

INSPECTION REPORT

CLIFTON HAMPDEN CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Clifton Hampden

LEA area: Oxfordshire

Unique reference number: 123127

Headteacher: Mrs Anthea Pearson

Reporting inspector: Mr Fred Riches
23235

Dates of inspection: 2 - 4 June 2003

Inspection number: 248429

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Controlled

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Clifton Hampden
Oxfordshire

Postcode: OX14 3EE

Telephone number: 01865 407700

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Helen Bottomley

Date of previous inspection: January 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23235	Fred Riches	Registered inspector	English Art and Design Geography History Music Foundation Stage Special Educational Needs Equal Opportunities	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
09052	Helen Barter	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
30618	Paul Story	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Information and Communication Technology Design and Technology Physical Education Religious Education	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School has 46 boys and girls on roll aged four to eleven, including three children in the reception year. All attend full time. The number on roll is similar to that at the last inspection. The gender balance is fairly even. Children live mainly in owner-occupied homes. A quarter live in Clifton Hampden. The rest come from outside the school's area. Pupils are almost all of white United Kingdom origin. The very small number of bilingual pupils are fluent in English and require no additional support. Attainment on entry to the school varies year on year. It is above average in most years and occasionally average. Eleven per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is below average. The school has nine per cent of pupils with identified special educational needs. This is below average. Currently no pupils have statements of special educational need.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Clifton Hampden is a good school with many strengths. Pupils of all abilities achieve well as a result of good teaching. Standards in English are particularly high. The new headteacher and governing body have maintained a positive ethos and provide a clear educational direction. The staff are dedicated and work very well as a team. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils consistently achieve very high standards in all aspects of English and more able pupils apply their communication skills very successfully in several subjects
- Good teaching ensures that pupils of all abilities achieve well
- The most stimulating aspects of the curriculum are linked to local environmental work or visits and result in high standards among older pupils in history, geography and art
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to work are very good, as a result of strong provision for personal development and a very caring ethos
- The headteacher and governing body provide a clear educational direction to ensure the school's aims are fulfilled
- Working in close partnership, parents make a significant contribution to the success of the school

What could be improved

- Assessment procedures are over-complicated and do not provide sufficiently clear information to help teachers track pupils' progress and set clear targets
- The secure outdoor area for pupils in the reception year is too small and is underdeveloped *
- Facilities for the headteacher, teaching and administrative staff are unsatisfactory*

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

** These items are already identified by the school for action in its current improvement plan*

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good improvement since it was inspected in January 1998. It has raised standards considerably in English and maintained them in mathematics and science. The school has fully addressed all of the key issues raised at the previous inspection, with particular success in raising standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and music. It has improved curriculum planning and is in a good position to move forward.

STANDARDS

The comparative statistical table is not included as the number of pupils in year groups is below eleven. With very small numbers in each year group, statistical comparisons can change rapidly. For example, each pupil in a year group of ten represents ten per cent. One gifted pupil or one pupil with learning difficulties can change comparative school grades considerably.

In three of the last four years, Year 6 pupils have achieved standards in English that were among the top five per cent of schools nationally. They have been consistently well above those of similar schools (those with fewer than eight per cent of pupils eligible for free school meals). In mathematics, Year 6 pupils achieved standards well above the national average in three of the last four years. All pupils reached the national standard level 4 last year in mathematics and science, but fewer achieved the higher level 5 in these subjects than in English. Consequently standards overall were in line with those of similar schools in mathematics and below in science. In the current year, with a small proportion of pupils with identified learning needs, standards are still well above average in the main in all aspects of English. They are average in mathematics and science. The school is already raising the level of challenge for more able pupils in mathematics and science in order to match standards reached in English. It is set to meet the suitably challenging targets set for English and mathematics this year. Standards have improved well since the last inspection.

Standards in reading at age seven have been consistently well above average in recent years. They were well above those of similar schools last year. In writing, standards last year were above average and in line with those of similar schools. In mathematics, they were well above average and above those of similar schools. In science, all pupils reached the standard level 2 last year, which put the school among the top five per cent of schools nationally. This year standards at age seven, in a very small year group of mixed ability, are broadly average in all subjects.

Pupils of all abilities achieve well throughout the school. There is no significant difference between boys' and girls' attainment. Standards in geography, history and art at age eleven are well above average and pupils make very good progress through Key Stage 2 as a result of the way teachers make learning relevant and interesting. Standards in other National Curriculum subjects and religious education, at ages seven and eleven and throughout Key Stages 1 and 2, are average. (No judgement was possible on standards in physical education, as no lessons were seen.) Pupils achieve well in their application of ICT skills in various subject contexts. The size and shape of the secure outdoor area restricts learning opportunities for children's physical development in the reception year. Despite this, they achieve satisfactorily. They achieve well in all other areas of learning and meet the early learning goals by the time they reach Year 1.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are very positive about the school. They enjoy their learning and are eager to do well. All are attentive and listen carefully to staff and volunteer adults.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils have a very good understanding of right and wrong, are very aware of the school's high expectations and respond accordingly. Older pupils' behaviour is excellent.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils willingly undertake responsibilities. Older pupils respond very well to opportunities to show initiative and develop independent learning. They frequently look after younger ones.
Attendance	Very good. Well above the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is good throughout the school and within each of the three key stages. It includes some very good teaching of English and mathematics with the oldest pupils, and of music in Key Stage 2. Some aspects of other lessons throughout the school also include examples of very good teaching.

In the reception year and Key Stage 1, the teacher's careful organisation and lesson planning are strengths. Teaching ensures that tasks are matched closely to pupils' abilities in all three year groups. The teacher uses time and deploys support staff well, for example creating opportunities for reception children to participate in imaginative role play while those in Years 1 and 2 focus on reading skills. Teachers implement the national literacy and numeracy strategies successfully throughout the school, promoting pupils' skills effectively. Pupils' speaking, listening, reading and writing skills are a major strength. These are extremely well developed through imaginative application in many contexts, particularly in history and geography. Thorough planning and preparation underpin the good teaching in Key Stage 2. Teachers routinely share the lesson aims with pupils to help them focus. They sustain a brisk pace and encourage pupils to communicate what they have achieved in closing discussions. Throughout the school, pupils of all abilities learn successfully because teachers match tasks to their needs, supporting those who need additional help. In Key Stage 2, teachers extend higher attainers particularly successfully in art and in subjects where pupils apply their literacy skills. The school is currently working hard to extend higher attainers further in mathematics and science. All teachers deploy teaching assistants successfully and make increasingly effective use of ICT in a variety of lessons to support pupils' learning. They also make very good use of homework to stimulate family discussion for younger pupils and independent learning skills for the older ones.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Broad and well balanced with a range of interesting activities. Meets statutory requirements. Often imaginative and stimulating. Includes French at Key Stage 2. Very good range of clubs, visits and visitors. Restricted outdoor activities in the Foundation Stage.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Carefully planned support and very good involvement of pupils and parents in planning and reviewing learning.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. School promotes all aspects well. Strong local culture and good attention to other cultures. Very good opportunities, particularly for older pupils, to care for others, develop organisational skills and show initiative.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good care and attention to welfare. Strong family atmosphere. Caring staff create a very supportive environment. Satisfactory procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress, but over-complicated.

