly in place and is implemented consistently across the school. The climate within the school is designed to promote good behaviour through self discipline rather than by teachers' intervention. The procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour and anger management are very effective, and well trained teaching assistants make a significant contribution in this area. Anti bullying strategies are very well established, and the school maintains very good records of incidents involving misbehaviour. Bullying or anti social behaviour is so quickly identified by vigilant staff that these instances rarely develop into significant incidents. However, when trouble does arise it is firmly dealt with by the school.
- 48 The arrangements for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good. Informal assessments are made of pupils' response to PSHE lessons. Teachers know their pupils very well and know when remedial action is necessary, such as an invitation to join the PIP club. Teaching

assistants are key players in this monitoring process. The end of year reports on pupils show that teachers monitor pupils' social skills and attitudes well.

- 49 Overall, pupils' academic progress is satisfactorily assessed and monitored. Within the core subjects, the procedures for assessment are generally effective in identifying pupils who need extra help. Good use is made of assessment procedures to identify pupils with special educational needs. Pupils' individual education plans are of good quality and contain targets, which are specific, measurable and attainable. They are also regularly reviewed, thus ensuring success and progress. Overall, good support is provided for pupils with statements of special educational needs and such pupils are well integrated into the school community.

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

- 50 In general, the perception that parents have of the school is good. About one in five parents or carers returned their pre inspection questionnaires, and all but one of the areas covered received over 90 per cent support. Parents are particularly impressed with the caring attitude that prevails in the school. However, only one parent attended the pre inspection meeting with the Registered Inspector.
- 51 The school works very hard to promote effective links with parents, but often with little success. The induction procedures for new pupils coming into the school are detailed, and the school makes comprehensive arrangements for transferring its pupils to secondary schools. The quality of information provided for parents is good. The prospectus and governors' report both contain a wealth of useful information, and the school regularly informs parents about the curriculum. Pupils' annual reports show that teachers have very good knowledge of each pupil's learning, and include very detailed targets for improvement. The school makes strenuous efforts to involve and inform the parents and carers of pupils with special educational needs. Since about one third of pupils have identified learning difficulties, this is a major task for the school.
- 52 Many parents are reluctant to become involved in the work of the school. A large number come into school for assemblies and to help with visits, sports and extra curricular activities, but too many parents avoid getting directly involved with important learning activities such as hearing their children read on a regular basis. The school tries hard to get parents involved, but these efforts have not been particularly successful. Reading and homework diaries are not always well used. Most parents have signed up to the home school agreement, but this is not yet an effective means of establishing a partnership between the school, parents and pupils. Many parents have responsible attitudes towards making sure their children attend school regularly, but the school records show that pupils with the poorest attendance records tend to make least progress.

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

- 53 The headteacher leads the school effectively and manages it efficiently, and together with his deputy, key staff and governors, he provides clear educational direction for the school. Staff teamwork is a very significant strength. School improvement and the need to raise standards are management priorities shared by the whole staff.
- 54 The headteacher has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching through his regular monitoring, together with observations of lessons carried out by his senior staff. Staff appraisal, in the form of performance management is fully in place.
- 55 Following the previous inspection by HMI in July 2001, an action plan was prepared to address the key issues identified for future development. Overall, the school has made good progress in addressing these issues as follows:
- 56 Key Issue 1: *'Continue to raise the standards achieved by pupils.'*

- 57 The school has been successful in raising standards in the core subjects, the evidence of which is seen in the year on year improvements in its national test results in both Year 2 and Year 6. However, the drive to improve pupils' levels of basic numeracy and literacy has taken up a large proportion of the available teaching time, and standards in some of the foundation subjects have suffered as a consequence.
- 58 Key Issue 2: *'Review the effectiveness of the arrangements for grouping pupils for literacy and numeracy lessons in Years 3 to 6.'*
- 59 This issue concerned the withdrawal of lower attaining pupils from classes for literacy and numeracy lessons, since the curriculum provided for them was not always appropriate to their needs. The school immediately responded to this concern, and one of the strengths of the school's current provision is the good quality help which is now given to its lower attaining pupils within lessons because of the good partnership between teachers and their teaching assistants. These pupils are now fully included in all activities.
- 60 Key Issue 3: *'Improve the pupils' attendance.'*
- 61 Attendance has significantly improved over the past year, and the latest data shows that it is now about average. This is due to a great extent to the very close monitoring carried out by the school as part of an Education Zone Action initiative.
- 62 The governors know the school very well, visit regularly, and have a very good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Governors successfully fulfil their role as 'critical friend' to the school through their monitoring of the school's work. A particularly good feature of the governors' work in shaping the direction of the school is the partnership which has been developed with subject leaders. In each subject, and in special educational needs, the coordinator, a governor and a teaching assistant liaise closely over issues that have arisen as a result of their monitoring. The governors' standards committee meets termly and carefully looks at issues such as the quality of teaching and learning, pupils' performance and statutory target setting. Governors have a very clear understanding of the principles of 'best value' and look very carefully at the impact of their decisions, such as the appointment of a large number of teaching assistants, on the attainment of pupils.
- 63 The management of the school's provision for pupils with special education needs is good. The special educational needs coordinator is a skilled and experienced teacher, who is supported well by the headteacher and by the dedicated special needs teaching assistant, and together they form an effective and committed team. The special educational needs coordinator monitors the school's provision well and liaises effectively with teachers when the individual education plans for pupils in their classes are written, using a computer program designed specifically for this purpose.
- 64 The day to day management of the school is effective. Efficient office procedures enable teachers to focus on their work in the classrooms rather than spend their time on routine administrative tasks.
- 65 Most legal requirements are fully met. The exceptions are in the curriculum for physical education and minor omissions in the governors' annual report to parents.
- 66 The school makes sound use of its resources, grants and other funding, and educational priorities are well supported by good financial planning. The recommendations of the previous audit report have been properly implemented. Overall, information and communication technology is used satisfactorily to support administration.
- 67 The school is well staffed. There has been a high turnover of teaching staff during the past few years, and it is to the school's credit that the good quality of teaching has been sustained. This has occurred through good appointments, effective induction procedures, and the very good support and advice which are readily available from all members of the staff team. All staff are highly valued by the school's management. An indication of the school's commitment to the professional

development of all staff is its work in developing the role of its teaching assistants in conjunction with another school within the Education Action Zone.

