

INSPECTION REPORT

WOODCOTE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Woodcote, Reading

LEA area: Oxfordshire

Unique reference number: 123040

Headteacher: Mrs Lynn Knapp

Reporting inspector: Mr David Carrington
15414

Dates of inspection: 23rd – 25th September 2002

Inspection number: 248416

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 5 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Reading Road
Woodcote
Reading

Postcode: RG8 0QY

Telephone number: 01491 680454

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr John Gant

Date of previous inspection: 25th September 2000

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
15414	Mr David Carrington	Registered inspector	Science Information and communication technology Physical education Educational inclusion English as an additional language	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well pupils are taught
13395	Mrs Joanna Illingworth	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well the school cares for its pupils The partnership with parents and carers
1189	Mrs Sharon Brown	Team inspector	English Art and design History Music Special educational needs	How well the school is led and managed
19765	Mrs Pauleen Shannon	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Geography Religious education Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage	The curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is located in the large village of Woodcote, about eight miles north of Reading, but lies in Oxfordshire. There are 79 boys and 64 girls in school. All pupils are white and all but two are of British heritage. All pupils are fluent in English and there are a small number of pupils from traveller families. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above average and there is a significant proportion of pupils with statements. The most common individual needs are mainly for speech and language. The level of attainment when children start school is broadly average although boys do not score as highly as the girls in early assessments.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Woodcote Primary School is an improving school. Due to the committed and determined leadership of the headteacher, it has moved ahead successfully since the previous inspection. The serious weaknesses identified in 2000 have been eliminated and although the school has a number of key priorities for continued improvement, its prospects are promising. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, with some strengths, standards are average, and rising, and pupils make steady progress through the school. Overall, it gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The school has clear priorities for improvement and the headteacher gives good leadership and management and ensures that all staff and the governors work well together in the interests of the pupils.
- Children make a steady start to their school life and learn successfully on the whole.
- Pupils' personal development is good, behaviour has improved substantially and is now sound and relationships are harmonious.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good.
- The school is at the heart of its community and has a good partnership with parents and local schools, all of which make a successful contribution to pupils' learning.
- Finances, including additional funding for school improvement, are used effectively.

What could be improved

- Standards, whilst improving well, are not yet high enough, especially in English and mathematics.
- Higher attaining pupils do not consistently have work that challenges them enough and some boys do not learn as successfully as other pupils.
- The use of time, including the way that the day is divided into lessons and the pace of learning, is not as effective as it could be.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

In 2000, the school was judged to have serious weaknesses and there were six significant key issues and one lesser issue for improvement:

1. Teach information and communication technology (ICT) more systematically to allow pupils to build appropriate skills and knowledge.
2. Improve pupils' behaviour and attitudes
3. Raise attainment in writing and ensure that the presentation of work is neat and tidy.
4. Improve teaching in junior classes.
5. Develop the management role of the headteacher.
6. Work to improve the school as a learning environment

And, as a lesser issue, improve outdoor play facilities and opportunities for children in the Foundation Stage.

Overall, it was evident that erratic progress and underachievement were significant weaknesses. In the two years since that inspection, there has been good improvement in school, particularly in relation to standards, which have risen well overall. The school has good prospects for continuing improvement.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	D	E	E	E
Mathematics	B	C	D	D
Science	A	C	D	E

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

Similar schools are those schools with between 8% and 20% of the pupils entitled to free school meals.

The above table shows that standards in the Year 6 SATs were well below the national average in English and below average in mathematics and science. When compared to schools with the same proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, standards were well below average in English and science and below average in mathematics. The picture was very similar in the Year 2 SATs in 2001. In the same year, the proportion of pupils attaining level 3 in Year 2 was below the national average and it was well below average for those attaining level 5 in Year 6. Over the last three years, girls have not done as well as boys in the Year 2 SATs, but in the Year 6 SATs, girls did better than boys in English and mathematics and boys did better than girls in science. At the start of the current school year, standards in both Years 2 and 6 are average in most subjects, though they are below average in English because attainment in writing is not as good as in reading, speaking and listening. Some boys do not concentrate as well as other pupils and this slows the progress that they make. Higher attaining pupils could be better challenged in their work, though those with learning difficulties make the expected progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are interested in their work and respond positively to the opportunities offered for them to learn successfully.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is sound and is a major improvement on the situation in 2000. The school has few incidents of bullying. The rate of exclusion has risen recently but this sanction is used sensibly.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development and relationships are a strength of the school. Most pupils develop into mature and thoughtful learners.
Attendance	The attendance rate is better than the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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

The quality of teaching has improved since 2000 and is satisfactory overall. Almost two thirds of the lessons seen were of satisfactory teaching quality and around a third was of good or better quality. There was one music lesson in the middle of the junior years where teaching was judged unsatisfactory. This was due to weaknesses in planning, not enough time to develop the music content, unsatisfactory management of behaviour and lack of satisfactory progress by a significant number of pupils. On the other hand, in one lesson which combined geography and religious education, very good teaching was observed. This was well focused on the development of knowledge and skills by the youngest children in the school. The teaching of English and mathematics, including basic skills, is sound. Strengths of teaching are teachers' knowledge and understanding, the management of pupils and the work of the support staff. Aspects for development are the pace of teaching and the marking of work to show how pupils can improve next time.

Learning is also satisfactory overall and pupils make sound progress. They put in appropriate effort and their concentration and general response to staff is as it should be. The target setting process is keeping pupils informed of how well they are learning. The pace of working is not brisk enough on all occasions.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education, though aspects of English, ICT and music require continued improvement. The partnership with the community and other local schools makes a valuable contribution to pupils' learning opportunities and the programme of activities outside lessons is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils with special educational needs, including emotional and behavioural difficulties, are supported soundly and most of them make similar progress to the other pupils. The support staff are effective in their work with these pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The spiritual development of pupils is satisfactory and their moral, social and cultural development is good. Music does not make a full contribution to pupils' cultural development but the work to celebrate and enjoy the contribution of minority ethnic and cultural groups is a strength.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Systems of care, health and welfare are generally good and the systems to assess pupils' attainment and the use of the data produced by assessment are satisfactory, though there remain things, such as marking, to improve.
The partnership with parents	Parents have positive views about the school and the overall partnership in their children's education is good. The information provided about pupils' progress is good and parents have a successful role in school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher now has appropriate time for her management and leadership duties and she carries these out well. There is a productive working atmosphere in school and staff form a strong team who are committed to the interests of the pupils.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are proud of the school and understand its strengths and aspects for development well. They are well involved in school improvement planning and ensure that it meets statutory requirements.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher has very good knowledge of school performance and staff have growing awareness of this information. Priorities are the right ones to bring even more improvement. Overall, the school ensures that the principles of best value are applied carefully.
The strategic use of resources	There are no major shortages of learning resources, staff or accommodation and the site is well maintained, cleaned and decorated. The school makes good use of additional funding for raising standards as recent SATs results show.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • Teaching is effective, expectations are appropriate and pupils make steady progress in their learning. • Pupils become mature and sensible learners and behave well. • The school is well led and managed. • It works closely with parents in the education of their children and staff are easy to talk to if there are concerns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of information about their children's progress is not detailed enough.

The inspection team judges that the school is successful and that it promotes the things that please parents satisfactorily at least. Inspectors judge that the information provided by the school is good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. In 2001, the last year for which reliable comparisons can be made, standards in the Year 6 SATs were well below the national average in English and below average in mathematics and science. These Year 6 pupils attained well below average standards in English and science and below average in mathematics when compared to pupils in schools with between 8 and 20 per cent of pupils entitled to free school meals. Standards showed a similar picture in the Year 2 SATs in 2001.
2. Higher attaining pupils have not done as well as they might in recent SATs. For example, in 2001, the proportion of pupils attaining level 3 in Year 2 was below the national average and it was well below average for those attaining level 5 in Year 6. The present inspection evidence points to under-achievement amongst the higher attaining pupils, largely because these pupils frequently complete the same work as the other pupils in the class. There are some success stories in the school's provision for the very top attainers. A small group of pupils from Year 2 have been placed with the mixed age Year 3/4 class so that their learning can be accelerated. This is paying good dividends and these pupils are doing well at present. The school is mindful to ensure that being with older pupils does not disadvantage this group, whose personal and social needs are rather different because of their age. Inspectors observed a mathematics lesson in the mixed age Year 5/6 class where additional and appropriate work had been prepared for the small group of top attainers. Such examples are, however, not widespread enough and the provision of taxing work for higher attaining pupils is part of the first key issue arising from this inspection.
3. There is an above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs, largely for speech and language and emotional and behavioural difficulties, including a significant proportion of pupils with statements. The quality of provision for these pupils is satisfactory and most make sound progress in their work. The individual educational plans covering their work programmes contain specific targets and overall provision has improved with the appointment of a special educational needs co-ordinator, and enhanced support from external agencies. Given their attainment on entry, most pupils with learning and emotional and behavioural difficulties achieve satisfactorily.
4. Over recent years, Year 6 girls have attained better standards than the boys in English and mathematics and boys have out performed the girls in science. During the same period, girls did not do as well as the boys in the Year 2 SATs. Evidence from this inspection shows that in junior classes there are a small number of boys, mostly with emotional and behavioural difficulties, whose concentration, motivation and effort are not as good as those of the other pupils. These boys are slower to settle to learning, though they show improved attitudes when the work is practical, investigational or physical. In lessons where learning involves lengthy listening, these boys lose interest if they are expected to sit and listen to the teacher for too long. The second key issue for this inspection in part concerns the review of the timetable to ensure that there is a mix of learning activity types through the day to ensure pupils concentrate fully at all times.
5. The very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds do as well in their work as the other pupils. All are fluent in English and they make good contributions in lessons. The school monitors the attainment and progress of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds satisfactorily.
6. There has been good improvement to standards overall during the last two years. Generally, expectations have improved over the last two years and the commitment to improved standards has strengthened. The school has made good progress in reaching its appropriate targets set for Year 6 pupils in the SATs. Inspectors judge that the current Year 6 pupils are attaining average standards in mathematics and science and below average standards in English. The weaknesses in English have been clearly analysed by the school and senior managers have incorporated an action plan to improve standards in writing in the school improvement plan. This is an entirely appropriate first priority for raising standards and a promising start has been made to the improvement of writing in English and writing across the curriculum. Current standards are average in all subjects apart from

