

INSPECTION REPORT

NETTLEBED COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Nettlebed, Henley-on-Thames

LEA area: Oxfordshire

Unique reference number: 123037

Headteacher: Mr Bob Worsell

Reporting inspector: Mrs Stephanie Lacey
3764

Dates of inspection: 16 – 19 September 2002

Inspection number: 248415

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:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	High Street Nettlebed Henley-on-Thames Oxfordshire
Postcode:	RG9 5DA
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Timothy Lewis
Date of previous inspection:	October 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3764	Stephanie Lacey	Registered inspector	English, art, geography, history, special educational needs and English as an additional language.	The school's results and pupils' achievements, How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
13828	Ron Ibbitson	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
24019	Ken Parry	Team inspector	Mathematics, information communication technology, design and technology, physical education and equal opportunities	How good are the other curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
19302	Chris Perrett	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, science, music and religious education	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Nettlebed Community School is small village school with 93 pupils on roll aged between four and eleven. There is an even balance of boys and girls. There are ten children in the reception year, who work in a class with Year 1 pupils. There are three further mixed-age classes. Pupils come from Nettlebed and surrounding villages. Most pupils live in owner-occupied housing, with some in housing authority homes. About 12 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is broadly average. Most of the families have their cultural roots in the British Isles, with six of the pupils coming from Finland, Portugal, Australia and America. Four pupils speak English as an additional language. They are all fluent English speakers. Children's attainment on entry to the reception year is wide-ranging, but below average for Oxfordshire. Nine per cent of the pupils are on the school's register of special educational need. This is below average. One pupil has a statement of special educational need.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Nettlebed Community School provides a sound education, with a warm and friendly ethos setting a firm basis for pupils' learning. Standards are broadly average in most subjects. The headteacher, very well supported by the school staff, is working hard to raise standards further. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Teaching is good overall and ensures that most pupils achieve well.
- Standards are particularly good in reading.
- Pupils enjoy school and behave sensibly.
- The strong staff team works very well together in the best interests of the pupils.
- Very good provision for the Foundation Stage ensures that children make a very good start.
- There is a family atmosphere based on a friendly and caring ethos.
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs.

What could be improved

- Standards in geography and religious education in Years 3 to 6.
- Systems for the headteacher, staff and governors to check how well the school is doing.
- The analysis and use of information about pupils' progress to raise attainment further.
- Strategic planning for the development of the school's work.
- The presentation of pupils' work.
- The consistent challenge for higher attaining pupils, especially in aspects of mathematics and science.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

It is to the school's credit that overall it has made sound progress since its last inspection in 1997. The last two years have been very difficult. Following the sudden and unexpected death of a much-loved headteacher in January 2001, two temporary headteachers were appointed before the current headteacher took up his post a year ago. Further disruption was caused by extended staff illness. In spite of this, standards in statutory tests have risen in line with the national trend and the quality of teaching has improved. Staff and governors have tackled the areas for improvement noted by the last inspection, which were related particularly to curriculum development, assessment and the monitoring of teaching and

learning. Satisfactory improvement has been made in all these areas, with more work needed on monitoring and the use of assessment. Staff are enthusiastic and committed and the school is in a good position to move forward.

STANDARDS

Standards in National tests

In small schools, comparisons of the standards reached in statutory tests with the national average can be misleading because standards can swing from average to below average on the performance of only one pupil. However some generalisations can be made. At Nettlebed standards have risen in line with the national trend since the last inspection, with no significant difference in the achievements of boys and girls. In 2001 the school won a government award for the improvement that had been made. In 2002, standards in Year 2 tests were well above the national average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing. Pupils did much better than their peers in schools with a similar socio-economic background in reading and mathematics and not as well in writing. In Year 6 tests standards were well above the national average in English, with pupils doing better in reading than writing. They were broadly average in mathematics and science. Pupils did as well as those in schools with similar socio-economic backgrounds in mathematics and science and much better in English. In recent years higher attainers have not done as well as they might in writing and science tests in Year 2 and mathematics in Year 6. The school has set very challenging targets for pupils in the current Year 6, which it is working hard to meet.

Standards in work seen

The inspection found that at the start of the school year new children have settled well into the reception class and are making very good progress. Most pupils at the start of Year 1 have reached the stage expected for them by the end of the Foundation Stage. Pupils in Year 2 are reaching average standards in writing, mathematics and science and are doing better than this in reading. In Year 6, pupils are also doing well in reading. Standards are average in mathematics and writing and above average in science. In other subjects standards are broadly average. There is evidence of some high standards in older pupils' art work and swimming standards are also above average. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are not doing as well as they should in geography and religious education. Pupils with special educational needs are making good progress because of the support that they receive. Pupils learning English as an additional language are also achieving well. This year, pupils are being challenged well in English particularly, with room for higher levels of challenge in other subjects. This need to challenge higher attaining pupils has been identified by the school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Most pupils enjoy school, are positive about their work and try hard in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Most pupils behave well. They are sensible in class and play happily with their friends at break times. There was no evidence of any bullying during the inspection. Pupils are now showing more settled behaviour this year after a traumatic period for the whole school community. There were no exclusions for inappropriate behaviour in the last academic year.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils get on well with the staff and each other. They work well together in lessons.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance levels are well above the national average. Most pupils arrive at school on time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Overall the quality of the teaching is good and this ensures that pupils achieve well. It is particularly strong in the Foundation Stage (the reception year). This marks good improvement since the time of the last inspection when over a tenth of lessons seen were unsatisfactory, with planning and class management being particular weaknesses. During the inspection, no unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Common strengths in the teaching in all classes include good relationships between staff and pupils, good management strategies, good planning, clear explanations and the contribution of the learning support assistants. Within the context of this good teaching, there are some areas for improvement. These include the marking of pupils' work, expectations of the presentation of pupils' work and the consistent challenge for higher attainers. Literacy and numeracy skills are well taught. Teachers plan well, using the national literacy and numeracy strategies as a basis. They adapt the strategies well to meet the learning needs of the two year groups in each class. Reading is particularly well taught and pupils are positive about books and enjoy reading. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well by teachers and learning support assistants and as a result they achieve well. Class teachers are sensitive to the needs of pupils learning English as an additional language and take care to make sure that they have understood.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that covers all subjects and is relevant to the needs of pupils. There are good planning frameworks in place. The curriculum is enhanced and enriched by a good range of visits and visitors. Although the range of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory overall, the opportunities for pupils to take part in regular competitive sport are limited.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. There are good levels of adult support for these pupils and their progress is carefully tracked and monitored. All statutory requirements are met.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. These pupils are fluent English speakers and no longer need any additional support. Teachers are sensitive to their learning needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The provision for pupils' personal development has improved since the last inspection. Provision for pupils' social and moral development is strong. More work is needed on planning for pupils' knowledge and understanding of the diverse cultures within our society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactorily. Staff know the pupils well and the everyday care for pupils' physical and personal needs is good. Some written policies related to this aspect of the school's work need updating. Procedures for checking how well pupils are doing academically are now sound, although the information gathered does not yet feed sufficiently into planning the next step in learning.

The school has a sound partnership with parents. Some parents help in school and the Friends' Association raises a good deal of money for school funds.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Sound overall. The new headteacher has led the school well through a difficult year. He is very well supported by committed and enthusiastic staff. Management systems and procedures are satisfactory.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactorily. Governors are very supportive of the school. Some have been particularly proactive in planning for the new building. Newly formed committees are enabling governors to undertake their responsibilities more effectively. All statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Sound overall. The headteacher, chair of governors and local education authority regularly review the progress made in all areas of the school's work. This is shared with staff and governors in order to plan for the future, although the plan for the current year is not as clear as it might be. Rigorous procedures for checking how well the school is doing, involving staff and governors, are not yet in place.
The strategic use of resources	Sound. The school is using some reserves to top up the budget for the day to day running of the school. Additional funds from trusts and charities are used for new initiatives. The school makes sensible spending decisions based on best value principles in order to obtain satisfactory value for money.

The school is well staffed by talented teachers and learning support assistants (LSAs). Other staff, including the secretary, lunchtime assistants, cleaner and crossing patrol lady, also contribute to the smooth running of the school. The accommodation is satisfactory overall, with very attractive grounds. Resources are satisfactory overall.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children are making good progress. • Behaviour is good. • Their children like school. • The teaching is good. • The school is helping their children to become responsible and mature. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extra-curricular activities. • The amount of homework. <p>A small minority also have concerns about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The closeness of links with parents. • Information about their children's progress.

Most parents are satisfied with the provision that the school makes for their children's education, although a few have some concerns about particular areas of the school's work. The views in the boxes above are drawn from the parents' meeting and questionnaires, which were sent out to seek parents' views. They represent the feelings of 18 parents at the parents' meeting and 36 who returned letters and questionnaires. The inspection team endorses parents' positive views and finds that pupils make good progress because of the good teaching. The inspection finds that pupils like school, behave well and become more mature as they move through the school. Overall it finds that the school provides a satisfactory range of activities outside lessons, with less competitive sport than there is in many schools. The amount of homework given is satisfactory and although the arrangements for informing parents of what is required appears satisfactory, the school is aware of the need to consult with parents over this. Similarly, although most parents appear to find the staff very approachable, the school is aware that it needs to investigate why a few parents feel that the links are not good enough. The inspection finds that while reports are detailed, they do not always give a clear picture of whether pupils are doing as well as they should.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

Starting school

1 Children start school at the beginning of the term in which they reach their fifth birthday. Children generally attend full-time from the outset unless there are specific reasons why a part-time entry is desirable. A good induction programme takes place, involving visits to the school, to ensure a smooth transfer from children's pre-school provision. The children have all had pre-school experience and enter the reception classes with a wide range of abilities, which, according to the county's entry profile, show them to be below average for their age.

Standards in national tests

2 In small schools, comparisons with the national average in statutory tests are often misleading because the performance of just one pupil can make a huge impact on the overall percentage reaching the expected levels. As a consequence, standards fluctuate from year to year. However generalisations can be made about improvement over time and at Nettlebed standards have risen overall in Year 6 tests since the last inspection in line with the national trend. In 2001 the school received a government award for its achievement in national tests.

Year 2

3 Standards have improved since the last inspection in both reading and mathematics. In these subjects standards in this year's tests are well above average, with higher attaining pupils doing particularly well. Standards in writing and science have fluctuated more and this year are below average, partly because higher attaining pupils did not reach their full potential. When compared to schools with a similar socio-economic background, pupils at Nettlebed did much better than their peers in reading and mathematics, but not so well in writing.

Reasons for this pattern of results

4 The introduction of the literacy and numeracy strategies has had a positive impact on standards in this school in relation to reading and mathematics. Reading standards have also improved because of good support from home, extra time spent at school on reading activities outside of the literacy hour and the emphasis placed on sharing good quality literature with the pupils. The reasons for lower standards in writing are fairly complex. A new approach for all children to improve writing has yet to impact on standards and there is no consistent approach to the teaching of handwriting. In science the lower standards are clearly linked this year to insufficient focus on developing pupils' scientific enquiry skills.

Year 6

5 There has been improvement since the last inspection, with pupils doing particularly well in 1999 and 2000. Standards in reading have improved consistently and this year are well above the national average. Standards have fluctuated more in mathematics and science and in 2002 are broadly in line with the national average; a similar picture to that at the time of the last inspection. Standards in writing are below average in 2002 national tests.

Reasons for this pattern of results

6 To some extent standards fluctuate from year to year as a result of the balance of higher and lower attainers in the year group. In 2001, for example, only seven pupils took the tests and two of these had a statement of special educational need. All pupils achieved very well within their capabilities. Pupils' achievements in this year's statutory tests indicate sound progress from entry, with pupils doing well in reading. In the light of the staff disruptions over the last two years, these pupils did well to reach the standards that they did. These results

indicate the need for the school to analyse and use information about pupils' progress in order to maintain the drive to raise standards. The school has set very challenging targets for pupils in the 2003 tests, which they are working hard to reach.