The school has very effective links with parents. Parents hold the school in high regard, are involved exceedingly well in its work and support their children's learning very effectively. The Parent Teacher Association plays a vital role in the life of the school and the local community and makes a significant financial contribution.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The new headteacher provides a very good teaching model, sets a clear educational direction and gives a very supportive lead to all staff. She successfully encourages staff to develop their management and leadership skills and works very closely with governors and parents.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body fulfils its role well. Wider delegation of governor roles since the last inspection has led to improved efficiency. Governors play a full, very active and supportive role. The school meets all statutory requirements.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Headteacher and governors make good use of comparative data to set priorities. Performance management procedures are fully in place. Development planning is satisfactory and procedures are being sharpened.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Day-to-day administration and financial management are good. The school applies the principles of best value satisfactorily.

The school is very well staffed. Resources are adequate. Some aspects of accommodation are unsatisfactory, restricting the youngest children's physical development and school efficiency. The school has plans in place to address these difficulties.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children make good progress and enjoy school • Teaching is good and the school expects children to work hard and do their best. • Behaviour is good and the school is helping children become more mature and responsible. • Leadership and management are good and the whole staff team is dedicated and committed. • The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons and children get the right amount of work to do at home. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few would like to be better informed about how their children are getting on.

Twelve parents attended the meeting held by the registered inspector and 16 replies to the questionnaire were received.

The inspection fully endorses the positive views expressed by parents at the meeting and through questionnaires. The sharing of information on pupils' progress through the use of work samples and teachers' assessment information does not always give a sufficiently clear picture. The school is already looking into ways of making information more regularly and readily available to parents, especially those who do not have the benefit of daily informal contact with teachers. The inspection finds the school's communication with parents is otherwise good overall.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

How well do pupils at Clifton Hampden achieve?

1 Pupils of all abilities achieve well throughout the school, as a result of good teaching. Pupils learn successfully because the high level of staffing and thorough organisation and planning ensure that work is closely matched to each pupil's abilities. Pupils with special educational needs do well because their needs are clearly identified and they receive well-planned support. More able pupils, including those with particular gifts and talents, are also identified and do well, especially in all aspects of English, and in history, geography and art. This is because they are challenged and extended very well in these subject areas, especially at Key Stage 2. There is no significant difference between boys' and girls' achievement.

In a small school what can analysis of test data show?

2 With very small numbers of pupils, average attainment (in relation to National Curriculum levels) in each year group can vary considerably. The largest year group currently in the school contains nine pupils and the smallest three. Recent results in national tests at age eleven show consistently higher attainment in English than in mathematics and science. The school is aware of this and its correct analysis shows that while all pupils achieved the standard level 4 in all three subjects last year, more pupils achieve the higher level 5 in English than in mathematics and science.

What do recent results of national tests at age eleven show?

3 In three of the last four years, Year 6 pupils have achieved standards in English that were among the top five per cent of schools nationally. They have been consistently well above those of similar schools. In mathematics, Year 6 pupils achieved standards well above the national average in three of the last four years. Last year, although all pupils achieved level 4, standards overall were in line with those of similar schools in mathematics because a smaller proportion achieved level 5 at Clifton Hampden than in similar schools. In science, standards were in line with the national average, but below those of similar schools. Again, all pupils attained the level 4 standards, but the proportion reaching higher was smaller than in similar schools.

What are the standards in the current Year 6?

4 In the current year, with a higher proportion of pupils with identified learning needs than the previous year, standards are well above average in all aspects of English, but average in mathematics and science. A high proportion of pupils in Year 6 are extremely articulate. Their speaking and listening skills are of a very high standard. Reading and writing skills are also very well developed. Examples of extended writing show higher attainers composing stories several chapters in length, using a wide and interesting vocabulary, organising their writing successfully into paragraphs, spelling and using punctuation accurately. Pupils read fluently and with expression, showing a clear understanding of characters and plot.

How effective has the school been in raising standards in mathematics and science?

5 The school is already working at raising expectations in mathematics and science in order to match standards reached in English. For example, all Year 6 pupils have enthusiastically attended a mathematics club and an extra lesson each week in science has helped consolidate pupils' learning this year. Pupils have worked in a more focused way to develop their scientific enquiry skills alongside their factual knowledge and have spent more time developing data-handling skills. These aspects had been identified by staff from previous

work as areas of comparative weakness. Although one or two pupils with identified learning needs may find it hard to reach level 4 in mathematics this year, higher attainers are being challenged more thoroughly. As a result of the well-focused studies, the school is on course to meet the challenging targets set for Year 6 attainment in English and mathematics this year and pupils are set to achieve well in science.

What are standards like at age seven?

6 Standards at age seven have been consistently well above average in reading in recent years. In 2001 they were in the top five per cent nationally. Standards were well above those of similar schools last year. In writing, standards last year were above average and in line with those of similar schools. In the previous two years they were well above average. Standards in mathematics have risen from below average in 1999 and 2000 to above average in 2001 and well above average last year, and above those of similar schools. In science, all pupils reached the standard level 2 last year, which put the school among the top five per cent of schools nationally. An average proportion achieved the higher level 3. Standards were in line with those of similar schools. This year, in a very small year group of mixed ability, standards at age seven are broadly average in all subjects.

What are the standards on entry and at the end of the Foundation Stage?

7 Children's level of attainment on entry varies year on year in schools such as Clifton Hampden, which have very small year groups. In most years, children's attainment has been above average, but in a few it is average overall. Children make mainly good progress through their reception year in all areas of learning. By the time they move into Year 1, all children have usually reached the Early Learning Goals set for the end of the Foundation Stage and a few have already begun to work at the earliest level of the National Curriculum. In the current year, attainment on entry in a very small year group is average overall. All are set to meet the early learning goals. They make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and in both creative and mathematical development. They make equally good progress in communication, language and literacy and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. They make satisfactory progress in their physical development, where the limited facilities of the outdoor secure area restrict progress.

What improvement has the school made since the last inspection?

8 Overall the school has made good improvement in terms of pupils' performance at the end of both Key Stages in English, mathematics and science. Pupils' attainment in English was judged average at the end of both key stages at the time of the last inspection in January 1998. Results in national tests have been much higher every year since then. In particular, in 2002, Year 6 pupils' performance in English was in the top five per cent of schools nationally at age eleven. These pupils had clearly made excellent progress through Key Stage 2, as their English at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1998 was average. In mathematics and science, pupils' attainment was judged average at the end of Key Stage 1 and above average at the end of Key Stage 2 in 1998. Standards in mathematics have been higher in the main since that time. In science, results have been more varied, with average attainment in the last two years.

What are standards like in other subjects?

