

INSPECTION REPORT

FARINGDON JUNIOR SCHOOL

Faringdon

LEA area: Oxfordshire

Unique reference number: 123061

Headteacher: Mrs Karen Foster

Reporting inspector: John Earish
23216

Dates of inspection: 10 -13 March 2003

Inspection number: 248419

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	The Elms Gloucester Street Faringdon
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Mark Kiff
Date of previous inspection:	20 October 1997

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23216	John Earish	Registered inspector	Design and technology	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements; How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19374	Wendy Sheehan	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
10214	Brian Milton	Team inspector	English Art and design Special educational needs English as an additional language	How well are pupils taught?
19613	Susan Thomas-Pounce	Team inspector	Educational inclusion Information and communication technology Music	
27591	Madeline Campbell	Team inspector	Science Geography History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
27773	Faith Mackenzie	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education Religious education	Assessment

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Faringdon Junior School is situated in a small market town midway between Oxford and Swindon. The headteacher has been in post for just over two years. The school is larger than most. There are 278 pupils on roll, taught in 10 single aged classes. Almost all of the pupils come from Faringdon and the surrounding villages of Coleshill, Buscot, Coxwell and Littleworth. Most pupils transfer to the junior school from the local infant school at the age of seven and then go on to the Faringdon Community College at the age of 11. The community of Faringdon is made up of a mixture of rural, small trade and commuter families. The school moved to its present site in 1986 when the former girls' grammar school buildings were modified for younger pupils. Further work to extend and develop the building is about to start. Many pupils live in owner occupied housing and rented accommodation. The roll reflects a variety of income groups and home backgrounds. Just over 18 per cent of pupils are identified as having special educational needs. This proportion is below the national average. Two pupils have statements of special educational needs, and this too is below the national average. There are very few ethnic minority pupils in the school, reflecting the ethnic mix of the area. One per cent of pupils come from homes speaking English as an additional language, and this is low when compared with national figures. There are currently 23 pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals. This is well below average in national terms. Attainment on entry is broadly average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective and rapidly improving school that gives good value for money. The new headteacher provides very strong, purposeful leadership and a strong commitment to raising attainment. A number of initiatives, introduced since her appointment, are beginning to make a difference, and are already having an impact on the standards achieved by the end of Year 6. Overall, pupils make good progress in lessons and achieve average levels in English, science and mathematics as a result of good teaching. However, achievement over time is satisfactory. Pupils are very eager to learn, are interested in their work, and behave very well.

What the school does well

- The school is very well led by a hardworking and committed headteacher and staff, who all work very effectively as a team.
- The school is very good at evaluating and monitoring the schools' performance.
- Teaching is good overall, with well over three quarters of the lessons being good or better.
- Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and make good progress.
- Pupils' very good attitudes to school and very good behaviour contribute to the very good relationships within the school.
- The school plays an important part in the life of the community and has developed very good links with parents.
- The school monitors and supports pupils' academic and personal development very well. Its provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good.

What could be improved

- The organisation of booster groups in English and mathematics.
- Raising awareness and understanding of cultural diversity within our own multicultural society.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Overall, the school has made good progress since its last inspection in 1997. Progress in addressing the issues from the last inspection has been very good since the appointment of the new headteacher. These issues related to:

- completion of schemes of work

- enrichment of the curriculum through homework and extra curricular activities
- improving the effectiveness of leadership and management
- providing a stimulating environment
- teacher appraisal

Schemes of work have been completed. The expectations of teachers have been raised, and lesson plans identify appropriately challenging work for pupils of all abilities. Standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 are improving as a result of good teaching. Procedures for assessing pupils are now very good, and data is being used very well to develop the curriculum and to set challenging work in English, mathematics and science. Leadership and management have also improved. The School Development Plan provides very clear direction, and contains clear targets for raising standards. These are supported by a very good strategic financial plan and programme of staff development. The subject coordinators now monitor the quality of the curriculum, and use this information to set new targets for improvement. Standards have risen in information and communication technology and music, which are now satisfactory. Improvements in the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development can be seen in the orderly and caring environment in which pupils work and play. The effects of the new leadership and management are significant in the very good progress the school has made recently in many areas of its work. Whilst all members of staff recognise that progress has been made, they are united in their determination to pursue higher standards throughout the school. The commitment to raising attainment and the capacity to succeed are now excellent.

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				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	D	D	C	D	well above average A above average B
mathematics	E	E	E	E	average C below average D
science	D	D	D	E	well below average E

The information shows that standards achieved in English in the national tests in the year 2002 were average. They were below average when compared with standards achieved by similar schools that have about the same proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. In mathematics, standards were well below average nationally, and well below average when compared with those of similar schools. Below average standards were achieved in science nationally, and these were well below the average of similar schools. Over the previous two years, results have been below average in English and science and well below average in mathematics. However, the trend in the school's average points score for all three subjects is broadly in line with the national trend.

As a result of a wide ranging consultation by the newly appointed headteacher, fresh initiatives were implemented to raise standards. These are now having a significant impact on standards. Pupils in the current Year 6 are in line to achieve the national standard in English, mathematics and science by the end of the year. Inspection evidence suggests that pupils in the current Year 5 are likely to achieve even better standards by the end of Year 6. Pupils are now making good progress because of these changes, although achievement over time remains satisfactory overall. Standards in all other subjects are average, although some aspects of physical education are above average. Pupils exceed the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus in religious education. The school has set realistic targets for pupils' performance in 2003 and inspection evidence suggests that these will be met.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and participating in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave very well in classrooms and in the playground.
Personal development and relationships	Very good overall. Pupils work and play together very successfully, and have a mature respect for each other and for adults.
Attendance	Satisfactory.

Pupils enjoy coming to school, and work and play together happily. Their attitudes to learning are very good, and these have a positive effect on both the quality of the education and the standards achieved. Pupils' very good behaviour and very good relationships all contribute to an orderly and welcoming environment in which effective learning can take place.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good

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

Overall, the quality of teaching is good, with well over three quarters of the lessons being good or better. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Standards are now rapidly improving because of higher proportions of good and very good teaching.

Strengths of teaching in all classes are that teachers have good knowledge and understanding, they plan very well together, enjoy very good relationship with their pupils, and often share objectives at the beginning of lessons. They have very high expectations of work and behaviour, and have good day to day knowledge of their pupils' attainment and progress. As a result, learning is enjoyable and lessons generally develop at a good pace.

Numeracy and literacy are very well taught, and teachers give pupils very good opportunities to practise these skills in other areas of the curriculum. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs and pupils who have English as an additional language is also very good. Very good assessment of these pupils ensures there are detailed individual education plans with appropriate targets to achieve. The school had previously identified the need to provide greater challenge for all groups of pupils. Teachers are now meeting this challenge through very good quality lesson planning and through grouping pupils by ability in mathematics. All these changes are having a positive effect on the quality of learning in lessons, and on the rate at which pupils make progress. Pupils learn well in lessons. They are very interested in all they do, concentrate very well and work hard.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant. A good feature of this school is the way in which it enhances pupils' learning through educational visits, enrichment weeks and community projects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good, enabling all pupils to take a full part in lessons.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The few pupils with English as an additional language are very well integrated into the school, and play a full part in all activities.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. Provision for pupils' social, spiritual and moral development is very good. Opportunities for raising awareness and understanding of cultural diversity within our own society are less well developed.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Arrangements for the day to day care and welfare of pupils are very good. The school's systems for assessing pupils' academic progress are also very good. Teachers make very good use of the information gained from these assessments, to plan what pupils are to learn next and to match work to the different abilities of the pupils.

The school has a very effective partnership with parents. The school is making tremendous efforts to involve the community in pupils' learning. The school is committed to raising standards and provides booster groups for those pupils who need additional support to achieve the average Level 4 by the end of Year 6. Although these pupils are making satisfactory progress, it could be improved.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher has made a significant impact on the work of the school since her recent appointment. She and the senior management team work very well together, set high standards, and provide very strong leadership.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors are knowledgeable and are very active in supporting the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Staff and governors are excellent at critically appraising their work and in seeking ways to improve.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its staff, accommodation and equipment very well, and makes very good use of funds allocated for specific purposes. The headteacher and governors have a very good understanding of strategic financial planning, and apply the principles of 'best value' very well when making decisions.

The new headteacher displays excellent leadership qualities, and in partnership with staff, parents and governors has taken very effective action to raise morale, improve the behaviour and attitude of pupils and the rate at which they make progress.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems. • Their children like coming to school. • The range of activities provided outside lessons. • The school is well led and managed, and works closely with parents. • Teachers have high expectations, and the children are well taught and make good progress. • The school helps their children to become mature and responsible. • Behaviour in school is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework. • Information about how children are getting on. • The school working closely with parents.

The inspection team broadly agrees with parents' positive views. A few parents expressed some concerns about being kept well informed, the amount of homework, and about the school working closely with parents. The findings of the inspection team do not support these concerns. The range and variety of information provided for parents, and the opportunities for meeting teachers and coming into school are at least good. The amount of homework was judged to be satisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

- 1 The majority of pupils at Faringdon Junior School enter the school with attainment that is broadly average, and they achieve satisfactorily. The results achieved by 11 year olds in national tests in the 2002 were average in English, below average in science, and well below average in mathematics. When compared with similar schools, these results were below average in English and well below average in mathematics and science. Results have been below average in English and science and well below average in mathematics since 2000. The rate of improvement over the past four years in the national tests has been broadly in line with the national trend. The school has set realistic targets for pupils' performance in 2003, and evidence suggests it is in line to meet them.
- 2 On her appointment in 2001, the headteacher's first priorities were to improve pupils' attitudes and behaviour, and to raise their levels of attainment. She also urgently needed to reduce the size of some classes. Some pupils had been in classes of 38 and 39 since starting at the junior school, and many of these pupils had significant behavioural difficulties. A new teacher was appointed and the Year 6 cohort was divided into three classes by September 2001. The monitoring of these groups of pupils indicates that significant gains in achievement were made from September to May. However, there was insufficient time for all pupils to meet their full potential by the time of the tests in 2002.
- 3 Inspection evidence shows that in the current Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are now average. Pupils throughout the school are now making good strides in their learning because of the organisational measures taken by the school to promote higher standards of achievement, although achievement over time is satisfactory overall. Evidence suggests that pupils in the current Year 5 are likely to achieve even better standards by the end of Year 6 if they sustain this good rate of learning and meet the targets that have been set for them.
- 4 Recent improvements are the result of:
 - good quality teaching which allows pupils to learn effectively;
 - implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, and development of a good curriculum;
 - the very good use of assessment information to inform planning to meet the needs of all pupils. This includes those who are higher attainers, have special educational needs or English as an additional language;
 - pupils' very good behaviour and attitudes to school, and their enthusiasm for learning.
- 5 The good quality of teaching is a significant factor in improving both progress and standards across the school, as is the system for setting targets and tracking personal and academic achievement. Pupils' very good attitudes also play an important part, as pupils are very interested in their work and are very keen to do well. The school is now carefully identifying pupils who learn at different rates, and is making additional provision for them within lessons. There are good examples of this, for example, in English and mathematics where work is well designed for their particular needs. Much work has been done at improving the curriculum, by analysing and interpreting all the data from the previous year's tests, and identifying areas of strengths and weakness by assessing pupils' performance in lessons. This careful analysis has been used to develop a good curriculum, which has a positive effect on the quality of learning.
- 6 Standards in information and communication technology are currently average overall, and pupils are achieving well. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection when standards were unsatisfactory. The breadth of the information and communication technology curriculum has previously been narrowed by the lack of computers of good quality. The provision of computers has improved considerably as has the quality of the scheme of work. This is now

having a positive impact on the standards achieved. Inspection evidence shows an improving picture, with pupils achieving well. Standards in music have improved. These were also judged to be unsatisfactory at the last inspection. Standards in religious education have improved and are now above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.