- 68 Overall, the accommodation is good. The number on roll has fallen steadily over the past years, and there is plenty of space for the number of pupils on roll. Classrooms are bright and well decorated, and the accommodation is suitable for the whole age range of pupils. The hall provides a spacious area for indoor physical education, assemblies and school meals, and the school grounds are extensive. There is also a good sized area for outdoor learning for children under five, and a well equipped information and communication technology suite. Good use has been made of much of the surplus accommodation, but the school library is unusable because it is cluttered with redundant furniture. The school has had to take extensive precautions, including additional patrols by the local police, to protect its premises from frequent criminal damage and break-ins. It has to work hard to minimize the effects of these incidents on pupils' education. Externally, parts of the building are showing signs of neglect. This is because maintenance is being restricted to essential repairs since a project to build new premises on part of the site is scheduled to be completed within the next few years.
- 69 The school's range of books and equipment is adequate overall. These are generally stored and deployed satisfactorily, are easily accessible and are generally in good condition. Most resources are appropriate to pupils' ages and needs, and regular audits of provision ensure that out of date or shabby materials are removed from use. The number of computers in use by pupils is in line with what is recommended nationally, and good use is made of them.
- 70 A wide range of indicators, including the good progress made in raising standards of literacy and numeracy from a low starting point, the good quality of teaching, the good leadership at all levels, and the good level of improvement achieved since the last inspection show that the school is effective. However, further improvements need to be made in pupils' attainment and in the curriculum, and its income is high in relation to most schools nationally. For these reasons, it provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- 71 In order to improve further, the headteacher, staff and governors should:
- (1) Raise attainment in English, and science at the end of Years 2 and 6, and in mathematics at the end of Year 6.
    - In English by:
      - ensuring that teachers' learning objectives are concise and simply expressed;
      - ensuring that regular evaluations of what pupils have learned inform the next stages of teachers' planning;
      - adopting a more flexible approach to the National Literacy Strategy, to meet the specific needs of pupils better;
      - placing a greater focus on the development of pupils' literacy skills in other subjects.
    - In mathematics by:
      - placing a greater focus on pupils' wider application of the skills and knowledge learned.
    - In science by:
      - ensuring that the needs of potentially higher attaining pupils are better met.
  - (2) Raise attainment in art and design, design technology, music and physical education at the end of Year 6 by:
    - providing enough time to teach the full requirements of these and other foundation subjects;
    - being specific as to how pupils' skills in these subjects are to be developed as they progress from Year 1 to Year 6;
    - mapping out the whole curriculum so that links between subjects can be clearly identified.

(3) Improve the contribution made by parents to their children's learning.

A further issue which the school should consider is to ensure that the governors' annual report to parents contains all of the information required by law.

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## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	57
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	33

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	11	23	18	0	0	0
Percentage	9	19	40	32	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	Not applicable	238
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	Not applicable	93

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	Not applicable	11
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	Not applicable	88

#### English as an additional language

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

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	20

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

%
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#### Unauthorised absence

%
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School data	6.9
National comparative data	5.4

School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	14	20	34

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	11	14
	Girls	16	19	20
	Total	26	30	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	76 (56)	88 (66)	100 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	13	14
	Girls	16	18	19
	Total	26	31	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	76 (61)	91 (71)	97 (59)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	25	24	49

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	10	22
	Girls	19	18	23
	Total	28	28	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	57 (55)	57 (55)	92 (79)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	11	23
	Girls	19	18	23
	Total	28	29	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	57 (58)	59 (61)	94 (84)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

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

<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
200	1	0
0	0	0
5	0	0
16	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
4	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
3	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
2	0	0

*The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, 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)	11
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.6
Average class size	23.8

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

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	358

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	Not applicable
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	Not applicable
Total number of education support staff	Not applicable
Total aggregate hours worked per week	Not applicable

### ***Financial information***

<b>Financial year</b>	<b>2001-2002</b>
	£
Total income	751,352
Total expenditure	752,406
Expenditure per pupil	3,161
Balance brought forward from previous year	46,018
Balance carried forward to next year	44,964

Number of pupils per FTE adult	Not applicable
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	3
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	238
Number of questionnaires returned	44

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	52	45	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	43	7	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	48	45	2	2	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	45	7	0	5
The teaching is good.	50	48	2	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	43	48	5	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	32	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	39	2	2	0
The school works closely with parents.	41	50	5	0	5
The school is well led and managed.	48	45	5	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	36	57	2	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	43	36	9	2	9

Eighteen per cent of parents or carers returned their questionnaires.  
Only one parent attended the pre inspection meeting with the Registered Inspector

## **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**

- 72 The quality of education provided for the children in the reception classes is very good and is particularly enhanced by the work of the nursery nurse. Children enter the reception classes with well below average levels of attainment particularly in language, mathematics and some aspects of personal, social and emotional development. Over one third of the children are identified as having special educational needs. Although they do not achieve all of the nationally recommended Early Learning Goals<sup>4</sup> by the end of the reception year they make good progress in each area of learning and very good progress in personal, social and emotional development, creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress due to the quality of support they receive in all activities.
- 73 Strengths in the Foundation Stage are:
- the progress children make, particularly in their personal development;
  - the good quality of teaching by the whole team;
  - assessment procedures;
  - links with the Family Centre.
- 74 There are no significant weaknesses.
- 75 The majority of children enter the reception classes at the beginning of the year in which they become five. The strong links with the Family Centre mean that the teachers in the reception classes will receive very accurate and useful information about the children's strengths and weaknesses. The carefully worked out schedule of transition events begins in early June, and by the end of the summer term the children who will be moving into reception in September have made three substantial visits to their new teachers.
- 76 In three of the six sessions observed, teaching was good, in two it was excellent and in the remaining session it was very good. The three adults work as a closely knit team, sharing every aspect of the work from planning to teaching, assessing the progress of children and building the relationships with parents. Throughout the reception classes, relationships with the children are excellent. The adults really value everything the children do and use praise and encouragement to raise their self esteem and confidence. This has the impact of making all the children give of their very best, and in everything they do they try really hard. In a school assembly, led by the reception children, every child put great effort into the singing and the chanting of rhymes. The children in the reception classes enjoy a curriculum that is based on a programme of well chosen topics. At the time of the inspection the topic was 'Gardens'. Through very careful planning of the topic and related activities the children receive full coverage of the Early Learning Goals. A recently devised assessment system called 'I can do,' maps the progress of children from the Family Centre through into the reception classes. It is thorough, easy to use and provides very good information to track children and to help the teachers to identify areas of significant weaknesses and modify the curriculum in the light of this information. In all activities, particular care is taken to involve all the children,

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<sup>4</sup> The Early Learning Goals are standards for each of the six areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage. Most children are expected to have achieved these by the time they start Year 1.

and such is the expertise of the adults that it is often not possible to identify those children with problems. This is a very good example of inclusion considering the high proportion of children with special educational needs.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