Inspection findings

The Foundation Stage

7 The children get a good start to school life. They make very good progress, and by the end of the reception year their attainment is at least average, with the vast majority attaining the Early Learning Goals¹ in all the recommended areas of learning², with a considerable number working within the early stages of the National Curriculum, particularly in the development of their literacy and numeracy skills, and in their physical development.

Years 1 and 2

Overall standards

8 The inspection found that overall standards are broadly average for pupils at the start of Years 1 and 2. Pupils have made a good start to the new year and are achieving well as a consequence of good teaching, although from time to time older, higher attaining Year 2 pupils are not sufficiently stretched.

English

9 Standards are above average overall. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are above average and most speak confidently in small groups and to the whole class. They are developing reading skills well and have a clear enjoyment of books and stories. Writing standards are average and pupils are making sound progress in developing handwriting skills and spelling strategies.

Mathematics

10 Standards are broadly average. Improved planning has already had a positive impact on pupils' enthusiasm for mathematics and is beginning to have an impact on standards. This is particularly evident in relation to pupils' knowledge and understanding of number, shape and measures.

Science

11 Standards are broadly average in Years 1 and 2. Pupils are developing a sound knowledge and understanding of science, but do not have sufficient opportunity to plan investigations.

Other subjects

12 In all other subjects pupils' attainment is broadly average. They do particularly well in swimming.

Years 3 to 6

English

13 Standards in Year 6 are above average. Pupils are articulate and confident when talking to adults and adapt their talk to suit the occasion. Standards in reading are well above average and pupils talk with interest about fiction and non-fiction texts. Writing standards are broadly average. Pupils write for a range of purposes and good links are made with other

¹ Early learning goals establish expectations for most children to reach by the end of the foundation stage.

² The areas of learning are: personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development.

subjects in order to help pupils to develop their writing skills. The oldest pupils are developing a neat, joined handwriting style, but younger pupils' work is not presented as well. There is increasing challenge for older, higher attaining pupils.

Mathematics

14 Standards are broadly average, with more scope for challenging all pupils through experimental and investigational work. Again improved planning and more support for older pupils are beginning to have a positive impact on standards.

Science

15 Standards are above average, with pupils strongest in the area of scientific knowledge. They make good progress in Years 3 to 6, but again do not have sufficient opportunity to plan investigations.

Other subjects

16 Standards are broadly average in design and technology, history, information communication technology (ICT) and music. This marks an improvement in standards in design and technology since the last inspection. Standards are also broadly average in physical education (PE), with pupils doing particularly well in swimming. Similarly in art most pupils reach average standards, but there are examples of very high quality work, such as the Year 6 paintings in the style of Monet in the hall. In both geography and religious education (RE), older pupils have not covered enough of the curriculum to reach the standards expected for their age by the end of Year 6.

Raising achievement of all pupils

17 Teachers are alert to most issues regarding equal opportunities. As a result they carefully identify those pupils who are disadvantaged or need additional support in order to achieve their potential. Recently, for example, they have conducted an audit to identify those pupils who have no access to computers outside school with the intention of using this information in their planning for ICT. However, higher attaining pupils are not always fully challenged and the school intends addressing this issue as part of its programme of school improvement. In literacy and numeracy sessions all pupils work in groups according to their ability and currently the lack of challenge is related more to subjects such as science and music, although there is still room for challenging pupils more in mathematics through work on investigations.

Achievements of pupils with special educational needs

18 All of the pupils who have special educational needs are in the older pupils' classes. Most are only a little way behind their peers. They achieve well because of the good levels of support that they receive from both teachers and assistants. They make good progress towards the targets on their individual education plans. One pupil has a statement of special educational need and also achieves well as a consequence of focused help.

Achievements of pupils learning English as an additional language

19 Four pupils are learning English as an additional language. None is now at an early stage and they achieve as well as their peers in all areas of the curriculum.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

20 Overall the positive picture presented by the last inspection has been maintained and pupils' attitudes and behaviour remain good. There was a dip in standards of older pupils' behaviour, as a result of the staff turnover during the last few years, but sensible measures were taken to address this and pupils' behaviour has improved.

21 The youngest children are even more enthusiastic about school than they were at the time of the last inspection. They show very good attitudes to their work. They work purposefully with good levels of concentration. Overall, these children behave sensibly and follow instructions well. The staff give a high priority to children's personal and social development when they start school, and this teaches the children very good work habits. They clearly know the difference between right and wrong.

22 Throughout the rest of the school the pupils have maintained the good attitudes seen at the time of the last report. Pupils of all ages are very polite to visitors and are very friendly. They show an eagerness for school, and approach lessons and activities with enthusiasm. This has a positive effect on their learning, and creates a happy and purposeful atmosphere. They are keen to talk about their life at school, and all pupils respond well to the opportunities and experiences they are given. In nearly all lessons, pupils listen carefully to their teachers and to each other, and offer some thoughtful responses to questions. Most concentrate well, and they work hard throughout the day. On some occasions, when teachers talk for too long, or where their questioning is less effective, a few pupils become restless and their attention wanders.

23 Relationships throughout the school are good, and pupils and adults show a mutual respect for each other. During the inspection there were no incidents of aggressive behaviour and no unacceptable prejudices observed. At playtimes pupils of all ages play very happily together. During the inspection the weather was good and pupils had great fun in the woods and on the field, under the careful supervision of the lunchtime supervisors. Particularly popular was the 'log' shop, where pupils sold grated 'cheese' bark for fir cones; a very old Nettlebed tradition. Pupils are encouraged to talk through problems and consider the effect of their actions on others. Pupils and parents feel that conflict and bullying are rare, and any instances that might occur are generally dealt with swiftly and effectively. There have been no recent exclusions.

24 Throughout the school, pupils are provided with opportunities to act as monitors to help the smooth running of the school and to develop as caring citizens. For example, pupils elected to the school council take their roles as class representatives seriously, particularly the younger pupils. Younger pupils carry out helpful tasks in the classroom, whilst the older pupils perform tasks such as preparing for assembly and selling tuck to the younger ones. However there are few opportunities given to pupils as they progress through the school, to gain the skills needed to develop independent learning skills. Although in some lessons pupils are encouraged to do their own research, opportunities for pupils to make choices and develop their initiative are missed within lessons.

Attendance and punctuality

25 The school has maintained its very good attendance rate. Attendance is well above the national average and is very good. There are no unauthorised absences but a few parents take their children on holiday in term time which disrupts their learning. Pupils arrive punctually for school, registrations are taken promptly and lessons begin on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

26 Overall the quality of the teaching is good and this ensures that pupils achieve well. Of the twenty-eight lessons seen, about a fifth was very good, two fifths were good and two fifths were satisfactory. There were no lessons that were less than satisfactory. This marks good improvement since the time of the last inspection when over a tenth of lessons seen were unsatisfactory, with planning and class management being particular weaknesses.

Reasons for improvement

27 Several factors have contributed to this good improvement. These include:

- Improved lessons planning. Staff have worked hard to improve planning since the last inspection and a consistent approach, based on the school's new subject planning documents has underpinned improvement.
- New staff and job share arrangements. New staff have brought enthusiasm and expertise and this has helped to lift the teaching. Job share arrangements in three of the four classes mean that pupils have the benefits of two teachers' expertise.
- A more consistent approach to classroom management so that pupils know what is expected of them.

A difficult two years

28 It is to the school's credit that these improvements have been brought about in the face of some difficulties. The unexpected death of a much-loved headteacher, followed by staff instability in the older pupils' classes made it difficult to achieve consistent practice through the school. Last year particularly, a series of temporary teachers and little opportunity for the headteacher to monitor the quality of teaching, because he had to cover staff absence, meant that it was even more difficult to ensure consistency. This term the situation is more stable and staff have returned with renewed enthusiasm. Parents' questionnaire responses indicate that 89 per cent of parents feel that the teaching is good, with only one parent disagreeing. However 23 per cent were unhappy with the amount of homework given. The inspection found that last year there was some inconsistency from class to class, especially when the class was taken by a supply teacher. This year sound procedures are in place. Class teachers have written to parents to inform them of what to expect and the older pupils now have a homework diary as well as a reading record. There is scope for consultation with parents so that a consensus on reasonable arrangements can be established.

Strengths in the teaching

29 There are common strengths in the teaching in all classes. These include:

- Good relationships between staff and pupils. Staff obviously enjoy the pupils' company and know them well.
- Good management strategies. There is mutual respect between staff and pupils and as a consequence pupils behave well and work hard. A firm approach to behaviour management in the oldest pupils' class is helping to settle pupils well at the start of the year. Some of these pupils had been particularly affected by staff disruption in the past.
- Good planning. Teachers' planning is thorough, with clear objectives set for lessons. The guidance given to support assistants is particularly clear.
- Clear explanations. Teachers explain new ideas clearly and so pupils quickly grasp new concepts.
- Levels of adult help and the contribution of the learning support assistants. In many of the lessons seen the good level of adult support meant that pupils worked in small groups with help from an adult. This was useful in a Year 5 and 6 art lesson, for example, where several parents worked with small groups in the school grounds. Learning support assistants make a particularly good contribution. They are well-briefed and prepared and work patiently with individuals and small groups.

30 Within the very good lessons, features that are particularly strong include:

- Good questioning skills. Some teachers use questions very well to extend pupils' understanding and to help them to think for themselves.
- Good emphasis on language development. This was a particular feature of the very good lessons seen in the reception class and helped pupils to widen their vocabulary.

Areas for improvement

31 Within the context of good teaching, there are some areas for improvement. These include:

- The marking of pupils' work. There is evidence that the new marking policy is being used more consistently through the school this year. However teachers are still not always marking work in terms of what pupils should have learnt during the lesson. Some of the comments are helpful to pupils and give them useful pointers about what they need to do to improve, but sometimes teachers' handwriting is difficult to read and this does not set a good example for pupils.
- Expectations of the presentation of pupils' work. Again this is not consistent through the school and in some classes teachers do not expect enough of the pupils in terms of neatness.
- The challenge for higher attainers. In most lessons seen all pupils were sufficiently challenged. However, in a few, not enough was expected of the older, more able pupils. This was particularly evident in the work samples from last year, where higher attaining pupils were not challenged sufficiently in writing and science. This year the challenge is still not always high enough in science. There is also more scope for challenging pupils in mathematics through work on investigations.
- The use of learning support assistants in the introduction to lessons. Assistants make a very valuable contribution during the activity part of the lesson, but are not used to best advantage when the class is listening to the teacher. Opportunities are lost, for example, for them to record pupils' responses.

Teaching in the Foundation Stage

32 The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage (reception year) is very good overall and ensures that children make a very good start at school. Teachers and learning support assistants develop good relationships with the children and manage them well. The two part-time teachers work well together to plan appropriate activities that give sufficient challenge to all in the class, including the Year 1 pupils in the reception class. Very effective planning ensures that all the areas of learning are covered with links to the National Curriculum made when appropriate, making sure that the oldest most able pupils are sufficiently challenged. Teachers have high expectations regarding behaviour and develop basic skills very effectively. Learning support assistants are well briefed and know exactly what their role is in the classroom. Adults interact well within groups, and use every opportunity to develop all areas of the curriculum. Adults support the children effectively during lessons but at times the pace of the lesson slows at the end while children wait for others to finish. Teachers use questioning well to reinforce previous learning before moving on, and this ensures that children continuously learn. Adults know the children well and comprehensive records are kept of what children can do that are then used to plan subsequent activities.