- 7 There is no significant difference between the attainments of boys and girls or between any groups or cohorts. The very few pupils with English as an additional language play a full part in all lessons and make the same good progress. Pupils with special educational needs also achieve well. They make good progress towards the targets set for them in individual education plans. This is due to the very good provision and high quality teaching they receive. Targets are specific and suitably challenging for their academic and personal development. Careful monitoring of pupils' achievement leads to regular adjustment of the targets, so that very good quality learning is sustained.
- 8 All pupils are on course to reach the predicted targets set for them this year. The school sets itself appropriate targets and strives to exceed them. It works hard to raise standards in all subjects. The well balanced and very relevant curriculum throughout the school ensures that pupils are now learning well during their time in school. This, together with the clear learning objectives set by teachers in lessons, has a positive effect on raising standards.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 9 Pupils have very good attitudes to school and learning, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Behaviour in lessons and around the school has improved and is very good, and there is no evidence of bullying or harassment. The positive friendly and supportive ethos has a significant impact on the quality of the pupils' learning. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and pupils for whom English is an additional language, display a very good approach to lessons and all aspects of school. This has a positive effect on the rate at which they learn.
- 10 The majority of parents feel that behaviour in the school is good and has improved significantly since the appointment of the new headteacher. They also believe that pupils are helped to work hard and achieve their best. Parents are pleased that their children enjoy coming to school, and say they are happy and get on well with each other. Inspection findings confirm the parents' views. There have been a low number of exclusions from the school in recent years.
- 11 All groups of pupils have very good attitudes to their learning. Pupils work very hard in lessons, are always interested in what they are doing and are very well motivated to learn. In discussion, they feel teachers make learning fun and interesting. They concentrate very well, listen very carefully, and enjoy all challenges set. Positive examples observed during the inspection include a Year 4 science lesson where pupils worked very well together in order to complete an electrical circuit. Their enjoyment and enthusiasm was evident from the feeling of success when every pupil managed to light up a bulb. In a Year 5 mathematics lesson on fractions and decimals, pupils felt tremendously proud of their learning and answered questions confidently and enthusiastically. These high levels of interest and enthusiasm for all aspects of school life reflect the good learning that all pupils are now making.
- 12 Pupils' behaviour throughout the school is very good. The majority of pupils are calm, orderly and attentive in lessons. No child had to be reprimanded in the overwhelming majority of lessons observed, and this ensures that they can be delivered at a very good pace. At lunchtimes, the majority of pupils are well mannered and sociable. They respond very well to the lunchtime supervision, and playtimes are very good social occasions with boys and girls happily playing basketball and draughts together. Particularly innovative features are the 'missions' or 'challenges' set by lunchtime assistants that effectively occupy and challenge pupils. On trips out of school, for example to the swimming pool, Year 3 pupils displayed very good behaviour, and waited very patiently at the poolside. Through personal, social and health education lessons, all pupils have learnt about the 'bully buster' system and have developed excellent strategies to help themselves and others. Pupils discuss, with the person showing bullying behaviour and the person being

targeted, how they can help and support them and this leads to pupils developing a mature sense of responsibility. Pupils reported that, “there is a lot less bullying now”, and that “we hardly ever get notes in our bully box.”

- 13 The pupils have very good relationships with each other and all adults. There is a great deal of mutual respect within an exciting and challenging learning atmosphere. This is effective in developing pupils’ maturity and gives them considerable confidence to contribute to discussions in lessons. For example, during a Year 6 personal, social and health education lesson, pupils discussed openly their feelings and thoughts on the theme of ‘courage’. Examples of answers included, “you need courage during the day because you don’t know what’s round the corner,” and that “you need courage to face up to bad things you have done”. One pupil described courage as, “an invisible friend who’s always there next to you for when you need it.” In lessons, pupils always work very well in pairs and small groups, and discuss topics in a mature way.
- 14 Pupils’ personal development is very good. Those pupils elected to the school council take their roles seriously, and this provides opportunities for a good number of pupils to be involved in developing their citizenship skills. Projects such as the ‘English Week’ and work within the community through the ‘Bridging the Gap’ initiative broaden pupils’ view of the world around them and helps develop inquisitive minds. In a Year 6 religious education lessons, pupils could identify the benefits of belonging to a community. Pupils’ self esteem is very well promoted, for example, in a Year 6 personal, social and health education lesson on the special person of the week. Here, pupils talked very positively about their class friend, and made perceptive comments such as, “she doesn’t care what mood you are in, as she will always cheer you up.” Pupils are also developing their knowledge of other cultures through school performances and opportunities in art and design.
- 15 Attendance is satisfactory and in line with the national average, which ensures that pupils have full learning opportunities. Pupils arrive at school punctually and registration takes up the minimum of time. However, the school has a rate of unauthorised absences well above the national average. This is due to the school’s stance of classifying all holidays during term time as unauthorised.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 16 Overall, the quality of teaching is good. During the inspection, teaching was good or better in well over three quarters of the 68 lessons observed. This represents an improvement on the quality of teaching observed during the last inspection. Previously only 15 per cent of lessons were judged to be very good or better and 11 per cent of lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory. During this inspection just over 43 per cent were judged to be very good or better, of which 7 per cent were excellent. No lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory.
- 17 Teachers manage their pupils very well and set high expectations of behaviour and learning. They create a positive climate for learning and very good relationships have been established. As a result, pupils of all abilities are very motivated, very keen to learn and behave very well. For example, in a well planned science lesson, pupils designed experiments to test materials to see if they were conductors or insulators. The teacher told the pupils what she wanted them to learn and explained how this could be achieved. The teacher demonstrated the techniques and moved from group to group clarifying, helping, reinforcing and moving pupils on to the next task. Pupils were then encouraged to evaluate the success of the experiments, and were expected to work hard. Where management skills are secure, a very good working environment is created and pupils are able to concentrate on what they have to do without any disturbance.
- 18 Teachers have good subject knowledge, particularly in English, mathematics and science, where it is very good. They teach basic skills very well in literacy and numeracy lessons and across other subjects, and often make good links between areas of learning. Opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills are not only provided in English but in other curriculum subjects such as personal, social and health education. A range of extended writing opportunities is provided across the curriculum, for example in history and geography. Numeracy teaching also takes place across the curriculum, and pupils are encouraged to work at their own level and use their reasoning skills to solve problems.

- 19 Teachers make good use of information and communication technology to support teaching and learning in a range of lessons including English, mathematics and art and design.
- 20 In well over three quarters of the lessons observed, teachers used a good variety of methods to challenge and interest pupils. In a Year 5 mathematics lesson on using protractors, the teacher used the group work well to challenge pupils' understanding, clarifying their learning and then moving them on to the next stage. Pupils respond very well when challenges are set. In a Year 4 history lesson, pupils looked at the similarities and differences between Athens and Sparta. This activity was very well planned and tasks were well matched to pupils' individual needs. Pupils with special educational needs were well supported by the teaching assistant. Higher attaining pupils were provided with extension material to challenge their understanding.
- 21 Teachers' lesson planning is very good, with pupils' levels of understanding accurately judged, and with an appropriate level of challenge in the tasks set. Teachers plan the work together in year teams, carefully building on pupils' previous knowledge and understanding. Individual lessons are very well planned and provide a clear structure to the activities. They generally match work appropriately to the needs of the pupils, with more challenging work for higher attaining pupils especially in English and mathematics. For example, in a Year 4 mathematics lesson the planning was very well matched to the needs of individual groups of pupils, and the teacher provided time within her plan for pupils to make mistakes and to learn from them.
- 22 Concerns were expressed at the parents' meeting about the amount and level of homework. The inspection found that teachers make satisfactory use of homework to extend pupils' learning. Work is usually marked regularly and the majority of teachers use marking to praise and encourage pupils.
- 23 Teachers' use of day to day assessment is good. In the majority of lessons observed, teachers used their time creatively to assess what pupils can do and to move them forward onto the next stages of learning. For example, a Year 5 literacy lesson started with a reassessment of the previous day's work including the need for one group of pupils to re-examine the work they had done. In a Year 3 science lesson about healthy eating, the teacher began by reviewing the work from the previous lesson in order to consolidate learning. Later, during activity work the teacher moved from group to group, helping, challenging, clarifying and moving pupils on to the next task.
- 24 Overall, the use of time and resources is good. Little time is wasted in lessons, and the majority of teachers use time well. There were good examples of lessons being well paced with pupils undertaking timed tasks before moving on to the next task. This was particularly apparent in a Year 3 art and design lesson when pupils worked throughout the afternoon developing their own printing ideas. The teacher skilfully managed the time so that the task could be completed, with sufficient opportunities for experimentation. However the pace of lessons is only satisfactory in some of the booster classes seen in Year 6. This is because the teacher has an unfamiliar group and therefore has to spend time on management issues and some pupils quickly become restless. As a result, there is sometimes insufficient time for pupils to complete the tasks.
- 25 Pupils with special educational needs and the very few pupils with English as an additional language learn very well in all areas of the curriculum. Teaching assistants provide support to pupils within the classroom. In all sessions they work from a lesson plan worked out in conjunction with the class teacher. All work is structured so that pupils with special educational needs are well challenged.

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

- 26 The school is successful in providing all pupils with a good quality curriculum with some very good aspects. In all respects, the curriculum meets and surpasses the requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education, which is taught in accordance with the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Learning opportunities are enriched by visits and visitors to school, community

participation and the wide range of extra curricular activities that are offered to all pupils. The curriculum is enhanced by the provision of a nature reserve, which was created on the site of a disused swimming pool. An appropriate proportion of time is allocated to each subject and the curriculum is judged to be well balanced and relevant.