- 77 The children in the reception classes make very good progress in developing their personal and social skills. In this area of learning most children, including many with special educational needs, achieve the majority of the Early Learning Goals by the time they leave reception. One of the major challenges which the teachers face is the low self esteem many children have, and their lack of self confidence. Activities to make children feel happy about themselves include 'hot seating', where a child sits in the middle of the circle and the other children are asked to say something good about the person. One comment was that a child in the 'hot seat' was always smiling, to which the teacher replied, '*Yes, he always makes me feel happy*'. During snack time the children take a piece of fruit or cheese, and on one occasion it became obvious to the teacher that this was the first time that a particular child had tasted a grape. In a very sensitive way the teacher suggested to the other children that it would be really kind if that child had the chance to have another piece. In moments such as this the children are becoming aware of simple acts of kindness and the need to support each other and not to be selfish. Through the very good teaching in this area of learning the children learn to care for each other. At the beginning of the morning one little girl began to cry, the nursery teacher quietly took her to one side and gave her a teddy bear to cuddle. When she sat down in the group, holding the teddy bear, the little girl next to her stroked her hair and comforted her. This reaction stems from the sensitive way in which the teachers approached all the areas of personal, social and emotional development leading to a very positive reaction from the children.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

- 78 The provision for the development of children's language and literacy skills is very good. A significant majority of the children will reach the Early Learning Goal in listening by the time they leave the reception class but in speaking, reading and writing the majority of children are still overcoming problems stemming from a lack of basic vocabulary and limited experience outside school of the correct use of language. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. The high quality teaching ensures that every opportunity is taken to engage the children in conversation, share books with them and develop a real love of stories and words. For instance, at the beginning of the morning session, the whole group sat looking at a 'big book' entitled 'This is the bear and the picnic lunch.' The teacher pretended that the other teacher had played a trick on her and had painted over some of the words. This meant that she needed the children's help in finding out what the words were as she read the book. This was a skilful way of getting the children, who are eager to help, to use picture clues to find the words. By the end of the session they had identified the words and were delighted that they had helped their teacher. At the same time, they had discovered how pictures in books could help them to find new words. Following on from the 'big book' work the children wrote about the story. The higher attainers could write a simple sentence underneath their picture but most only managed a few identifiable letters together with some marks on the paper. All children, however, have the confidence to attempt writing, and will happily talk about what they have written. As a result of the pleasure they get from reading 'big books' together, many of the children are beginning to read their own books. Most children have a reading book, and this is supplemented by another book which they take home. Writing skills are developing slowly as the children learn to control the pencils and put their thoughts into words but of paramount importance in this area of language

development, is the building of confidence and self esteem. In all the areas of language development this is the prime concern of the teachers.

### **Mathematical development**

- 79 The provision for children's mathematical development is very good and children are taught well. Standards are very low when children first enter reception due to the lack of language skills and the inability of the children to find the words to describe what they are doing. Through a wide range of interesting, practical activities children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. An example of this kind of activity occurred during the inspection when the children placed teddy bears in order according to size prior to taking them on a picnic. By constantly referring the learning to real experiences the children quickly become more confident and in simple counting, where the skill does not rely heavily on language, the children meet many of the Early Learning Goals. Very good use is made of counting rhymes and songs, and the beginning of mathematics sessions involves the children in lively counting games where they join in with confidence and exuberance. Very good use is also made of displays, which are used as a reference point for children in their work and which help them to become familiar with the vocabulary of mathematics. A feature of the work in mathematics was the way in which all staff insisted on answers being given in correct sentences, thus helping children to develop their skills in language and literacy.

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

- 80 Children come to school with very limited knowledge of the world in which they live and with poorly developed life skills and, by the time that they move to Year 1, most do not achieve all of the goals in this area of learning. The quality of teaching and provision in this area of learning is very good and all the children, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress. A very good feature of this area of learning is the way in which the curriculum is constantly linked to real, practical experiences related to the immediate environment around the school. For instance, during the period of inspection, the role play area was a garden centre and in the corridor outside the classroom the children were growing beans and caring for them. As the beans grew, the children keep a diary to log the changes that they see. Tadpoles also fascinated the children as they begin to change. A chart on the wall showing the life cycle of a frog helped them to know what is going to happen, and they drew and 'wrote' about these changes in their books. The school grounds are well used in the hunt for minibeasts, and the children use magnifying glasses and 'petri' dishes to find and collect any examples. A visit to Slimbridge Wildfowl Trust, by parents and children, adds another dimension to their learning. Well planned discussions encourage children to talk about the past and the present as they become more aware of the passage of time. Computer skills develop very well, with children using the information and communication technology suite and using the computer to help with other areas of learning, such as designing a book cover for a 'Little Red Riding Hood' book.

### **Physical development**

- 81 Provision for physical development is very good with children having access to a large outdoor area as well as the use of the school hall. Not all the Early Learning Goals are achieved by the end of reception but all the children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. In the outdoor area the children have access to a wide range of activities that encourage confidence and initiative and help them to play together. The wheeled toys are made to carry more than one child so that they have to negotiate taking turns and sharing. When the children were using these toys the



teacher placed cones in particular spaces to add challenge to the riding. In the school hall they work in pairs and in groups to learn how to throw and catch and how to use the space available to them. A range of good quality construction kits helps children to use their hands with more control and this, in turn, helps when they come to use tools such as scissors, brushes, pencils and crayons. In spite of the good progress they make in physical development many children, by the end of the reception year still find the formation of letter shapes hard and still need to follow the teacher's example.

### **Creative development**

- 82 This is an area of learning in which the children gain considerable success. For example, children's pictures of a vase of flowers, drawn with pastels, are remarkable in their use of colour and the way in which the children have captured movement in the stems. Many of them produced by generally lower attaining children, are a great boost to their self esteem. Children not only use pastel, but also paint with confidence: use media such as fruit for printing, and use marbling techniques to create underwater pictures. All the children thoroughly enjoy singing. Available in the classroom is a good range of percussion instruments which the children use to accompany songs and rhymes and compose their own tunes. The role play area provides them with opportunities to become different characters as well as learning to play together. All the pupils, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress in this area of learning.
- 83 Leadership of the Foundation Stage is very good. Initiatives to bond together the work of the Family Centre and the reception classes are excellent, particularly the work on assessment.

### **ENGLISH**

- 84 The results of the national tests in 2002 showed that standards at the end of Year 2 were below average in writing and well below average in reading. At the end of Year 6, standards overall were well below average. Inspection findings broadly confirm these results and show that, overall, standards are below average at the end of Year 2 and well below average at the end of Year 6.
- 85 However, the school has made significant progress in raising pupils' attainment over the past four years. This is evident in the year on year narrowing of the gap between the school's test performance and the national averages for Years 2 and 6. When the 2002 test results are compared to those of similar schools, the performance of pupils at the end of Year 2 was above average in both reading and writing, and at the end of Year 6 was average overall.
- 86 This good improvement has been largely brought about through good leadership, good teaching, the skilled help provided for pupils by teaching assistants, and pupils' willingness to learn. A culture of improvement permeates the school, which came closer to achieving its realistic targets for pupils' performance in 2002. From a low starting point, pupils achieve well and make good progress as they move from Year 1 to Year 6.
- 87 The school's strengths in English are:
- the focus placed on the development of pupils' writing;
  - the detail of teachers' marking of pupils' work;
  - the on going development of assessment systems and the emerging use of assessment data.