9 Standards in geography, history and art at age eleven and throughout Key Stage 2 are well above average, with a few pupils in each year group showing very high levels of knowledge and understanding and using very high levels of skill in these subjects. These very high standards stem from the imaginative teaching. The involvement of visiting experts, the focus on the locality and the excellent use of homework tasks add to the quality of the work undertaken. Pupils become thoroughly involved in their studies and by doing the best they can produce work of very high quality. A little French is taught at Key Stage 2, but this

subject was not on the timetable during the three inspection days and not required to be inspected.

10 Standards in design and technology, ICT and music at age eleven are average. The improvement in ICT and music is particularly notable, as standards were below average in these subjects at age eleven at the last inspection. Standards at age seven are broadly average in all National Curriculum subjects. Pupils' standards in religious education meet the requirements of the Oxfordshire agreed syllabus. Standards achieved in swimming are good, as shown by the school's records, but no judgement was possible on standards in either key stage in other aspects of physical education, as no lessons were seen.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11 Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are very good. Since the last inspection the school has worked hard to maintain and strengthen this area of its work. This is reflected in the quality of pupils' responses, their very positive attitudes and the increasing maturity of behaviour they exhibit.

Pupils' attitudes

12 Pupils' are eager to attend school and have very positive attitudes to learning. They take pride in their school and describing the things they enjoy. Good routines are established when children enter the school. This means they quickly develop the ability to concentrate on the task in hand and have very good attitudes to their work. The caring, welcoming approach of staff and good use of encouragement means that children quickly settle into full time schooling. Good teaching helps them to develop a sense of achievement and a joy of learning. They learn to listen carefully to instructions, work with others, try their best and concentrate on what they are doing. This was evident as the three children in the reception class sorted shells by properties during a numeracy session.

13 As pupils progress through the school these attitudes are developed and strengthened. Very good relationships ensure that pupils work closely together in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. Strong Christian values are evident in this approach and visitors are impressed, as indeed are parents, by the caring family atmosphere throughout the school. The good or better teaching stimulates pupils' interest so that they are enthusiastic and eager to learn. This was seen in lessons throughout the school. Pupils are keen to join in and contribute and there is no shortage of answers to their teachers' questions. In assemblies all ages take evident delight in joining in songs and contributing ideas and information, as in the whole school discussion about the ascent of Everest.

Pupils' behaviour

14 Overall behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good. Amongst the eldest pupils it is often excellent. Pupils respond very well to the school's policy for positively reinforcing and rewarding good behaviour and are attentive to their teachers. Where attention occasionally strays, as seen amongst some of the youngest pupils, it is quickly and suitably corrected and does not interfere with the learning. Pupils are very clear about the behaviour expected and how it is reinforced through assemblies, religious education and discussions during personal, social and health education (PSHE) sessions. They have been actively involved in drawing up rules for their classroom and the playground. Pupils respond very well to all the adults in the school and are courteous to both them and visitors, thanking an inspector for hearing them read, for example.

15 Pupils use equipment and resources carefully and for their intended purpose, clearing away quickly so that time is not wasted. At lunchtimes older pupils sit with younger ones and all quietly wait to collect their meal or calmly talk to others at their table. Those with packed

lunches sit sensibly on the terrace, weather permitting, in small groups creating a picture of serenity. In the playground all ages and genders mix well and play in harmony. There have been no exclusions. Pupils report in discussions that there is no bullying, racism or sexism and certainly there was no evidence of any during the inspection. They are clear that arguments are quickly resolved, everyone gets on and that they would go to an adult if there were a problem. Parents' views support this and all have a positive view of behaviour.

Pupils' personal development

16 The very good relationships that are apparent throughout the school have a significant impact on the quality of pupils' learning because they clearly feel valued, secure and well supported. Pupils are polite and considerate to staff, visitors and each other. They listen carefully to what others have to say and value their views. Encouraged to respect others' values and beliefs they look after each other well and sensitively respond to other points of view. They are very aware of the effects of their actions on others as for example how football in the small playground restricts the enjoyment and choices for others. They appreciate opportunities to contribute their ideas through the suggestion box and other routes and are appreciative of the way in which these are noted and responded to. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, are well supported and treated respectfully by their classmates.

17 From early on pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for remembering to take work home, tidying up after lessons and completing tasks around the school. Older pupils set out materials and resources for lessons, take charge of lunchtime play equipment, prepare the quiet room for assembly and read grace prior to lunch. As well as their direct contributions during productions and services they organise equipment, manage themselves and ensure all runs smoothly. They take these roles very seriously and are very good role models for younger pupils. Pupils are actively involved in fundraising, whether for the school or charities, with recent examples being the Blue Peter Bring and Buy sale and Seeds for Africa. They frequently work independently, particularly when researching projects or for homework, and often work collaboratively on tasks without the need for direct supervision, as seen in numeracy and literacy sessions and when using ICT.

18 The school's strong commitment to pupils' personal development is well demonstrated by the biennial residential visit for Years 5 and 6 to Yenworthy. This includes outdoor and adventurous pursuits to develop individual and team qualities as well as providing the valuable experience for pupils of caring for themselves. It effectively extends qualities already developed through productions and team building activities like the maths shape challenge. A very good example of their maturity was the decision by the football team to choose a female member as captain.

Attendance

19 Attendance is very good. Last year it was well above the national average and there were no unauthorised absences. Pupils arrive punctually and quickly settle to completing tasks. They clearly enjoy school, are eager to see their classmates and to share their news with others.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20 The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. Of 13 lessons seen, eight were good, three very good and two satisfactory. Pupils' work in all year groups confirms the pattern of good learning throughout the school. In English, history, geography and art at Key Stage 2, and in mathematics with the oldest pupils, teaching is particularly strong and pupils

learn very successfully. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. The school has maintained the overall good quality of teaching since the last inspection.

Teaching in the Foundation Stage

21 Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good overall. Sessions are well planned and teacher and assistant use questions very effectively to develop children's thinking and communication skills. The teaching of early reading and writing skills is particularly effective and a range of well planned activities help children to feel involved and successful in their learning. The reception teacher deploys the teaching assistant very effectively and their teamwork contributes very positively to children's learning. For example, in a literacy lesson, the assistant instigated imaginative role play with reception children while Years 1 and 2 focused on reading a text. Year 2 pupils then worked with the assistant while reception children joined Year 1 for some work on rhyme and phonics. Children's learning is mainly good because of the well-organised range of activities and the fact that both teacher and assistant know the children's abilities well. Their expectations are therefore consistent and this helps children feel secure, as well as ensuring tasks are pitched at their level. The limitations of the secure outdoor area hinder children's physical development, but staff make good use of the equipment and the area available.