Teaching in Years 1 and 2

33 The overall quality of teaching for these pupils is good. Pupils are taught in two classes. Some are in a reception and Year 1 class and the rest are in a mixed Year 1 and 2 class. They meet together for music sessions. Teachers plan carefully so that the Year 1 pupils in the different classes cover the same work. Classes are well-organised and pupils know what is expected of them in terms of behaviour and routines. As a consequence pupils are very settled and happy in these classes and work hard. Teachers are just getting to know their new classes and at the moment the challenge for the Year 2 pupils is not always high enough.

Teaching in Years 3 to 6.

34 Teaching is also good overall in the two older pupils' classes and pupils are trying hard at the start of the new academic year. The job share arrangements are working well and teachers in both classes plan well with their colleagues and have good systems for keeping each other informed about pupils' progress. Teachers particular strengths are used very well. The teacher with art expertise, for example, works with all the pupils during the year. This has had a significant impact on standards. The older pupils particularly have had a disrupted couple of years and the teachers are sensibly laying down firm guidelines for behaviour and work. They are aware that these pupils will need more opportunities to work independently as the year moves on.

Teaching of literacy and numeracy

35 Teachers plan well, using the national literacy and numeracy strategies as a basis. They adapt the strategies well to meet the learning needs of the two year groups in each class. Reading is particularly well taught and pupils are positive about books and enjoy reading. The school has concentrated on improving writing standards and this is beginning to have an impact on standards, although the current lack of consistency in the teaching of handwriting means that this is not as good as it should be. Numeracy skills are also well taught and pupils are developing a good knowledge and understanding of number, shape and measures.

Meeting all pupils' needs

36 Grouping of pupils in English and mathematics helps to cater for the needs of most pupils of different abilities. In other lessons it is common for all pupils to be given similar work. Usually these tasks are sufficiently open-ended to allow pupils to learn at their own pace although higher and lower attaining pupils would gain from a more focused approach. The most recent school improvement plan signals the school's intention to develop further its provision for the most able pupils. Teaching methods motivate and engage all pupils and the demands placed upon boys and girls and other groups are similar. Although teachers know their pupils well, formal and informal assessment procedures are not yet leading to individualised and specific targets for learning, because the data is not sufficiently analysed.

Teaching of pupils with special educational needs

37 Pupils with special educational needs are supported well by both teachers and learning support assistants. Work is carefully planned for these pupils and they often have extra adult support, especially in literacy and numeracy sessions. Occasionally pupils are withdrawn from class to help them work on particular difficulties or for assessment and pupils do well at these times. The pupil with a statement of special educational need has very good levels of support and is making good progress.

Teaching of pupils learning English as an additional language

38 The pupils learning English as an additional language are now fluent English speakers. Some had specialist support when they were at the early stages. Class teachers are sensitive to the needs of these pupils and take care to make sure that they have understood everything that has been discussed.

Teaching of higher attaining pupils

39 More is expected of these pupils in the quality and amount of the work that they do. There is indication in planning for English and mathematics of more difficult tasks for these pupils. In some classes teachers focus more complex questions on higher attaining pupils, but this is not consistent across the subjects, particularly in science and occasionally for Year 2 pupils.

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

40 The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that is relevant to pupils' needs, including children in the Foundation Stage. It includes all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education and places a suitable emphasis on developing literacy and numeracy skills throughout the school. It prepares pupils well for secondary education and successfully supports their intellectual, physical and personal growth. All statutory requirements are fully met and equality of access and opportunity are ensured for all pupils. A good range of visits and visitors enriches the curriculum. Since the last inspection provision has been considerably strengthened and as part of the continuing process of curriculum development the school has identified further areas it wishes to improve. This includes the challenge for higher attaining pupils in all subjects.

Curricular planning

41 The teachers in the Foundation Stage plan an appropriate curriculum to meet the Early Learning Goals. There is a good balance of structured lessons and opportunities for children to learn through play. Good use is made of visitors to the school, who share their experiences with the children. A good range of quality activities is provided to enable children to meet the Early Learning Goals.

42 The curriculum in Years 1 to 6 is balanced satisfactorily between the subjects with literacy and numeracy appropriately being allocated the largest proportions of time. In these two areas the national strategies are being successfully and consistently implemented, and this is leading to improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. However, the analysis of samples of pupils' work suggests that the amount of time allocated to subjects other than English, mathematics and science last year was often more limited than is the case now, with the result that pupils did not spend enough time on geography and religious education

43 Good progress has been made to deal with the significant weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection. Teachers have worked hard to review and improve the long-term plans for each subject and, as a result, there are good quality planning frameworks in place across the curriculum. The school is aware that policy statements in some subjects, including English and mathematics, are out of date and therefore do not reflect these improvements.

44 In art and design, geography and history, national guidelines have been successfully adopted. In other subjects the school has produced its own planning documents by carefully adapting national and local guidelines and supporting them with commercially produced schemes. Teaching in religious education is based on the Oxfordshire Agreed Syllabus. These new documents provide teachers with clear advice on what is to be taught in each class. This successfully addresses the concerns voiced in the last report about the lack of guidance for teachers. As pupils move through the school it will be necessary to check teachers' plans and pupils' work regularly in order to ensure that pupils' learning builds progressively year on year. This is particularly relevant as teachers are using the documents to plan for mixed-age classes.

45 Teachers have not yet begun to plan opportunities systematically for pupils to use and practise their skills across a number of different subjects. For example, there are not enough planned opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical knowledge in subjects such as geography and science. In addition, ICT is not yet being used widely enough to support learning.

Equal opportunities

46 One of the strengths of the school is its friendly, caring atmosphere. This is based on the firm commitment of all staff to the principle of equal opportunities that is strongly evident in the school's statement of aims and values. It is reflected in the good arrangements for pupils with special educational needs and results in the school's deserved reputation locally as an inclusive school. In order to ensure that pupils in mixed age classes do not repeat work unnecessarily from one year to the next, the whole school curriculum plan is based on a two-year planning cycle. Teachers' consistent implementation of the plan ensures equality of access and opportunity for all pupils to all aspects the curriculum. Pupils learning English as an additional language follow the same curriculum as their peers. They are now all fluent English speakers and do not need any extra support.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs

47 Good provision is made for the small number of pupils with special educational needs. Teachers adapt the work well to challenge them effectively and frequently they work with extra adult support. Some pupils work with an assistant or a teacher outside the classroom for a short session each week to concentrate on specific difficulties. This is a sensible arrangement.

Additional activities, including visits and visitors

48 The basic curriculum is enhanced and enriched by a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities. Regular clubs and activities include bridge, badminton, French and football. In addition, in the past year there have been opportunities for pupils to take part in rounders, rugby, cricket and skipping. However, opportunities to take part in competitive sport within and out of school are limited. The headteacher has identified the need to extend the range of these activities to include more opportunities for girls, for example through a netball club. He has also identified the lack of musical activities as an area to be developed. An interesting programme of educational visits and visitors to the school is organised to support pupils' learning in all classes. Recent venues for visits have included a local farm, London, Reading Museum, the Roman remains at Silchester and for older pupils a local citizenship project. In addition, almost all of the older pupils enthusiastically take part in a residential experience each year. Visitors to school have included dance and drama groups, a storyteller and craftspeople who ran an art workshop. While all of these activities are carefully planned to support and extend pupils' classroom experiences they are also significant factors in promoting their personal development.

Links with the community and partner institutions

49 The school makes sound use of links with the community to support pupils' learning. For example, Henley rugby and cricket clubs have provided coaching sessions and pupils' visits to the neighbouring Sue Ryder Home, local nursing homes and the W.I. contribute to their social development.

50 There are beneficial links also with the 'Happy Days' playgroup and local secondary schools that help to ensure smooth entry to the school and transfer at the end of Year 6. The local primary schools cluster group is not only a useful forum for sharing and exchanging ideas, but also a means of sharing the costs of arranging workshops and visits.

Pupils' personal development

51 Provision for pupils' personal development is good. This marks an improvement since the last inspection. The school has a caring family atmosphere where pupils learn mutual respect and a set of appropriate values to govern their lives. The caring ethos of the school permeates all activities, and helps to promote pupils' good relationships, attitudes and personal development.

52 The co-ordinator has drawn up a detailed plan for the school and is supporting teachers as they begin to implement it this term through a programme of weekly timetabled sessions for each class. Frequently these involve the use of 'circle time'³ with opportunities to explore values, attitudes and beliefs and to resolve areas of conflict. The teacher used the one session seen during the inspection very effectively. It was an opportunity for the older pupils to examine and share their own feelings and for her to confirm good working relationships with a new class at the start of a new school year. Pupils responded positively and were eager to contribute to the discussion. All staff are good role models and in all their dealings with pupils show respect, care and sensitivity. Governors have recently been involved in the writing and approval of a policy for Sex and Relationships Education.

Spiritual development

53 The provision for pupils' spiritual development has improved and is now satisfactory. There is a heightened awareness of the need to promote spiritual development since the last inspection, but opportunities are missed, however, for experiences to be planned into lessons to develop the spiritual aspect more fully.

54 Spiritual development is promoted through daily acts of collective worship and religious education, although less successfully through other subjects of the National Curriculum. In religious education, pupils begin to discuss the beliefs of others, and learn to value them. For example, pupils in Class 2 learn that there are important stories that people value in different religions, which are different from the stories Christians know. In another lesson pupils were asked to think about what they thought was truly wonderful and why. These pupils are developing a good insight into such abstract ideas as love, friendship, as well as the wonders of nature around them. Achievements are rewarded in assemblies through a variety of stickers and certificates, and this helps pupils to value the efforts of others.

Moral and social development

55 Good provision is made for pupils' moral and social development. There is a consistent approach to managing pupils' behaviour, and pupils are quite clear about their class rules, and the sanctions applied when these rules are broken. From a very early age, pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong, and they benefit from the very good role models set by the adults in school. Qualities such as honesty, politeness, and helpfulness are rewarded along-side academic achievement.

56 Some opportunities are given in lessons for pupils to work co-operatively, sharing expertise and helping each other to achieve. For example, pupils in Class 3 worked in pairs, discussing what they thought was wonderful. However, there are fewer opportunities in other classes to encourage collaborative work. During the inspection there were few opportunities given for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. For example, in science pupils carry out investigations that are prescribed by the teacher rather than design their own.

57 Pupils make a positive contribution to the running of the school by volunteering to act as monitors in the classroom, and around the school. The use of 'buddies', which has been recently introduced, promotes a caring attitude towards other members of the school

³ 'Circle time' is when pupils sit in a circle to share their thoughts and feelings.

community. Representatives from all the year groups meet regularly as a pupil council, discussing improvements that can be made to school life. Although this is a relatively new initiative, pupils make sensible and thoughtful suggestions as to how playtimes can be improved. Further opportunities to develop maturity occur when the older pupils attend a residential camp. Pupils are encouraged through all school activities to be honest, trustworthy, and well-mannered. The way the majority of pupils relate to each other and to adults indicates that pupils are developing a set of values that inform their perspective on life. A sense of community is fostered by the involvement of the school in various local events, such as the village fete. It is clear from the charities that the school supports, that the pupils show a concern for those less fortunate than themselves.

Cultural development

58 The provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory overall. Opportunities are used well to promote western culture in subjects such as history, art, music, and English. Pupils visit many local places of interest, such as museums where pupils learn how people lived in Victorian times. Pupils appreciate their own local culture when they take part in traditional English country-dances at the village fete. However, an understanding of wider cultural traditions is less well promoted. The religious education syllabus promotes understanding of two other faiths other than Christianity, and different parts of the world are studied in geography. The school has invited visitors to school from other parts of the world to improve pupils' awareness of other cultures, but generally there are few opportunities to prepare pupils for life in multi-cultural Britain today. The school is aware of this, and there are plans to improve opportunities in the future.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

59 The overall satisfactory support and guidance given to pupils has been maintained but some of the shortcomings mentioned in the report of the last inspection remain.