- 88 Areas for improvement are:
- the precision and clarity of teachers' learning intentions;
  - the frequency with which evaluations of what pupils know and can do inform the next stage of learning.
- 89 Overall, attainment in speaking and listening is below average at the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils join the school with very limited speaking and listening skills. They generally speak clearly in formal or public situations such as assemblies. However, adults working with the pupils do not generally place enough emphasis on the quality of pupils' speech in lessons other than literacy, and are sometimes content to accept single word answers or responses that are not properly constructed. Pupils' listening skills are generally better. They understand the 'rules of audience' and listen carefully to what their classmates or their teachers have to say.
- 90 Attainment in reading is well below average at the end of Year 6. Most pupils have achieved technical competence in the skills of reading, but not all pupils fully understand what they are reading because their range of vocabulary and levels of general knowledge are below what is normally expected at this age. Their skills in selecting books to read are limited. Generally, they have few strategies other than looking at the cover design, a previous knowledge of a book from class reading sessions or using the colour coding system which gives an indication of the reading level. However, most pupils enjoy reading and are keen to share books with each other. Most pupils use their knowledge of initial letter sounds to 'sound out' unfamiliar words, but few regularly use the context of the passage as an aid. Attainment in reading is below average at the end of Year 2. Only the higher attaining pupils can read simple stories with expression, can retell the plot and can predict what will happen next.
- 91 The school is working hard to improve pupils' skills in reading. A consistent pattern of 'guided reading' time is used to start the afternoon sessions. This provides pupils with a good opportunity to read quietly for a sustained period, to receive guidance and to extend their skills. Pupils are expected to take books home every night, although they do not always have the opportunity to read to someone at home. To compensate for this, the school has set up effective initiatives with the local business community whose staff come into school during their lunch hour for shared reading sessions. In past years this was arranged with a local radio station. The current programme involves 25 adults from the headquarters of a large building society, who visit the school daily. Both pupils and volunteers look forward to, and enjoy, these sessions.
- 92 Attainment in writing is well below average in Year 6 and below average in Year 2. As a result of a recent focus on writing and its mechanics, standards of handwriting and presentation are improving and children show pride in their work. Teachers 'model' writing well in literacy lessons, but not enough emphasis is placed on correct spelling. In most classes, writing tasks provided are often the same for all pupils. As a result, higher attaining pupils are not challenged enough, while lower attaining pupils are able to achieve because of the effective help provided by teaching assistants. Where practice is better, teachers vary their expectations of the finished work in order to challenge individuals. For instance, pupils may be expected to produce more complex sentences or use more adventurous adjectives. In classes, pupils' individual targets are referred to regularly and are available on their tables. In the best examples of marking of pupils' work, teachers relate comments to their learning intentions, give suggestions on improvements, and allow pupils time to respond. However, there is very little evidence of pupils' response to this marking. In general, not enough attention is paid to the

improvement of pupils' skills in literacy through other subjects, with grammatical and spelling errors usually not corrected.

- 93 The quality of teaching of literacy is good overall. Eight lessons were observed, of which two were very good, four were good and two were satisfactory. Where teaching is good or better, teachers communicate the aims of lessons clearly to all pupils and reinforce this throughout the session. For example, in a very good lesson about adjectives the teacher used Charles Dickens' 'Great Expectations' effectively to illustrate how the skilled use of adjectives enhances a story. In particularly effective lessons, teachers make good use of questioning to assess pupils' understanding and challenge their thinking. They set time limits for activities, and classroom assistants are very well used to help individuals or small groups of pupils to achieve their learning goals.
- 94 Overall, the school's strategy for literacy is satisfactory and is steadily raising pupils' attainment. However, teachers do not always adjust the planning of their next lesson in response to their evaluation of pupils' learning and in recognition of the fact that many of their pupils have difficulty in remembering what they have previously learned; instead they stick to their plan for the week. Learning intentions are also not always expressed clearly enough and sometimes relate to a week's work rather than to a specific part of a lesson.
- 95 Resources are satisfactory overall. The collection of books to support reading and extra literacy support is good. It is accessibly stored and displayed well. There is a broad selection of 'big books' for class use. In many classes the range of fiction books is poor and in some cases there are only a few titles on display. The school library is currently out of use, and therefore pupils are unable to develop properly their skills of independent research. A review of the stock has already been carried out and books that were old or in poor condition have been removed. Furniture and shelving for a new library has arrived and the ordering of a broad range of new stock is in hand.
- 96 Leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The subject coordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic. With support from senior staff she is able to provide effective help for her colleagues through her evaluations of their work, giving demonstration lessons and leading staff training. As part of the school's drive to improve standards, the way in which pupils are assessed has been reviewed and a new system is being implemented. Teaching assistants are fully involved in the teaching of English and there is good liaison with the governor responsible for overseeing the subject.

## **MATHEMATICS**

- 97 Results of the national tests for pupils in Year 6 show that, over the last four years, there has been a significant increase in the number of pupils attaining the national target of Level 4 and that the trend of improvement in the school's results has been above the national trend. Overall, results remain well below the national average, but inspection findings endorse the school's evidence that improvement will continue to be a feature of the national tests. A further indication of positive improvement in the future can be seen in the results of the seven year olds. Here, the improvement in results has been dramatic, with overall performance rising from well below the national average in 2000 to be among the highest five per cent nationally in 2002.
- 98 Inspection findings broadly confirm the most recent national tests results. Standards are above average in Year 2, but below average in Year 6. Overall, pupils achieve well and make good progress. The rate of significant improvement noted in the 2001 inspection report by HMI has been maintained.

99 Strengths in mathematics are:

- the clear focus placed on raising standards;
- the use of assessment data to inform teachers' planning;
- the provision of tasks to meet the range of pupils' abilities in lessons;
- the quality of help given to pupils by teaching assistants.

100 Areas for development are:

- to raise standards in Years 3 to 6;
- to provide more opportunities for pupils to practise their mathematical skills.

101 Throughout the school there has been a sharp focus on improving pupils' skills in using numbers. Pupils in Year 2 have made good progress and most are able to count reliably up to 20 and use mental recall of addition and subtraction facts to at least ten. The higher attaining pupils can correctly add two digit numbers, such as  $47 + 17$  and, using a 'number line' as a counting aid, correctly subtract similar numbers. They competently add amounts of money and give change, and solve problems such as: *'If Katie buys four packets of buns and there are six buns in each packet how many buns has she bought?'* A feature of the work throughout the school is the insistence by teachers that pupils explain how they have arrived at the answer, so when a pupil gives an answer to a problem, the teacher will ask, *'How did you get that?'* Making pupils evaluate how they have worked out answers and questioning whether there was a better way has been an important ingredient in raising standards and improving skills in numeracy. By the end of Year 2 pupils can correctly describe the features of common two and three dimensional shapes, and are becoming increasingly confident with measures. Pupils with special educational needs make similarly good progress, in part due to the high quality of support they receive from the teaching assistants.