Strengths in teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2

22 The consistent strengths in teaching throughout Years 1 to 6 are:

- thorough planning and preparation (seen in all lessons, with very good examples in a Key Stage 2 music lesson and in literacy and numeracy lessons);
- regular sharing of the lesson aims at the start of each lesson in language the pupils understand;
- very good organisation in the mixed age settings, with tasks very well matched to groups' and individuals' abilities;
- good use of questioning to ensure that pupils are alert and ready to participate actively in discussion;
- effective deployment of teaching assistants and other adults;
- teachers' very good relationships with pupils ensure that time is used efficiently, pupils settle quickly and focus well.
- regular, effective use of ICT programs and word-processing opportunities as learning tools to support pupils' learning in several subjects;
- very effective use of extended homework tasks in Key Stage 2, which offer particularly good challenge to higher attainers;

Areas for development in teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2

23 Occasionally the balance of activities in lessons results in too much input from the teacher and too little time for the pupils to complete their tasks or explain what they have learnt. In a few lessons teachers did not clarify time limits sufficiently for pupils. Although the teachers are aware of the time scale, they do not give pupils a sense of urgency by letting them know the time constraints; this results in a lack of application and a slower work rate in some instances. Examples of pupils' work over the past year show some inconsistency in expectations, where standards of presentation vary between very neat and rather careless.

Examples of very good teaching

24 In a very good literacy lesson with Years 5 and 6, the teacher was particularly successful in involving all pupils in creating various types of report and made time for each group to summarise what they had achieved. Particularly impressive was the way the teacher encouraged pupils to listen and comment on each other's work, which led to very high levels of listening and focused comment.

25 In a music lesson involving all Key Stage 2 pupils, each group achieved very well as a result of the teacher's high level of planning, extremely thorough preparation, clear instructions and very good deployment of support staff. As well as listening and commenting sensitively on an excerpt from 'Fingal's Cave', pupils learned from listening and appraising in order to compose their own arrangement, using layers of music. The teacher's close knowledge of pupils' abilities had led to the setting of appropriately high expectations for each group and the teacher managed time very well to allow opportunity for a group to share a performance of their composition.

The teaching of literacy and numeracy

26 All aspects of English and mathematics are taught well and in Years 5 and 6 teaching is very good in these subjects. The school adapts the national literacy and numeracy strategies successfully. The school's clear emphasis on these subjects is shown by the staffing policy. The school employs a teacher to take Years 3 and 4 for literacy and numeracy every morning. Teachers plan carefully for the different age groups and abilities. Marking is regular, focused and effective. The school allocates additional time for a mathematics club, attended by all of Year 6, following identification of weaknesses in data-handling and mathematical enquiry. The school's use of ICT to develop pupils' skills is a strength in both literacy and numeracy teaching. The very well planned use of literacy in the context of a range of other subjects is a particularly strong element of the school's provision.

Homework

27 The school uses homework very well to support pupils' learning. In Key Stage 1, the regular use of mathematical problems and investigations as weekly homework activities has helped raise standards in mathematics. At Key Stage 2, the very good use of extended homework tasks is one of the strengths that underpins pupils' high achievements in English, history and geography.

Teaching for pupils with special educational needs and to ensure equality of opportunity

28 Pupils with special educational needs are taught well. The support teacher draws up very well focused individual education plans, setting targets in liaison with pupils and their parents. Teachers and assistants ensure that pupils learn effectively by providing tasks well matched to their needs. They ensure that pupils feel valued and included by actively involving them in all lessons and by organising a variety of mixed ability groups. Boys and girls learn equally successfully and mix well. The pupils' sense of equality is exemplified in their choice of a girl as captain by a mainly boys' football team. The school identifies pupils' particular gifts and talents and meets higher attainers' needs well overall through good use of challenging activities.

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

29 Overall the school provides its pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum that is relevant to their needs and promotes their intellectual, physical and personal development well. It is enriched by very good use of the locality, visits and visitors. Work in the Foundation Stage covers the six areas of learning and is based on national guidance. In Years 1 to 6 it is based on all prescribed subjects of the National Curriculum, plus French in Years 3 to 6, and religious education is taught in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus. Suitable proportions of time are allocated to each subject with good links frequently made between the skills and knowledge of different subjects. There is a strong emphasis on practical activities to consolidate and extend skills and ensure meaningful learning experiences for all pupils. The key issues of the last inspection relating to curriculum planning, particularly in ICT and

music and providing opportunities for imaginative play for children under five have been addressed.

Development of the curriculum

30 Since the last inspection the school has continued to develop and modify its curriculum and its related documentation to take account of the key issues, changes in requirements and guidance from the Curriculum and Qualifications Authority. It is currently revising and updating its subject policies and has in place a suitable and realistic timetable for completing this in the near future. The school is awaiting receipt of the new version of the Locally Agreed Syllabus to review its scheme of work for religious education. However, in a small school like this, while information is readily shared, there are few to share the task of revising and updating documentation. Planning for most subjects is therefore currently based on national guidance with adaptation to match the content to the particular needs of the school and its pupils. Much help has been given by local authority advisers on matching and adapting tasks and topics to ensure suitable levels of challenge for the different ages and abilities in the two classes. The school now plans to formalise these working documents. Governors have been linked to subject areas and there are plans to involve them in this process.

31 Topics have been mapped to ensure all intended subjects are covered with suitably supportive links made between subjects. An overview of this has been shared with parents. Although in most areas much of this is relatively new the school has been careful to build on existing good practice when reviewing curricular areas and incorporating new requirements. A strong feature of the curriculum is the careful thought that has been given to the choice of topics and linkage of subjects within them to ensure natural rather than contrived links are made. This not only uses time efficiently it also creates meaningful learning experiences that enhance pupils' knowledge and understanding, as reflected in annual activities such as the Harvest Lunch and follow-up work to the production of 'The Firebird'. Homework projects such as 'bedroom designs' and 'endangered species' provide further good opportunities for independent research and employment of different subject skills.

32 Learning for the three reception children is suitably planned from the Foundation Stage curriculum with progress towards the 'Early Learning Goals' made through practical and enjoyable activities alongside pupils in Years 1 and 2. Opportunities for imaginative play have increased, but outdoor activities to promote children's physical development are limited by the small size of the secure play area.

33 The recent improvements in resources for ICT and the planned further development of an ICT suite have meant that the school is well placed to move forward in teaching and provision for this subject. There is already good evidence of the developing good use of ICT to support learning in other subjects and parents recognise the improvements already made.

34 The school has made, and continues to make, good use of specialist expertise to improve and strengthen specific areas of the curriculum. The music curriculum provides good guidance and the subject expertise provided by visiting instrumental specialists and the part time teacher support this well. Design and technology has benefited from the focused input of different specialists, as for example with the fairground models and the recent work on ballistas that arose from the Roman soldier's visit. Science work has been extended by links with Culham labs and the access this has provided to specialist knowledge and resources.

35 The school makes good use of the Berinsfield Sports Centre to provide opportunities for swimming and gymnastics, together with equally good use of students from Abingdon College to provide tuition for games.

Strategies for teaching numeracy and literacy

36 Teachers make good use of the clear and detailed guidance of the national strategies for numeracy and literacy to plan work for pupils of all ages and abilities in English and mathematics. Numeracy skills are practised and reinforced as pupils employ them in accomplishing other tasks. Literacy skills are clearly developed and extended as pupils access and complete tasks in many other subjects. Opportunities for this are regularly recognised and consistently exploited, particularly in English.