Welfare of pupils

60 Procedures to ensure the welfare of pupils in school are satisfactory. Pupils requiring extra help are particularly well cared for by sympathetic teachers and ancillary staff. There are several staff qualified in first aid and staff who supervise swimming hold appropriate life saving certificates. All accidents at school are recorded and minor injuries treated. Parents are advised in all cases of head injuries. Risk assessments are done prior to school visits and these are recorded.

Child protection

61 Child protection issues are dealt with satisfactorily by the headteacher who is the named person for child protection. The headteacher and staff know their pupils well, are very caring and alert to any signs of distress. Should it be necessary, the headteacher does not hesitate to seek professional advice and there is a good liaison with social services. Records of children requiring help are well maintained. The last inspection report mentioned the lack of up to date guidance for staff and although this was addressed immediately the guidance now needs updating to make reference to county guidelines. Staff are well-briefed on child protection procedures, but have not had any additional training for some time.

Health and safety

62 Health and safety procedures are satisfactory. Since the last inspection, when the fire alarm system was found to be unsatisfactory, the school has effectively used a hand held foghorn to signal the need to evacuate the building in the event of fire or other emergencies. The filing of records however needs to be improved to make them more readily accessible, for example the latest risk assessment record was unavailable at the time of the inspection. The named governor responsible for health and safety carries out his duties with dedication.

Monitoring of behaviour and attendance

63 Staff know pupils well and monitor their behaviour informally. Sensible steps are taken to support pupils who need extra support. A specialist teacher, for example, works with pupils with particular behavioural and emotional needs. The promotion and monitoring of attendance is good. The importance of regular attendance is emphasised in newsletters and the prospectus as well as through verbal encouragements to pupils. The school makes good use of a computer to show the attendance rates of all pupils and there is a daily procedure for investigating any unexplained absences. The Educational Welfare Officer visits the school each half term to check attendance.

Assessing and monitoring pupils' academic progress

64 At the time of the last inspection the school's arrangements for assessing attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science were satisfactory. Since then there have been refinements to strengthen these arrangements. The assessment of pupils' progress in other subjects was unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection. While some improvements have been made, there remains much to be done in order to make effective use of assessment to plan the curriculum, set targets and raise standards.

Assessing pupils' attainment and progress

65 Overall, arrangements for assessment remain satisfactory. Procedures for the youngest children are thorough. When they start school they are carefully assessed and this information is used to form groups and to plan teaching programmes. This leads effectively into a programme of ongoing assessment across the whole curriculum that continues through reception and Year 1, providing helpful information for the next class.

66 As well as the statutory tests in English, mathematics and science, at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, optional national tests have also been recently introduced in Years 3, 4 and 5. These include reading, writing and mathematics. Standards in spelling have been a particular concern and as a result a formal spelling test is administered twice a year throughout the school. This range of tests allows teachers to compare their pupils' performance with national expectations. In addition, teachers assess pupils' work in these subjects at the end of each half-term. This arrangement is now being introduced in ICT where the new planning framework includes helpful suggestions for teachers about planning suitable tasks to check pupils' understanding of what has been taught.

67 In other subjects teachers identify what pupils are expected to learn and check pupils' progress through their marking and regular observations. These arrangements are less formal and are not being implemented so consistently.

Using assessment information as a basis for planning

68 As a result of these formal and informal procedures teachers know their pupils well. As they move through the school the information gathered in these ways grows into a detailed picture of their strengths and weaknesses. However, the use of this information as a basis for planning is currently unsatisfactory in English and science. In his role as subject co-ordinator, the headteacher carefully analyses test results in mathematics to identify areas where pupils do well and others that might need more attention. For example, a recent analysis showed that pupils generally were not confident in dealing with problem solving. This information was shared with teachers with the intention of improving the quality of teaching and learning. There is no expectation at present that co-ordinators should be carrying out a similar task for English and science. This is a significant shortcoming and does not help the school in its intention to raise standards further.

69 In English, but not in mathematics or science, pupils have individual targets for improvement that are written into the front of their workbooks. However, they are too broad to provide a sharp enough focus for teaching and learning. They are also attainable only in the long term and therefore not a strong incentive for pupils. Many pupils are not familiar with their targets. This suggests that they are not reviewed frequently enough and that pupils are not sufficiently involved in the process.

70 There is no agreed consistent approach to day-to-day assessment. This results in a lack of consistency in marking pupils' work and in the quality of feedback to pupils to help them improve. In most cases the marking includes few comments to move pupils on in their learning or to set them targets for higher achievement.

Monitoring and supporting pupils' academic performance

71 Arrangements for monitoring pupils' progress year by year are satisfactory. The results of annual tests combined with teachers' informal and ongoing assessments are used to assign National Curriculum levels to pupils in English, mathematics and science at the end of each year. At the same time, levels are predicted for the following year and for the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This information is usefully entered on a simple record sheet that shows, at a glance, the progress of pupils as they move through the school. These National Curriculum levels are not shared with parents and so they do not know whether their child is doing as well as he or she should. However, parents of pupils with special educational needs are given a clear picture of how well their children are doing. These discussions usually take place within the context of the parent-teacher consultation evenings. All statutory requirements related to the annual review of the statement for the pupil with significant special educational needs are met.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

72 The school's satisfactory partnership with parents has been maintained. There has been improvement in the information given to parents through the governors' annual report and this now meets statutory requirements.

Parents' views of school

73 Parents have a satisfactory overall view of the school, but also have several concerns. These are mainly about the amount of homework and the lack of after school activities. There are also some lesser concerns about the lack of information on children's progress and how the school should work more closely with parents. A few parents also have reservations about how well the school is being managed. About eighteen months ago the school was demoralised by the sudden death of the headteacher and by subsequent staffing problems. These staffing problems are now resolved and parents spoken to during the inspection agree that there has been a great improvement over recent months. The great majority of parents who replied to the questionnaire said their children liked school and were pleased with their children's progress.

Involving parents in their children's learning

74 There are good links with parents in the Foundation Stage. There is a well-planned induction programme, and parents are well informed about the work of the reception class. Some parents help in the reception class and this forges further links, and cements the good relationships between the reception class and parents. Parents are expected to help with work at home, in particular with early reading skills.

Information to parents

75 The quality of information that the school gives to parents about the school and their children is satisfactory. The prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents are well

presented and informative and both meet statutory requirements. The annual reports on pupils also meet statutory requirements and give a fair picture of children's academic and personal progress over the year. Targets are also indicated in some reports to guide pupils in planning their own development but more details could be given of pupils' achievement levels. Frequent newsletters keep parents advised of school life.

Parents' impact on pupils' learning

76 The contribution of parents to their children's learning is good. Most parents get their children to school regularly and on time. Parents listen to their children read at home and ensure that homework is completed. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved well in discussions about their children's progress. The school friends' association (FONS) runs successful fund raising events such as quiz evenings, line dancing and car boot sales that have greatly benefited the school. As a result of their efforts the school was able to meet swimming expenses and purchase additional books and equipment. Some parents help regularly in the classes and two parents run an after school club.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

A time of change

77 The school has been through difficult times since the last inspection, but in spite of this the sound provision for pupils' education identified by the last inspection has been maintained. A well-respected headteacher died in January 2001 and while staff, children, parents and governors were coming to terms with her death, the school was run by two temporary headteachers. The current headteacher took up his post a year ago, but was prevented from implementing the planned improvements by the need to cover for extended staff absence. In spite of this the school has moved forward. Standards have risen in line with the national trend and the quality of teaching has improved. The school has tackled the areas for development identified by the last inspection. These were related to curriculum planning, assessment, the monitoring of teaching and learning and standards in design and technology. Satisfactory progress has been made overall, with more work needed on the use of assessment information and the monitoring and evaluation of the school's work. Other issues related to meeting statutory requirements in relation to the governors' annual report, child protection guidance and fire alarm systems have been met, although the written child protection guidance needs further updating.

Reasons for improvement

78 There are several factors that have helped the school to move forward since the last inspection and to cope with the challenges of the last two years. These are:

- the commitment and hard work of the staff;
- the support of the governors;
- the calm and caring leadership of the new headteacher.

The leadership of the school

79 The headteacher has a clear view for the way forward, which is shared by staff and governors. In his first year he has worked effectively to lead and support the new staff team and as a result there is a very positive team approach. He has worked well with governors in order to form sub-committees, so that they might undertake their work more effectively.

80 The inclusive nature of the school's aims and values is clearly reflected in its everyday work and particularly in the caring and sensitive approach of all staff. The headteacher gives his colleagues a strong lead through his visible presence around the school and his formal and informal involvement with pupils.

81 The contribution of the staff, both teaching and non-teaching is outstanding. All teaching staff have extra responsibilities, which they undertake without any extra financial reward. They are enthusiastic about their roles and many bring particular specialist expertise to their subject responsibilities. One of the reception teachers oversees the Foundation Stage and has a very clear picture of all aspects of children's learning. Both teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of this age group, and there is a very good team approach ensuring that all adults' views are valued, and all make positive contributions to children's learning. The teacher responsible for special educational needs has taken on her new responsibility with great enthusiasm. The work is very well organised and all statutory requirements are met.

82 The governors are committed to the school and value the contribution the school makes to village life. Many are particularly involved in plans and preparation for the new school building. Some governors, including the chair, are long serving and have supported the school well for many years. All statutory requirements in relation to governors' responsibilities are met.

The management of the school

83 Overall the management of the school is sound, but there are some areas that need improving so that the school functions more effectively.

Monitoring how well the school is doing

84 At the moment there are no systematic procedures for monitoring how well the school is doing. Last year there was some monitoring of teaching by the headteacher and adviser, as well as regular meetings with the headteacher, chair of governors and adviser to evaluate progress. These are not yet incorporated into a cohesive cycle of monitoring, review and implementation of improvement. Subject co-ordinators, for example, do not have a framework for monitoring the work in their area and governors are not as involved as they might be in looking at their particular curriculum area.

Planning for improvement

85 Another area for improvement is school development planning. The current plan is based on the Oxfordshire framework and is quite extensive. However it is not clear what the current priorities for the school are because improvement planning is subsumed into the planning which deals with maintenance and review. Subject co-ordinators' plans also form part of the strategic plan. Some of these are lists of jobs to be undertaken, rather than plans to raise standards. Subject co-ordinators do not have their own budgets and are thus unable to plan as effectively as they might. An example of good practice in this area, where a budget was allocated, is the plan for ICT. At the moment governors are not sufficiently involved in planning for improvement.

Financial planning

86 The financial management of the school is satisfactory. The anticipated construction of a new school building is influencing present financial management. Some overdue maintenance is understandably not being undertaken, for example the replacement of an old boiler. The school is, to a large extent, managing on a temporary basis until it is clear when the new school will be built. The school's budget is presently operating at a deficit but this is covered by a substantial amount carried forward from last year.

87 The governing body approves the budget, which is drawn up by the headteacher and bursar. The finance and personnel committee monitors expenditure regularly. The school's development plan is drawn up by the headteacher after the budget has been set and is not sufficiently costed. The financial implications of school priorities are therefore not evident from the school development plan. To some extent this is because the school uses money

from trusts and charities to finance particular initiatives, but this is not clearly identified within the planning.

88 Funds allocated to particular areas, such as special educational needs, including those from trusts and charities, are used effectively. In addition the friends' association give generously to the school through their fundraising activities and this has been a considerable help, for example towards maintaining the swimming pool.

89 The school makes sound use of the principles for seeking best value in relation to comparison and consultation. It considers alternative quotes before purchasing goods and services, for example. More work is needed in the areas of challenge and comparison when making spending decisions. The school is providing sound value for money.

Day to day management of finance

90 Although there are some improvements since the last inspection the school still lacks financial rigour in some areas. The last inspection report referred to a long overdue audit by the local authority. This has still not taken place. The day-to-day management of finance is generally satisfactory and there are satisfactory standards of financial control in most areas but there is no formal ordering system for goods and services. The result of this is that goods received cannot be adequately checked. This deficiency was mentioned at the time of the last inspection. The school maintains an inventory but only for electrical items, including computers. The inventory should include all items of equipment used in the school.