English, although there is relatively light curriculum coverage of music and this affects the standards attained in this subject.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. There has been good improvement in pupils' attitudes and values since the previous inspection. Two years ago, inspectors found that attitudes to learning and the quality of relationships were unsatisfactory. Pupils' personal development was also unsatisfactory. Their behaviour was poor and adversely affected academic progress, particularly in some Key Stage 2 classes. This is no longer the case. Behaviour in lessons and around the school now is sound and personal development and relationships are good. Pupils' attitudes to learning are satisfactory overall and make a positive contribution to their academic attainment. At the time of the previous inspection a significant number of parents regarded behaviour as a problem and complained of disruption and bullying. Parents are now happy with pupils' attitudes and standards of conduct. They say that their children like school, behave well, and become mature and sensible learners.
8. The majority of pupils are keen to learn and want to do well. They arrive punctually for lessons, settle down quickly and show interest in their work. They listen to their teachers carefully and sustain their concentration well. They are lively, enjoy answering questions in class, and are eager to take part in activities. They talk confidently to adults about their work and like to show them what they understand and can do. Most pupils are capable of working independently on their own or in small groups, and are willing to persist when tasks are difficult. This was the case with some Year 3 pupils in a mathematics lesson, where they did not find it easy to decide whether certain money problems involved addition or subtraction. They nevertheless tried their best, worked hard and were prepared to learn from their mistakes. As a result, their knowledge and understanding improved significantly and they made good progress. A few boys are inattentive and not as co-operative in class as the other pupils, particularly if they have to listen for long periods and the pace of the lesson is slow. The pupils who display these unsatisfactory attitudes usually have specific emotional and behavioural problems. They are therefore far from typical of the school as a whole.
9. The quality of behaviour is satisfactory overall, and this is reflected in the number of exclusions from school. There have been five in the in the past year, involving three boys. Disruptive and aggressive behaviour is not a feature of lessons or breaks and lunch hours. Pupils are lively and energetic, but behave responsibly, treating the school's grounds and equipment with due care and respect. They play well together in mixed age and gender groups in the playground. They are friendly and helpful, and are very polite to visitors, opening doors for them as a matter of course and offering to show them the way to classrooms. Parents say that the school deals *quickly and effectively* with the few instances of bullying that do occur.
10. The quality of relationships is good. Pupils get on well with members of staff and with each other, showing good moral and social development. The school's '*Values led curriculum*' makes an important contribution in this area. During the week of the inspection, assemblies and lessons focused on the value of *respect*. Pupils learnt that in order to earn respect they must give respect to other people. Members of staff constantly reinforce this message by example. They treat pupils with courtesy and consideration and in general receive a positive response. This promotes learning and helps to make the school an orderly and caring community.
11. Pupils of all ages get good opportunities to take on responsibility in the day-to-day life of the school. For example, they can serve on the school council or on the school's ecological council, and Years 5 and 6 get the chance to act as secretaries at lunchtime. Pupils respond well to the opportunities that they receive. They are keen to accept responsibility and to use their initiative, especially in the service of others, as when they recently took part in an art competition to raise money for children in Afghanistan. Overall, personal and social development is good. During their years in school, pupils become much more mature and responsible, both as learners and as members of the school community.
12. Whilst most pupils with special educational needs have similar attitudes and behaviour to their peers, a significant minority have emotional and behavioural difficulties that sometimes leads to a

negative attitude to work, especially amongst the boys. This is seen as an aspect for improvement. To this end the governors have maintained the service of an external advisor for behavioural management who works with pupils and supports staff. His work is seen as a major factor in the improved behaviour in school over recent years. Most pupils with special educational needs listen attentively when work is interesting and matched to their needs.

13. Pupils' attendance is good and has a positive effect on their attainment and progress. In the last full year, the school's attendance rate was better than the national average. Pupils generally arrive in good time for the start of the school day, though lessons do not always start promptly enough.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. Since the previous inspection, good improvement has been made to teaching. In the 2000 report, there were serious weaknesses in teaching, not least the management of behaviour. Today, the school has much more settled staffing and this has benefits for the pupils whose education is now more systematic and not subject to the interruptions that frequent changes of teachers bring.
15. In all, teaching and learning are satisfactory. The same is true of the individual phases in school, from the Foundation Stage, through the infants and juniors. Teaching is also satisfactory in all subjects, including ICT¹ where teaching was singled out as weaker last time. There are some strengths in teaching and learning and although in a small proportion of lessons observed teaching was of unsatisfactory quality, pupils generally get a sound deal in lessons.
16. Teaching quality for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. In English and mathematics needs are usually met soundly, with appropriately matched activities and good adult support. Learning support assistants and other supporting adults play an important role in ensuring that these pupils make sound progress in learning against their prior levels of understanding. There are times when the work is not as well matched to individual needs as it might be. Work in these lessons is not always planned with reference to personal targets in pupils' individual education plans, and this affects learning and concentration. The headteacher accepts that this is an area for further improvement and has already appointed a new coordinator of special educational needs, and has firm plans to develop the links with external agencies, in order to ensure a tighter match of work to needs.
17. The one unsatisfactory lesson observed during the inspection was due largely to weaknesses in the management of behaviour and the pace of learning and use of time in the lesson. In this mid junior music lesson not enough was achieved by the pupils. Generally, pace is rather sedate in many lessons and is something for attention. It forms part of the second key issue for this inspection. In recent years, the school has paid good and successful attention to improving the management of behaviour. A continuing programme of staff training has resulted in much more consistent management of behaviour, with the result that most lessons are now settled sessions of learning and in many, the quality of behaviour is good. The school's successes in improving behaviour have helped considerably in its removal from *the serious weaknesses* category. Continuing improvement will be assisted by a focus now on the pace of learning.
18. In most lessons the quality of teaching is satisfactory and in the other third it is good or very good. The scrutiny of pupils' past work also showed the overall sound quality of teaching and learning. There are some relative strengths in the teaching of skills and knowledge in school. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught soundly, as are those for ICT. In the best lesson observed during the inspection, the youngest children in school were making good advances in their geography and religious education knowledge and skills as two visitors talked to them about a Hindu wedding ceremony and showed a vivid photographic record of every stage in the proceedings. The children were fascinated by the content of the lesson and were soon making comparisons with their own experiences. In response to one visitor saying that her ceremony had taken three days to complete, two children, not to be out-done, insisted that the weddings they had attended had lasted

¹ Information and communication technology

two days at least! By the end of the lesson, the children had good insights into religious ceremonies in other faiths and were able to talk about similarities and differences in Christian and Hindu customs.

19. In general, teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach and the needs of the pupils. In many cases this is translated into interesting and motivating lessons where pupils learn actively. There are times when a few boys are not as well motivated as the other pupils, especially when the lesson demands quiet listening and good concentration. Where the lesson involves practical, investigational or physical activity, the learning of these boys is much more successful as they maintain interest for much longer. Teaching methods are generally satisfactory and some teachers have the skill of engaging concentration and motivation by a skilful mix of methods and tasks. This was shown in a mixed age Year 5/6 science lesson where pupils' enthusiasms to discover the effect of cola drink on human teeth enthused them to compare this with a shark's tooth. There was avid examination of the teeth, animated discussion of their observations and the beginning of hypothesising about cause and effect.
20. Everyday assessment of the building of skills and knowledge is satisfactory and is contributing to the better match of work to individual needs than reported in 2000. Marking of work is regular and often helpful in identifying how the pupil can improve future work. However, such practice is not consistent.
21. For the vast majority of the time, learning is satisfactory. This enables pupils to make sound progress on the whole. Most pupils are interested in the work and some show considerable enthusiasm. Such pupils work hard, listen and concentrate as expected and produce appropriate amounts of work. The oldest pupils show increasing responsibility and independence in their work. This marks good improvement because, two years ago, the Year 6 pupils were in the class that experienced the weakest teaching and their attitudes and response to learning were far from satisfactory then. Improvements in the target setting and tracking process are contributing successfully to pupils' knowledge of how well they are achieving and building self-esteem and motivation well.
22. That teaching and learning have improved is clear. However, senior managers recognise that the process of improvement must be maintained. The governors, wisely, continue to employ specialist advice to assist the management of behaviour and additional part-time staff to release the head teacher for essential tasks such as the monitoring of teaching and learning in all subjects and classes. This process has not yet been extended to monitoring by other members of staff, though opportunities for this work are being planned for the future. Once in place, it is intended that there will be greater, and shared, knowledge of what in teaching and learning should be spread, because it is effective practice, and what requires strengthening.