102 Pupils in Years 3 to 6 continue to make good progress. The impact of the successful strategies adopted to improve mathematics in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 is now being seen, with many pupils in Year 3, for example, performing at levels which are generally above those normally expected of pupils at this age. Throughout Years 3 to 6 the major emphasis is again on developing skills in numeracy. Pupils are becoming increasingly confident in using decimal fractions and in changing fractions such as  $\frac{3}{10}$  into decimals. They are able to find percentages, use coordinates and calculate the perimeter of irregular shapes.

103 Much of the success in raising standards lies in the fact that the teachers have very simple, achievable objectives for lessons and quickly evaluate whether the pupils have been successful in their learning. If the pupils have not acquired a particular skill then more work is done in the following lessons. As many of the pupils have poor memory skills, this means that a particular aspect of learning may be spread over a number of lessons until the teachers are satisfied that the pupils really know what they have been taught. For those pupils who achieve the learning objective quickly, there is work that is well matched to meet their needs and additional activities to take them further on if necessary. Introductory sessions are very well used to assess how much the pupils know and understand and this, along with the more formal assessments, helps the teachers to plan effectively. For example, in a lively Year 6 lesson, the first session was a bingo game where the pupils had to round up decimal numbers to the nearest whole number. Pupils worked well in pairs using individual whiteboards to record answers. As the game progressed the level of challenge increased, and by the final game it was quite demanding. The game developed pupils' skills while at the same time consolidating earlier learning, and enabled the teacher to assess what they knew and who the least confident pupils were. In all classes pupils' progress is enhanced by daily practice in mental calculation.

104 The quality of teaching in mathematics is good and in three of the five lessons observed it was very good. Teachers plan their lessons well and build systematically upon pupils' prior knowledge. Teaching is precise and clearly focused, and pupils are clear about what they have to do. In the introductions, good questioning skills keep all the pupils involved, and once activities begin, pupils who need support receive it in a most unobtrusive way from the teaching assistants. These assistants are so skilled in the way in which they support pupils that it is often difficult to identify who the special needs pupils are because they are included so fully into activities. Teachers and teaching assistants have high expectation of pupils, they use praise and encouragement well to motivate and encourage them, and the pupils respond with very positive attitudes to their learning.

105 The curriculum is broad and balanced. However, although pupils are now improving their range of skills in numeracy they need more opportunities to use these skills to solve practical problems, not only in mathematics but also in other areas of the curriculum. The school's decision to abandon the system of grouping pupils into 'sets' according to attainment and to return to whole class teaching is having a positive impact on standards. Leadership in the subject is very good, and plans for future development are sharply focused. There is a very strong commitment to continued improvement.

## **SCIENCE**

106 Standards in science are below average for pupils in Year 6. Although there are more pupils attaining the average Level 4 than is expected nationally, not enough pupils attain the higher Level 5. Standards for pupils in Year 2 are broadly average. These findings reflect the results of the national tests for 2002. Over the last four years, data from national tests shows good year on year improvement in standards in science. Pupils are achieving well and making good progress throughout the school. Those with special educational needs also progress well, mainly because of the extra, good quality help they receive from the staff who support them.

107 The main strengths of science are:

- the good progress pupils make, particularly in scientific enquiry;
- teachers' management of pupils during science lessons;
- the teachers' consistent use of a wide range of scientific vocabulary.

108 The areas for development are:

- the curriculum provided for the pupils in mixed age classes;
- the needs of potentially higher attaining pupils.

109 From the outset, pupils learn well in science lessons. There is an emphasis on learning science concepts through investigation or experimentation. As a result, many pupils achieve above average standards for their ages in the area of scientific enquiry. For example, Year 2 pupils' skills in investigation were improved when they were asked to give their predictions about whether a truck or a car would travel further after rolling down a slope, then to compare this with their observations. Later, these pupils were asked to write why they thought that the different vehicles went faster or more slowly. Teachers often use familiar and direct experiences of pupils to develop their scientific knowledge. In Year 2, pupils wrote a short report comparing the lifestyle of babies and toddlers after parents with children of this age had visited the class. The recorded work of pupils in Year 2 shows that teachers often ask for explanations to help pupils of this age understand science.

- 110 By Year 6 pupils have further opportunities to experiment in order to deepen their skills and knowledge. They know that it is important to test ideas using evidence they have gathered. Their previously completed work shows that they experience a good variety of practical and investigative activities. Sometimes they employ 'fair testing', or consider the best variables to measure. This helped them to solve challenges such like being asked to obtain pure water from some sea water, or to make a particular kind of switch for a circuit. They use a range of sources of information well to answer questions. In one lesson, pupils considered a letter from a gardener describing the problem he was having with caterpillars on cabbages. This helped them to learn more about life cycles.
- 111 The good progress made by pupils was also evident in discussions with Year 6 pupils. When asked how they would find out more about the motion of the earth and other planets, they suggested using the internet, books or CD-ROMs. They could describe the sort of apparatus and the nature of the fair test needed to answer the question '*What makes sugar dissolve more quickly?*' The First Aid club further enriches learning for some pupils. They learn about the human body parts in detail in addition to issues associated with illness and health. A homework club is open for pupils to complete work set in lessons.
- 112 The teaching of science is good overall. Of the seven lessons seen, five were good or better, with one being excellent. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Teachers have generally good knowledge and understanding of science, which gives them confidence. Consequently, introductions to lessons and other discussions with pupils are of good quality. Teachers manage pupils very well, and this helps to keep pupils involved in their tasks. Methods for carrying out experiments and safety rules are well known to pupils. All these features have a good impact on pupils' learning and, as a result, both attitudes and behaviour are very good. In excellent and very good lessons pupils' very good behaviour also enables teachers to strike a good balance between telling pupils what to do, and allowing them some scope for creative thought. For example, in an excellent lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4 in which they were investigating what makes the best kind of 'spinner', the pupils were given time to think about the factors that might affect how fast the spinner falls, then test their ideas. In one case, this led to a 'scientific' discussion between two more able pupils about the effects of weight and shape on the speed of the spinner.
- 113 Teachers also use information and communication technology well to prepare well constructed and clear recording sheets on which pupils are encouraged to record clearly and neatly. A particular strength of teaching is the importance placed on the use of scientific vocabulary. Teachers focus carefully on correct terminology, so this means that from Year 1, pupils become used to the idea of 'observing', and 'predicting', while by year 6 pupils also understand the meaning of a good range of technical vocabulary. Words associated with the current topic are displayed attractively in classrooms, and these words are emphasized, without fail, during lessons.
- 114 Teaching assistants provide invaluable help to teachers and to pupils with special educational needs by planning regularly with teachers. This means that these pupils are included fully in all lessons and can achieve lesson objectives. However, not enough emphasis is placed on the learning of potentially higher attaining pupils. Planning sometimes lacks any detail of tasks for these pupils.
- 115 The subject is well led. The coordinator has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development in science, and has already begun to address the need to introduce a new assessment system, with a view to improving the quality of activities for higher attaining pupils in future. The coordinator has also identified the way in which

pupils' skills are to be developed progressively between Year 1 and Year 6. This is particularly necessary where there are mixed age classes, in which the curriculum is currently geared to the older age group.