- 27 The school has made great strides since the last inspection in producing schemes of work for all subjects, and enriching and extending extra curricular activities. In addition, the computer suite has given the pupils many more opportunities to develop their information and communication technology skills through varied and relevant learning experiences. This provision is scheduled for further improvement as part of the redevelopment of the school site. In addition, the appointment of a creative arts coordinator from September 2002 has had a significant impact on the quality and breadth of the curriculum. This is particularly noticeable in the provision and standards in music, which were judged to be unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection.
- 28 The national strategies for literacy and numeracy are used very effectively to provide a framework for the teaching of English and mathematics. Pupils are grouped by ability in mathematics throughout the school, and there are also booster groups for mathematics, English and science. These arrangements are having a positive effect on pupils' standards.
- 29 Curriculum plans carefully identify tasks for different groups of pupils, and teachers plan together to ensure that all pupils have equal access to the learning activities. This is supplemented by systematic and regular review of policies and practice to enable effective and dynamic curriculum development.
- 30 There are also ample opportunities for pupils' literacy skills to be extended very well in other subjects such as history and geography. Numeracy skills are also extended, for example, in science and design technology. In all subjects, the curriculum follows national guidelines, which are supplemented by commercial schemes of work and school initiatives. Curriculum provision is further enhanced by 'enrichment weeks' when learning activities are focussed on a specific curriculum area. The most recent week focussed on English, and previous weeks on geography and science.
- 31 There are week long residential trips for pupils in Year 6, which are staffed by teachers, teaching assistants and governors. Pupils have opportunities to take part in adventurous activities such as climbing, fencing, quad biking and abseiling. These provide very good opportunities to develop personal qualities such as perseverance and cooperation. Visits and visitors to the school provide diversity and insight into the wider world. These include visiting authors, history role play activities, an artist in residence, and an interactive science 'Explorer Dome'. Pupils have also sponsored a Trans Atlantic rowing challenge, and were able to develop their information and communication technology skills when tracking the rower's progress via email and satellite links.
- 32 The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils have full access to the curriculum as their support takes place within the classroom setting. This is an improvement on the last inspection. Individual educational programmes are very well used to support pupils' learning. Class teachers and teaching assistants are closely involved in the review of individual educational programmes. In addition, parents are invited to the review meeting, and pupils are asked to comment on their own progress. There is excellent liaison with the infant school and the community college, and the special needs coordinator from the college is involved with the reviews of pupils in Year 6. The school liaises very well with the specialist agencies who visit the school on a regular basis to give additional educational and health support.
- 33 The school provides a very good range of extra curricular activities. These include sports for both boys and girls as well as construction kit modelling, model aeroplane making, French language, line dancing, table tennis and an 'International Schools Club'. Many pupils learn to play musical instruments with the peripatetic music services, and they often demonstrate their talents to the rest of the school during collective worship. The school runs a breakfast club, and other community groups make use of the school facilities for activities such as ballroom dancing.

- 34 Provision for personal, social and health education is very good, and is supported by a very good scheme of work. The use of collective worship supports this work, as does discussion work during circle time¹. Use is made of outside agencies in order to utilise specialist skills. In Year 6, the school nurse delivers a sex education programme alongside teachers, and the Community Police Officer supports adults in the delivery of a drugs awareness programme. In addition, Year 6 pupils who have been identified as being vulnerable when transferring to secondary education, work with the Educational Welfare Service to prepare them for the move.
- 35 The community of Faringdon plays an excellent part in the life and learning of the school. The school is involved in a 'Bridging the Gap' project, which supports links between young people and the senior residents of the town. This provides excellent opportunities for pupils to appreciate and value the contributions older people make to the local community, and helps break down stereotypes about old age. The pupils have produced a book comparing their experiences with those aged 50 and over, and both have worked on a collage and a musical production. In addition, the pupils have become guardians of the Buscot and Coleshill National Trust Estate and use the buildings and grounds as an outdoor learning resource. They use this to undertake historical and geographical studies and learn about their local rural traditions and history.
- 36 Relationships with other institutions are very good. The local partnership of schools is very active, and the school has close links with other institutions. Head Teachers and coordinators meet regularly together to discuss educational matters. The local Community College has been awarded specialist status for engineering, and is working in partnership with the junior school to develop curriculum enrichment activities in science and design and technology.
- 37 The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous report when provision for spiritual development was judged to be satisfactory, and the provision in other areas was judged to be good.
- 38 Provision for spiritual development is now very good. There are now many opportunities to develop spirituality through visits to church and other places outside school, as well as achievement assemblies and the planned programme of collective worship. School assemblies add to pupils' spiritual well being by giving them an opportunity to reflect on important issues and to celebrate achievement. Pupils are shown respect by being invited to join in prayer and hymn singing rather than being told to do so, and this furthers their self worth. The school follows the locally agreed syllabus and assemblies follow Christian themes. During collective worship, pupils are given time to reflect through prayers, stories and themes.
- 39 The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. A strong sense of morality underpins the aims and ethos of the school. Pupils have a very clear sense of right and wrong, and demonstrate an understanding of the impact of their actions on others. This is actively explored in regular personal, social and health education lessons, and contributes to pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour in class and around the school. Teachers provide very good role models for pupils using praise and encouragement well in lessons. All pupils are expected to behave well and are taught to respect others and to take good care of property and equipment. Pupils are encouraged to distinguish between right and wrong, and know how to behave without having to be continually reminded.
- 40 Pupils' social development is very good. Adults set high standards through their relationships with each other and in the friendly and open manner in which they address pupils. In return, pupils behave courteously towards visitors and demonstrate respect for teachers and other adults employed in the school. There are very good opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills through the very wide range of extra curricular activities and school visits. For example, pupils develop personal qualities such as determination, cooperation and teamwork through adventurous activities during residential visits. Pupils are also encouraged to take on responsibilities, such as becoming a class representative on the school council, and as guardians of the Buscot and Coleshill National Trust Estate. Pupils learn how to respond to others in different social settings,

¹ This is an activity in which pupils, seated in a circle, take turns to speak.

such as the annual carol singing activities, working alongside senior members of the local community and through raising money for charity. There are many opportunities for them to work collaboratively in such subjects as physical education, music, science and information and communication technology. Pupils are taught to have respect for each other and all, from the lowest attainer to the highest, are listened to and their views valued.

- 41 The school makes good provision for the cultural development of pupils. Pupils have many opportunities to develop an awareness of their own culture. They visit local places of interest as part of their work in history and geography. The school teaches pupils about other religions, cultures and beliefs. Pupils have studied patterns in Islamic art, and used the work of Rennie Macintosh as a basis for exploring symmetrical patterns. The oldest pupils have studied the work of well known artists such as Picasso and Van Gogh. However, the school has recognised that there are not enough planned opportunities within the curriculum for raising awareness and understanding of cultural diversity within our own multicultural society. Consequently, pupils' understanding of cultures and traditions that are represented within our own diverse society could be better.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 42 The school has succeeded very well in creating the 'challenging, positive and inspirational environment' outlined within its vision statement. All pupils, whatever their ability, flourish and develop in an atmosphere that supports and values each individual, including those who have special needs, are gifted and talented or have English as an additional language.
- 43 Procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare are satisfactory. The school's policy for health and safety is in place. The responsible governor has monitored a recent fire practice, and inspected the school site for health and safety risks. On a day to day basis, the school caretaker is diligent in ensuring a safe environment. Risk assessment is regularly and appropriately completed before undertaking visits out of school. However, guidelines for visits are not consistently applied, for example, on trips to the swimming pool.
- 44 Many members of staff are trained in first aid, and appropriate procedures are in place to record and monitor accidents. Pupils are given very good opportunities through the personal, social and health education curriculum to learn about their own safety. For example, a Year 6 display on 'How can I be responsible for my health, safety and well being' showed some reflective responses including 'doing exercise' 'eat healthily', 'thinking before you act', and 'having a sense of humour'.
- 45 Child protection procedures are firmly in place, although the new draft policy has yet to be formally agreed by the governing body. At present the headteacher is the named responsible person, and she has received full training. Staff meetings are frequently used to discuss and highlight concerns. The school relies heavily on verbal communication, but has yet to formalise written procedures for all staff. The school now has an internet policy, and subscribes to a filtered service designed to block any material that is undesirable for children.
- 46 The school has very good arrangements for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. The policy is reflected fully in the school's practice. Sanctions and rewards are well understood by all pupils, and they are particularly pleased when awarded with team points and certificates. Detentions are carefully monitored and appropriate targets are set for each class to ensure that recent improvements are sustained.
- 47 The school's strategies for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are excellent. The 'Bully Buster' scheme has been very effective in offering immediate support to pupils and in preventing bullying. The whole class is involved in discussing instances of bullying, as well as ways of resolving them. Instances of bullying are now infrequent. The headteacher keeps careful records of any occasions of bullying, harassment or racism. She has wisely used this data to monitor the introduction of the new school behaviour initiatives in order to evaluate their success. Pupils now report that they feel safe and secure in and out of the classroom.

- 48 There are good procedures for monitoring and analysing attendance. The computerised attendance system is used very effectively to monitor pupils' attendance, to analyse trends and to follow up any unexplained absences.
- 49 Monitoring of pupils' personal development is very good and is based on the very good relationships all staff have with their pupils. There is a strong emphasis on celebrating achievement through newsletters, personal, social and health education lessons and assemblies. In all classes, pupils set themselves appropriate termly personal targets alongside those for academic work.
- 50 The school makes very good provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs. Individual educational programmes are thorough and the requirements of the statement are met. Outside agencies are fully involved, as are parents and the pupils in reviewing statements. Support is provided in accordance with the requirements of individual education statements.
- 51 The monitoring and assessment of the performance of all groups of pupils is very good overall. The school's meticulous concern to monitor progress is a key factor in the rapidly improving rate at which pupils now make progress. The school is carrying out a meticulous analysis of pupils' performance in English, mathematics and science on a yearly basis, and can identify trends in their performance. In the other subjects the school undertakes end of unit assessments or evaluations, and individual assessments, which are retained by the pupil in an assessment book. These individual assessments are graded against exemplars in subject portfolios. This thoroughness enables the school to adjust its provision and build in appropriate support. For instance, the school identified that boys were under performing in writing, and a specific programme of activities was devised to address this issue. The school uses this information to set realistic targets, so that pupils can reach higher levels of attainment by the end of Year 6. However, procedures for assessment in music could be improved.
- 52 Pupils have termly targets in English, mathematics, science and personal, social and health education. These are discussed with the pupil and parents, with regular opportunities for reviews. Teachers assess pupils' performance on a weekly basis and identify areas where consolidation may be required. This also informs teachers' lesson planning. For example, pupils are given individual help and tasks that are well matched to the different rates at which pupils make progress. The school marking policy is followed by teachers and provides helpful feedback to pupils about the progress they are making. This is an improvement from the last inspection, when marking procedures were not consistently applied. Overall, the assessment system is a strength of the school's provision.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 53 Parents have very positive views about the school, and the vast majority feel their children like school. The majority of parents who replied to the questionnaire agree that their children make good progress and that teaching is good. Additionally, they nearly all assert that the school is well led and managed. These views are supported by inspection findings. A minority of parents felt they are not kept sufficiently well informed about how their children are getting on, that the school does not work sufficiently closely with parents, and had concerns about the amount of homework. This is not supported by inspection evidence. The range and variety of information provided for parents, and the opportunities for meeting teachers and coming into school are at least good. The amount of homework was judged to be satisfactory.
- 54 The school is constantly striving to improve its partnership with parents. The new headteacher has introduced many new ways by which to gauge parents' views and opinions. For example, there is an annual questionnaire for parents, as well as regular consultation meetings and focus groups. The school has carefully analysed parents' views and has taken appropriate actions in response to their perceived concerns. This has led to significant progress since the last inspection when parents were judged not to be sufficiently well involved in the school. The home school agreement has been signed by all parents and works extremely well at establishing a partnership between the school, parents and pupils.