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

23. The school provides a suitable range of learning opportunities for pupils in the Foundation Stage and in infant and junior classes that are relevant to pupils' backgrounds and interest. The curriculum satisfactorily meets statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and the Locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are securely in place. There is good provision for personal and social education and sex and drugs education. Collective acts of worship meet statutory requirements.
24. The quality and range of learning opportunities for the children in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. The children are provided with a well-planned set of learning experiences to match their needs. There are appropriate priorities to update curriculum plans and records, so that they match the early learning goals. There has been appropriate progress with issues raised at the time of the previous inspection. There are now more opportunities for children to learn through informal play. However, these should be further developed so that children can explore water, sand and

investigative areas independently. The school has improved its outdoor provision but there is still no separate fenced off area where the youngest children can play.

25. Due to the authority admission arrangements, many children have only one term in the Foundation Stage and do not have sufficient time to complete all the early learning goals. The school needs to review the impact of these arrangements in order to allow more flexibility, so that all children can complete each area of learning before moving to National Curriculum work.
26. The school provides a suitable range of learning opportunities in the infants and juniors. Although the pupils benefit from the full range of experiences, the morning sessions give pupils little variety as they are almost exclusively dedicated to the teaching of English and mathematics. The afternoon sessions offer pupils a more varied curriculum. Some literacy and numeracy lessons are too long; this affects the pace of the lessons, which at times slow down and as a result, some pupils become restless. Subjects such as music have insufficient lesson time to ensure that all the elements are covered adequately. The taught week is one hour shorter in Years 3 to 6 than the minimum recommended. The review of the length of lessons and number of sessions in the school day is part of the second key issue from this inspection.
27. The National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy are now firmly in place and applied effectively. These together with a range of intervention strategies are helping raise standards. More opportunities are needed for pupils to use their literacy skills, particularly writing, in other subjects.
28. The school has an appropriate curriculum plan, which caters for the mixed age classes. Detailed medium term plans also identify any pupils who either exceed or are not achieving the week's learning objectives. These are used effectively in the short term planning the following week. A systematic programme for the development of study skills has been developed so that teachers can identify any skills or aspects of the curriculum that may need further development. However, there needs to be a sharper focus (particularly in science and mathematics) on investigation and problem solving and more opportunities for personal research work. There is an appropriate amount of homework across the school.
29. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory and follows the recently revised code of practice soundly. In most literacy and numeracy lessons pupils are given work suitable to their needs, which reflect targets in their individual education plans, though these could be more sharply focused. The school endeavours to be socially inclusive with most staff ensuring that special educational needs pupils are fully integrated into groups within the classroom. The work provided for higher attaining pupils is not always sufficiently challenging, though there are some good examples of teachers catering for their specific needs in the mixed age Year 3/4 and 5/6 classes. This needs to be more consistent, however.
30. The school has made a good start to improvement of the key issues related to information technology and writing from the previous inspection report. ICT has a higher profile in school, it is taught regularly and skills are developed systematically. However, ICT continues to be underused in some subjects. The school has identified that raising standards in writing remains a priority. As at the time of the previous report, there is still a need to ensure that handwriting and presentation are as good as possible and that more opportunities are available for extended writing.
31. The school has good policies and practices for personal, social and health education. It incorporates the local education authority programme '*Smile*' and '*Health for life*'. Its own '*values led curriculum*' contributes well through its religious education programme and assemblies. The school has achieved the '*Eco-schools*' award and pupils undertake regular environment projects with the support of an outreach worker. Pupils are encouraged to make decisions, take personal initiative and plan projects at their '*Eco-council*' meetings. They have explored issues around litter, use of energy, and have helped set up a bog garden.
32. The provision that the school makes for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. This represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Two years

ago, inspectors said the school's work to promote pupils' spiritual development was satisfactory, but that its provision for moral, social and cultural development was barely adequate.

33. Measures to promote pupils' spiritual development are satisfactory, and the school meets legal requirements on a daily act of collective worship. Although there is no whole school policy on spirituality, there is planned provision in assemblies, based on the school's programme for promoting core values. Pupils receive plenty of time to reflect on the '*Value of the Month*' in the daily assembly. Teachers also encourage them to think about and discuss these values in the classroom. Thus in a lesson observed during the inspection, the mixed age Year 5/6 class examined examples of respect and lack of respect in '*Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*'. There are pleasant features around the school, such as the raised flower-beds in the playground, that encourage pupils to appreciate the beauty of the world around them. However, there are missed opportunities to use music to enhance spiritual development. For example, there is no live music in assemblies except hymn singing.
34. There are good arrangements for promoting pupils' moral development. The importance of good moral values is inherent in the school's mission statement and code of conduct. Morality is central to the school's values programme, and, as a result, moral issues are fully and effectively explored in practice in assemblies and lessons. For example, during the inspection the mixed Year 4/5 class contrasted truth and lies, kindness and cruelty when discussing '*The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*' in an English lesson. Members of staff also make an important contribution to moral development by acting as good role models. The respect that they receive from pupils, and the significant improvement in behaviour in the last two years, show that their work is effective.
35. The school makes good provision for pupils' social development. It has established a system of rewards that encourages them to work co-operatively and to support one another. The school also ensures that pupils have good opportunities to use their initiative and to exercise responsibility. They are encouraged to behave responsibly towards other people and towards the environment, and they respond positively to this. Pupils enjoy helping others and are very interested in what is in the world around them. The success that the school has in raising pupils' awareness of environmental issues is one of its strengths. Another positive feature is its formal arrangement for evaluating the effectiveness of provision for personal and social education. Its procedures ensure that school is fully aware of the impact of its programmes on pupils' personal development.
36. There is good provision for cultural development. The school broadens pupils' cultural horizons effectively through art and design, religious education and English lessons. However, the contribution that music makes is relatively limited. Pupils' cultural development is also promoted well by the school's programme of curricular activities, trips and talks by artists, environmentalists and representatives of other cultures. During the week of inspection, a visiting speaker gave pupils a vivid insight into Hindu culture and religion when she showed them photographs of her wedding and explained the ceremony to them. The school makes every effort to ensure that its cultural provision is inclusive. It has a formal policy on racial equality and cultural diversity. This covers the culture of traveller families, and therefore has due regard to the needs of the pupils from such backgrounds who attend school.
37. The school enriches pupils' learning experiences through a good range of extra activities outside the school day. There are clubs for football, dance, French, art, and using computers. Different sports are well catered for throughout the year. Musical tuition is available. There is a wide range of visits to enhance pupils' interest in the curriculum. Older pupils have a residential experience at Kilvrough, which supports their social development well. Planned trips, such as visits to the Wyld Court Rainforest, Katesgrove Victorian school room, Little Wittenham Nature reserve and places of religious worship, all extend their knowledge in a lively and exciting way. Good use is made of the local area, with regular visits to local farms, woods, and building sites.
38. The school has good links with the wider community. There is an extensive programme of regular well-known visitors who support various aspects of the curriculum, help with clubs and take assemblies. The visitors, (who include local police officers, religious leaders, the school nurse, and

a professional football community officer) have positive relationships with the pupils, who clearly enjoy their visits. A number of parents, grandparents and governors also help on a regular basis.

39. The school has good relationships with partner institutions. The school works particularly closely with the pre-school provider on the site and the secondary school. This ensures that pupils transfer smoothly through each stage of their education. There is a particularly effective link with *Langtree Cluster* schools. Staff training is organised and joint curriculum topics and workshops planned, such as '*motivating maths*', investigations, artists in residence and design and technology challenges. The school also supports students from higher education institutions who are training to be teachers.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. Procedures for safeguarding pupils' welfare are satisfactory. The school monitors pupils' academic performance and personal development well and provides them with good educational support and guidance. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. At that time, inspectors reported that there were a number of areas of concern and that not all procedures were successful in supporting pupils' welfare and academic progress.
41. The school's procedures for monitoring pupils' progress and personal development are good. Good personal care and support starts with the induction of children into the reception class. The school's very close links with the pre-school provider that shares the same site ensures that new pupils are familiar with members of staff and with school routines. As a result they settle down very quickly and make good personal and social progress. Adults in the school know pupils of all ages well as individuals and have good relationships with them. They are friendly and approachable, and inspire trust. They respond to pupils' needs sensitively and effectively. The good care that they provide successfully promotes academic attainment and progress in the school. Good formal procedures effectively complement this informal provision. Overall, assessment systems are satisfactory and the information gathered is used soundly in planning the next steps in learning. There could be more consistency in the matching of work to pupils of different attainment levels but the school is working to develop its target setting and tracking process to refine this. The school has well established systems for recording and monitoring pupils' response to the programme of personal and social education. Children with problems are identified and given effective additional support. Where necessary the school brings in specialist help from outside agencies.
42. The school has good systems for monitoring behaviour and promoting good conduct. In the last two years it has put significant resources into this aspect of care for pupils. It has invested in the services of a specialist adviser on behaviour and employs a classroom assistant specifically to support pupils with behavioural problems. Its measures have been effective, and the school is now coping much more successfully with some very difficult pupils. There are good procedures for promoting discipline across the school. Teachers apply the school's behaviour policies consistently and fairly and manage pupils well in lessons. The system of rewards provides incentives that effectively promote good behaviour. It is greatly appreciated by students, who are keen to win team points by working hard in lessons and being polite and helpful. The quality of the school's measures is evident from the way in which behaviour has improved since the previous inspection.
43. Arrangements for monitoring and promoting attendance are good. Teachers hold roll calls at the beginning of school sessions in accordance with legal requirements. The information on the registers is entered on to the school's computer system, so that members of staff and the education social worker have ready access to attendance statistics for individual pupils and for classes. They use this information to follow up any unexplained absences and to monitor attendance rates. The home-school contract encourages parents to ensure their children attend school regularly. Newsletters also remind parents of the importance of good attendance and punctuality on pupils' learning.
44. Procedures for child protection are satisfactory. An appropriate policy is in place, and the headteacher, who is the school's designated child protection officer, has had recent training in the matter. Members of staff are aware of the correct procedures to follow should they have any

concerns about a child's welfare. The school also makes adequate provision for health and safety. There are satisfactory arrangements for first aid, emergency evacuation of the buildings and checks of equipment. Risk assessments have been carried out and pupils are properly supervised in the playground.