## **ART AND DESIGN and DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

116 Standards in art and design and design technology are below national expectations at the end of Year 2, and Year 6 and pupils make slow progress. This occurs because of weaknesses in the curriculum. No comparison can be made with the findings of the previous inspection, since this did not focus on these subjects.

117 Owing to the way in which the timetable was arranged, no art and design lessons were observed in Year 1 and 2, and only a single design technology lesson was observed in Year 2.

118 The strength in both art and design and design technology is:

- the useful guidance about activities provided by curriculum planning.

119 Areas for improvement are:

- the time allocated for teaching these subjects;
- the guidance provided for teachers about the levels at which different skills are to be taught in different year groups.

120 In art and design, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Of the four lessons observed in Years 3 to 6, two were good and two were satisfactory. Teachers generally explain clearly to their pupils what they have to do and prepare the necessary equipment well, and in all classes routines are well established. As a result, pupils set to work quickly because they know precisely what they have to do and where to get the necessary equipment. Since pupils respond very well to their teachers' very high expectations of their behaviour, they are able to work productively and without undue disturbance from others. Teaching assistants play an important part in pupils' learning, and work very closely with teachers in ensuring that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are involved and included in activities. There was insufficient evidence from either lesson observations or retained work to make a clear judgement on the quality of teaching in design technology; however, it was good in the single lesson observed.

121 The schemes of work for both of these subjects are based on nationally recommended guidance, and provide good direction for teachers in terms of the sorts of activities they should be providing for their pupils. They are, therefore, useful for teachers who are not particularly skilled in art and design or design technology and for teachers who have to take classes at short notice. However, the school has not yet adapted these to meet the specific needs of its pupils in terms of mapping out precisely how it proposes to develop their skills in all elements of both subjects as they move from Year 1 to Year 6. As a result, teachers largely have to rely on their experience to determine the correct level at which to 'pitch' the work. This can result in repetition and in work which is either too easy or too difficult. For example, separate art and design lessons observed during the course of inspection in Year 3 and in Year 6 covered broadly the same level of skills development in the use of clay.

122 A further weakness within the curriculum is that the amount of time allocated for teaching falls well short of what is recommended nationally. This has occurred because over the past few years there has been a very strong emphasis placed on raising attainment in the core subjects. The subjects share a time allocation, and are generally

taught alternately for a half term at a time. When separated out, the amount of time allocated for each is about half of what is recommended nationally. Teachers try to compensate for the shortage of time by combining work in the two subjects. For instance, a project to design and produce model chairs in Years 3 and 4, which is essentially a design technology exercise, also contained many elements of art and design. Good use is also made of opportunities for pupils to use their skills in art and design to illustrate work in subjects such as history or religious education, and collage work produced by pupils in Year 4 was closely linked to a village study exercise in geography. However, the shortage of time means that the curriculum is not covered in enough depth and pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop techniques through the direct teaching of skills.

123 In art and design, there is very little evidence of regular and systematic study of art appreciation within the curriculum. When works of famous artists are used as a stimulus for pupils, they are almost all of western origin. As a result many opportunities are missed to develop these aspects of pupils' cultural knowledge.

124 Through their effective monitoring, both coordinators have a very clear understanding of the issues to be addressed. They are each compiling useful portfolios of samples of pupils' work, to be used as a future reference point for teachers' judgements. Overall, the leadership in both subjects is good.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

125 Standards in geography are line with what is expected nationally at the end of Years 2 and 6. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress and are fully included in all geographical activities. The previous inspection did not report on geography.

126 A particular strength in geography is the development and use of mapping skills.

127 The main area for further development lies within the curriculum, since the amount of time allocated limits the range and depth of work possible.

128 Pupils in Year 1 build on the work started in the Foundation Stage where children use the school environment to begin to understand how we can make a map. Year 1 pupils study their own route to school, talking about how they get there, the places they pass and features they remember, and this is then developed into a simple map. The understanding and use of maps is a regular feature of the geography curriculum and pupils become very confident in using them. Pupils in Year 3 can plan a route and work out distances using scale. They know the eight main points of the compass and, when studying Tocuaro in Mexico, are able to use world maps to pinpoint the region they are looking at. In Year 6 lesson, pupils successfully worked out their own non standard scales and used them to calculate complex distances on a map of the world. In this lesson they responded to challenge in a very positive way and were confident to 'have a go' and make a contribution to the lesson.

129 Samples of pupils' previously completed work included some excellent examples of work on rivers by the oldest pupils. They use atlases to find major rivers and make detailed drawings to explain the stages of a river. A feature of this work is the good use made of information and communication technology, through spreadsheets, to calculate the depth of rivers. Similarly, opportunities to develop pupils' literacy skills were well taken through a metaphoric poem about the use and abuse of rivers. In this particular study good use was made of local examples, such as the River Severn. The use made



of the immediate locality is a strong feature of the work in geography. Year 3 pupils investigate Coney Hill, correctly identify physical and human features of the area and successfully make a 'key' to identify them on the map. This work prepares them for later studies when they look at a village in India and compare and contrast physical and human features with those in Coney Hill.

130 Overall, the quality of teaching is good. It was good in three out of the four lessons observed and satisfactory in the remaining lesson. Teachers use introductions to their lessons well to recap on previous work and assess how much the pupils know and understand. For example, in a good Year 6 lesson, one pupil used a word such as 'Equator' while the next had to give a sentence that explained what the word meant. This was a challenging exercise that not only tested pupils' knowledge, but also improved their literacy skills. Teachers plan lessons well and provide a good range of resources to interest and challenge the pupils. The necessity for the school to target improvement in literacy and numeracy has meant that time for geography is restricted, and this inhibits the breadth of activities within the subject. The coordinator, who provides good leadership, is aware of this.

## HISTORY

131 By the end of Years 2 and 6, most pupils attain standards that are in line with what is expected nationally and make satisfactory progress overall. No comparison with previous inspection judgements can be made, since the last inspection did not report on history. However, there is clear evidence that, over the last three or four years, standards have improved significantly

132 Strengths in history are:

- the development and use of resources;
- the successful introduction of a new assessment system;
- the focus placed on the development of pupils' research skills.

133 The main area for improvement in history is:

- the inconsistency in the marking of pupils' work.