Staffing

91 The school is generously staffed by dedicated suitably qualified teaching staff to meet the needs of the curriculum. The job-share arrangements work well, and the part-time staff undertake curriculum responsibilities and give of their time freely. There is a good mix of age and experience among the staff. Support staff provide additional support for pupils with special educational needs and they are generally deployed effectively. They are well trained, work closely with class teachers, and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. All members of staff are committed to the well-being and support of the pupils. In their various ways, they make a good contribution to the effective running of the school, which enhances the quality of education provided by the school. Induction and mentoring procedures for teachers new to the school are very effective, making any new member of staff feel very welcome and a valued member of the school community. There is no policy for the induction of newly-qualified teachers, but at present there are not any in school. Performance management procedures for the professional development of staff are satisfactory.

Accommodation

92 The quality of accommodation overall is satisfactory. There are exciting plans for the building of a new school and the headteacher and governors have been reluctant to commit large sums of money to renovate a building that will only be needed for a short time. However, there are some minor improvements needed, which would enhance provision for the current pupils.

93 Classrooms provide appropriate facilities for the teaching of all subjects. However, part of the large classroom for Class 4 has been adapted as an ICT area, and the use of this sometimes causes disruption to pupils in Years 5 and 6. The internal and external decoration is shabby in parts and lacks care and attention but public areas and classrooms provide a stimulating environment, although this quality is not consistent. Overall, the accommodation does not project the values the school desires to foster, however teachers make good use of the accommodation available. The reception children benefit from a newly-constructed secure play area giving them access to outside play throughout the day.

94 The school uses a separate dining room for meals, but this needs redecoration and is not an attractive place in which to eat. The school is aware of this and there are plans to buy new furniture. There is a good-sized hall for the teaching of physical and musical activities, which enhances these curricular areas, and there are extensive grounds that are well used for environmental studies as well as play activities and physical education. However, parts of the vast grounds are not well maintained as there are brambles and stinging nettles, which present a hazard for the pupils. The school is fortunate to have its own swimming pool, and this greatly enhances opportunities for all the pupils to learn to swim.

Learning resources

95 The quality and quantity of learning resources are satisfactory overall. The range and quality have improved since the time of the previous inspection in some subjects, such as art and ICT. Resources for physical education are good. There are plans to continue to rectify resource shortcomings during the present financial year, as additional funding becomes available. Provision in the majority of subjects is satisfactory, but no better. The number and range of non-fiction books need boosting. There is a lack of stimulating role-play equipment for the Foundation Stage.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

96 In order to build on the strengths of the school the headteacher, staff and governors need to:

- Raise standards in geography and religious education in Years 3 to 6 by implementing the newly agreed planning framework.
(Reference paragraphs: 16, 42, 128 – 131, 156 – 159)
- Improve the systems for checking how well the school is doing by:
 - establishing an annual timetable for the monitoring of teaching, work sampling, classroom visits by subject co-ordinators and visits by governors;
 - involving staff and governors more in the evaluation of progress made towards the objectives in the school development plan.(Reference paragraphs: 77,84,117,127,131,149 and 159)
- Improve the analysis and use of information about pupils' progress in order to raise their attainment further, including more sharing with parents of assessment information.
(Reference paragraphs: 68 – 70)
- Improve the planning for the development of the school's work by simplifying the plan, making key objectives clearer and involving staff and governors more in the plan's development.
(Reference paragraphs: 77, 85 and 87)
- Improve the presentation of pupils' work.
(Reference paragraphs: 13, 106, 112 and 138)
- Improve the challenge for higher attaining pupils, particularly in science and mathematics.
(Reference paragraphs: 3, 8, 17, 31, 33, 39, 107, 113, 117 and 150)

The headteacher, staff and governors might consider including the following minor issues in their action plan:

- the marking of pupils' work; (Reference paragraphs: 31, 116 and 118)
- the provision for enabling pupils to learn about the cultural diversity in Great Britain;
(Reference paragraph: 58)
- repairs and re-decoration of the school building; (Reference paragraphs: 93)
- the opportunities for older pupils to take responsibility for their own learning.
(Reference paragraphs: 34 and 54)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	28
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	34

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	5	12	11	0	0	0
Percentage	0	18	43	39	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 three percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	93
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	11
Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	8
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.8
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	10	9	19

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	9	9
	Girls	9	9	9
	Total	19	18	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (74)	95 (84)	95 (89)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	9	9
	Girls	9	9	8
	Total	18	18	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (84)	95 (84)	89 (84)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

The attainment table for pupils in Key Stage 2 is omitted because only seven pupils took the statutory tests in 2001.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	65	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	21	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)	4.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19
Average class size	23

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	102

Financial information

Financial year	2001 - 2002
	£
Total income	242210
Total expenditure	249873
Expenditure per pupil	2717
Balance brought forward from previous year	31115
Balance carried forward to next year	23452

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4.2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4.2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	92
Number of questionnaires returned	36

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	69	25	0	6	0
My child is making good progress in school.	33	58	6	3	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	22	72	3	3	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	50	17	6	6
The teaching is good.	39	50	0	3	8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	31	58	6	6	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	53	33	6	6	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	36	53	3	6	3
The school works closely with parents.	36	47	11	6	0
The school is well led and managed.	31	53	6	8	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	33	56	3	3	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	14	47	17	14	8

Percentages are rounded up or down to the nearest whole number and may therefore not total exactly 100.

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

97 Provision for children in the Foundation Stage has improved since the last inspection, particularly in relation to both planning and teaching. Currently there are ten children in the reception class. They are taught alongside a group of Year 1 pupils. Children are admitted to the school at the beginning of the term in which they are five. Children have variety of pre-school experiences with the majority coming from the local playgroup. The school has good induction procedures, which help the children to settle quickly into the routines of school. When children start school their skills, knowledge and understanding are wide ranging, but assessment shows that overall are below the average for children in Oxfordshire. Children make very good progress during their reception year as a result of the very good teaching and by the end of the reception year attain the Early Learning Goals, with some children working within the early levels of the National Curriculum.

Personal, social and emotional development

98 Children achieve very well in this area because they are taught very effectively. This area of learning is well promoted. Adults set high expectations of behaviour, which help to ensure that the children develop positive attitudes to their learning. Behaviour is generally very good and most children listen well in all situations. Children enjoy coming to school and know the routines of the class well. Their personal independence is fostered well by staff. For example, children change independently for PE and leave their clothes in a tidy pile. There are many opportunities for the children to work in pairs and small groups, and to begin to develop the skills necessary to work independently. Children pose for each other, for example, when they are drawing portraits and co-operate very well by sitting very still. During 'circle time' children learn to value the contributions of others and obey the strict rules associated with these sessions. During the inspection the role-play areas were not seen in use, but generally these areas are not stimulating and so there are missed opportunities for children to develop their personal and social skills further through imaginative play. Children clearly know the difference between right and wrong.

Communication, language and literacy

99 The quality of the teaching of communication, language and literacy skills is very good and consequently children also achieve well in this area. Teachers have adapted the school's literacy strategy well so that it is appropriate for these young children. During these sessions pupils enjoy the 'Big Book' and the teacher uses every opportunity to enhance the children's vocabulary and understanding of the world by the very effective use of questioning. Children handle books with enjoyment. They are keen to talk about their books, and do this with confidence. Higher-attaining children are beginning to recognise a range of words and use their growing knowledge of sounds to help them with words that they do not know. Lower-attaining children rely on the heard text and use the pictures to guide them as they tell the story. Most children know where to find the 'title' of the book, and some know what the author and illustrator do. All children take their books home each night and share them with adults at home. This leads to a real love of books as well as enhancing their reading skills. Early writing skills are promoted well and children are aware of the need for full stops and capital letters. As they develop early writing skills, children record their ideas and experiences confidently, through drawing and attempting to write independently. Most children write their first names, but many cannot write their full names because the teacher does not consistently expect them to. All children show a developing understanding of letters and words in their writing, and recognise rhyming words and sequence events correctly to make a story.

Mathematical development

100 The quality of teaching is good and children achieve well. All children have opportunities to learn mathematical skills in the many activities they are offered. Teachers show good subject expertise and plan interesting activities to enhance children's learning. All children count and recognise numbers to at least 10, and learn how to write numbers with correct formation. Children are beginning to be aware of how to add and subtract numbers, and higher-attaining children record their sums using correct mathematical symbols. Teachers link mathematical tasks well with language development, explaining positional language, for example. In a session seen, children hid 'Mr Bear' in a variety of places describing whether he was 'under, beside or behind'. Adults relate well to the children, and give them many opportunities to talk about mathematical ideas in order to develop their mathematical understanding. As a result, children are developing a good understanding of such basic mathematical vocabulary, as 'lighter' and 'heavier' or 'longest' and 'shortest' as they work on practical activities, for example, ordering Russian dolls from the biggest to the smallest.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

101 The quality of teaching is very good and most children make very good progress in this area. The teacher plans this area in conjunction with the demands of the National Curriculum as well as the Foundation Stage curriculum, so expectations of achievement are high. Work is based on children's own experience, and at present the children are learning about 'Ourselves'. They look at photographs and recognise how humans change as they get older, and can place events in chronological order. Children learn about living things as they look at mini-beasts and the life cycle of butterflies. They also develop their mathematical skills by drawing bar charts showing the different habitats of the creatures they find. Creative development is linked well to this area, as children use paper and a computer program to draw pictures of a worm. Children show reasonably accurate control of the mouse as they click and drag icons around the screen. They learn early mapping skills by drawing a route to 'Hansel and Gretel's' house. As a result of this integrated approach children's knowledge and understanding of the world are developed well.

Physical development

102 The quality of teaching in this area is good and all pupils achieve well. No structured outdoor play sessions were seen, but planning indicates that a range of different activities enhance physical development. The children benefit from a newly-constructed secure play area, which means that the children have access to an outside area throughout the day. This is an improvement since the last inspection. There are regular opportunities for children to use the hall for their PE lessons, where they learn how to use their imagination during dance lessons, and develop a satisfactory awareness of control and co-ordination. They learn to use their bodies well to create different movements to show a range of emotions. For example, they use stamping, punching movements to show anger. They listen well and obey commands promptly. There are many opportunities for children to use scissors, paintbrushes and pencils, and they do this with good control. All children play imaginatively with construction toys and teachers' planning shows that there are suitable activities for children to use soft materials such as 'playdoh'.

Creative development

103 The quality of teaching in this area of learning is very good in structured lessons. In these children achieve very well, although there are missed opportunities to develop the children's use of their imagination through role-play. In structured lessons the teacher has high expectations and sets the children challenging activities. In one session, for example, the children drew portraits of each other using pastels, paying attention to the correct position of the features. They are beginning to be critical of their work, and some suggested improvements. Higher-attaining children use the computer independently to draw pictures, whilst lower-attaining children are supported well by adults. During a joint singing lesson with

Class 2, children learnt about high and low notes, and sang appropriate action rhymes. There were no role-play activities seen during the inspection and this is an area that is underdeveloped. The areas available for role-play lack imagination and the teachers do not provide a stimulating environment for imaginative play.

ENGLISH

104 Overall, standards are above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is because of high standards in reading, which raise the overall profile. Standards in speaking and listening and writing are broadly average. To a large extent this replicates the pattern in standards in statutory tests over the last few years, although there have been fluctuations because of the small size and unique nature of each year group. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection in speaking and listening and writing and improved in reading.