- 55 The contribution of parents to children's learning at school and home is good. Many parents attend weekly class assemblies, and join in the activities organised as part of curriculum 'focus weeks.' The Friends of Faringdon School help to strengthen the partnership between home and school. For example, they raise large amounts of money, which is currently being used to purchase extra books in preparation for the new library. Parents also receive a detailed termly curriculum and homework overview to help them contribute to their children's learning. Some parents also help in lessons or run after school clubs.
- 56 The information provided for parents is good in quality and quantity. The fortnightly newsletters are very informative and reflect the school's ethos of sharing and celebrating pupils' successes both inside and outside school. The school prospectus and governors' annual report to parents meet statutory requirements and are easy to read. The pupils' annual reports are satisfactory overall. The headteacher has already discussed with parents, through focus groups, ways of improving them further. Most teachers explain in good detail what pupils know, understand and can do, and are consistent in reporting targets for improvement in mathematics and English. However some reports don't always reflect pupils' individual achievements sufficiently clearly.
- 57 Information given to parents of pupils who have special education needs is very good. There are regular opportunities for parents to discuss progress. Parents are invited to discuss the pupils' individual education plans and contribute to the review of targets so that support is clearly focussed on the next steps of learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 58 The quality of leadership and management is very good overall. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and clear educational direction. She manages the school effectively in close partnership with the governing body, and is personally committed to building an effective partnership between the school, the home and the community. Parents were unanimous at the parents' meeting that the new headteacher had made significant improvements to the behaviour of pupils, links with parents and the progress that pupils are making. They applauded her efforts at giving new direction to the school and her very clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve the school further.
- 59 On her appointment in 2001, the headteacher's first priorities were to improve pupils' attitudes and behaviour, and to raise their levels of attainment. Working closely with the chair of governors, she consulted widely with staff and parents to formulate an action plan to address these weaknesses. Parents and governors report that the new management team have already achieved significant improvements in pupils' attainment, attitudes, behaviour and personal development. This is supported by inspection evidence. There are now very good relationships in the school and a strong sense of teamwork among all staff, parents, governors and the wider community. The curriculum has been broadened and enriched, new assessment procedures are providing valuable data to track the progress of individuals and cohorts, and pupils are now making good progress. The leadership and management have also improved so that everyone has a clear understanding of school development. This was a significant area for improvement at the last inspection. The shared commitment to improvement between all partners in the school and their capacity to succeed is now excellent.
- 60 The governing body is effectively organised and successfully fulfils its obligations in monitoring the work of the school. Its role in shaping the direction of the school is very good. Governors know the school well, and have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses through their regular visits and through their day to day contact with parents and staff. They successfully fulfil their role as 'critical friend' to the school, and are very active in holding the school to account for its performance. The governing body meets all its statutory responsibilities in relation to policies, including a good policy for racial equality.
- 61 Following the last inspection in December 1997, an action plan was prepared in response to the key issues identified for future improvement. Most of the points contained in these key issues have been successfully addressed. They are as follows:

62 Key Issue 1: “ensure progression in the curriculum by completing schemes of work for each subject.”

Progress has been good. There are now schemes of work for all subjects, which are regularly reviewed as part of the school's drive to improve further.

63 Key Issue 2: “review opportunities for the curriculum to be enriched and extended through extra curricular activities and work pupils undertake at home.”

Progress has been very good. Provision for extra curricular activities is now very good. There is an excellent take up of school clubs, and almost all pupils are attending activities in the spring term. The school seeks to ensure all pupils have access and opportunity to participate in extra curricular activities. Clubs are provided free of charge and any costs are met from the study support standards fund. In order to ensure full participation in activities for both genders, for example in football, the school has established a girls only club to assist in their participation. In addition ten per cent of pupils are learning to play musical instruments with the peripatetic music service, with many on the waiting list.

64 Key issue 3: “improve the effectiveness of school leadership and management so that everyone has a clear understanding of school development through the production of a School Development Plan that:

- **ensures the effective determination of priorities;**
- **has clear targets that will impact on raising standards and quality;**
- **is clearly linked to budget planning and staff development;**
- **identifies criteria for monitoring and evaluating the success of school developments.”**

Progress has been very good. The School Development Plan now provides very clear direction with identified priorities and actions, which are set against agreed school priorities. The plan contains clear targets for raising standards in subjects and the quality of the learning environment. These activities are supported by a strategic financial plan and programme of staff development. Success criteria are carefully explained and used to evaluate the rate of school improvement by teachers and governors. The views of parents have also been obtained through a series of focus groups chaired by the headteacher.

65 Key issue 4: “provide pupils with a more stimulating learning environment around the school.”

Progress has been very good. The school has undergone a refurbishment programme; it is clean with bright displays of pupils' work. Since the arrival of the new headteacher all classrooms of the former girls' grammar school have been refurbished, as has the staff room and administrative office. Corridors are being repainted, and there is a display policy with classes responsible for providing work around the school. The stage has been reclaimed as a functioning drama space and there are plans to rebuild the main entrance and administration block. A new information and communication technology suite has been built, but it is shortly to be redeveloped as part of the building programme to provide new accommodation and an administrative block.

66 Key issue 5: “ensure that statutory requirement for teachers' appraisals are met.”

Progress has been very good. Statutory requirements are now fully met.

67 There are rigorous procedures for improving the quality of teaching, learning and curriculum provision. The headteacher and senior staff monitor regularly the quality of teaching and learning. Their observations are carefully recorded and form the basis of professional development meetings with teaching staff. Information gained from this work in different classes gives the headteacher and coordinators a very good view of the strengths to be shared and weaknesses to be remedied.

This supports the drive for higher standards most effectively. Overall, the process of school self review is very well established.

- 68 The governors and headteacher work closely together to ensure that the school utilises its available resources effectively and meets its agreed development priorities. The quality of strategic financial planning is very good, and has not only enabled the school to match resources to educational priorities to date but provides a clear and fully costed projection for future developments and improvements in its facilities and resources. Spending is monitored closely and the principles of checking that the school gets good value for the money it spends are effectively applied.
- 69 The school had a carry forward figure of just over eight per cent last year. However, just under half of this amount is due to changes in staffing costs during that year. Figures for the current financial year show a projected carry forward of about eight per cent. However, this includes a capital grant of nearly £41,000 for the new building work which is to start shortly. Once this figure is removed from the balance, the projected carry forward is about two and a half per cent.
- 70 The day to day management of the school is effective. Both the administrative officer and bursar are hard working and efficient, and enable teachers to focus on their work in the classrooms rather than spend time on routine administrative tasks. They are making good use of management information systems to support the work of the school. For example, information given to governors about the budget is very detailed, thus enabling them to fulfil their monitoring role, and to have an oversight of the school's financial position.
- 71 The coordinator for special needs provides excellent leadership. She is extremely hard working and the management of this area is of the highest quality. Statutory requirements for pupils with special educational needs are fully met. Funding for special educational needs and other designated funds are carefully monitored and evaluated against targets to ensure the funds are spent effectively and provide value for money.
- 72 There is a good match of teachers to the demands of the National Curriculum. There have been a significant number of recent changes to the teaching staff. There is now a good number of very able and well qualified support staff who add much to the quality of pupils' learning. The management of the school places a high level priority on providing for the continuous professional development of all members of staff, and the strategy for appraisal and performance management is excellent. This is seen as an important way of raising teachers' expertise and morale. The school is working towards accreditation as an 'Investor in People.'
- 73 The school provides regular opportunities for student teachers to gain classroom experience, which has the added advantage of providing class teachers in the school with leadership and management experience.
- 74 The provision of learning resources is good, fully supporting the delivery of the National Curriculum. In all subjects resources are at least satisfactory, and in mathematics, religious education and physical education they are very good. The school makes good use of its resources.
- 75 Overall, the standard of accommodation is good and supports the full delivery of the National Curriculum. The school buildings are maintained and cleaned to a very high standard. Displays are used effectively to celebrate pupils' work and promote extra curricular activities. The school library and information and communication technology suite are to be developed as part of the new building programme so that they will be better placed to support investigative learning and research projects.
- 76 The school grounds are extensive and provide grassed and hard surfaced areas for a wide range of sports and leisure activities. The grounds are attractively landscaped and well maintained.
- 77 A wide range of indicators, including the quality of teaching, the quality of leadership and the good improvements made since the last inspection, show that the school is rapidly developing. When its expenditure per pupil is considered, it provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

78 In order for the school to improve further, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- (1) review the timing and organisation of booster groups to ensure:
 - tasks are always well matched to pupils' individual needs;
 - information about pupils' progress is efficiently exchanged.(paragraphs: 24, 28, 82, 83, 90, 95, 97)

- (2) explore and identify opportunities within the curriculum for raising awareness and understanding of cultural diversity within our own society.
(paragraphs 40, 41)

This has already been identified as an area for development.