Equal opportunities

37 The school works hard to ensure that all pupils enjoy full equality of opportunity in the curriculum it provides and full access to all that it offers. Grouping by age and ability in mathematics and English helps to meet the needs of all pupils. Practical tasks, coupled with modifications for different age groups in other subjects, provide good opportunities for pupils to work at their own level. All pupils have equal access to clubs, sports and other activities provided by the school. Catch-up programmes such as Early Literacy Support (ELS) and Further Literacy Support (FLS) are used well to develop pupils' literacy skills and enable them to access the curriculum. In mathematics the Maths Club provides similar support for older pupils and links with another school are used well to extend three more able pupils.

Provision for special educational needs

38 Arrangements for special educational needs are good. Together with the support of a special needs teacher, class teachers ensure that work on pupils' individual education plans is linked to the ongoing work of the class. As a result, pupils feel fully involved alongside their peers and achieve well because their self-esteem is maintained alongside the focused tasks they undertake.

Extra-curricular and other activities including educational visits

39 Professional instructors, volunteers and teachers provide a very good range of clubs for such a small school. They are open to all and include sports such as football, cricket and netball, as well as activities related to music, drama and the environment. There are also competitive matches in football and netball against other schools. A very good programme of visits and visitors are used very well to enrich and broaden the curriculum. These have included Abingdon, the Watermill Theatre, Little Wittenham nature reserve, museums in Oxford, a Roman soldier, an archaeologist, scientist, chiropractor and artists. All pupils, from reception to Year 6, benefit from weekly visits to Berinsfield Sports Centre for either swimming or PE. Pupils all have the opportunity to learn to play the recorder. A visiting specialist provides tuition in violin. Pupils are encouraged to perform in assemblies. Very good use is made of the school's immediate environs and the village to support work in a range of subjects. The biennial residential visit for Years 5 and 6 provides very good further support and extension for subjects such as PE, geography, science and PSHE.

Personal, social and health education

40 Good provision is made for pupils' personal, social and health education. A good programme of activities that includes education on diet, health, sex, drugs and personal safety has been developed and is well integrated with other subjects, especially science, to help pupils develop a safe and healthy life style. This is developed progressively as pupils move through the school and supported well by visits such as that to see lambing at Little Wittenham. Input from the police and the school nurse together with opportunities in lessons to focus on specific issues from the well designed local education authority (LEA) programme of study all help pupils to gain confidence, learn to interact with others and develop responsible attitudes.

Links with the community and partner institutions

41 The school has very good and supportive links with the local community. St Michael's Church and the village are visited for events during the year. The local vicar and ministers from further afield are regular visitors to the school to talk to pupils and lead assemblies. Performances by pupils in school, the church and village hall, the annual harvest lunch, sports day and fundraising events all forge very good links with the local community and make the school an important part of village life. There are a very good links with a range of partner schools and local secondary schools that support transfer arrangements and learning through specific projects very well. Very good examples of this being the shared residential visit with Culham, sports and music activities and the joint maths workshop. Links with Culham labs have been used very well to support work in science. Close links with the local toddler group help prepare pupils for entry to the school.

Personal development

42 The school sees pupils' personal development as a very important part of its work. As at the time of the last inspection it continues to be a strength of the school, which has done well in the intervening period to maintain and strengthen this position. It makes very good provision overall. Provision is very good for pupils' moral and social development and good for their spiritual and cultural development.

Spiritual development

43 Spiritual development is encouraged effectively. Daily whole school assemblies provide good opportunities for moments of quiet reflection or focused prayer. The cosy, family ambience of these occasions encourages thoughtful responses and further consideration of qualities such as bravery or determination. Excerpts from the life of Florence Nightingale or events such as the Ascent of Everest are well used to explore these ideas and extend them, as was consideration of what being a Christian might mean for the athlete Jonathan Edwards. Special services at the local church extend this further.

44 In religious education pupils learn about the significant aspects of the major faiths. In subjects such as literacy and history they have good opportunities to consider others' emotions and feelings and in subjects such as art and science to marvel at the beauty of their world. Thoughtful observation, such as in pupils' attempts to capture the effects of the light on the water of the Thames in their oil pastel pictures, support and extend this process well.

Moral development

45 Pupils' moral development is very good and a central part of the school's Christian ethos. Pupils have a very well developed sense of right and wrong due to the good guidance they receive. Throughout the school adults are very good role models for pupils both in the way they interact with one another and the care they show for the pupils. The reward system is used very well for positive reinforcement and to confirm the behaviour expected and this is supported well by a strong pattern of established routines. Teachers often remind pupils of their high expectations of them and when necessary they draw attention to the rules pupils have helped compile. In religious education pupils look at the rules of the major faiths and PSHE provides further opportunities for consideration of why rules are important. Attitudes and reactions are explored in these subjects and during assemblies, where pupils show suitable respect for the views and beliefs of others. Older pupils show integrity when dealing with other pupils, particularly the younger ones, and when carrying out their responsibilities. They care deeply about their school and those in it.

Social development

46 Social development is also very good and is clearly reflected in the 'family' atmosphere of this small school so apparent to parents and visitors. A very good range of opportunities is provided for pupils to work with others in pairs or small groups during lessons. Older pupils

play with younger ones and look after them at lunchtime and during special events. After school clubs, visits to places of educational interest, working links with neighbouring schools and whole school productions and events all provide further very good opportunities for pupils of all ages to learn how to work together and meet others. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have the valuable opportunity of a biennial residential visit with pupils from neighbouring Culham School with outdoor and adventurous activities to broaden their experience away from home. Older pupils conscientiously undertake their allotted tasks around the school and all pupils develop personal initiative as they undertake housekeeping tasks such as setting out and clearing away in lessons. Pupils are encouraged very well to develop an understanding of their responsibilities in the wider world through a regular programme of charitable events. The planning, organisation and execution of the harvest lunch for elderly folk from the village and for dramatic productions extend this well. Pupils are given opportunities to contribute to discussions about improvements to the school, playtime arrangements, development of rules and planning for the residential visit which allows them to make a valuable contribution to the school community and develop an increasing sense of responsibility. Activities such as the environment club's programme of planting and improving the school grounds encourage a sense of belonging to a community set in a wider world.

Cultural development

47 Pupils have very good opportunities to explore their own culture and are helped effectively to develop an understanding of that of other countries and peoples. They learn about their own culture, traditions and locality in geography, history, music, art and English. This is extended very well by a strong programme of visits to museums and historic sites, exploring the village and further afield and community events. They learn about different faiths and beliefs in religious education and of other peoples and areas of the world in geography. Although the school is a mono-cultural community parents recognise that efforts are made to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of other cultures and to prepare them for life in a multicultural society. A good example of this is the involvement of an African student in pupils' learning and a visit by his mother. The school is looking to extend the range of this provision further by forming links with a school in Oxford that has a multicultural intake and by making links with India.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

48 This is a small school where teachers and staff know and care well for all the pupils and their families. Parents appreciate the pastoral support that is provided for their children and most say that they can approach the school if they have any concerns about their children's welfare or progress. Pupils are offered good standards of educational and personal support and guidance. Staff support pupils' personal development well because they know the pupils and help them to grow in confidence. This provides a good foundation for their learning.