134 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 satisfactorily compare evidence from their study of the past with what they know about present times. For example, they have looked at how homes, seaside holidays and toys have changed over time. In Year 6, pupils make appropriate use of a range of source materials to develop historical perspectives on, for example, life in Tudor England, and as part of their studies on life in post war Britain, they have focused on John Lennon and the Beatles. Their work shows that they have grasped the difference between past and present well. They use the internet and books from the school's 'topic boxes' to research information, but weak literacy skills hinder their progress in developing their skills of historical enquiry and their ability to communicate historical information. Furthermore, the lack of a usable library means that opportunities for independent research are more limited than they should be. Many pupils find it difficult to extract the information they need and present it in a structured form, although the school's focus on the development of research skills is beginning to have an impact. Work in the class is appropriately matched to the different needs of pupils of different ages and attainment, including those with special educational needs. Attainment in the recording of historical facts is generally satisfactory and the work reflects pupils' interest.

135 Evidence from three lessons observed and a scrutiny of pupils' previously completed work shows that the quality of teaching is good. None of the teaching observed was unsatisfactory. Teachers' enthusiasm for the subject is evident in many cases and this

has a beneficial effect on pupils' learning. There is a suitable mix of direct teaching, successfully coupled with opportunities for pupils to research topics for themselves. However, marking of work is inconsistent and does little to help pupils to understand what they need to do to improve further. Not enough use is made of the opportunities presented to develop pupils' skills in literacy. The subject is generally well resourced with a good range of 'topic boxes' which contain photographs, posters, videos, CD-ROMs, and various items of interest. The school's resources are enhanced by the loan of 'history boxes' from the local authority. These give the pupils opportunities to handle more historical artefacts. However, opportunities for pupils to enhance their learning through visits to places of historical importance and interest are limited.

136 The leadership of the subject is good. Curriculum planning is successful in guaranteeing a suitable coverage of the National Curriculum and an interesting range of learning opportunities. A summary of how pupils' skills in the subject are to be developed throughout the school has been produced and an effective assessment system introduced. While some good cross curricular links, for example with art and design and information and communication technology are made, opportunities to link work in history with other subjects are not always taken.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

137 Standards in information and communication technology at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with national expectations. Pupils generally achieve well and make good progress as they move through the school. There is secure evidence to show that there has been a good deal of improvement in information and communication technology over the last few years. The pupils with special educational needs also make progress well, often because of the help they are given by skilled teaching assistants.

138 Particular strengths in information and communication technology are:

- the progress made in developing pupils' skills;
- the teachers' very good management of their pupils;
- the leadership of the subject and teachers' partnership with the teaching assistants.

139 An area for further development is:

- the tracking of pupils' progress as they move from Year 1 to Year 6.

140 Pupils have a very broad diet of information and communication technology throughout the school which gives them the opportunity to develop a wide range of skills. Pupils arrive in Year 1 having had a good start in the Foundation Stage. They can control the mouse pointer and are familiar with using the computer suite. By Year 2, pupils realise that they can enter and store information in the computer, and they have become adept in using text images and sound. In one lesson seen, pupils were enthusiastically making a database about themselves by selecting pictures from a 'bank' of various features. They could open the program and follow the instructions successfully. Information and communication technology is used well to aid learning in other subjects. For example, pupils have used a 'decision making tree' in science, and a musical instrument program. In one Year 2 lesson seen, pupils used 'flood fill' techniques and straight lines to design pictures in the style of Mondrian. Samples of previously completed work show that they have successfully used a modelling program in geography to produce simple town plans.

141 By Year 6 pupils are good at developing ideas by organising text, tables, images and sound. In a Year 6 lesson pupils successfully added buttons to link the pages in a

multimedia presentation that they had made, based on a topic in geography. Using information and communication technology makes pupils careful and proud of their work. Pupils are beginning to exchange information using electronic mail. In one lesson in Year 3, pupils were thinking about what they might say in sending an email to another class. Pupils can use the internet with reasonable confidence to search for information selectively, and can talk about using spreadsheets and graphs. Work on display and in pupils' recorded work shows that they have formulated simple sets of instructions to program the movements of devices. Though pupils have in the past measured temperature using a 'data logger', this equipment needs updating and its use developing further. Pupils in Year 6 talked keenly about the skills they had learned, and gave examples of having used information and communication technology in English, mathematics, history and geography. The school plans to develop further the use of information and communication technology as a vehicle for learning in subjects across the curriculum.

- 142 Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Of the four lessons seen during the inspection, one was very good, two were good and one was satisfactory. Pupils learn well because their teachers are generally knowledgeable and competent in using information and communication technology. A regular feature of all lessons is teachers' very good management of their pupils. Teachers insist on a high standard of behaviour in the information and communication technology suite, and in classrooms where laptops are used, creating a calm purposeful working environment for pupils. Teaching assistants are competent in using information and communication technology and work well in tandem with teachers. On some occasions teaching assistants work with a group of pupils themselves. For example, in a Year 2 lesson an assistant effectively helped a group of pupils with special educational needs by using a slightly simpler version of the graphics program being used by the rest of the class. This meant that these pupils were able to master the skills being taught at their own rate. Very often, teaching assistants provide valuable help in the information and communication technology suite. Teachers make very effective use of the interactive whiteboards during their introductions to lessons. This arouses pupils' interest so that they make considerable creative effort during lessons. Opportunities to develop pupils' literacy skills through information and communication technology are generally taken well. For instance, rather than simply using the term 'multimedia', a teacher took care to explain its meaning to her pupils.
- 143 The coordinator provides very good leadership and management for the subject. She monitors planning in each year group and has occasionally observed lessons, so that she is aware of the strengths in teaching and learning and areas for improvement. She has led staff training sessions, and has ensured that all staff are familiar with the use of the suite. Sound practice in assessment is evident. The coordinator has recently developed and introduced a new assessment system, which is easy to use, so that teachers can use information about their pupils in subsequent planning. There is a very comprehensive portfolio of pupils' work from all year groups which is available to teachers as a reference point. Many examples have notes about the area that was targeted for learning and the pupils' response, such as their evaluation of a modelling program they had used. This helps teachers take an overall view of the 'state of play' of information and communication technology within the school, as well as providing information about pupils' attainment. An area for development highlighted by the coordinator is the further use of information and communication technology across the curriculum and tracking of pupils' progress through the school. The school works well with the Education Action Zone to promote initiatives, which encourage parents into school to develop their own information and communication technology skills and support their children's learning. The coordinator has also given a course for parents and pupils, which has been very successful.

144 Resources for information and communication technology are good and used very well and the information and communication technology suite provides very good accommodation.

## **MUSIC**

145 Standards in music are below what is expected nationally at the end of Year 6. There is not enough evidence of attainment in all of the elements of the curriculum for a judgement about standards at the end of Year 2 to be made. The recent focus on literacy and numeracy made by the school has limited the time available for music. As a result, pupils have not made enough progress. No comparisons between the current situation and the previous inspection report can be made.

146 The strengths in music in the school are:

- pupils' enjoyment in singing;
- the 'enrichment' activities provided.

147 The main areas for development are:

- the curriculum, and the time available for music;
- the assessment of pupils' skills.