45. A large proportion of pupils has special educational needs and they are soundly supported. Pupils are identified early through assessment in the first weeks of school. Most individual education plans contain specific targets but inconsistent use is made of these when planning pupils' work. Learning support staff and specialist staff to support behaviour management are effective in their roles and assist these pupils in making sound progress towards their learning goals.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46. There are good links between home and school, and parents' involvement with children's learning enhances standards of attainment and promotes academic progress well. The school has made satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection by successfully sustaining an effective partnership with parents.
47. Parents have favourable views of the school. Most of them feel very well informed, although more than one in six say that they are unhappy with information about their child's progress. More than nine out of ten parents think that the quality of leadership and management is good, and similar numbers are happy with standards of behaviour and the quality of teaching. The vast majority also says that the school works closely with parents. Inspectors agree with parents' positive judgements on these aspects of the school's work. They do not support the minority view that information on pupils' progress is inadequate. On the contrary, they find that the school makes good arrangements to inform parents of their children's academic and personal progress. They also note that there is an unusually high degree of parental satisfaction with the school's homework policy and practice and the team agrees with this view.
48. Parents are interested in their children's learning and give sound support to the life of the school. Their involvement has a positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress. A significant number of parents regularly act as volunteer helpers in lessons, and many more hear children read at home and help them with homework. They also assist with school trips and extra-curricular activities. Most are willing to make financial contributions towards the cost of these events. Parents show their interest in their children's learning by attending consultation evenings on progress in large numbers. School productions are well supported, as are events organised by the parents' association, known as the '*Friends of Woodcote Primary School*'. This body is active and successful in raising funds to provide additional equipment for the school. Only a small minority of parents is not as supportive. A few are reluctant to come into school to discuss concerns over their children's progress. Others are not as co-operative over attendance, and take their children away for holidays in term time, despite requests not to do so.
49. The school works hard to establish strong and on-going contacts with parents. There is a home-school contract that sets out the entitlements and obligations of all parties. These are also set out clearly in the school prospectus. This document encourages parents to discuss matters of concern with members of staff, and to act as voluntary helpers in school. The governing body is active in promoting good home-school links. It has created a system whereby governors are paired with particular groups of families and are responsible for keeping in close touch with them. Parents see this as a strength of the school and as something that helps to maintain an effective partnership.
50. Conventional ways of informing parents also work well. The school sends out weekly newsletters containing notices of forthcoming events, information on pupils' achievements and reminders of school routines. Informal contacts between home and school are effective, thanks to the school's open door policy. Parents find members of staff friendly and approachable, and feel able to discuss matters of concern with them. Teachers will always do their best to meet the needs of working parents who cannot come to see them at the end of afternoon school.

51. The school has good formal procedures for reporting on pupils' progress and for holding consultations with parents. Arrangements for parents' evenings are satisfactory, and the quality of written reporting is good. The main report that goes home at the end of the school year tells parents what their child knows and can do in each subject of the curriculum. It also contains specific and constructive targets for improvement in English, mathematics and science. The only significant weakness in this area is in the marking of pupils' work. Some marking and feedback to students is done orally, therefore parents are unable to see it in their children's books.
52. Sound links have been established with the parents of pupils with special educational needs. In the spirit of the revised code of practice, parents and pupils are involved in the target setting progress and greater involvement is planned for the future. Local authority support services work closely with staff to ensure needs are met. Individual education plans for special educational needs pupils are shared with parents at regular intervals. Most parents attend the annual reviews to discuss their child's progress. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are given sound information and are invited to regular review meetings.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

53. Leadership and management were judged to have serious weaknesses in the previous report. Although there was a shared understanding of school performance and a commitment to improvement, strategies to achieve this were lacking and there were weaknesses in staff development and support. The headteacher's heavy timetable load adversely affected time for the leadership and management role. There was no system in place for class monitoring by subject leaders.
54. The management of behaviour was a serious weakness that affected the impact of many other management systems and procedures. The deployment of staff needed review and the accommodation was not well maintained. The school gave unsatisfactory value for money.
55. Since that time there has been a vast improvement in the leadership and management largely because the governors and the headteacher have reviewed her teaching load in order to give attention to the wider issues that were affecting the school. The school has benefited from considerable in-service training and good support from the local education authority. Leadership and management are now considered to be effective. The headteacher ensures that there is clear educational direction and knows what she wants for the school. She has established firm priorities for improvement, having a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher is well supported by the recently formed senior management team, staff and governors. This determined approach is having an effective influence in setting a clear course for improvement in the school.
56. Senior managers and subject leaders are gaining confidence and several show a strengthening lead in their role. All staff show commitment to improvement and work hard to complete their management tasks. However, not all are fully aware of the strengths and shortcomings of the subjects that they lead. Systems for monitoring, assessing, target setting and tracking have been established and continue to develop with some subject leaders having a clearer picture of what needs to be done.
57. The coordinator for special educational needs is fully conversant with the new code of practice and has ensured that all staff understand the changes in the new code which has been successfully implemented. The co-ordinator is conscientious and very committed to her role. She is managing the provision for these pupils soundly. However, she also has other demanding responsibilities and is under great pressure to carry out all that the role demands in the few hours allowed.
58. Governors continue to take an active interest in the life and work of the school, with several being regular visitors during the school day. They have a good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses and give good support to staff and pupils. Governors ensure that statutory requirements are fully met. They are actively involved in using and interpreting information such as

the annual analysis of results in SATs, to check on the school's progress and what needs to be improved.

59. The headteacher has a good knowledge and understanding of how the school is doing in relation to other schools locally and nationally. Her analysis of performance data is thorough, giving insights into school performance, including the performance of boys and pupils with special educational needs. Tracking systems are in place to ensure pupils meet the targets set for them.
60. The target setting file is comprehensive, identifying the value added to performance. In the main this shows good progress for pupils through Years 2 to 6 to 2001 SATs. At present, it is a retrospective analysis with targets based on past performance. The class target sheets build from early assessment in the Foundation Stage to Year 6 and include annual targets checked against optional SATs results. Class teachers' target setting files record the outcomes of assessments undertaken throughout the year, identifying those falling behind and those doing well. Booster classes are in place to support the former as a reinforcement of the target and there is evidence of higher attaining pupils being fast tracked to the year above their age group to meet their needs more fully.
61. All class teachers are fully informed of school performance through their contribution to this process. Targets are shared with pupils and parents on a termly basis. Monitoring of lessons is a rigorous process, with the headteacher, sometimes supported by the link adviser, evaluating teaching and learning. Weaknesses are clearly flagged and action points discussed with staff. Not all subject leaders have had the opportunity to monitor standards, progress, teaching and the curriculum in other classes, but those who have, contribute to the effective management of the school.
62. The school has sufficient teachers for the number of pupils on roll, and in general their qualifications match the requirements of the subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education and the Foundation Stage curriculum. The exception is music, where there is limited expertise amongst the staff. The number of learning support assistants is good. They work closely and very effectively with teachers in lessons and give good support to pupils with special educational needs. Two of the learning support assistants are also qualified teachers, and another specialises in the support of pupils with behavioural problems. This enhances the quality of their work and their contribution to pupils' attainment and progress.
63. The amount of accommodation is adequate. The number and size of rooms is sufficient to meet the school's needs, and the grounds provide sufficient play areas and facilities for outdoor physical education. The standard of maintenance and cleaning has improved since the previous inspection when many areas of the school were described as dirty and untidy. There have also been major improvements to the playground, which has been resurfaced. The school now provides a safe and satisfactory learning environment for its pupils.
64. Resources for learning are adequate overall. They are at least satisfactory for every subject of the curriculum except music, and the school library has a sufficient stock of books. As at the time of the previous inspection, there is a good range of indoor resources for children in the Foundation Stage to use in lessons. The previous report was critical of the lack of outdoor equipment for them. The school has addressed this issue successfully. The amount of outdoor equipment for children in the Foundation Stage has been increased and is now satisfactory. However, there is still no separate fenced off area where these children can play.
65. The school follows the principles of best value satisfactorily. Continued improvements to the monitoring and target setting process will enhance these further. Finance is well planned, managed and administered. Governors have a good oversight of the school's finance and are actively involved in monitoring the school development plan, which is closely linked to the budget. The relatively large carry forward in the budget is identified for the maintenance of current staffing to support behaviour management in school as well as enabling the headteacher to appoint a special educational needs co-ordinator, thus releasing her from this heavy workload. The school makes good use of the additional funds it receives for supporting pupils with special educational needs and for boosting standards in literacy and numeracy.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

66. The school has moved ahead successfully in the last two years but there remain some things for completion. The school improvement plan flags clearly how the school intends to tackle these aspects of its work and shows that the school has adopted the right priorities for the future. The prospects for future improvement look secure. In order to move ahead effectively the school should:

(1) Continue the good work to raise standards, especially in English and mathematics and amongst boys

By

Improving the quality of writing in literacy work and across the curriculum.