In addition, the school may wish to include the following minor issue in their action plan:

ensure the safety guidelines for visits are consistently applied.
(paragraph: 43)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

68

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

18

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	25	28	10	0	0	0
Percentage	7.3	36.7	41.2	14.7	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	278
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	24
Special educational needs	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	51
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.3
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.3
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2002	41	38

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	23	21	33
	Girls	31	31	32
	Total	54	54	65
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	68 (71)	57 (58)	82 (76)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	23	25	33
	Girls	32	27	30
	Total	55	52	63
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	71 (n/a)	67 (n/a)	81 (n/a)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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	212	3	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	7	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	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	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	49	2	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	27.8

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	226

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	N/a
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/a
Total number of education support staff	N/a
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/a
Number of pupils per FTE adult	N/a

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6.7
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	8.3

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.9
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	607,003
Total expenditure	554,779
Expenditure per pupil	1,967
Balance brought forward from previous year	45,609
Balance carried forward to next year	52,224

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	278
Number of questionnaires returned	82

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	50	44	5	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	40	54	2	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	15	72	7	1	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	57	17	1	2
The teaching is good.	47	46	4	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	24	52	19	4	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	54	41	4	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	42	1	0	6
The school works closely with parents.	18	56	18	4	5
The school is well led and managed.	41	52	1	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	40	49	6	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	56	5	0	1

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

ENGLISH

- 79 The attainment of pupils on entry to the school, at the start of Year 3, is average in all aspects of the English curriculum. As they move through the school, pupils make satisfactory progress and standards at the end of Years 6 are average. In the 2002 national tests at the end of Year 6 the proportion of pupils attaining the national target of Level 4 and above was close to the national average, and an above average number of pupils attained the higher Level 5. However, nearly a third of the pupils did not achieve a Level 4. This was because of the high number of pupils with special educational needs in that particular cohort. Over the past five years, the school's performance in the national tests for Year 6 has risen steadily. Inspection evidence suggests that the effort the school has put into raising standards over the past two years is having an impact.
- 80 Strengths are the:
- attitudes and response of all pupils;
 - leadership and management of the subject;
 - quality of teaching and learning in the subject;
 - quality of the curriculum, including special weeks focusing on English;
 - match of work to pupils' differing abilities;
 - analysis of assessment results to help raise standards;
 - monitoring of pupils' progress;
 - use of teaching assistants to help pupils of lower attainment.
- 82 Areas for development:
- the organisation of booster groups.
- 83 Standards in the subject have risen since the last inspection. However, the school remains in line with national expectations because national standards have also risen. The professional development of teachers, curriculum initiatives and improvements to the monitoring and assessment of pupils' achievements introduced during the past two years are already having a positive effect on standards. More effective targeting of pupils who need additional support to achieve Level 4 using booster groups is also helping raise standards further. Inspection evidence suggests that pupils in the current Year 5 are likely to achieve even better standards by the end of Year 6 as a result of the impact of these new strategies. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are given tasks that match their needs and extra help ensures that they make good progress.
- 84 By the time pupils reach the end of Year 6, standards in speaking and listening are above average. The majority of pupils have good oral skills. They listen with interest to their teachers and are keen to make an active contribution to oral activities. Teachers provide wide opportunities for pupil discussion in English and other subject areas. For example, in a Year 6 PSHE² lesson, pupils articulated their feelings about courage very clearly, with reverence, and used vocabulary that was appropriate to the occasion. At the same time, all the pupils listened carefully to each other and respected each other's views. In a Year 4 literacy lesson, pupils talked about the poem they were reading, articulating their ideas clearly and putting forward suggestions for alternative rhymes. Pupils use more formal language appropriately and technical terms correctly. There are opportunities for drama and school productions, and many pupils become confident in speaking to larger audiences for a widening range of purposes.
- 85 Standards in reading are average. Pupils read suitable texts with expression. They correct their mistakes and are able to use a range of strategies when dealing with unfamiliar words. Pupils in Year 6 talk about their favourite authors, and eagerly discuss the works of J R Tolkien, J K Rowling and C S Lewis. All pupils are able to retrieve information from reference books and show

² Personal, social and health education

confidence when using contents and indexes. Reading is generally well supported at home, and the home school reading record is a useful contact between home and school. Not only do pupils read to an adult at home, some read to younger brothers and sisters. Pupils are given regular opportunities to extend their reading comprehension skills within well planned guided reading activities, with additional time being provided for silent reading.

- 86 Standards in writing are average. An appropriate amount of time is given to the development of basic skills, and these are well integrated into the literacy hour. Teachers provide pupils with good opportunities to write in a range of styles and for different types of audience. Pupils learn to write for an increasingly wide range of purposes, including letters, book reviews and news reports. For example, Year 3 pupils learn how to plan a story or a dramatic text. Year 4 pupils successfully develop skills in writing newspaper reports and texts for younger pupils paying particular attention to the style and impact of the text. Year 5 pupils write instructions and poetry. They check instructions for clarity and ambiguity, and explore the figurative and poetic use of language. In Year 6, pupils present arguments and produce mini magazines, and the majority are able to initiate, organise and revise their work. Tasks are set for pupils with potentially higher attainment to develop their skills in using the formal language, complex sentence patterns, and paragraph structures expected at the higher level. Writing presented for display in school is always of a good standard, with accurate spelling and punctuation, and pupils make good use of word processing skills in the presentation of their work. Handwriting is usually joined and legible, and by Year 6 most pupils use well formed cursive writing
- 87 Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in English is good. Thirteen lessons or parts of lessons were observed during the inspection. Five of these were very good, six were good and two were satisfactory. This evidence, along with the scrutiny of work, supports the judgment that pupils are now learning well and making good progress in all areas as a result of the recent initiatives to raise the quality of teaching and learning. However, achievement remains satisfactory overall for the current cohort of Year 6 pupils.
- 88 Teachers in all classes make very good use of the National Literacy Strategy to teach English. They create interesting opportunities for pupils to recognise and use a variety of ways to communicate in speech and in writing. Pupils respond positively and confidently, knowing their answers will be valued. Teachers plan together using a recommended format to ensure that pupils in similar classes have equal access to the learning activities. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good, and they show technical competence in teaching the basic skills. Lessons are well planned, with clear objectives and well matched tasks for the various ability groups, enabling pupils to make good progress within the lessons. There are good opportunities at the beginning of sessions to review the previous learning and to share the learning objectives with the pupils. This helps pupils' understanding of what is to be achieved by the end of the activities. These objectives are revisited at the end of the lesson to provide time for clarification and consolidation of new ideas. Teachers then use this information to plan the next stages of learning. For example, in a Year 4 poetry lesson, the objectives about the use of expressive language when writing poetry were shared with the class. During the plenary session³, pupils shared the sentences they had crafted, and the teacher discussed the quality of their language and their use of imaginative vocabulary. Pupils who are given these opportunities to evaluate their own work do so thoughtfully and critically.
- 89 Work is marked regularly. Marking is encouraging and usually offers indications of what pupils need to do to make further progress. In some classes the quality of the marking is very detailed and helps pupils overcome difficulties and make good progress at achieving higher levels. Books and poetry are well chosen to catch pupils' interest and demonstrate important features of language. The emphasis on drafting and redrafting of written work develops pupils' independence and confidence at checking for mistakes and self correcting. Where teaching is good or very good, teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour and provide a good level of challenge for pupils. They assess pupils' work carefully and thoroughly, and use the information to help pupils overcome difficulties and make good progress at achieving higher levels. The very positive attitudes that pupils display are a significant factor in their achievement and learning.

³ A short time at the end of lessons when pupils share their work and review their learning.

- 90 The good use of the classroom support assistants adds significantly to the quality of teaching and learning. Teaching assistants give very good support to the less able pupils and those with special educational needs. The school is committed to raising standards in English, and provides booster groups for those pupils who need additional support to achieve the average Level 4 by the end of Year 6. This group of eighteen Year 6 pupils work together to improve their literacy skills. Although this group is making satisfactory progress, the rate of progress could be improved further. Tasks are not always well matched to pupils' individual needs, and there is no formal procedure for quickly reporting progress, during these sessions, back to class teachers.
- 91 The curriculum is of good quality. A particular strength is the use of 'focus weeks' to stimulate and enrich the curriculum. Pupils have recently had the opportunity to work with a poet, listen to African and Caribbean stories, share books with older people from the community, and produce a visitors' guide for the Buscot and Coleshill National Trust Estate. Teachers and classroom support assistants provide pupils with many opportunities to explore their own ideas in other areas of the curriculum, and constantly make constructive suggestions about how to improve the quality of writing. For example, Year 6 pupils have written poems about Anne Boleyn and have word processed the text using a wide range of styles with a wide variety of fonts and layouts. Year 5 pupils have written a story about the life of Mohammed during religious education lessons.
- 92 Leadership and management in the subject are very good. The English coordinator has a clear commitment to raise standards, and this has had a significant impact on the improvements to the quality of learning across the school. She is well supported by the headteacher and governors. Her non contact time is well used to monitor planning, pupils' work and teaching. There is a good range of documentation to support teachers in the delivery of the English curriculum. Very good assessment procedures are in place, and these are used well to support planning and to check on the progress of groups and individuals. Resources have recently been improved and there is a good range of fiction books in each classroom. Pupils make very good use of information and communication technology to support their work in English. The position of the library makes it difficult to use for individual study, but the school has plans for a new library in the next phase of its development.

MATHEMATICS

- 93 The inspection found that standards are average at the end of Year 6, and achievement is satisfactory. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection report. However, this represents a very significant improvement on recent test results. The attainment of pupils in the 2002 National Curriculum tests was well below the standards attained by pupils of a similar age nationally, and well below the standards attained by pupils in similar schools. Results have been well below the national average since 2000.
- 94 Strengths are the:
- attitudes and response of all pupils;
 - quality of leadership and management;
 - quality of teaching and learning ;
 - quality of the curriculum;
 - match of work to pupils' differing abilities;
 - analysis of assessment results to help raise standards;
 - monitoring of pupils' progress;
 - use of teaching assistants to help pupils of lower attainment.
- 95 Areas for development:
- the organisation of booster groups.
- 96 On appointment in 2001 the headteacher's first priorities were to improve pupils' behaviour and attitudes, and to raise their levels of attainment, particularly in mathematics, where they were well below the national average. She initiated a wide ranging consultation, which resulted in the reorganisation of mathematics' teaching. However, there was insufficient time for these initiatives

to impact on standards for 2002. Inspection evidence suggests that the effort the school has put into raising standards over the past two years is now having a very significant impact. Pupils in the current Year 6 are in line to achieve the national standard by the end of the year. Inspection evidence suggests that pupils in the current Year 5 are likely to achieve even better standards by the end of Year 6 as a result of the impact of these new strategies. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are given tasks that match their needs and extra help so that they make good progress. There are currently no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls.