Pupils' health, safety and welfare

49 Pupils' health, safety and wellbeing are promoted well. The school is aware of pupils' backgrounds and needs and follows child protection procedures correctly where they have concerns. Staff care sensitively for pupils who are unwell or hurt themselves. With the assistance of expertise on the governing body, the school has reviewed its health and safety policy and carried out risk assessments around the school. It is aware of potential hazards and monitors these carefully.

Monitoring attendance

50 Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are very good and comply with statutory requirements. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils' attendance and punctuality is very good and the school rarely has to follow up unexplained absences. All

parents say that their children enjoy coming to school. Attendance figures are reported correctly in the governing body's annual report but are not reported precisely in the prospectus. Registration procedures fully meet requirements and registration sessions are well used to continue activities begun on arrival that ensures good use of time and a calm start to the day.

Promoting good behaviour

51 The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting behaviour are very good and have improved further since the last inspection. All adults working in the school are consistent in their high expectations that pupils will behave well. They treat all pupils alike and have very good relationships with them. Pupils respond positively to this and behave very well. Older pupils discuss the school rules and understand them well. They set good role models for younger pupils in the school, such as when eating together at lunchtime. Clear guidelines and the promotion of positive behaviour help younger pupils to learn what is expected of them. Pupils are clear that there is no bullying in the school but that any adult would help them if they had concerns. Parents say that their children have a lot of pride in the school. They feel that standards of behaviour are high because 'all age groups work together and care for each other.'

Assessment procedures

52 Overall procedures for assessing pupils' progress are satisfactory and current arrangements are similar to those at the time of the last inspection. However arrangements for setting targets for improvement are less secure and those for collecting samples of pupils' work for assessment and setting individual targets for improvement require review.

53 Teachers have good knowledge of their pupils' levels of development and make good use of this when planning for the next stages of learning. A regular pattern of assessment using optional national tests in English and mathematics, together with regular teacher assessments in English, mathematics and science, is used to record pupils' attainment and check their progress. Results are carefully recorded and charted on individual and year group records, allowing comparison of progress over time. Informal assessments of pupils' understanding through observation, discussion and the marking of work are used well to inform this process. Teachers take good account of this information when preparing lessons to meet and address the needs of all groups of pupils, including the different age groups, higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs in their class.

Use of assessment information

54 The school makes good use of assessment data to compare the performance of its pupils with others locally and nationally and to consider the implications for this for its own provision. It identifies, for example, the need to raise the proportion of pupils achieving level 5 in science and mathematics to match the school's performance in English. This information is shared with governors and used to inform initiatives in the school development plan. Tracking data is also used to identify those pupils at risk of not achieving the expected Level 4 and to target them through initiatives such as FLS and Maths Club. It is also used to agree annual targets with the local authority. Analysis of pupils' test answers is used to identify areas that could be improved, as, for example, data handling in science.

Assessment information for pupils and parents

55 Current procedures for collecting examples of pupils' work in English, science and mathematics are unnecessarily time-consuming. Although they provide an opportunity for dialogue between teacher and pupil, they do not currently provide information that informs the assessment process. Parents have expressed confusion over the 'I can do' books and many feel unclear about how well their children are doing. Inspectors would agree that whilst the idea of involving pupils and parents in setting individual pupil targets for improvement is

commendable, the actual process is confused and complex. There is a need to streamline this process so that the good information from ongoing assessment is used to create meaningful, understandable targets for the next stages of learning for individual pupils. This will enable them to make the expected progress and achieve well. It could also be used to provide more meaningful targets for the next steps in learning in the otherwise detailed and useful annual reports.

Monitoring of assessment procedures and the use of assessment information

56 Tracking data is carefully maintained, although the actual process of setting and reviewing targets is not sufficiently robust. This means that in a number of instances there is a disparity between pupils' predicted levels and those actually assessed by teachers. The school therefore needs to ensure that all teachers have a clear and informed view of what features are required at each level and that achievable, but demanding targets are regularly set and reviewed for all pupils. This will ensure that the school continues to strive to raise its pupils' overall levels of attainment, has early indications of problems, achieves a closer match between its predictions and actual results and can clearly demonstrate the good progress that its pupils make over their time in the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

57 As reported at the last inspection, there is a very strong and established partnership between parents and the school. The school works very effectively with all parents to ensure that they are involved as much as possible in their children's learning and in supporting the school in all its activities. This has a very positive impact on the quality of pupils' learning. The school's very good partnership with parents has been maintained successfully since the last inspection.

Parents' views of the school

58 Parents are very pleased with all areas of the school's work. They say that there is 'family' atmosphere in the school, which has a very good impact on their children's attitudes to learning, behaviour and personal development. They feel that the school expects their children to work hard and do their best and are pleased with the standards that they achieve as a result. Parents say that they are made to feel very welcome to come into school to discuss any concerns, which are taken seriously and dealt with well.

59 Parents have very few criticisms although a small number feel that the school does not provide sufficient information about their children's progress and does not work closely enough with them. The school has recently introduced formal consultation meetings with parents for junior age pupils in the spring term. However, some parents of infant age pupils feel that the period between the autumn meeting and the receipt of pupils' reports in July is too long a gap and would also like more regular opportunities to speak to teachers. Parents at the meeting, however, were very sure that any parent could come in to discuss their child's progress at any time.

60 Inspection findings confirm parents' very positive views on the many strong aspects of the school's work. The inspection also agrees with the view expressed by parents of younger pupils, who feel that the lack of a termly opportunity for formal parent-teacher consultation means they receive insufficient information about their children's progress. For many parents, communication works well because there is ample informal opportunity to talk with staff. For a few, whose lifestyles make it difficult to see teachers informally, the gap from autumn to summer is too long.

The quality of information provided for parents, especially about pupils' progress

61 The quality of information provided for parents is good. Parents say that they feel very well informed about what is going on through regular newsletters, the website and informal contact. Pupils' end of year reports meet requirements and give parents good information on their children's achievements in all subjects of the curriculum. While parents say that these reports are helpful, the inspection team feels that the targets set in reports for English, mathematics and science are not always precise enough to guide parents who wish to support their children's learning at home. Some parents find the 'I can do' books used for assessment and target setting helpful, although a few say that these are confusing and that they are not clear about their use. The inspection concludes that the school is unclear about the purpose of these books and that in their current form they do not serve a valuable assessment purpose. The school has sought parents' views through a questionnaire and has acted positively upon parental requests for more curriculum information, a criticism highlighted at the last inspection. Parents report a very rapid response by the new headteacher once this was raised through the questionnaire. The governing body's annual report meets requirements, although information for parents is brief and does not reflect the amount of work done by the school during the year.