Further developing reading and writing skills amongst children in the Foundation Stage.

Ensuring that handwriting and presentation are as good as possible.

Maintaining work to extend the use of ICT across the curriculum.

Taking effective steps to promote boys' learning, particularly those with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Identifying all gifted and talented pupils in school

Making sure that higher attaining pupils and the gifted and talented consistently have work that is demanding enough, particularly in mathematics.

Making targets in the individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs more precise.

Improving assessment, including the marking of pupils' work, and the target setting and tracking system to identify when and how improvement to progress is due.

Sharpening the focus on investigation, problem solving and research in the work, especially in mathematics.

Giving music a more substantial part in the curriculum.

See paragraphs: 2, 4, 6, 8-9, 12, 15-17, 19-21, 26-30, 33, 36, 45, 51, 56, 59-60, 62-5, 68, 73-6, 80, 88-90, 94-8, 105-6, 111-4, 116-9, 123-5, 132 and 136-42

(2) Review and evaluate the use of time and the pace of teaching and learning

By

Amending the length of lessons and number of sessions in the school day, where appropriate.

Improving the pace of teaching and learning so that levels of productivity are consistently good.

Ensuring that there is a smart start to the day.

Eliminating any slippage of time.

Evaluating the length of time children spend in the Foundation Stage and its impact on their needs when they join Year 1.

See paragraphs: 4, 8, 13, 17, 25-6, 67, 69-72, 76, 88-9, 91, 96, 102, 108, 118, 136 and 140.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	35
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	23

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	1	12	21	1	0	0
Percentage	0	3	34	60	3	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 must be taken in interpreting the above percentages as each lesson counts for almost three per cent.

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)	143
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	13

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	42

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.6
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)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	7	14	21

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	4	4	7
	Girls	12	13	14
	Total	16	17	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	76 (79)	81 (79)	100 (79)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	4	7	7
	Girls	13	14	14
	Total	17	21	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (79)	100 (89)	100 (93)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	11	11	22

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	5	8
	Girls	9	10	9
	Total	14	15	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	64 (62)	68 (77)	77 (85)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	7	8
	Girls	10	10	10
	Total	16	17	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (62)	77 (92)	82 (92)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

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	134	5	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	2	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	7	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	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

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28.0
Average class size	28

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	155

Financial year	2001-2
	£
Total income	351 933
Total expenditure	323 710
Expenditure per pupil	2 329
Balance brought forward from previous year	10 440
Balance carried forward to next year	38 663

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	143
Number of questionnaires returned	56

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	25	13	4	0
My child is making good progress in school.	41	48	7	4	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	25	64	5	4	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	52	9	0	4
The teaching is good.	55	39	5	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	45	36	20	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	70	30	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	45	5	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	55	30	9	4	2
The school is well led and managed.	66	27	4	4	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	38	5	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	64	11	0	0

The rows may not total 100 because of the effects of rounding

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

66. The school makes satisfactory provision for the children in the Foundation Stage. The teacher and learning support assistants work well together and provide a calm purposeful learning atmosphere. Teaching is satisfactory, with elements of good teaching of literacy, numeracy and social skills. Overall, children make satisfactory progress. Some younger children make good progress in the short time they are in the Foundation Stage. There are currently no children identified as having special needs.
67. Due to the local education authority's admission arrangements, children do not join the Foundation Stage until the term they will be five. The school needs to review the impact of these arrangements and allow more flexibility, so that all children can complete each area of learning before progressing to work from the National Curriculum. There are currently four Foundation Stage children (two girls and two boys) who have joined the mixed reception/Year 1 class. At the time of the inspection they had completed two full weeks in the class, with no part time schooling. The children have pre-school experience, and the arrangements between the two phases are effective in helping children settle to school easily, with good induction arrangements.
68. Children's attainment when they start school is assessed using the local education authority scheme. The baseline assessments undertaken at the beginning of each year show that the level of attainment when children start school is broadly average, although boys do not score as highly as girls in some aspects of literacy. The assessments also show that the children enter with a wide range of ability. Last year's results showed that the majority of children entered the school achieving as expected, with a significant minority of children below average in their reading and writing skills. The staff plan together and make detailed ongoing assessments, keeping samples in individual 'snapshot' folders. However, assessments are not currently matched to the early learning goals.
69. There have been a number of improvements since the previous inspection. The Foundation Stage curriculum has been introduced and planning revised. Indoor resources match each area of learning. The class teacher has introduced more play-based activities matched to the early learning goals but some sessions are still too long. The phase leader has identified appropriate priorities, which include updating the curriculum plan and records so that they match the early learning goals.
70. The main issue raised at the time of the previous inspection has been addressed soundly. The school has improved its outdoor provision and the arrangements to share resources with the pre-school provider works well, but there is still no separate fenced off area. This limits children's opportunities for independent learning activities outside, as they need to be timetabled and supervised. There is a review taking place as to where the Foundation Stage class is to be located and this has held back planning for a secure, separate outdoor area, which still needs to be addressed.

Personal, social and emotional development

71. Foundation Stage children are confident and friendly. They have settled in well in a very short time because of the very effective arrangements with the pre-school staff. For example, weekly outdoor play sessions ensure that the new children know the staff and Year 1 children. They are confident to mix with the older children and work well in small groups. There are good relationships between the staff and children. The staff make sure the children understand what behaviour is expected. They use lots of praise, which the children respond to well. The children enjoy learning and behave well. Because they join in with Year 1 activities at times, they find the length of sessions too long and become restless. However, staff try and overcome this by building in separate shorter sessions and some informal play.

72. Children are able to make some choices throughout the day; however, these sessions could be further developed, so that the children can choose activities such as water and sand and creative activities informally. The staff encourage the children to take some responsibility for tidying away equipment used. Year 1 pupils help them and provide good role models for appropriate behaviour. The children enter school with satisfactory social skills and most will leave with appropriate levels of personal and social development. Because this aspect is well promoted, many will exceed this level. The Foundation Stage children mix confidently with older children in breaks and lunch times. Teaching is good and children (particularly younger children) make good progress with their social development.

Communication, language and literacy

73. Many children enter school with satisfactory communication, language and literacy skills overall, although a large minority enter with skills below that expected in reading and writing. These young children experience elements of the literacy strategy each day although the teacher also plans informal language activities. A strong feature is the time the staff give to promoting children's speaking and listening skills, with frequent opportunities for interaction and talk. As a result, children listen well and enjoy answering questions. The role-play areas are matched to topics and used to promote language development.
74. Big books and puppets are used to encourage children's enjoyment of reading. In a lesson observed, the teacher used a puppet well to help the young children focus on the story. The learning support assistant skilfully followed up the learning with sound games. The classroom has a big reading area, where children can sit informally and enjoy books quietly and comfortably. They have reading books and word games to take home and share. Some of the reading scheme books however, are a bit old. The children are happy to talk about the stories and characters in their shared books.
75. Last year's work shows that handwriting skills are practised regularly and by the end of the year many children could write their name neatly and begin to write simple sentences. However, some children lacked fluency with their letter formation and needed more targeted support. Supplies of paper, pencils, crayons and white boards and pens are available for children to make marks informally.
76. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with speaking and listening skills well promoted. Basic skills are covered thoroughly and as a result most children are likely to make at least satisfactory progress. Due to the lack of time in the Foundation Stage, however, a significant minority of mainly younger children are unlikely to achieve the expected standard in reading and writing.

Mathematical development

77. Most children enter school each year with broadly expected skills in number awareness, however there is a very wide range of ability. Elements of the numeracy framework are used effectively, especially the daily oral session. Number skills are practiced in different ways through a range of practical activities, which the children really enjoy. The class has an attractive mathematics area. There are plenty of good quality resources, including number pictures and puzzles and number lines to 20 to help children develop their skills.
78. There is an appropriate balance between number based activities and activities that promote the children's understanding of mathematical ideas and language. There are informal opportunities to count, match, thread beads and make patterns, handle coins, with good opportunities to discuss what they are doing. The Foundation Stage children have the expected mathematical awareness for their age. They can count up to five, and use equipment to build number towers within five.
79. Scrutiny of last year's work indicates that teaching is good and, as a result, many children make good progress with their mathematical understanding. Most children are likely to achieve the standards expected, and some above that expected.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

80. Previous baseline assessments indicate that most years the majority of children in the Foundation Stage enter with the expected knowledge and understanding of the world around them. A range of topics helps children build up their picture of the world. The current topic on 'Bears' has given children the opportunity to handle different materials and fabrics. While children have a good range of planned activities, there is no ongoing investigation area for them to handle and explore a range of equipment informally.
81. Weekly cookery sessions with a parent volunteer give children the opportunity to use their senses to handle, smell and explore ingredients and these occasions contribute well to their speaking and listening skills.
82. Provision for ICT is good. Despite only two weeks in school, the children are surprisingly confident in the computer suite. They can name and handle a mouse and, with help from staff and Year 1 pupils, can select colours to make pleasing abstract pictures.
83. The curriculum makes a positive contribution towards the children's knowledge and understanding of different cultures. A topic with 'Blue Bear' stimulates children's interest in different countries. The locally agreed religious syllabus covers simple religious stories such as 'Joseph's multi-coloured coat.' Scrutiny of last year's work shows that children learn about various festivals such as Diwali, Christmas, Hanukah and Easter as they arise. Special events, such as the recent visitors who talked about an Indian wedding, bring learning to life and the children respond with real interest and enthusiasm. Overall, teaching is satisfactory, with children making the expected progress.