- 97 Pupils throughout the school are now learning well due to good teaching and the organisational measures taken by the school to promote higher standards of achievement. Progress in the short term is now good, although achievement is satisfactory overall. The school has introduced setting⁴ arrangements, which are being phased in for all year groups. This enables the teachers to plan learning opportunities at a suitable level for individual pupils, and to provide very good additional support for those with special educational needs. The school has also introduced booster classes to help lower attaining pupils reach the national average Level 4. However, these classes tend to be timetabled at the end of the school day, and are less effective in meeting pupils' needs. Pupils are often tired and less able to cope with demanding intellectual tasks. Higher attaining pupils are also identified within teachers' planning so they can provide them with suitably challenging activities. Previous test papers have been analysed to identify weaknesses in pupils' attainment, and the curriculum has been adjusted to address these concerns. Pupils are also set regular homework activities, which reinforce and consolidate work undertaken in class.
- 98 The curriculum is of very good quality. The numeracy strategy is firmly established as the framework for teaching mathematics. Class teachers often overlay this guidance with additional planning to ensure that it fully meets their objectives. As a result, the school has a curriculum that not only meets statutory requirements but also shows the development of skills and knowledge. This enables pupils to acquire knowledge, understanding and skills in a logical sequence, and at a pace that is suited to their individual needs.
- 99 In 2001 the school introduced a new scheme of work, supplemented by additional resources for lower attaining pupils. Teachers have received appropriate training in the implementation of the scheme. The school has also successfully introduced individualised consolidation and extension tasks via computer aided learning. Mental arithmetic forms a regular routine in numeracy lessons, and is developed in a systematic, planned way across the whole curriculum. All these initiatives are having a positive effect on the rate at which pupils make progress.
- 100 During the inspection, the main focus of work in lessons in Year 6 was the measurement and understanding of angles, but a scrutiny of pupils' workbooks show they cover all of the elements of the National Curriculum and the National Numeracy Strategy. In Year 6, pupils in the top and middle sets estimate and measure angles accurately, calculate the third angle in a triangle, and accurately draw triangles. Higher attaining pupils identify and draw reflex angles, using circular protractors. Lower attaining pupils measure angles to within five degrees of accuracy. They identify and name acute and obtuse angles, and estimate their value. These pupils receive very good support from the teaching assistants, which enables them to progress well. In Year 5, pupils in a lower ability set showed very good understanding of the properties of numbers, including prime numbers, and had a good knowledge of their times tables. Pupils showed confidence in calculating fractional equivalents, and were starting to convert fractions to simple decimals. The higher attaining pupils are able to calculate to two decimal places. In Year 4, the only year group not yet grouped by ability, pupils are competent at recalling their times tables, and have a good understanding of strategies for partitioning numbers. Higher attaining pupils are challenged well through problem solving activities, and all pupils showed good use and understanding of mathematical vocabulary and symbols. In Year 3, pupils mentally add and subtract two digit numbers, and record their calculations. Most pupils apply these calculations to solve problems using larger numbers. Pupils throughout the school are generally very enthusiastic about mathematics, and keen to learn, which is a good reflection of the challenging and well planned

⁴ Grouping of pupils by ability

teaching they receive. They concentrate very well and have good working habits. Most pupils listen well in lessons and respond well to teachers' questions. There was no difference in the responses of pupils with special educational needs, or from boys or girls.

- 101 The overall quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. Fourteen lessons were observed. Just under half of the lessons were of very good or excellent quality. Of the rest, three quarters were good and a quarter was of satisfactory quality. The quality of teaching is better than when the school was last inspected. In all lessons the quality of planning was very good, and conformed to the spirit of the National Numeracy Strategy, thanks to teachers' very good subject knowledge. There is also a very good emphasis upon mathematical language development, and upon the provision of good opportunities for pupils to estimate and approximate answers. Homework provides regular consolidation or extension activities. Teachers share lesson objectives well and use plenary sessions⁵ to provide an overview of the learning that has taken place. Teachers' weekly planning identifies those pupils who need revision or consolidation tasks. All pupils have termly targets for improvement, which are shared with parents. Most importantly, common to all lessons are the very good relationships that teachers have with pupils, which encourage positive responses to the subject. Pupils' work is well presented and work is regularly marked with informative comments to help pupils improve. Pupils with special educational needs learn very well because of the very good support they receive within class.
- 102 There are good links with other subjects such as science, particularly in the context of data handling. Computers are used to support numeracy well, especially when pupils are using the information and communication technology suite. The school has plans for one class in each year group to have an interactive whiteboard, to enhance computer aided teaching and learning outside the computer suite.
- 103 The coordination and management of mathematics is very good. The coordinator has carefully monitored the changes to the mathematics curriculum by scrutinising pupils' work, teachers' planning, and by observing lessons. Assessment is very good. Information from test results and work in class is used to identify the strengths and weaknesses of individuals and curriculum provision. This is very clearly linked to the school's performance targets and strategic development plan. Evaluation at all stages is very thorough, and therefore the school is likely to maintain the recent good progress for all pupils. The coordinator has supported colleagues in a variety of ways, including team teaching, and the provision of staff training. She has provided the governing body with detailed information about the developments in this subject. Resources for teaching mathematics are very good, and there are plans to develop understanding and enjoyment of mathematics within the wider community, by holding a 'community mathematics week'.

SCIENCE

- 104 Standards are average at the end of Year 6, and pupils are achieving satisfactorily. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. However, the attainment of pupils in the 2002 National Curriculum tests was well below the standards attained by pupils of a similar age nationally, and well below the standards attained by pupils in similar schools. Results have been below the national average since 2000. Data provided by the school indicates that the test results for 2003 are likely to be much better than those for 2002. This is supported by inspection evidence. It also suggests that pupils in the current Year 5 are likely to achieve even better standards by the end of Year 6 as a result of the impact of the recent changes to the teaching of science. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are given tasks that match their needs and extra help so that they make good progress. There are currently no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls.
- 105 The school's strengths in science are the:
- use of practical, investigative science in all year groups;
 - attitudes and response of all pupils;
 - quality of leadership and management;

⁵ A short time at the end of lessons when pupils share their work and review their learning.

- quality of teaching and learning;
- enrichment of the curriculum by science week;
- analysis of assessment results to help raise standards;
- monitoring of pupils' progress;
- use of teaching assistants to help pupils of lower attainment.

106 Areas for development:

- use of information and communication technology for research and recording results, especially when undertaking practical investigations.

107 Pupils throughout the school are now learning very well in lessons because of the organisational measures taken by the school to promote higher standards of achievement, although progress over time is satisfactory. Significant changes have been made to the curriculum, which is now good. Higher attaining pupils are consistently challenged and opportunities for independent learning are well developed. Opportunities for undertaking extended writing in the subject are also good and numeracy skills are being well developed in investigative work concerned with measuring time, heat, mass and capacity. The links between science and information and communication technology are developing well; for example, pupils confidently use software to analyse their data using pie and bar charts. However, pupils do not make sufficient use of sensors as part of their experiments.

108 Pupils' understanding of a range of topics across the breadth of the science curriculum is rapidly developing. For example, the youngest pupils understand the requirements of a healthy diet, and know the composition of different food groups. Pupils in Year 4 understand that materials are conductors or insulators and test this by building simple electrical circuits. Pupils' standards in scientific enquiry are also rapidly improving. For example, pupils in Year 5 plan an investigation to measure the conditions that affect the rate of evaporation. They take measurements, display the results graphically, and use the data to draw conclusions. Throughout the school, pupils' skills of scientific enquiry are being well developed and their understanding of predicting, 'fair testing' and drawing conclusions is good. This is the result of a review of the science curriculum for Years 3 to 6. The scrutiny of work shows an improvement in both the quality and range of experimental work. Teachers are also making very good use of assessment information to plan the pupils' next steps of learning, and to develop the curriculum.

109 Overall, the teaching and learning in science is very good. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection where teaching was described as good. The teaching observed was never less than good; four of the nine lessons observed were of very good quality and one was excellent. Where teaching is very good or excellent, pupils are given very good opportunities to develop scientific concepts in a practical, investigative way. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, and they use this very well to enthuse and motivate pupils. Teachers help pupils learn the specialist vocabulary. They share the precise learning objectives with pupils at the start of lessons, and refer to them again at the end of sessions to help pupils identify the progress they have made. Questions are used well to review the pupils' previous learning and to challenge pupils' understanding of new ideas. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils in terms of behaviour, participation and standards of work. Pupils are very enthusiastic about the subject and are keen to learn. Teachers tirelessly monitor and support pupils during group or individual work to ensure that they understand what they are doing and are making progress. Learning support assistants provide very good support to pupils with special educational needs, enabling them to learn very well and make good progress.

110 Much of the recent improvement in science has been due to the very good quality of leadership and management. The coordinator is very aware of the strengths of the school's provision and areas for development. Much has already been achieved. There are now very good and consistent assessment procedures, which are being used effectively in all classes to plan the next steps of learning for individual pupils or groups of pupils, or to improve the curriculum. Pupils' standards in scientific enquiry are also rising rapidly, and good use is being made of the local environment for scientific enquiry.

ART AND DESIGN

- 111 Pupils in Year 6 attain average standards in art and design and all groups of pupils make satisfactory progress. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection report. Owing to the way in which the timetable was arranged, only one art and design lesson was observed during the course of the inspection. Judgements are based on this observation together with a scrutiny of photographic evidence, work on display around the school, teachers' planning, and samples of pupils' previously completed work.
- 112 Strengths are the:
- quality of leadership and management;
 - enrichment of the curriculum.
- 113 Areas for development:
- greater use of assessment information to guide curriculum planning.
- 114 A particular strength in art and design lies in the good enrichment activities provided for pupils. A good example of this was the banner created to celebrate the Chinese New Year. This involved pupils working at the Community College in a textile workshop. The subject is also used well to enhance work in other areas of the curriculum, such as history, design and technology, and information and communication technology.
- 115 As only one lesson was observed, it was not possible to make a secure judgement on the quality of the teaching and learning across the school. However, the quality of the single lesson observed was excellent. The quality of teaching in this lesson was outstanding. The Year 3 pupils stayed on task throughout the afternoon, working on developing their printing techniques. The lesson was very well planned and all pupils had equal access to a good range of resources. Not only were they encouraged to produce high quality work; they were able to evaluate critically the work of other pupils and offer suggestions for improvement. Excellent use was made of support staff and the way the teacher skilfully used the time available resulted in pupils maintaining high levels of enthusiasm and concentration.
- 116 Pupils use a good variety of media and techniques. The youngest pupils develop their understanding of texture and tone, and experiment with observational drawings of plants using chalks. An investigation of patterns from Islamic cultures provides older pupils with inspiration for developing their own designs using felt tip pens. Older pupils combine drawing, painting, collage and printmaking techniques to communicate their ideas about, for example, seascapes and the buildings in the immediate surroundings.
- 117 The works of famous artists are used satisfactorily to provide a good stimulus for pupils. Work on Picasso has inspired Year 6 pupils to produce good quality portraits using torn and cut coloured paper. Vincent Van Gogh's 'Sunflowers' has inspired a range of plant drawing and paintings, and the work of Renee Macintosh has been used as a basis for symmetrical patterns. However, work based on non western art and artists is generally under represented.
- 118 The work on display in the classrooms and around the school is well mounted and displayed. Some pictures are framed to add a professional touch. There are good examples of art and design to celebrate other areas of the curriculum, such as weather posters for a TV news competition, as well as computer generated symmetrical pictures. The use of information and communication technology to support work in art and design is good.
- 119 Leadership and management of the subject are good. The coordinator has a good overview of teachers' planning and pupils' work, and gives valuable support to colleagues. A clear sense of educational direction is apparent, and the school's aims and values are reflected in the pupils' work. The school's priorities for development, particularly the emphasis on monitoring and the review of standards, are good. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are