Reasons for improvement in reading

105 There are several contributory factors to the good improvement in reading standards. These include:

- An emphasis on encouraging pupils to read for enjoyment. Pupils are encouraged to talk about books and share their enthusiasms with their friends. In Years 5 and 6, for example, there is a weekly 'Book talk' session, when individual pupils give a short lecture to their friends about a book that they have read. Events like 'Book Week' also help pupils to enjoy stories and hear about new books. Consequently pupils are developing distinct reading preferences and older pupils especially talk about the different genre that they enjoy. Roald Dahl and JK Rowling are firm favourites with older pupils. In conversation with pupils of all ages it was clear that most enjoyed reading.
- A good partnership with parents. Pupils are encouraged to take books home to share with their parents and carers and their book diaries indicate how conscientiously most parents encourage this aspect of homework. Some parents also take their children to the local library so that they can widen their reading diet.
- Good planning for the teaching of reading. Staff base their planning on the National Literacy Strategy and this has ensured a good grounding in phonic awareness for the younger pupils and the use of a range of reading strategies as pupils move through the school. When pupils read to inspectors, for example, younger ones used their knowledge of initial sounds to work out simple words. Older pupils also 'broke words up' to sound out different syllables and build up the word. Older pupils used context clues well. Reading is also given a high profile on the timetable and there are daily reading sessions in addition to the literacy hour.
- The use of good quality texts. Most teachers read to their class on a daily basis and this helps pupils to enjoy texts that they might find too difficult to read independently. Overall book provision is satisfactory. Class libraries include a good range of books, although some are a little well-worn. The non-fiction library needs enhancing. However pupils use non-fiction books well and from Years 1 and 2 are taught how to find information by using the contents and index pages.
- The good support for pupils with special educational needs and for those a little behind their peers. Pupils who struggle with reading are given extra help and this helps them to catch up with their peers. One of the learning support teachers, in association with the class teachers works with these pupils on specially designed activities, which helps them to succeed.

Reasons for average standards in speaking and listening and writing

106 Pupils make sound progress in these areas, but standards are not as high as for reading. There are several reasons for this:

- At the moment, although there are often good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills, there is no cohesive planning framework to identify the skills that pupils should be taught year by year. Teachers often plan interesting activities for pupils, but these do not necessarily build on what pupils already know. Question and answer sessions were often a feature in many lessons seen, for example, but the expectations of the complexity of pupils' responses did not increase for older pupils. In Years 3 and 4 particularly, there were good examples of paired work seen during the inspection. In one history session, pupils worked together to gather information about Victorian schooling from a reproduction of a painting. Pupils also have a few opportunities to speak to a class audience and the 'Book talks' in Years 5 and 6 were good examples of this.
- In some classes there is a tendency for the teacher to talk too much, with less opportunity for pupils to develop their skills. To some extent this is related to the start of the academic year, when teachers are establishing a rapport with their new classes.
- Drama activities are not planned on a regular basis.
- There are some opportunities for pupils to write for a real purpose, but this is not consistent through the school. In some classes the range of writing that pupils undertake is not wide enough. The work samples from last year, for example, showed that younger pupils spent quite a few sessions writing 'news', which did not extend their skills. Examples of rich writing experiences include the booklets pupils in Years 3 and 4 made about their trip to Ewelme Farm and their collection of Haiku poems. Some pupils found the structure of the poetry hard to manage, but some managed very well. One wrote about a Red Kite, for example, *'Gliding over trees/Looking for its prey on the ground/Swooping peacefully'*.
- The use of good quality texts as a stimulus for writing is not consistent through the school. There are some good examples. In Years 5 and 6, for example, pupils were asked to continue a chapter from Joan Aiken's *'The Wolves of Willoughby Chase'*. Much of the writing was lively and imaginative, such as: *'They heard screaming voices echoing as people precipitated out of the tree'*.
- Generally teachers do not have high enough expectations for the presentation of pupils' work. To some extent this is compounded by a lack of consistency in the teaching of handwriting, which the school is currently addressing.
- Opportunities for pupils to develop writing skills through work in other subjects are not planned as consistently as they might be, especially in Years 3 to 6. However this is not the case with ICT and pupils are given opportunities within literacy sessions to word process their work.
- Recent initiatives to improve spelling are just beginning to impact on standards.

Teaching

107 In the lessons seen during the inspection teaching was consistently good and ensured that all pupils achieved well. Teachers plan well for the different ages and abilities. They use the National Literacy Strategy as a basis for their plans and group pupils by age and ability so that they are working on tasks appropriate to their learning needs. Activities set are often interesting and there are opportunities for pupils to show some creativity in their work. Teachers explain what they want pupils to do clearly. The learning support assistants make a good contribution to lessons, especially during the activity time, when they often work with pupils who need extra help. Sometimes opportunities to use their skills during the introduction part of the lesson are lost. The samples of work from last year show that marking is not as good as it should be, with insufficient guidance given on what pupils need to do to improve. It also indicated that some higher attaining pupils in Year 3 were not

sufficiently challenged, although this year this is not the case. The use of individual targets to help pupils to move forward is still at the early stages.

The work of the subject co-ordinator

108 The subject co-ordinator has only been in post since the beginning of the term and so has had insufficient time to make a real impact on the leadership of this area. However she is enthusiastic and knowledgeable and is already putting together an action plan for improvement.

Strengths:

- *standards in reading;*
- *good teaching, especially in relation to reading;*
- *enthusiasm of the new co-ordinator;*
- *contribution of learning support assistants;*
- *parental support with reading.*

Areas for development:

- *planning for speaking and listening, including drama;*
- *presentation of pupils' work;*
- *challenge for higher attainers in writing in Year 2;*
- *marking of pupils' work and the use of target setting;*
- *links with other subjects;*
- *non-fiction book stock.*

MATHEMATICS

109 Standards are average at the end of Years 2 and 6, as they were five years ago at the time of the last inspection, although there have been some fluctuations in between. Pupils make a good start in reception and Year 1 and in recent years have made satisfactory progress as they move through the school. Currently pupils are achieving well in a more stable staffing situation. The small proportion of pupils with special educational needs also achieves well. There are no significant differences in the standards attained by boys and girls.

110 There have been improvements in the way mathematics is taught since the last inspection. These include:

- better planning following the consistent implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy;
- extra support in 'booster' classes for older pupils;
- motivating tasks in mental and oral sessions.

111 These have already had a positive impact on pupils' enthusiasm for mathematics and are beginning to have an impact on standards. This is particularly evident in relation to pupils' knowledge and understanding of number, shape and measures. All teachers place great emphasis on the development of mental and oral skills, encouraging pupils to talk about their mental calculations and often making good use of practical teaching aids. In Year 1 and 2, for example, the teacher used a variety of resources to stimulate interest and to support pupils' learning.

112 By the end of Year 2, most pupils develop a secure knowledge of the place value of each digit in numbers to 99, confidently adding and subtracting to 20 and beyond. They are familiar with the associated symbols and use them correctly to make up number stories.

They estimate and measure with reasonable accuracy and tell the time to the quarter-hour. They recognise the properties of common two- and three-dimensional shapes and construct block graphs to record their favourite pets. By Year 6, most pupils have acquired a range of methods to add, subtract, multiply and divide and show a sound understanding of the relationship between these operations. They calculate area and perimeter and construct and interpret line graphs. In the current age group a significant minority is well set to attain higher standards by the end of the year. A small minority are working below these expected levels, although as a result of sensitive teaching and encouragement they demonstrate good attitudes to their work and apply themselves well. Throughout the school the way that pupils present their work is a weakness and teachers do not do enough to encourage them to work more neatly and accurately.

113 Pupils' progress in using and applying their mathematical knowledge could be more rapid. Standards in this aspect are not as high as they should be. Teachers do not systematically plan tasks for pupils to practise their skills in other subjects, although some examples were seen, as in science and design and technology. There are also too few opportunities for pupils to carry out open-ended investigations. This restricts their development as independent learners and has a particular impact on the work of higher attaining pupils. The use of ICT to support teaching and learning in mathematics is currently under-developed.

114 Teaching and learning are good and are based on the consistent and enthusiastic implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject and this is evident in their clear and confident explanations and in their thorough planning. In some cases teachers simply re-state the broad key objectives from the strategy defining rather than stating more precisely what pupils are expected to learn in each lesson. Effective management and control of pupils was a feature of all lessons seen. It is based on the good relationships and caring atmosphere that exist in all classrooms. This is reflected in pupils' positive responses, good behaviour and their enjoyment of the tasks that teachers plan for them.

115 Other strengths include the systematic use of the whiteboard, as in Year 3 and 4, to support the teaching of strategies to translate word problems into mathematical calculations. In addition, essential mathematical vocabulary was shared and displayed in order to extend pupils' understanding. Emphasis on relevant vocabulary was a feature also in Year 1 where the teacher and support assistant worked very effectively as a team as pupils measured classroom objects using hand-spans. In most lessons, teachers plan different tasks for the ability groups within the class. However, they do not always show enough awareness of future learning, for example, they do not consider the objectives for the next age group in order to extend higher attaining pupils. This results in a lack of challenge.

116 Mathematics is well led by the co-ordinator. He has sampled pupils' work, observed teaching to gain an overview of the subject and is gaining a clear awareness of what needs to be done to raise standards further. Assessment procedures are well established, although they are not yet being used to the full by teachers to plan for individual needs or to set targets with pupils. The quality of teachers' marking is inconsistent. It is often encouraging but it rarely tells pupils what they need to do in order to improve.

Strengths:

- *good teaching based on thorough planning and good relationships;*
- *pupils' enthusiasm;*
- *consistent implementation of the numeracy strategy and in particular the use of mental and oral sessions;*
- *good leadership.*

Areas for improvement:

- *opportunities for pupils, especially higher attainers, to use and apply their skills in problem-solving and investigational work;*
- *clearer links with other areas of the curriculum particularly the use of ICT to support learning;*
- *marking and feedback to pupils;*
- *pupils' presentation of their work.*

SCIENCE

117 Only one lesson was observed during the inspection, but analysis of pupils' work and discussions with pupils show that standards of attainment of pupils age seven remain average, as they were at the last inspection. Pupils made sound progress last year in Years 1 and 2. Standards at age eleven have improved and are now above average. All pupils between the ages of seven and eleven made good progress last year. This is because scientific knowledge is taught well, and the oldest pupils are given plenty of opportunities to test their acquired knowledge. However, the investigational part of the curriculum is less well taught and teaching and learning in this area is satisfactory, rather than good. Pupils carry out experiments, but these investigations are very prescribed by the teacher, and pupils are not given enough opportunities to plan their own investigations. This hinders learning for the oldest, higher-attaining pupils. Pupils record what happens during an experiment, but often cannot explain why. For example, pupils in Year 6 know that the pulse rate increases as a result of exercise, but are not sure why this happens. This is because pupils are not encouraged to make general conclusions from their observations, and the assessment of scientific skills is not rigorous enough. Further challenge for the higher-attaining pupils is not always planned into lessons and pupils of all abilities tend to do the same work.

118 Teachers plan interesting activities for the pupils, based on a comprehensive scheme of work delivered on a two-year cycle to take account of the mixed-age classes. All areas of the curriculum are covered, although more time is spent on teaching about living things at the expense of teaching about forces. There is good subject expertise within the school and this is used well. Pupils show an enthusiasm for the subject and this has a positive impact on their learning. There is a good emphasis on the use of technical language so that pupils from an early age understand the language of science. Marking, however, needs improvement as there is little evaluative marking and often pieces of work are not marked at all. On occasions work is not finished and there has been no attempt to ensure the pupil completes it. From the work seen the quality of teaching appears to be at least satisfactory, but there is a lack of use of ICT to support learning. In several classes pupils used their computer skills to generate graphs in science. However, in these examples, teachers did not build carefully on pupils' earlier experiences and as a result the work from three different age groups was similar.