Physical development

84. Previous baseline information shows that children enter reception with the appropriate physical development for their age. During the inspection week, the Foundation Stage children mixed well with both the younger playgroup children in the playground and with Year 1 pupils in a dance session. They enjoy their physical activities. There is an appropriate range of indoor equipment and planned opportunities to share bikes and larger equipment outside. However, there is still no secure outside area.
85. When children start school, many have had pre-school experience using scissors, paintbrushes and glue. The reception staff build on these skills and continue to provide opportunities to handle equipment safely. Girls and boys both use the large and small construction equipment with confidence and pleasure. Teaching is satisfactory and children make appropriate progress.

Creative development

86. Most children enter reception with the creative development expected for their age. Staff develop the children's creative talents through art, music, physical education and role-play sessions.
87. Last year's Foundation Stage children had appropriate opportunities to mix colours, paint, print and make collages. The current children have had experiences of free painting, blow painting and colour mixing. However, the creative area is not set out in a way that enables children to choose their own artistic activities.
88. Music sessions are timetabled but some opportunities are missed for children to handle and explore instruments informally. The role-play area is used appropriately to develop their creativity. Children clearly enjoy these opportunities to play imaginatively, which further develops their speaking and listening skills. Teaching is satisfactory and children make appropriate progress.

ENGLISH

89. Standards are below average at the age of seven and 11. The weaknesses in standards are largely due to shortcomings in writing in English, and writing across other subjects of the curriculum, throughout the school. Insufficiently high expectations, slow pace to some lessons, and not enough attention to the systematic progression of writing skills are major contributory factors. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels in Years 2 and 6 is also below average. The headteacher indicates an improvement is expected for the current year's results as a result of the appointment of new staff, better teaching leading to improved progress. There has also been the introduction of target setting and a tracking system that is seen to contribute to the even progress now found.
90. Inspection findings match the results of SATs in respect of writing particularly, but the team judges that standards are now improving especially in reading in Year 2 and that overall pupils are now making satisfactory progress, but much remains to be done to raise standards in English. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress, given their prior levels of learning. Although boys out perform girls in Year 2, the situation is reversed in Year 6. Underachievement of boys is clearly an issue for the school.
91. Spelling and listening skills are average for seven- and 11- year-olds. Most pupils listen attentively and some are keen to answer questions in Year 2. However, a number of pupils sit passively and a few lack confidence. Teachers sometimes miss opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. For example in a literacy lesson, questions linked to the language of time had not been thought through and many pupils do not respond as a result. In other lessons, there are good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills. Most pupils speak clearly and some higher attainers are very articulate. For example, an above average reader discussed her reading preferences at length explaining vocabulary used such as *'canter'* – *'that's a bit slower than a gallop but faster than a trot'*. Few teachers identify key vocabulary in their planning in order to extend and improve pupils' vocabulary, although some teachers do encourage pupils to think about interesting words. For example, in a mixed age Year 3/4 geography lesson when posing questions to ask the policeman, pupils had structured their questions correctly and in many cases thought carefully about their choice of words.
92. By the ages of seven and 11, standards in reading are below average. Although there is an improving picture, there is still a large group of pupils with below average reading skills. However, evidence from the inspection shows that the efforts that the school is making to improve pupils' reading is paying off, and by the ages of seven and 11, although still below average, standards are closer to the expected level. Higher and average attaining 11-year-olds read fluently with higher attainers reading with good expression and decoding complex vocabulary such as *'invulnerable'* and *'interfered'*. These pupils enjoy reading and are able to discuss their reading preferences at some length. However, in other year groups the picture was more varied. In the mixed age Year 4/5 for example, few pupils take home their reading books or read to adults at home. These pupils have little understanding of how books are classified in the library, though in other classes a significant number of pupils belong to the local library and this increases their enthusiasm for reading.
93. By the age of seven, higher attainers read fluently and with good understanding, making good use of punctuation to aid expression. Average pupils make use of phonic skills to help build unknown words, but these skills are less secure for lower attainers. Sound teaching of the National Literacy Strategy means that by seven most pupils know terms such as *'author'* and *'illustrator'*. By the age of 11, most pupils are familiar with terms such as *'contents'* and *'index pages'* and understand how to use a glossary. Most understand how to locate books in the school library, using the index. The library provides a satisfactory range of fiction and non-fiction books, making a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Inconsistencies in practices, such as, taking books home and encouraging pupils to read to an adult at home, impact on the progress pupils make. Similarly, there is a lack of consistency in the approach to guided reading in lessons. In some classes, parents and other adults make comments in reading diaries, but in others, only the teacher makes comments, and some reading diaries have few remarks to help pupils improve. The school does not make enough use of reading diaries as a method of

communication between teachers and parents to encourage help with reading. This is one aspect of the otherwise good information provided for parents that could be improved.

94. Standards in writing are below average by the ages of seven and 11. Pupils write for a reasonable range of purposes and audiences, but do not use these skills enough in other subjects, such as, history and geography. However, more development of writing was seen in religious education. By the age of 11, pupils write stories, letters and produce simple play scripts. They describe characters, write instructions and occasionally produce poetry. They compose simple arguments for and against the selling of fast food, for example. There is also some evidence of non-fiction writing, for example, researching on dynamite and a survey on road safety. However, attainment in this work is not to the standard found in most schools.
95. Higher attaining pupils use a range of interesting vocabulary and create good story openings. For example, one pupil wrote *'It was one of those days in winter when you don't want to be out. The fog was as thick and grey as an English fighter plane...'* They organise report writing well, sequencing events and including relevant information. Thus, an account of a story at Kilvrough Manor included: *'By the time we had finished we had caught about four tiny crabs, three medium sized crabs, including a baby velvet one and three large edible (edible) crabs, but our catch of the day was defiantly (definitely) the velvet crab. All in all I really enjoyed the day.'* Average and lower attaining pupils' work is less imaginative. Ideas are not well extended in some cases and are often repeated. For example, one lower attaining pupil writing a letter of thanks wrote *'I like the trip out... I liked the pond because I liked the animals...'* Stories lack much detail and choice of vocabulary is more limited. However, there is evidence of some writing contributing to personal development, such as, writing about a friend. One pupil wrote *'A friend is someone who you like and is kind to you. A friend is someone you can rely on...someone you can trust.'*
96. Many pupils, including higher attainers do not present their work neatly. Handwriting is often unevenly formed with incorrect joins. Many lack pride in their work. There is a lack of common practice when correcting work with crossing out and rubbing out leading to some messy work. Often pupils do not write enough in lessons because they are not encouraged to work harder or at a greater pace. A weakness for many pupils is the lack of spelling strategies to help them with their writing. Pupils learn how to use paragraphs and a wide range of punctuation, but many, except for higher attainers, forget to use these in their writing. By the age of seven, the most able pupils are beginning to join their handwriting but this is not yet secure. Letter formation is not always accurate and work is often untidy. They write for a reasonable range of purposes but heavy use of worksheets in some other subjects limits the opportunities for more extended writing. Spelling strategies are weak for a significant number of pupils.
97. Classroom assistants give pupils with special educational needs good support in literacy lessons. Higher attainers are not always challenged with sufficiently demanding work and often complete the same writing task as others in the class. The use of literacy to support learning in other areas of the curriculum is not as well developed as it could be.
98. Overall, teaching and learning is satisfactory across the school, but it is evident that more attention is needed to writing in particular in order to raise standards. Teaching of English during the inspection was never less than satisfactory. Although planning is satisfactory, some teachers do not place sufficient emphasis on developing pupils' writing skills and enabling pupils to write independently at length. Good use is made of learning support assistants in most lessons enabling lower attainers in particular to be fully included. Learning objectives are clear and in the best practice are shared with pupils so they are clear about what they have to do. Most teachers manage pupils well, using the school's behavioural code where necessary. The majority of pupils have positive attitudes to learning, but a minority of boys with emotional and behavioural needs present challenging behaviour. Although marking has improved and there is evidence of the marking code being applied, teachers' use of marking is inconsistent. The best marking indicates how pupils can improve their work, as well as praising effort. This helps pupils to make better progress. Too few comments relate to presentation of work and pride in what they are doing. Some work is not marked at all. Not enough use is made of ICT to support learning, though some

good practice was seen in Year 1 where pupils were working to produce illustrated text using the word processor and a graphics program.

99. The management of English is good. The subject leader has a clear view of what is needed to improve standards. She works hard, sharing her expertise and addressing issues from previous inspections. She is developing her monitoring role well, observing lessons to check on teaching and learning. There are secure systems in place for assessing pupils' work. Analysis of information from tests and other assessments is used to identify areas of weakness, such as writing, in order to set targets. A tracking system is in place to monitor the progress individual pupils make and ensure they meet the appropriate targets that are set for them. Resources are good. There is a well-stocked library and a wide range of materials to support the literacy hour.
100. Standards are beginning to improve, albeit slowly as a result of the improving systems and strategies put in place and strong leadership of the subject.