satisfactory, and are being formalised with a greater emphasis on the assessment of skills relevant to each National Curriculum level. The use of assessment to guide curriculum planning is sound.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 120 The standards attained by Year 6 pupils match national expectations. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection report. Although only a small number of lessons were observed during the week of the inspection, evidence of previous work, discussion with teachers and pupils, and an analysis of pupils' work on display indicate that standards are satisfactory. All groups of pupils are making satisfactory progress, and there are no significant differences between the achievement of boys and girls.
- 121 Strengths are the:
- attitudes and response of all pupils;
 - quality of leadership and management;
 - quality of teaching and learning;
 - quality of the curriculum.
- 122 Pupils generate their own ideas and analyse and amend their designs, bearing in mind the intended purpose of the article planned. For example, pupils in Year 6 designed and made slippers. Their designs took account of properties of the materials and suitability for their intended purpose. When making the slippers, the pupils amended the design as difficulties of construction became apparent. Their evaluations took account of these amendments and their implications for future work. There is an emphasis on design, making, and evaluation throughout the school, and pupils successfully develop their skills as they progress from Year 3 to Year 6. There is a good range of design activities that includes making photo frames, sandwiches, moving toys and monsters, Victorian samplers and shelters. All pupils achieve satisfactorily, including those with special educational needs.
- 123 The pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons are very good overall. Pupils enjoy lessons and can sustain their concentration well. They respond very well to questioning and readily recall previous learning, thus developing their skills and understanding. Teachers have high expectations of the quality of making throughout the school, and pupils achieve high standards of precision and finish to their products.
- 124 The range of evidence considered indicates that, overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Two lessons were observed during the inspection, one of which was satisfactory and one very good. Teaching was very good in one lesson because of the clarity of the teacher's explanations, the very good use of what had been previously learned as a reference point for pupils, and the quality of the teacher's questioning. The way in which the teacher phrased her questions challenged pupils to clarify their thinking and to give reasons for their choice of materials. When teaching was satisfactory there were fewer opportunities for pupils to work individually and take responsibility for their own learning. Teachers always shared the learning objectives with pupils, so that they had a clear understanding of what they had to achieve by the end of the session.
- 125 Design and technology is managed well by the coordinator. The recently appointed coordinator is enthusiastic about the subject, and has a very clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject. The quality of the curriculum has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Pupils have more opportunities to make their own decisions and choices when making and designing products. Teachers assess pupils' work informally during lessons, and pupils are involved in evaluating their work against agreed criteria. Also, there are formal opportunities to assess work against national criteria, and to have it moderated by the school staff. This information is used well to track pupils' progress and to adapt and change the curriculum.
- 126 The resources for teaching design and technology are good. They are of good quality and, in the lessons observed, were well used. The use of information technology is developing well and is good overall.

GEOGRAPHY

- 127 It was only possible to see one lesson during the inspection. Evidence of previous work, discussion with teachers and pupils, and an analysis of pupils' work on display and their notebooks indicate that standards are satisfactory. There was insufficient evidence to make a secure judgment on the quality of teaching and learning. These findings are similar to those of the last inspection.
- 128 Strengths are the:
- well balanced curriculum with good opportunities for field work;
 - good cross curricular links with other subjects
- 129 By the age of 11, pupils have studied a range of geographical topics and have a growing understanding of physical and human geography. They understand, for example, about the course of a river, and are able to use the correct terminology to explain its features, changes and the importance of the water cycle. Pupils have a well developed knowledge of maps, and can use atlases and Ordnance Survey maps with confidence. They have used these skills well to develop a strong knowledge of the local area, and identified ways in which man has changed the environment. For example, Year 6 pupils have devised a questionnaire for local residents about the impact of a local bypass on the community. Pupils' knowledge of other countries is satisfactory, and they compare and contrast lifestyles in other countries such as India, and identify physical features.
- 130 The curriculum planned for geography is good overall. A particularly good feature is the range of fieldwork undertaken, which supports a good range of local studies in each year group. Pupils carry out first hand enquiry, such as identifying local land use and the use of shops. The teachers make good use of cross curricular links: for example, developing numeracy skills when studying temperature, reading map scales and locating features using coordinates. The curriculum is also enriched through geography 'activity weeks' for all pupils. These provide very good opportunities for parental and community involvement. Examples of these are, visits by the 'Wild Waste Bus' for a project on recycling, the 'Bridging the Gap' group, who shared their knowledge and reminiscences about local farming, and a visit by a meteorologist who is also a parent. The use of information and communication technology is good. For example, pupils have tracked a rower crossing the Atlantic Ocean using satellite links and email.
- 131 Coordination of the subject is satisfactory. The policy and scheme of work provide good guidance for staff and ensure consistency across year groups. Assessment is good. Teachers keep a careful record of what pupils can do, and use this information well to support pupils' learning and plan subsequent work for them.

HISTORY

- 132 By the end of Year 6, pupils attain average standards in history. These findings are similar to those of the last inspection. Evidence from the scrutiny of work shows that pupils are now making good progress and are learning well. However, achievement is satisfactory overall. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are well supported and the work is always matched to their needs. Likewise, higher attaining pupils are well challenged and given ample learning opportunities. There are good opportunities given for pupils to discuss work, cooperate in groups and develop their ideas.
- 133 Strengths are:
- the quality of teaching and learning in the subject;
 - the attitudes and response of the pupils;
 - activities such as visits that enrich the curriculum;
 - practical first hand experience;
 - opportunities for extended writing.
- 134 An areas for development is:
- Improvement to the number of historical artefacts.

- 135 By the end of Year 6 pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of how life in past times and cultures was different from life today. Younger pupils study the Romans as invaders of Britain. They use their research skills well to compile a fact file on an aspect of Roman life, and compare it to their own experience of modern life in the 21st century. There are good opportunities for pupils to consolidate and review their ideas about life in Roman Britain during a school based 'Roman Day'. Year 4 pupils study the Ancient Greeks, and use a wide variety of resources including video, pictures and text to find out about the ancient Gods. Older pupils in Year 5 make good use of opportunities for extended writing to gain a historical perspective about early civilisations and their conquest. For example, they consider the Aztec civilisation through the eyes of Spanish invaders, and compare it with an Aztecs' view of the Spanish invaders. Year 6 pupils study Ancient Egypt, and investigate their way of life, their dynasties, religious beliefs and the influence of the River Nile on their culture. Pupils are encouraged to use their individual research skills to find out about the details of mummification, hunting and toys and games.
- 136 Throughout the school, research skills are developed systematically, and historical contexts are compared with the pupils' views of modern life in the 21st century. By the age of 11, pupils are able to empathise with life in the past and relate it to their lives today.
- 137 The quality of teaching and learning is good. Six lessons were seen, of which three were satisfactory, one was good, one was very good and the other was excellent. Lessons are thoroughly planned, and teachers make good use of the available resources to bring history alive for pupils. When teaching is very good or excellent, teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to make deductions based on a thorough evaluation of first hand evidence including historical objects. Teachers' very secure subject knowledge enables them to present key ideas in a manner that pupils can understand, while at the same time looking in depth at the principles involved. When teaching is satisfactory, there are fewer opportunities to develop pupils' skills at interpreting evidence and the pace of the lessons is slower. However, there are good opportunities to develop pupils' literacy skills through writing play scripts linked to Theseus and the Minotaur, or empathising about the execution of Anne Boleyn through poetry.
- 138 Leadership and management are satisfactory. The coordinator is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject, and the action plan for development has appropriate priorities. Teachers keep a careful record of what pupils can do, and satisfactorily use this information to support pupils' learning and plan subsequent work for them. The resources in the subject are satisfactory overall. The school has a satisfactory range of artefacts, but they could be improved. These are supplemented by visits to sites of historical interest and through special school based 'history days'. There are some good examples of the use of information and communication technology and the internet for historical research by groups and individuals.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- 139 The previous inspection indicated that standards and pupil attainment in information and communication technology were below those expected nationally. Since the last inspection standards have improved and are now in line with those found nationally for pupils aged 11. This represents a significant improvement.
- 140 Strengths are that:
- The numbers and quality of computers has been improved.
 - All pupils now have regular access to the direct teaching of information and communication technology skills.
 - The quality of teaching is very good.
 - The level of teacher competence and confidence has been raised through training and the recruitment of enthusiastic teachers.
- 141 An area for development is that:
- Day to day marking needs to be improved so that the pupils are clear about how to improve their work.