The impact of parental involvement on the school and on children's learning

62 The extent of parental involvement in the school has a very significant impact on pupils' learning and contributes to the 'family' atmosphere that they describe. The school is very fortunate to have excellent support from parents in its work. Parents themselves say that the links are very strong and that you 'feel a part of the school' because parents get involved in everything that's going on. Many parents regularly help in school and give good quality support to activities such as art and drama activities, clubs, church services and visits outside school. Parents are well represented on the governing body and work hard to support and develop the school. There is a very active Parent-Teacher Association, which holds fundraising and social events and encourages all parents to support the school and to get involved with its activities. Significant funds are raised each year to enable the school to provide swimming for all pupils and French lessons for junior age pupils, as well as the purchase of resources such as computers. There is very good involvement of parents in their children's learning at home and school. Most hear their children read and support their homework activities. There is excellent attendance at parents' evenings, services in church and concerts. The school has a strong identity in the local community and parents appreciate the mutual benefit to their children's education, their families and the village.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

63 The new headteacher gives good leadership, ensuring that all staff work extremely well together as a team. Teachers with subject responsibilities are developing their roles well. The governing body is well informed and has created effective structures over the past two years. Governors are fully supportive and offer thoughtful and constructive comment. Overall, the school has sustained the good quality of leadership and management during the change of headteacher and the governing body has improved its contribution since the last inspection by creating more efficient systems and sharing roles more widely.

64 The school has a clear educational direction. The headteacher has won the respect of parents, governors, staff and pupils. She monitors teaching well and ensures that teachers' individual targets are linked helpfully to the school improvement plan. She has a clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Two areas of significant impact are the development of the use of ICT throughout the school and the encouragement to teaching staff to take greater responsibility for monitoring standards and the quality of the school's provision in the subjects for which they are responsible.

65 The headteacher's leadership style builds confidence in staff and a strong sense of teamwork lies behind the school's friendly and inclusive ethos. Displays celebrate pupils' work, with several reflecting imaginative work in the locality. The use of Paul Klee's art to stimulate pupils' thinking as they explored how to represent the view of the Thames and surrounding fields from their classroom window is just one example among many of an exciting approach that involves pupils and gets the best out of them.

School improvement planning

66 Governors and headteacher share a clear vision and this forms part of the school's improvement plan. Because of the change of headteacher, the timing and format of the planning have not led to the production of a succinct document that helps drive the school's improvement. Governors and headteacher are clear about the priorities, but these stem from a variety of processes that are not yet fully integrated. The processes of performance management, staff action plans for subjects, local education authority monitoring and review all form parts of the current planning cycle, but the various elements do not form an integrated whole. The process of creating a written plan has been drawn out over the year rather than kept within a tight review cycle. Minutes of governors' meetings do not show sufficient attention to monitoring progress towards the various targeted outcomes. The current draft lacks a strategic long-term view, a clear hierarchy of priorities, associated strategies for addressing these, and ways of checking progress.

67 The leadership and management of special educational needs is good. The support teacher works closely with staff during her visits. The revised policy is in place, linked to the new code of practice. Records are kept well. Both the work with pupils and the involvement of parents are effective.

Equal opportunities

68 The school's aims to provide equality of opportunity are fully reflected in its work. Arrangements for boys and girls to experience the same opportunities both in lessons and in activities out of school are very good. Teachers know pupils well and their knowledge ensures that individual pupils receive support when required and also very good levels of challenge. A few parents at the pre-inspection meeting spoke of a possible difficulty in challenging higher attaining Year 6 pupils in a small school. Inspection findings show that the school is fully aware of this challenge. It more than meets it in all aspects of English and addresses it very successfully in projects related to the locality and in history and geography. It is addressing the challenge well in mathematics, ICT and science. Provision for higher attainers is a specific priority in mathematics and science in the improvement plan.

Governors' Role

69 Governors play a positive role in sustaining the strengths of the school and developing a vision for the future. Changes in the governing body have presented a challenge, but these have enabled governors to develop a committee structure that involves more playing an active role. Governors have set up a series of regular visits to the school and they monitor the school's provision through the knowledge gained from these visits and from regular termly headteacher's reports. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and of the areas needing improvement. A small group plays an active role in the consultation process leading to the setting of priorities for improvement. The finance committee oversees budget planning and this is becoming more closely linked to improvement planning. Several governors give considerable time and effort to share in the planning processes as the school considers its future building and maintenance programmes and staffing and curriculum developments. The new committee procedures are efficient. Performance targets for the headteacher have been set. The school meets all of its statutory requirements.

School administration

70 The administrator supports the school well and, with the support of the bursar, manages the school finances and administration effectively. Good use is made of ICT for pupils' records, to manage finances, record attendance and to support teaching and learning across the curriculum.

Financial management and planning

71 Financial management in the school is satisfactory. Effective and proper use is made of specific grants and the school is able to account for any expenditure made. The school is aware of the principles of best value and is prudent with its spending. The governors, headteacher and bursar have a good understanding of the school budget and the difficulties posed by the small size of the school and predicted low numbers of pupils on roll over the next two years. However, currently, there is a predicted overspend in the budget for the next two years and the school is acutely aware of the need to increase pupil numbers in order to maintain its current provision of staffing and resources. The governing body and headteacher are able to account for the financial implications of new building projects, making effective use of current reserves. This would enable an increase in roll and improve the learning and working environment for pupils and staff. They have also embarked on strategic planning for various possible funding scenarios in the light of varying pupil numbers. The governing body and headteacher recognise that this is a key element in the school's development and are working hard to develop its profile in the local community through a working party set up to 'market' the school more widely in order to attract more families.

Value for money

72 Although unit costs for the school are high due to its small size, it gives good value for money because it is an effective school which provides pupils with a good quality of education.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

73 The school is very well staffed. As well as additional class teaching staff to create smaller groupings in Key Stage 2, it has part-time specialist teachers for design and technology, music and special needs. Junior age pupils also receive French lessons from a teacher funded by the Parent-Teacher Association. Teachers are assisted effectively in their teaching by skilled support staff. All staff, including administrative and domestic staff, work closely together to provide pupils with good quality of education and care. The school has introduced good arrangements for performance management for teaching staff, although there are no formal appraisal arrangements for teaching assistants or the school administrator. A satisfactory programme of staff development has been introduced for all staff, which is linked clearly to the development needs of the school. The school offers good support for student teachers.

74 The accommodation is unsatisfactory. Since the last inspection, the school has been unable to achieve any improvement in its facilities for teaching and administrative staff. There is no staff room and the administrator and headteacher share an office in very cramped conditions. Staff work well together to overcome this but overall, the poor quality of administrative accommodation has a detrimental impact on the efficiency of the school and the welfare of staff. Classrooms are a good size for the numbers of pupils currently on roll although some of the furniture is outdated. There are pleasant grounds for pupils to play in. A small room is used for individual and group work and assemblies, although it is rather cramped when all pupils are together. Space for children in the Foundation Stage to participate in physical activities is very limited and this restricts opportunities for physical development to play and lunchtimes, when the climbing frame is available to all year groups, including reception, on a rota basis. The school's improvement plan includes further strategies to address this. Although the school has no hall, it makes suitable provision for

pupils' physical education through weekly sessions at a nearby leisure centre and swimming pool. The current accommodation is not suitable for any pupils or staff with physical disabilities.