MATHEMATICS

101. In recent years, the Year 6 mathematics SATs results have been below the national average overall. This year, the Year 6 pupils are maintaining the average level of skills and knowledge they have built earlier in the junior years.
102. Standards achieved by Year 2 pupils in the 2001 SATs were well above the national average and that found in similar schools. The baseline assessment information for these pupils shows they entered school with a very wide range of ability. Many pupils identified as lower attainers are younger age pupils, who have had limited time in the Foundation Stage. The attainment of the current Year 2 class is average at present.
103. Most pupils in the current Year 6 have a satisfactory grasp of place value. They use a range of mental methods to multiply and divide whole numbers up to 10,000 by 10 or 100, estimating reasonably accurately. They have appropriate opportunities to use informal pencil and paper methods to record and most can explain their mathematical reasoning. Higher attaining pupils can order mixed decimal fractions and lower attaining pupils can order simple fractions.
104. The majority of Year 2 pupils can order whole numbers below 50. They can count forward and backwards in ones and tens from any two-digit number. They understand that subtraction is the reverse of addition. There is an appropriate balance between number activities, shape and space and measures. They have a solid basis of practical experiences to reinforce their understanding of simple fractions, measuring and weighing and average pupils can describe the properties of different shapes.
105. Most pupils make satisfactory progress within lessons. Work books and discussion with pupils shows that over time, most pupils, including pupils with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress across the school. Some boys with emotional and behavioural needs and some higher attaining pupils under perform because the work is not consistently focused on the development of appropriate skills and knowledge and does not always take account of the ways in which these pupils learn most successfully.
106. There have been a number of improvements since the time of the previous inspection, which are impacting on standards. The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully introduced. Whilst the number of pupils who have joined the school in the junior years with special needs has an impact on results achieved, the school is aware of the need to ensure that higher attaining pupils do not under perform. To this end, the school has adopted a '*green light*' planning system across the school to ensure that pupils in the mixed age classes have activities planned for their ability and not by age.
107. The school has put in place a number of strategies aimed at borderline and lower attainers in order to raise standards; these are effective. For example, '*springboard*' sessions, for helping pupils to catch up and individual action plans for pupils with special needs. Learning support

assistants are used well to target particular groups. All pupils in school have individual mathematics targets. There is good provision for two pupils who are particularly able in mathematics. They are taught in an older year group, and, as a result, they make good progress, clearly enjoying the challenge.

108. The teaching of mathematics is satisfactory throughout the school. There was no unsatisfactory teaching observed, and just under half of the lessons seen were taught well. Where teaching is good, there is good pace and questions are used effectively, with time at the end of the lessons for pupils to reflect on their learning and discuss aspects that are difficult for them. While teachers work hard to motivate and interest pupils, the length of the lessons is long and sometimes the pace slows. As a result, some pupils find it difficult to concentrate by the end of the lessons.
109. In the infant phase, teaching is good in the mixed age Year 1/2 class because pupils have access to good quality practical equipment to help them with interesting problem solving activities. This motivates the pupils and creates a buzz of activity.
110. In the juniors, there are examples of good teaching, such as, in the mixed age Year 3/4 class where, with practical money activities, key questions are displayed and used as prompts for the pupils. In another well taught lesson with a mixed age Year 5/6 class, the teacher promoted mathematics enthusiastically and with humour; this motivated the pupils, who responded well. Work was pitched at the right level for the different ability of the pupils, with appropriate extension work to further challenge the higher attaining pupils.
111. Teachers plan thoroughly and share learning objectives for each lesson. All lessons start with a lively session of quick questions to help pupils' recall of number facts. Some pupils in Years 3 to 6, who struggle with mathematical ideas, need more regular opportunities to use practical equipment. Teachers use mathematical language appropriately and encourage pupils to explain how they arrive at their answers. Most pupils respond well to the teaching they receive; their attitudes to their work are usually positive, and behaviour is generally good. In some classes, a small minority of pupils with behavioral difficulties find it more difficult to concentrate on their work and need additional help. While teachers generally give appropriate advice when marking pupils' work, pupils are not consistently expected to keep the work in their books neat or use sharpened pencils. An appropriate range of mathematical homework is given on a regular basis.
112. Teachers give pupils good opportunities to extend their speaking and listening skills by encouraging them to explain their thinking. Numeracy skills are appropriately applied to other subjects such as measurement in design and technology, and time lines in history. There is clear evidence of ICT being used with groups to consolidate work in mathematics.
113. Mathematics is well led by the headteacher. She systematically monitors teaching and learning, providing constructive feedback. Teachers' planning and pupils' work are regularly checked and test results analysed to target areas of weakness. The school has a clear action plan and has prioritised the need to map the teaching of measure across the school and, especially in Years 1 and 2 to increase opportunities for practical work with money. Assessment procedures, including the introduction of feedback regarding pupils who exceed or do not meet the targets set for the week, are proving useful. All classes have attractive numeracy areas, with a good range of equipment.

SCIENCE

114. Standards in science are average at the ages of seven and 11. Pupils build skills and knowledge satisfactorily from Year 1 to Year 6 and their scientific *knowledge* is good by the time they leave school. Their science *skills*, however, could be built at even better rates. Over recent years, standards in science declined substantially and the proportion of pupils reaching level 5 was well below the national average for a number of years. The corner has been turned, and preliminary analysis of last year's junior SATs results show that improvement on past performance in science was positive.

115. Knowledge is built up successfully from an average starting point when pupils join Year 1. By the end of Year 2, pupils have good knowledge of living things and the things they need to survive, different materials and their properties and physical processes. This good progress in building scientific knowledge is maintained through the junior years, so that by the age of 11, pupils' knowledge is just above average levels.
116. The development of science skills is less assured. Much of the work in the past centred on completing tasks that were closely tailored by the teacher. Written work was largely the retelling of what the teacher had explained, demonstrated or developed with the pupils. True investigation and problem solving was less in evidence. This much is demonstrated by earlier examples of pupils' past work. However, the emphasis has changed and there is now more focus in the work on pupils investigating for themselves, predicting, making careful observations and, in the mixed age Year 5/6, hypothesising as to outcomes, then making comparisons with the original predictions. There is still room for enhancement of this element of the work to ensure that pupils build appropriate skills and understanding in science.
117. Pupils often show good levels of interest in the work. Boys are attracted by the practical work and this ensures that their attention is held successfully compared to subjects where they have to listen for long periods. This also affects behaviour, which is satisfactory overall.
118. The quality of teaching of science is satisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they manage their pupils well overall. Sometimes, methods of teaching are a little narrow and rely on pupils remembering information and repeating it in written form rather than in investigating and problem solving for themselves. The marking of science work could be more informative of how to improve next time and the pace of some work is too relaxed. Learning follows teaching, in that it too is satisfactory. Pupils work productively on the whole and the oldest show that they can work independently and responsibly. Opportunities to do this are on the increase as evidenced by the work scrutiny and lessons observed during the inspection.
119. The management of science is sound and this has led to some good improvements to standards. However, the subject leader does not have an opportunity to monitor standards, progress and teaching in lessons throughout the school. There are appropriate priorities for improving the subject. These include greater use of ICT, which is not used proportionately as much in science as it is in English, mathematics, geography and history, and, in assessment, to build on the promising target setting and tracking process already in place. However, the prospects for continued improvement look secure.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

120. Two years ago, provision and standards in ICT were among the serious weaknesses in the school. Because of shortcomings in teachers' subject knowledge, resources and the systematic coverage of the curriculum, pupils made unsatisfactory progress and standards were below average. The serious weaknesses have now been eliminated and whilst there are still things to complete, pupils are given a satisfactory deal in ICT, they make sound progress and standards are average by the end of Years 2 and 6.
121. The school has invested in a programme of staff training and has enhanced the resources for ICT well. In all there has been good improvement to the subject in the last two years. The curriculum is now systematic in its development of knowledge and skills and pupils have regular, timetabled lessons in the very good quality ICT suite. There is good use made of ICT in most subjects, with some particularly effective work to develop literacy and numeracy skills being observed in Years 1 and 5 during the inspection. ICT makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, with the fostering of moral and social development a strength. Pupils respond well to the opportunities they have to develop skills and knowledge in the subject. They often show enthusiasm and independence in the work and the level of self-discipline is good on the whole. This ensures that behaviour is good in the ICT suite.