119 The subject is well led and the co-ordinator has a good overview of the subject. However, opportunities for monitoring the quality of work and classroom practice are limited and this is a weakness. Although the national tests results are analysed in relation to past achievement, the questions and answers are not examined to highlight strengths and weaknesses, to enable the curriculum to be adjusted if necessary. The extensive grounds are used well for environmental studies, and this enriches pupils' learning.

Strengths:

- *attainment in the subject is rising and is currently above average when pupils leave the school;*
- *the subject is well led;*
- *the planning framework includes appropriate activities for the mixed-age classes.*

Areas for improvement:

- *opportunities for pupils, particularly the higher-attaining ones, to plan their own experiments are limited;*
- *planning for the investigative strand of the subject, with particular reference to drawing conclusions;*
- *more rigorous analysis of test results in order to plan future work;*
- *monitoring the quality of what is taught and what pupils learn;*
- *use of information technology to support the subject.*

ART AND DESIGN

120 Standards are broadly average throughout the school, with some examples of very high quality work in Years 3 to 6. This marks an improvement since the last inspection, which stems from a new planning framework and the enthusiasm and expertise of the subject co-ordinator.

121 Particular strengths in the work include three-dimensional work. This has been approached in an imaginative way. Last year, for example, pupils were involved in making structures from willow to make withy circles. This project clearly caught the interest of both pupils and parents. Examples of their work remain on display in the walled garden. Painting is also very well taught in Years 3 to 6 particularly. Some extremely fine paintings are displayed in the hall, based on the work of Monet. They show excellent colour mixing and fine brush work. This use of artists' work to develop pupils' own skills is well managed. In a Year 5 and 6 lesson, for example, pupils looked at the work of Andy Goldsworthy before working in the school grounds to design and make their own picture from natural materials. In the session seen, pupils made a good start on their designs and showed enthusiasm and application to the task. During this particular lesson good levels of adult support meant that pupils achieved well. Younger pupils looked at the work of Henri Matisse and used this as an inspiration for paper collages of insects and animals.

122 Work from last year shows that pupils in Years 1 and 2 make satisfactory progress in painting, drawing and collage as a consequence of at least sound teaching. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 develop their sketching and planning for art work through their sketch books. In some the standards of drawing are high, with most pupils doing as well as they should for their age. They do well because of consistently good teaching. There is not so much evidence of printing or textile work through the school, although younger pupils have made some effective patterns by rubbing on textured surfaces. The co-ordinator has identified printing as an area for development and is re-organising resources to help teachers to plan for the work.

Strengths:

- *standards of work in older classes;*
- *the expertise and enthusiasm of the subject co-ordinator.*

Areas for development:

- *printing and fabric work.*

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

123 By the end of Year 2 and Year 6 standards are average. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily throughout the school. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when standards were below expected levels and provision for the subject was unsatisfactory. The introduction of a balanced planning framework that takes account of recent national guidance has ensured coverage of all aspects of the subject. It also provides more opportunities for pupils to work with a wider range of materials and techniques. Teachers' own expertise and understanding in this area has improved leading to much better achievement by pupils.

124 Overall pupils develop designing, making and evaluating skills effectively. Pupils are given sufficient opportunities to experience all areas of the subject and practise the specific skills associated with design and technology. This is particularly so in Years 1 and 2 as a result of the more stable staffing situation in the recent past. Throughout the school, units of work are often linked to other subjects, such as science, art, history, and geography.

125 Year 1 pupils explore the use of wheels and axles to construct wheelbarrows. In their designs they include careful sketches and list the materials used. Written evaluations, many helpfully scribed by the teacher, show a clear insight into the processes. They include thoughtful comments such as 'masking tape wouldn't stick very well – perhaps because it was a hot day'. These pupils also designed a coat for Joseph using a graphics program on the computer to decorate it. In Year 2, they have used a selection of reclaimed materials and winding mechanisms to raise and lower Incy Wincy Spider'. They showed a developing awareness of health and safety matters in their designs for a healthy sandwich and made suggestions about how they might improve the recipe next time.

126 Older pupils gather information from a range of sources and carefully consider the users and uses of their products. In Years 3 and 4, for example, they investigated pulleys in a variety of everyday equipment such as cranes and fishing reels and used the information gathered to construct a catapult. When designing and making a package to hold an egg safely they first carried out tests and experiment with different materials. They evaluated their designs and models thoughtfully in terms of usefulness and suitability for their purpose.

127 Evidence of pupils' work in Years 5 and 6 is largely photographic, with helpful annotations by the teacher. It shows their 'Cosy Christmas Slippers' and their carefully constructed Tudor houses. It is clear that pupils use well-developed artistic skills and good joining, cutting and finishing techniques. However, producing very similar, almost identical artefacts shows a lack of independence within the design process. While this improves pupils' making skills it does not extend their designing skills.

128 In the one lesson seen teaching was good and the chosen activity linked well with the class study of the Victorians. Resources and teaching aids were well prepared and used effectively to promote pupils' understanding of the variety of stitches to be used to create a sampler for a friend. Pupils listened attentively to the clear explanations and worked carefully and accurately, taking pride in their designs and confidently selecting from a range of materials, colours and techniques.

129 The joint co-ordinators provide clear educational direction for the subject. They have introduced a supportive scheme of work that provides teachers with clear guidance on the development of knowledge and skills year on year. Teachers are not yet consistently implementing procedures for assessing and recording pupils' progress. There are currently no formal arrangements for regularly monitoring the quality of classroom work or to identify areas requiring development.

Strengths:

- *improvements since the last inspection;*
- *good scheme of work to support teachers' planning;*
- *leadership and educational direction;*

Areas for development:

- *greater focus on the process of designing and evaluating in older classes;*
- *consistent use of assessment procedures;*
- *monitoring of the subject.*

GEOGRAPHY

130 Standards are broadly average at the end of Year 2, but not as high as they should be by the time pupils leave the school. The reason for this fall back since the last inspection is related, in part, to the blocking of geography and history study units over a two-year period. In one year for example, pupils in Years 3 to 6 study one geography unit and two history ones, with two geography and one history unit in the following year. This means that pupils sometimes go two terms without studying geography (or two terms without studying history). This would be satisfactory if the individual geography units were tackled in some depth, but samples of work indicate that the coverage is cursory. This means that teaching and learning were satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 last year and unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 6. The school has now adopted national guidelines for geography and when these are fully implemented, will ensure satisfactory coverage of the curriculum.

131 There was no geography timetabled during the inspection and judgements are based on discussions with pupils and an analysis of work from last year. This was fairly limited, because topics were not covered in any depth. In the younger pupils' classes the focus has been on developing map work skills. In Year 1 last year, for example, pupils drew maps of the wolf's route to the 'three little pigs' houses'. Pupils in Year 2 undertook some grid reference work based on their 'Pirate Island'. This year Year 1 and 2 pupils are looking at maps to see where they have been on holiday. Other map related activities, such as 'Bertie Bear's' trips and the map display of a mass balloon race help pupils to identify countries and places.

132 In Year 3 and 4 last year pupils studied India as a contrast to our own country and are currently reminded of what they learnt by an attractive display in their classroom. Their work showed some good recall of what they had learnt, but was not presented well. It is clear that in Year 6 pupils' geographical skills are not sufficiently developed. They had little recall of any work with maps, for example. They found it a challenge to identify countries such as India in an atlas and had no understanding of the use of co-ordinates in finding places. They have not yet used Ordnance Survey maps. They were able to compare and contrast a place in India with Nettlebed and came to some sensible conclusions about the difference. However they found it difficult to undertake this activity and needed support. Last year these pupils studied 'rivers', but their work shows only superficial coverage. Their end of year assessment indicates that in some areas they have almost reached the level expected, but that in others, such as work to do with pattern and processes, they are some way behind.

133 The subject manager has only been leading the subject for a year and has concentrated more on one of her other subject responsibilities. She has not yet had the opportunity to monitor and evaluate how well pupils are doing. Planning is in place and resources are adequate, with new up to date atlases needed. Teachers do make use of trips, such as the Year 5 and 6 residential visit to Yenworthy, as a basis for some of the work. This helps pupils to develop their geographical skills in a practical way.

Strengths:

- *use made of trips and the potential for field study work in the local area.*

Areas for development:

- *raising standards in Years 3 to 6;*
- *implementing the new planning framework;*
- *improving resources.*

HISTORY

134 Standards are broadly average throughout the school and have been maintained since the last inspection. At that time there was no whole school planning document to underpin what went on in classrooms. The school has now adopted a national planning framework, which effectively plans for the development of historical skills through the study of different periods or themes. It has not been used for long enough to have had a significant impact on standards.

135 The strongest element of the teaching is related to the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding of the past. This is often linked to a visit, which helps to bring the past alive for the pupils. Year 2 and 3 pupils, for example, visited Reading museum, and Year 5 and 6 pupils visited the War Cabinet rooms, as part of their work on World War 2. This attention paid to fostering pupils' interest means that they are enthusiastic about history and enjoy finding out about the past. In a Year 5 and 6 lesson, for example, pupils worked in pairs to find out the difference between life in Sparta and Athens. The whole session was very well planned and pupils learnt a great deal in a short time.

136 Good work on using both primary and secondary sources helps pupils to develop their enquiry skills. In work on Victorian education in Years 3 and 4, for example, pupils studied extracts from school Log Books to find out what school was like over 120 years ago. This session was enhanced by use of the school's own log books. Pupils also studied a reproduction of a Victorian schoolroom to see what was different. They identified objects such as candles and canes.

137 Pupils make a good start to developing their understanding of chronology. In the youngest pupils' class they are studying the changes that occurred as they grew from babies into children. This helps them to develop some ideas about the passing of time. Work on chronology is planned throughout the school. Year 2 pupils worked on time related vocabulary in the session seen. They sequenced pictures of different age houses to show that they understood the concepts of old, older and oldest. This task was not as challenging as it might have been and had been undertaken by children in the reception class last year. The oldest pupils in their study of the Ancient Greeks are reminded of the chronology of the period by a time line displayed on the wall.

138 Work on historical interpretation is not so well developed and pupils have not done much work so far on recognising how the past is represented and developed. They are doing better on organising and communicating what they have learnt, although the presentation of some work is sometimes untidy.

139 Teaching is good overall, with some very good features in some of the lessons seen. Strengths include a good emphasis on encouraging pupils to ask questions about the past, interesting and relevant tasks and the use of primary sources. Areas for improvement include using ICT in order to assist with historical enquiry and setting higher standards for the presentation of work.

140 The subject co-ordinator has only been responsible for the subject for a short time and has been initially concentrating on her other subject responsibility.

Strengths:

- *pupils' enthusiasm for the subject;*
- *the use of visits to enrich the learning experiences.*

Areas for development:

- *links with ICT;*
- *work on historical interpretation;*
- *presentation of work.*

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

141 Standards are broadly average throughout the school. This is similar to the judgement at the time of the last inspection, and the school has done well to maintain these standards. It has kept pace with the rapid developments in information and communication technology and responded well to the raised national expectations. There is no difference in the standards attained by boys and girls and teachers are alert to any issues regarding equal opportunities. They have recently, for example, conducted an audit to identify those pupils who have no access to computers outside school with the intention of using this information in their planning.

142 There have been significant improvements since the last inspection, many of them quite recent. They include:

- better teaching as a result of recent training;
- much improved resources;
- better assessment systems;
- better guidance and support for teachers.

They are already beginning to have a positive impact on raising standards.

143 Only one full lesson was seen during the inspection with a number of shorter observations of pupils working with learning support assistants and occasionally the class teacher in small groups. Judgements, therefore have been based also on discussions with the co-ordinator, teachers and pupils, samples of work completed this year and last year, teachers' plans and records, displays and resources. These show that standards in word-processing, graphics, accessing the Internet and using e-mail are securely in line with expectations throughout the school.