- 142 The level of provision has improved and the school is now in a strong position to raise standards even further. Improvements have been made to equipment and facilities, and more curriculum time has been provided for the development of information and communication technology skills. An information and communication technology suite has been built with a good number of computers of good quality. The broad and balanced scheme of work is of good quality, and provides comprehensive coverage of the requirements of the National Curriculum. For example, all groups of pupils now have regular access to the direct teaching of information and communication technology skills, as well as opportunities to develop and support work in other subjects. Pupils are now achieving well, given their previous levels of attainment and experience. The school now has an internet policy, and subscribes to a filtered service designed to block any material that is undesirable for children.
- 143 Pupils demonstrate a wide range of information and communication technology skills, which they are beginning to apply in other subjects. For example, Year 6 have used skills to research topics for projects, and have successfully downloaded information from the internet and incorporated graphics and images into their work. They are also confident at using multimedia programs. In one Year 5 lesson, pupils were able to resize the map of the school, and then highlight areas using the mouse, before copying and pasting them into other applications. All pupils are developing their skills at data handling, control and composing well. For example, pupils in Year 3 were able to organise and amend musical phrases using screen icons. The more able pupils were able to change the sound source and develop more complex sequences. Pupils across the school can enter data and use information well to produce charts and graphs. They have also developed their word processing skills well, and can change the quality of text including font styles, size and colour to maximise effect. The vast majority of pupils of all ages can access the internet, and many can communicate with email. For example, pupils were able to track the progress of an Atlantic rower via email and satellite links. Information and communication technology is used well to support the literacy and numeracy strategies effectively.
- 144 The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good, and is having a positive effect on raising the previously unsatisfactory standards. The level of teacher competence and confidence has been raised through school based training and the recruitment of enthusiastic teachers. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and plan effectively. They give very clear introductions to lessons and this, together with high expectations of pupil behaviour, enables pupils to concentrate very well when working independently. Pupils also have a very clear understanding of what is expected of them because it is explained clearly to them at the beginning of lessons. The learning support staff provide very good support both for pupils and for the day to day management of the information and communication technology suite.
- 145 Pupils work very well together, cooperate when making decisions, and have a very positive attitude to information and communication technology. The very positive relationship established by teachers enables pupils to work together sharing ideas and taking turns to operate the computer. Pupils are highly motivated, and treat equipment very well. The well established routines for logging on, saving and retrieving work ensure that lessons run smoothly and efficiently.
- 146 Assessment is satisfactory. Teachers keep careful records of what pupils can do, and satisfactorily use this information to support pupils' learning and plan subsequent work for them. The school is building a database to track pupils' progress and has set challenging targets for raising standards in information and communication technology. The school has started compiling a portfolio of work to ensure the accuracy and consistency of teachers' assessments. However, day to day marking needs to be improved so that the pupils are clear about how to improve their work.
- 147 Leadership and management are good. The coordinator has a very realistic view about the strengths and weaknesses within this subject, and has a clear view for its future development. He is already taking effective action to improve standards. Teachers' planning has been monitored and evaluated, and pupils' work sampled to check on the standards achieved and the rate at which they make progress. There have been significant improvements to the number of good quality

computers, a good new scheme of work has been adopted across the school, and there are good links with other curriculum areas.

MUSIC

148 Standards achieved by the end of Year 6 are in line with expectations. At the time of the last inspection standards were judged below expectations, but since then there have been improvements in staffing and resources and overall improvement in curriculum delivery. Pupils of all abilities make good progress, enjoy music and receive a broad range of musical experiences. Assemblies also provide opportunity for pupils to listen to a wide range of music. Pupils have very positive attitudes to music and most approach tasks with enthusiasm.

149 Strengths are:

- staffing and resources have been improved;
- pupils of all abilities make good progress;
- the quality of teaching is mostly good and sometimes excellent;
- staff confidence has increased through training, together with a well resourced and detailed scheme of work;
- subject development has been a key priority for the school.

150 Areas for development are:

- the monitoring of planning;
- a more structured approach to assessment.

151 Pupils are developing a good understanding of musical terms such as tempo, phrasing and sequences. They are able to copy and create a range of rhythmic patterns and explore sounds using tuned and untuned percussion and through music technology. Pupils have learned songs by heart and sing with enjoyment. Their attitudes to learning and behaviour are very good and they work very well together on musical activities.

152 The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. In the lessons observed during the inspection, teaching was very good or excellent in two lessons, good in one lesson and satisfactory in another. Teachers' very good subject knowledge, teaching of basic skills, effective planning and high expectations lead to good quality learning by pupils, including those with special educational needs. Pupils' very good attitudes towards music, their very good behaviour and very good relationships are instrumental in enabling them to learn very well and achieve well. The management of pupils is very good. Pupils' interest and enthusiasm are engaged, and they apply creative effort to their work. In all lessons observed good use was made of instruments.

153 In addition to pupils' learning during lessons, there are opportunities for pupils to sing in the choir, and take part in whole school musical productions. Music tutors visit the school and many pupils have opportunities to learn to play a musical instrument. Staff confidence has increased through staff training supported with a good quality and well resourced scheme of work. This has enabled the school to deliver units of work, which support the progressive development of musical skills. However, the monitoring of planning to track the development of pupils' musical knowledge and skills as they move through the school is not yet in place. Also, there is a need for a more systematic approach to the assessment of pupils' achievements. The school has already identified these areas of development.

154 The management of music is very good. The new headteacher had quickly realised that the development of music was a key priority for the school, and responded to this challenge by appointing a creative arts coordinator. He has already made a significant impact on the quality and breadth of the curriculum. This is particularly noticeable in the provision and standards in music, which were judged to be unsatisfactory at the last inspection. Musical provision has already been carefully audited and a good new scheme of work has been successfully introduced. The coordinator's enthusiasm and excellent subject knowledge and expertise have already effectively raised the profile of the subject within the school and the wider community.

155 Musical resources have improved since the last inspection, but only satisfactorily meet the requirements of the subject. The development of music technology is at an early stage, but there is a clear rationale for the development of information and communication technology to support learning. The school has made good links with other local schools and made use of the local education authority to support subject development. Parents believe that standards in music have improved significantly, and appreciate the musical production organised by the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

156 It was not possible to see the full range of physical education activities during the period of the inspection, and there was insufficient evidence to make a secure judgment about standards in all aspects of the subject. However, standards in dance were good in a lesson observed in Year 4. Again, standards in games were good in the Years 5 and 6 games lessons. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous report, when standards were satisfactory. By the age of 11, standards in swimming are also good. There are no significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, and those pupils with English as an additional language achieve well.

157 Strengths are:

- scheme of work ensures that pupils develop a wide range of skills in swimming, dance, games and gymnastics activities;
- the quality of teaching and learning is mostly good;
- effective evaluation of the school's development needs;
- staff confidence has increased through training.

158 Pupils attained good standards in dance in Year 4. They were challenged to perform dance movements that communicated character and narrative based on the musical 'Cats'. They participated enthusiastically, listened carefully to what the teacher was saying to them and tried very hard to improve, using the clear guidance they were given. Throughout the lesson, pupils cooperated very well, discussed their performance with the teacher and suggested ways to improve their movements. Pupils demonstrated precision, control and fluency in their performances, and were developing a good understanding of composition.

159 The oldest pupils attain standards in games that are above average for their age. All pupils change into physical education kit, and good attention is paid to health and safety. Year 6 pupils enthusiastically participated in small team games, and were learning a variety of passes, including bounce and shoulder passing. They showed good cooperation and were developing good tactical and positional skills, as well as precision and control in their movements. Pupils learned how to mark opponents, and were developing a good understanding of rules and strategies, as well as an awareness of the importance of fitness. Year 5 pupils were developing a broader range of techniques and skills for attacking and defending in hockey. They practised passing and receiving the ball, as well as stick control when dribbling. Year 3 pupils were able to demonstrate satisfactory balance and control when developing a sequence of movements, both in floor work and using apparatus. They worked well together and made useful suggestions when evaluating each other's performance.

160 The quality of teaching is good overall, and ranges from very good to satisfactory. One lesson was judged to be very good, four lessons were good and one was satisfactory. The importance of healthy and safe routines, and the promotion of fitness were emphasised in all lessons. The teachers had very good subject knowledge and promoted lessons of good pace and timing. Equal opportunities for all pupils were implicit in both planning and practice, and the teachers promoted positive discipline strategies well, by providing praise and encouragement. Lessons were usually very well planned and structured, and learning objectives were clearly identified and shared with the class. This helps to ensure that pupils know what they are to learn. Teachers' instructions were clear, and pupils generally listen well and follow these with enthusiasm. In gymnastics, good opportunities were provided for pupils to work in pairs or small groups. This promotes collaborative working and very good relationships. Teachers carefully evaluate lessons and complete records, as well as undertaking informal assessment during lessons. In all the lessons seen there was

good encouragement for pupils to participate in well planned and interesting warm up and cool down activities.

- 161 The subject is very well managed. Good progress has been made since the last inspection in 1997, and the school has reviewed both the scheme of work and the policy. These are of very good quality, and contain relevant guidance on teaching strategies, equal opportunities, assessment and health and safety. The scheme of work now ensures that pupils develop a wide range of skills in swimming, dance, games and gymnastics activities. These activities are supported by a very good range of resources. Pupils also have the opportunity to take part in adventurous activities during residential visits.
- 162 The coordinator has also been instrumental in developing the extensive range of extra curricular clubs, which support physical education. She has attended relevant in service training herself, and involved members of the community and other experts well in the development of physical education activities in the school. The coordinator has effectively evaluated the school's development needs, and has appropriate plans in place for enhancing community involvement and external expertise. She monitors teachers' plans and lessons to ensure quality of provision during the term when physical education is designated a development area for the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 163 At the time of the last inspection standards in this subject were reported as being satisfactory. However, there was a lack of artefacts and resources and the scheme of work needed updating. Since then the situation has improved significantly, and standards and progress are now good. There are no significant differences in the achievement of boys and girls, pupils with special educational needs, or pupils for whom English is an additional language. Religious education is now taught as a separate subject, and a new coordinator has been appointed. There is good policy guidance and a scheme of work, outlined in an annual plan of suitable religious topics, including Christianity and a number of comparative religions. The scheme of work also complies with the Oxfordshire Religious Education agreed syllabus. There is now a comprehensive list of well organised resources; artefacts are provided for teachers, as well as useful support materials devised by the coordinator.
- 164 The curriculum provision conforms to national and local authority expectations, and there is appropriate provision for collective worship within a carefully structured plan, for the whole school. This plan incorporates recognition of Christian festivals and traditions, an emphasis upon issues relating to the development of pupils' moral, social and spiritual development, the inclusion of songs of praise, and celebrations of pupils' achievements.
- 165 The quality of teaching is good overall. Four lessons were observed. Two lessons were of good quality and the remainder were very good. In a Year 6 lesson, the teacher built upon the story of St Peter, and encouraged pupils to devise dramatic scenarios, related to everyday life, to exemplify the concepts of denial, courage, and forgiveness. Pupils participated very well in this lesson, and their contributions indicated good understanding of the religious themes. In a Year 5 lesson, the teachers built upon earlier learning of the story of the 'Good Samaritan', and encouraged pupils to relate the moral teaching in the story to ideas of good neighbourliness in the contemporary world. Pupils in Year 4 learn about many religious issues, including the spiritual meaning of pilgrimages, and about their significance in a range of world religions. Year 3 pupils learn about values, for example, such as 'appreciation', and are able to relate this understanding to events and people in their own lives. They also understand the meanings and significance of symbols in different religions, and this is supported by visits to different places of worship.
- 166 The coordinator provides very good leadership. She has given teachers support packs, has arranged training about comparative religions, and has provided advice to colleagues on the use of the Oxfordshire strands of learning, for assessment purposes. The coordinator also monitors pupils' work to check on standards and has plans to observe the quality of teaching and learning. Resources to support teaching and learning are very good. The use of information and communication technology to support work in religious education is satisfactory.