122. The examination of past work and lessons gives good evidence for the improvement in knowledge and skills in ICT. Year 1 pupils confidently set up the programs they are to use and word process and work with images confidently. Year 2 pupils mix text and images in their files and work with Roamer, the programmable robot-like vehicle to follow a set course. By the age of 11, pupils have sound skills in the use of the Internet for research. The process of building the skills of communication starts earlier in school when pupils in Year 4 send e-mail messages to their Internet friends at a school near Oxford.
123. ICT is taught satisfactorily throughout the school. A major contribution to teaching is made by the learning support staff who have good subject knowledge and understand the needs of their pupils well. Lessons in the ICT suite go at an appropriate pace and pupils work productively. The assessment of skills and knowledge is a central priority for the new subject leader to tackle; though it is clearly improved on the situation two years ago. ICT targets are set for groups of pupils and this is helpful in ensuring that pupils know what has to be learned and what they have already achieved. The target setting process is in its early days, but shows promise in terms of the impact it is likely to have on standards and progress.
124. The new subject leader has made a good start to her task of leading and managing ICT. Even before starting at school this September, she audited the subject thoroughly and drew up an action plan. She has already completed some elements of this plan and is well on the way to accomplishing several others. This level of commitment and determination is a positive indicator of future prospects for improvement. Assessment and the monitoring of teaching and learning in lessons throughout the school are central priorities. The rate of recent improvements to ICT suggests that these too will be implemented successfully.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

125. By the ages of seven and 11, pupils' attainment in religious education is average. Scrutiny of work, together with the two lessons observed, indicate that teaching is satisfactory across the school and, as a result, most pupils across the school, including pupils with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Scrutiny of the pupils' work indicates that at times, higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged because their work is often identical to that of other pupils.
126. The curriculum planned for Years 1 and 2 and the work scrutiny for last year show that Christianity and Judaism are covered in appropriate depth. Pupils have learnt about various religious stories such as 'Noah's Ark' and 'Rama and Sita'. In lessons and during assemblies, they are learning about different festivals, including Harvest, Diwali, Hanukah, and Christmas. From discussion within a lesson, most Year 2 pupils understand that religions have holy places to worship God. They have some understanding that that the Christian and Jewish religions have celebrations where people might wear special clothes, make special food and use holy objects. They are beginning to use some religious terms.
127. From their work in Year 5 and their current work, Year 6 pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of religious education, with an appropriate understanding of Christianity and Hinduism. They have updated Bible stories such as 'The Prodigal Son' and studied the life of Jesus. Their work on Hinduism covers knowledge of different Gods such as the elephant god and the life of Krishna. They have studied the creation story and considered beliefs and concepts such as good and evil. They have explored the possibility of a spiritual dimension to life after death.
128. Discussion with Year 6 pupils shows they have retained some of the factual knowledge from last year. They can explain the basic requirements of belonging to the Muslim or Christian faith. They are aware of some of the similarities between each religion. However, they struggle to recall and use correct religious terms.
129. Teaching is satisfactory across the school and teachers have appropriate subject knowledge. In a good lesson with the mixed age Year 1 /2 class, the teacher used attractive resources and

role-play activities to make the factual learning about the Jewish festival of Shabbat come to life and have relevance. This motivated the pupils who showed real interest and enthusiasm.

130. Teachers create opportunities for pupils to talk about and value different religious backgrounds. For example, as pupils in a mixed age Year 3/4 class discussed religious buildings, two pupils felt comfortable to share information about their own places of worship, a church and a mosque.
131. Pupils use their art skills to illustrate their work and have some opportunities to practice their extended writing skills. Speaking and listening skills are further developed as time is given to discuss ideas and beliefs. Other subjects enhance pupils' religious knowledge, for example, in a very successful mixed age reception/Year 1 geography lesson, pupils also learnt about a traditional Indian wedding ceremony.
132. Although the planning and organisation of the curriculum provides appropriate learning opportunities, the work in pupils' books indicates that the higher attaining pupils sometimes miss out as the pitch is aimed at the majority. There are few examples of extension work for the higher attaining pupils. While marking is generally positive, there are not always detailed enough comments to help pupils improve their work. Limited use is made of ICT for research purposes.
133. There have been a number of improvements since the time of the previous inspection. The planning has been updated and includes a set of key questions and useful end of topic assessments. Pupils' response in lessons has improved; they show interest and behave well. The subject leader checks the planning, however, there is no monitoring of teaching and learning. This limits her ability to identify what needs to happen to extend the pupils' learning. Resources are satisfactory, although there are few religious displays in the school.
134. Religious education makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, and cultural development. The school provides opportunities for pupils to find out first hand about different faiths. Younger pupils visit a local church and older pupils have planned visits to a mosque, Hindu temple and synagogue and there are good links between religious education and the school's programme for personal, social and community education, as pupils are taught to respect people, animals, and the environment.

OTHER SUBJECTS

135. *A total of eight lessons were seen in subjects other than those discussed above. Past work in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education was also examined closely. Because there was less evidence in total for these subjects, they are reported together here.*
136. There have been some improvements to art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education since the previous inspection and most of these subjects hold an appropriate position within the curriculum to develop pupils' learning effectively. However, in the case of music, not enough time is allocated and staff knowledge of the subject is weaker than for the rest. In general, pupils develop skills and knowledge satisfactorily in these subjects, though progress is slower in music than the others.
137. In most physical education lessons, the development of skills is well focused and there are ample opportunities for pupils to practice and polish their performance. There are also some useful opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own performance and that of others in order to improve. Pupils work energetically in physical education lessons and build an appropriate range of skills in gymnastics and games. The school gives pupils good opportunities to learn to swim and most can swim 25 metres by the time they are 11-years-old. During physical education lessons, pupils learn to work well together and to understand the rules of behaviour and safety that govern the way they must work. In this way, their moral and social development is promoted well.
138. Skills are also built successfully in art and design and design and technology. Because these are mainly practical lessons, pupils tend to show a good response to the work. Boys who find

difficulty in concentrating in subjects such as English, mathematics and music are more motivated by the active learning that takes place in art and design and design and technology and attain better standards in these practical subjects. Displays of work and the collection of items made last year show that pupils have appropriate chances to plan, design and evaluate their work as well as to create images or products. There are useful links to ICT in art and design, but these could be improved in design and technology to include computer modelling of design and manufacturing processes. An example of good use of ICT was seen in Year 1 when pupils produced their own images using the graphics program *'Colour Magic'*. They experimented with different size brush tools and changed the colour in order to find the best effect. The inspector recorded that some pupils derived *'great pleasure from their abstract designs...(because)...the teacher and support assistant encourage creativity.'* By the age of 11, standards in these two subjects are average and pupils develop basic skills appropriately in painting, printing and collage and are given opportunities to select their own materials and to use clay and textiles in their creative work. Good attention is paid to the work of well-known artists and craftspeople and, in design and technology, good links with environment-based work in science and geography give the work a clear purpose – as in the bird boxes, windmills and scarecrows that are displayed around the school.

139. In the humanities subjects of geography and history, skills are also built satisfactorily. Again, there are profitable links with ICT that also develop pupils' cultural awareness. In Year 5 geography, the theme of art around the world is developed to show pupils the similarities and differences found in artwork of different cultures. The pupils investigated Islamic art using ICT and produced their own Islamic tiling patterns on the computer. This work was well tied-in to the geographical theme of manufacturing processes that included paper and spoon making in other parts of the world. The current Year 6 are working on a history project on Ancient Egypt this term and have already used the Internet to research Tutankhamun. Their skills of enquiry and research are being promoted effectively by such experiences, though this could be more widespread. The scrutiny of a wide range of geography and history work from last year shows clearly that standards are average in both subjects but that there are often long gaps between geography and, especially, history projects. Furthermore, there is limited extended writing in these subjects as much of the work is produced on worksheets. However, the use of the local environment is a strength in geography, as are the links with the community that produced the very effective lesson in Year 1 discussed in the teaching and learning section above.
140. As indicated above, music is not so strongly promoted as other subjects. Every class has timetabled music lessons, but these tend to be for half an hour per week and do not allow for the full development of appropriate skills and knowledge in each session. The lack of an overall scheme of work for music hampers teachers' best efforts to ensure that pupils have a full music education and because of this, standards are below average by the age of 11. Singing is the most frequent element of music studied and standards here are average. Pupils sing together and in harmony in assembly, where Years 1 to 4 particularly try hard to improve. Most pupils maintain a steady rhythm and use a range of dynamics to bring appropriate interpretation of the song. Pupils have some opportunities to listen to a range of music and here, there are often links to other subjects, as when, for example, Year 4/5 listened to Tudor music. Adequate resources for music also enable pupils to compose and perform simple works for tuned and untuned percussion though there are few opportunities for them to work with instruments from other cultures. The work of visiting specialist teachers of keyboard and percussion, as well as recorders, is good. However this tuition is limited to a minority of pupils and, although helping them to improve, does not have a major impact on standards across the school. Parents are pleased with the music productions presented by the pupils and there are some good opportunities for pupils to take part in festivals and concerts. Whilst it is evident that pupils have opportunities to learn about music, coverage is not consistent and therefore, this subject forms part of the second key issue for this inspection.
141. Teaching and learning quality are satisfactory overall in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education. The only unsatisfactory lesson during the inspection was a music lesson where some boys were not well motivated and progress was slack. On the other hand, teachers have good subject knowledge, though this could be improved

in the case of music, and they teach skills and knowledge successfully. The management of pupils is good and this results in settled and productive learning conditions in the vast majority of lessons. The scrutiny of books shows that marking could be improved by the greater use of informative comments to help pupils improve what they do. However, as observed in lessons, there is some informative feedback about performance given in physical education lessons that contribute well to improved practice. In much of the work, the tasks are similar for all pupils and so the degree of challenge is not always sufficient, particularly for higher attaining pupils.

142. The management of the six subjects is shared amongst the full- and part-time staff of the school, some of whom have more than one subject responsibility. In general, they manage resources, staff development and curriculum matters well, though there is very little opportunity for them to monitor and evaluate standards, teaching and learning in other classes. Assessment varies from subject to subject, but is satisfactory overall. The quality of leadership for these subjects is sound in the main, though the leadership of music would stand improvement. Overall, there has been satisfactory improvement to these subjects since the previous inspection and the prospects for the future look to be sure.