144 In Year 1 and Year 2 pupils are introduced to basic editing skills. They use the shift key for capital letters, backspace to delete and, with adult support, save, print and retrieve their work. They use early data handling skills, generating block graphs on the computer to show numbers of boys and girls in the class and favourite pets. In their use of the keyboard and mouse, pupils are learning the rudiments of modelling and control. Commanding a roamer (programmable toy) to make quarter and half turns extends this understanding appropriately.

145 In Year 6, pupils carry out basic re-drafting, inserting words and sentences, centring titles, changing fonts and using Clip Art to combine text and graphics. By the end of the year, they are clearly aware of the importance of ICT in their lives when gathering information on a range of subjects. They search CD-ROMS and the Internet while undertaking individual research into a variety of topics, much of it in their own time, confirming their interest and

enthusiasm for their work. In the current Year 6, pupils have typed and formatted their set of class rules and used cut and paste techniques to place them in order of priority. Gaps in the earlier experiences of these pupils means that they are in a 'catch-up' situation. Their knowledge, skills and understanding in modelling and control, therefore, are not as secure as the other strands of the subject. However, teachers' records and plans show that they are achieving well. With the support of the new scheme of work and their motivation to do well they are set to attain expected levels by the time they leave the school.

146 The quality of teaching is satisfactory. In the sessions seen both teachers and LSAs dealt competently with the planned tasks demonstrating sound and improved knowledge of the subject. In Year 3 and 4, a lower attaining group made good gains in their understanding of how to use the computer to support a design task in design and technology. They persisted well when they encountered difficulties but were confident in seeking help when needed. Earlier, a group of higher attaining pupils from the same class were supervised by a LSA while carrying out a carefully designed task to assess their word-processing skills. They worked in pairs discussing their work confidently and sharing the keyboard successfully.

147 The co-ordinator provides good leadership. She has produced a comprehensive development plan that gives a clear direction for further improvement in the subject. She is fully aware of the need to extend the use of ICT to support other subjects. However, there have been few opportunities to develop her broader management role, for example by direct observation of classroom work. She has produced a good quality scheme of work that is now being introduced throughout the school. Consistent implementation will ensure that all pupils experience the full range of ICT required by the National Curriculum. The scheme includes suggested assessment activities to help teachers check pupils understanding and a checklist of skills that links clearly with the National Curriculum.

148 The level of resources is good. However, only eight of the school's computers are networked and this limits the size of the group that can be catered for in the computer room to half a class. As a result, there are not enough opportunities for direct teaching and reinforcement of skills by class teachers and this slows the pace of pupils' learning. The restrictions imposed by the accommodation have led to the computer 'room' being sited in a large classroom shared with Class 4. This causes continuous interruptions to the class as computer groups come and go. Frequently conversations in one half of the room disturb the concentration of pupils in the other half.

Strengths:

- *good rate of improvement since the last inspection;*
- *good leadership;*
- *comprehensive scheme of work and good systems for assessing pupils' attainment and progress;*
- *good resources (within the constraints of the building).*

Areas for development:

- *continuing to improve the quality of teaching;*
- *more direct teaching by class teachers;*
- *use of ICT across the curriculum;*
- *accessibility to networked computers (again within the constraints of the building).*

MUSIC

149 Satisfactory standards have been maintained since last inspection. The quality of the singing heard was tuneful, but, as at the last inspection, it lacked gusto. The youngest pupils sing a variety of songs with appropriate actions while the oldest sing a song using a

pentatonic scale. However, in sessions seen, there were missed opportunities to enhance pupils' performance further by singing in parts. All areas of the curriculum are covered, and pupils are given opportunities to listen to music, perform and compose, and understand technical terms such as pitch, duration and tempo. A large number of pupils have opportunities for instrumental tuition, which further enhances their musical talents. Overall achievement is satisfactory throughout the school.

150 In the two lessons observed the quality of teaching was satisfactory. Lesson planning is well developed to address all areas of the curriculum. There is good use of technical language so that pupils learn the meanings of these terms from an early age. Teachers generally set appropriate activities to give pupils suitable challenge, although in the joint lesson with classes 1 and 2 the content of the lesson was insufficiently challenging for the oldest, most able pupils, and the songs these pupils were asked to sing were too infantile. This resulted in some silly behaviour as the songs they sang were ones learned in the reception class. The age and ability range was very wide in this lesson but insufficient use was made of group work to appropriately challenge the pupils. In the second lesson seen, although pupils made satisfactory progress overall, the pace of the lesson was slow, giving opportunities for pupils to misbehave as they were insufficiently involved, and this interrupted the flow of the lesson.

151 The subject is well lead and there is a good scheme of work fully adapted to the needs of the school. This gives teachers a good structure to help them plan their lessons. However, the co-ordinator has had no opportunities to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school to ensure that standards are at the appropriate level. The school is involved in many productions, often joining with the local cluster of schools, and this broadens the musical experiences for those involved. The standard of these productions is high. Last year the school took part in a concert at the Albert Hall. Although there are opportunities for instrumental tuition for pupils who pay for lessons, there are no extra curricular musical opportunities at present, such as a choir, orchestra or recorder sessions. Resources are satisfactory but there is a lack of instruments from different cultures.

Strengths:

- *a comprehensive planning framework tailored to meet the needs of the school;*
- *good leadership of the subject by a knowledgeable co-ordinator;*
- *good opportunities for pupils to perform in concerts and productions.*

Areas for improvement:

- *the challenge for higher attaining pupils;*
- *monitoring of provision and pupils' learning.*

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

152 Overall standards in physical education are average, as they were at the time of the last inspection. Standards in swimming are above average. The physical education curriculum includes all the essential elements of the National Curriculum. Games, gymnastics, dance and swimming are taught throughout the school with the addition of athletics and outdoor and adventurous activities for older pupils. Most pupils achieve satisfactorily and there is no difference in performance between boys and girls. The small proportion of pupils with special educational needs is fully integrated into lessons as a result of teachers' careful strategies to involve all pupils actively and fully in their learning. Often, as in a dance lesson for Years 3 and 4, this involves the sensitive support of teaching assistants.

153 In Year 1 pupils demonstrate sound levels of control and co-ordination in dance, responding imaginatively to the musical stimulus and expressing feelings of happiness, sadness and anger. They follow instructions carefully and are attentive during teacher and pupil demonstrations. Year 2 pupils explore a variety of actions as they try very hard to link jumps and rolls to form sequences. Their awareness of space and other pupils when travelling during the warm-up phase is not as good as it should be in pupils of this age.

154 In a dance lesson, pupils in Years 3 and 4 produced a good range of imaginative movement patterns to form interesting sequences in response to thoughtfully chosen music. They made careful observations of each others' work, seeing similarities and differences and using them to improve their own performances. In swimming, teachers' records show that by Year 6 almost all achieve the standard expected nationally and many go well beyond this in distance, water skills and safety.

155 Teaching is satisfactory overall. The main strengths include the important skill of managing pupils well to promote good attitudes and behaviour. This is an improvement since the last inspection when unsatisfactory behaviour was an issue in some lessons. In all lessons there is good attention to safety, with pupils changed into suitable clothing and staff setting a good example. In the most successful lesson, the teacher's clear explanations and coaching of individual pupils to improve their techniques showed good understanding of the finer points of skills development. As a result, pupils made good progress and were continually striving hard to improve their African dances. However, pupils are not always given sufficient support and guidance when reflecting on their own performance, comparing it with others and practising to improve.

156 Recent national guidance forms the basis of planning in the subject supplemented by a commercial scheme that has been introduced to deal with the weakness identified at the time of the last inspection. There are currently no formal arrangements for monitoring the subject and arrangements for assessing and recording pupils' achievements are undeveloped. As a result the school does not have a clear view of standards in the subject. The school rightly places strong emphasis on water safety and this is reflected in the good standards attained by the time pupils leave. Good use is made of the school's outdoor pool and older pupils have regular deep-water sessions at the neighbouring secondary school.

157 Local sports clubs have supported the subject well, both in lesson time and as part of the school's satisfactory range of after school clubs. Pupils respond enthusiastically to these opportunities where they practise and extend their skills in informal situations. The school recognises the importance of these activities and is seeking to increase the range on offer. There are limited opportunities to take part in regular competitive sport within the school and against other schools. Resources for physical education and therefore the potential for improvement are good. They include extensive playing fields, a well-marked playground, a swimming pool, a well-equipped hall and a good range of games equipment.

Strengths:

- *standards in swimming;*
- *school grounds, facilities and resources;*

Areas for development:

- *monitoring of the subject;*
- *procedures for assessment.*

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

158 Pupils' attainment by the age of seven is satisfactory, and in line with the standards required in the Oxfordshire Agreed Syllabus. The amount of pupils' work aged seven to

eleven available for scrutiny was very limited. However, talking to pupils and looking at the available work show that by the time pupils leave the school, standards are not high enough. Assessment information shows that the curriculum is not being covered in sufficient depth for pupils to meet the requirements of the syllabus by the time they leave the school. Although pupils generally have a sound knowledge and understanding of Christianity, their knowledge of the two other religions they are required to study is poor. This is because in the recent past too little time has been devoted to the teaching of these world religions. The requirements of the syllabus have therefore not been met by the time pupils leave the school. The school has not yet fully implemented the good, well developed planning framework for the subject to ensure that all areas of the curriculum are covered.

159 Younger pupils study Christianity. They learn about the teachings of Jesus, and know that the Bible is special to Christians. They visit a church and identify the main features such as the cross, font and pulpit. They learn about Christian festivals such as harvest and Christmas. The theme of harvest is developed by the oldest pupils when they discuss different customs and traditions, but the religious significance of harvest is not developed. As pupils get older they are beginning to think about the significance of rituals such as prayer, and pupils in Class 3 know that Christians talk to God through prayer. Progress in this area of the syllabus is therefore satisfactory throughout the school. Other religions are dealt with superficially. Examination of pupils' work shows that pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn facts about Judaism and Hinduism, for example, the names of artefacts such as a menorah, and they learn about the Jewish festival of Sukkot. Pupils know that different religions have different stories that are special, such as the Hindu story of Rama and Sita. Progress of pupils between the ages of five and seven is therefore satisfactory, and their knowledge and understanding are appropriate for their age. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 do not develop their understanding of Judaism and Hinduism sufficiently, do not compare and contrast the differences and similarities of the world's religions, and so their knowledge and understanding of the fundamental principles behind these religions are unsatisfactory, and the pupils do not make satisfactory progress.

160 Overall the quality of teaching was satisfactory in all the lessons seen during the inspection. Teachers plan their lessons well according to the syllabus, and, as a result of the interesting activities set, the pupils show positive attitudes to their lessons. Teachers show they have sound subject expertise in the areas covered, and in Class 4 there was some good use of homework when pupils had to carry out some personal research at home. This had a positive impact on the learning in this lesson. The spiritual nature of religion was developed well in Class 3 when pupils wrote prayers about what they thought was truly wonderful. The oldest pupils in this lesson were encouraged to explain *why* their choices were wonderful, which extended their thinking and understanding well. Areas for improvement include increasing the pace of lessons, limiting the time spent listening to the teacher and increasing opportunities for pupils to discuss the religious significance and meaning of what they are studying. In one lesson seen, for example, the activity was not sufficiently challenging. It involved pupils spending some time on drawing and colouring their extended families and meant that there was insufficient time to cover the work planned on discussion about religions.

161 The enthusiastic co-ordinator leads effectively and knows the subject well. However, the management part of her role is underdeveloped as she has had no opportunities to monitor what is actually being taught, and what the pupils are learning. Assessment procedures are in place, but as yet the information gathered from these assessments is not being used to plan work.

Strengths:

- *a comprehensive long-term planning document;*

- *an enthusiastic co-ordinator who has good subject knowledge.*

Areas for improvement:

- *monitoring of the subject to ensure that the three world faiths have sufficient coverage;*
- *challenge for higher attaining pupils;*
- *raising standards in Years 3 to 6.*