148 The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Of the three lessons observed, teaching was good in one, and satisfactory in the other two. Teachers manage their pupils well and consequently pupils behave very well, respond enthusiastically, and enjoy their music making. Pupils particularly enjoy singing. In assembly and in lessons the pupils' singing is lively, confident, and generally tuneful. Teachers often prepare their pupils well for singing by ensuring that they have good posture and are able to breathe deeply. Teachers ensure that their pupils have regular opportunities to use musical instruments. In a good lesson in Year 4, pupils used a range of untuned instruments to compose a short piece involving notes of different pitch, noted down their compositions and then satisfactorily performed their work. This lesson provided many opportunities for the pupils to develop musically, particularly the skill of listening carefully to each other. The plenary session, was also well used for pupils to appraise each other's work. Teaching assistants provide much help in preparation and organisation. They also assist pupils with special educational needs to learn songs, for example, so that they can take a full part in lessons.

149 Teachers enrich pupils' musical experiences by providing the opportunity for them to sing in a choir. This develops the pupils singing and performing skills, which are used at Christmas, for example. There is also a recorder club for pupils. All musical activities develop pupils' social skills very well. The pupils are happy to play and sing together, and learn self control through musical experiences.

150 A recent audit shows that there are a good number of resources of fairly good quality, which are used well by staff and pupils. There is a good range of tuned and untuned instruments. Much new equipment, including percussion instruments and recorders, has been bought recently. There is a useful trolley loaded with equipment which is easily accessible to staff.

151 Music has not been one of the school's priority areas in recent years. The time allocated for teaching music is below what is recommended nationally. In addition, in some classes the subject is taught fortnightly, alternating with PSHE lessons. This means that pupils cannot build up the depth of skills and knowledge necessary for them to reach

expected standards. There is no assessment system other than the lesson evaluations and the 'checkpoints' for teachers within the published music scheme followed by the school, and any information gained about pupils' learning is not generally used when future lessons are planned.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

- 152 Standards in physical education are in line with what is expected nationally at the end of Year 2 and pupils make satisfactory progress. However, National Curriculum requirements in Years 3 to 6 are not fully met, and for this reason progress overall is slow and standards in Year 6 are below average. No comparison can be made with the findings of the previous inspection, since this did not report on physical education.
- 153 The main strength in physical education lies in the range of 'enrichment' activities available for pupils, some of which are funded by the Education Action Zone.
- 154 The single key area for improvement lies within the curriculum.
- 155 Teaching is satisfactory. Six lessons were observed during the inspection. One of these was good and the other five were satisfactory. A consistently good feature of all lessons is the teachers' management of their pupils. Pupils are well organised by their teachers, and have clear routines to follow at the start of lessons. In every case, pupils entered the hall in a calm and orderly manner and, when called to attention to listen to a teaching point during lessons, they responded immediately. The weakness in teaching is that in some lessons, teachers did not achieve a good balance between direct instruction and time for pupils to practise the skills learned. Sometimes this is because explanations are too lengthy, but on other occasions there was not enough time to explore the lesson theme in greater depth. For example, teachers made good use of the technique of selecting a few pupils to demonstrate the movements that they had learned or the routines that they had devised, and also made good use of other pupils to make constructive comments. However, they rarely gave pupils time to refine their work following these evaluations, because they had too much to fit in within the time available.
- 156 The curriculum is in need of improvement. Time allocations are uneven. For example, the timetable for pupils in a Year 5 and 6 class shows 30 minutes less for physical education than that of another Year 5 class. Swimming and water safety, which is a National Curriculum requirement for pupils before the end of Year 6, is an option available only to pupils in Years 3 and 4 and which some choose not to do. Records of attainment in swimming were not available during the inspection, but evidence strongly suggests that not enough pupils attain the national requirement to swim unaided for at least 25 metres. Similarly, requirements regarding outdoor and adventurous activities are not fully met. Furthermore, the school is yet to map out the way in which it proposes to develop pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding as they progress from Year 1 to Year 6, and teachers do not have clear guidance as to precisely the level at which they are to teach.
- 157 The school's membership of the Gloucester City Education Action Zone has benefited pupils in a number of ways, although none of these have yet made an impact on attainment overall. Year 5 pupils have visited a local school for an athletics afternoon, sports competitions have been arranged, specialist coaching is being provided, and the subject coordinator is being trained as part of a national school sports coordinators' initiative. Further 'enrichment' activities include extra curricular clubs for football and netball and a course of tennis tuition which was available for Year 3 pupils and was funded through a national lottery grant.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 158 Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are similar to those expected in the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils make satisfactory progress, including those with special educational needs. The previous inspection report made no reference to standards in religious education and therefore no judgements about improvement can be made.
- 159 The strengths in religious education are:
- the quality of teaching;
  - the links made between religious education and other areas of the curriculum;
  - the recently revised scheme of work.
- 160 An area for improvement is:
- the time allocated for the subject.
- 161 The good quality of teaching throughout the school has enabled standards to be maintained at an expected level. Lessons are well planned, have a clear focus and are introduced with good questions that enable the teachers to find out how much the pupils know and understand. In all aspects of the work in religious education, teachers try hard to ensure that there are strong links with other areas of the curriculum with a particular emphasis on the development of pupils' skills in literacy. For instance, pupils in Year 5 pupils told Mary's story about her son Jesus, and in writing this story drew on their learning about how to structure a good story and how to bring it to life through the use of descriptive language and interesting phrases. In a Year 5 and Year 6 lesson, the teacher illustrated the fact that the Bible is a collection of different kinds of writing by drawing comparison with the range of texts they have used in the past and the variety that can be found in school.
- 162 The new scheme of work for religious education now places greater emphasis on pupils' learning about other religions. Many of the pupils have little awareness that, in the place in which they live, there are different places of worship. Pupils in Year 4 are producing leaflets to inform newcomers to the area about the variety of religious groups in Gloucester. In order to produce the leaflets they needed to find out about Judaism, Islam and Hinduism as well as Christianity. In the introductory session to a lesson observed in this year group, the pupils were confident in recalling the knowledge they had gained and showed that they had retained a good breadth of understanding about the different faiths.
- 163 Lessons are soundly prepared and have a clear purpose, and good use is made of the introductory sessions to assess pupils' knowledge and understanding and to set clear expectations for the work to be done. Satisfactory use is made of artefacts, books and the internet to enable pupils to investigate the topics they are studying. However, books for research need to be provided by the teacher because the school library cannot be used. This limits pupils' opportunities for more independent work. Items of work produced are often good, but the range of topics covered is limited, as is the amount of time they can spend on any particular aspect.
- 164 Leadership in the subject is good. The coordinator is enthusiastic and committed to raising the profile of the subject and integrating it more closely with other areas of learning. She is well aware of the influence the subject has on the personal and social development of the pupils and the role that can be played in developing pupils' skills in literacy.