75 Learning resources are satisfactory overall and weaknesses identified at the last inspection have been addressed, for example, the provision of wheeled toys for the youngest children. Good use is made of facilities outside the school, including visits, to the Botanical Gardens in Oxford and to Little Wittenham Nature Reserve for example. Particularly good use is made of the local village, church and surroundings as a resource for pupils' learning in many areas of the curriculum.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

76 In order to build on current strengths, further raise standards and improve the quality of education provided, the headteacher, governors and staff need to:

- (1) Simplify assessment procedures and use the information from assessments more carefully to track pupils' progress, set challenging targets and inform parents
(reference paragraphs 52-56)
- (2) Improve the outdoor secure area for children in the Foundation Stage
(reference paragraphs 7, 32, 74, 78, 83)
- (3) improve administrative and staffing accommodation and facilities
(reference paragraph 74)

77 The headteacher, staff and governors should also consider the following minor points for inclusion in the improvement plan:

Tighten procedures for school improvement planning in order to plan and budget strategically and focus more clearly on raising standards *(paragraphs 66 and 71)*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	13
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	22

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	3	8	2	0	0	0
Percentage	0	23	62	15	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 seven percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	46
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	4

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.1
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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	44	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15
Average class size	23

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	24

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2003
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	£
Total income	187198
Total expenditure	175947
Expenditure per pupil	3910
Balance brought forward from previous year	23861
Balance carried forward to next year	35112

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

46

Number of questionnaires returned

16

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	88	13	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	75	13	6	0	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	56	38	0	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	50	44	0	0	6
The teaching is good.	75	25	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	44	31	19	6	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	13	19	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	31	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	50	31	13	6	0
The school is well led and managed.	81	6	6	0	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	75	19	6	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	63	31	6	0	0

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

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

78 Children in the reception year are in a class together with pupils in Years 1 and 2. Levels of attainment on entry vary year on year. In recent years this has usually been above average overall, but in the current year it is average. Children make mainly good progress through their reception year and are set to meet the Early Learning Goals by the time they move into Year 1. They make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, their knowledge and understanding of the world and their creative development. They make satisfactory progress in their physical development, where the opportunities in the outdoor secure area restrict children's development. The school improvement plan includes this as a priority for action. Resources are otherwise satisfactory, although some are a little old and worn. Standards and the quality of teaching and curriculum provision have been maintained since the previous inspection and the school has satisfactorily addressed the key issue related to imaginative play. Staff now organise sufficient opportunities, both within the classroom and in the small outdoor area. The calm and caring manner of teacher and assistant create a warm atmosphere and give children a sense of security in their learning. The school makes sound use of Oxfordshire guidelines for the Foundation Stage and staff have undertaken training in new assessment procedures, which are being developed satisfactorily.

Personal, social and emotional development

79 Children make good progress in this area of learning. They settle quickly into school and benefit from the established routines and the role models of pupils in Years 1 and 2. Teacher and assistant organise a good range of opportunities for children to develop independence, to collaborate in pairs and small groups and to participate in lessons with the whole class. Teaching is good in this area of learning and motivates children to learn successfully. Children show confidence and sustain concentration in the way they tackle tasks. They select resources for activities suggested and organise themselves well, as when they collect resources and clothing for Mr Grinling's picnic. They rely on staff or older children to initiate activities, however, and do not show the same involvement in play as when they have the interest and participation of an adult. Children dress and undress independently and manage their own personal hygiene. They understand what is right and wrong and respond well when the teacher helps them consider the consequences of their actions.

Communication, language and literacy

80 Children achieve well in this area of learning as a result of the good teaching. Literacy lessons are very well planned and organised, so that the teaching assistant and teacher have some time focusing on the needs of the reception children and organise some time for them to undertake activities without close supervision. For example, in one lesson observed, children spent the initial session with the teaching assistant sharing ideas and planning a role play activity. They then shared a session with Year 1 pupils reading a text and recognising rhymes and initial letter sounds before further time for role play. When with an adult, children listen and concentrate well. In a small group they take turns in conversation. Because they are a very small year group, their conversation in role play or independent play sessions is limited. Staff are aware of this and involve older pupils to stimulate the reception pupils' thinking and conversation, as when shopping for fruit. Children have made a good start to reading. They enjoy talking about the stories and most know their letter sounds and read simple texts. They write their own names and label pictures, holding a pencil correctly and forming letters well. The teacher keeps a close check on their progress through careful observational assessment and plans tasks that help them progress, deploying the assistant

effectively to support children as they undertake tasks well matched to their abilities. Home-school reading diaries show consistent use of books to encourage children to develop enjoyment of reading at home.

Mathematical development

81 Children achieve well in this area of learning. The teaching is good and activities are well organised to ensure that children regularly use mathematical vocabulary and develop early numeracy skills in role play and in counting and sorting activities. Children count and match numbers to ten. They buy fruit at Handa's shop and count out pence to pay for each item, while an older pupil acts as shopkeeper to check their counting. They recognise and name squares, triangles, circles and ovals. In the mathematics lesson observed, children worked with the teaching assistant using the interactive whiteboard, selecting their own criteria for sorting shells. They worked well in the small group, developing awareness of the criteria for selection or rejection to create a set. Placing the shells in the appropriate circles, they commented on why they made their selection, considering texture and shape. Staff make good use of ICT programs to develop children's early mathematical understanding. Teachers, children and parents work particularly closely together in this area of learning, with mathematics homework activities providing a very good stimulus and support. The regular participation by parents and children in mathematical games and investigations at home helps parents support their children and keeps them aware of their children's understanding and progress.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

82 Children make good progress in this area of learning as a result of a well-organised range of activities and good teaching. They develop early understanding and skills in history, geography, science, design and technology, ICT and religious education through activities that they undertake alongside the pupils in Years 1 and 2. In science, they enjoy keeping a diary to show the changes in plants, labelling the parts of the plant on their illustration after measuring the height in cubes. The teacher or assistant acts as secretary to note children's comments as they make pancakes, confirming that 'the mixture went hard when we mixed the egg into the flour' and 'the mixture went floppy when we mixed in the milk'. While their counterparts in Years 1 and 2 write sentences contrasting an African village with Clifton Hampden, reception children draw illustrations to show the differences. In a geography lesson, children developed the concepts of 'forwards', 'backwards', 'left' and 'right', controlling the roamer with a series of directions after receiving instructions from Year 2 pupils.

Physical development

83 Children achieve satisfactorily in this area of learning. The opportunities for physical development using wheeled toys or large apparatus are limited. The school has a secure outdoor area for children in the Foundation Stage, but this is small and narrow. Children attend a weekly physical education and swimming lesson at a nearby leisure centre and have a weekly outdoor physical education lesson at the school alongside pupils in Years 1 and 2, but current arrangements do not offer regular daily physical development outdoors, except during play and lunchtimes. The school has made development of the outdoor area a priority on its improvement plan. Children develop manual dexterity through regular use of pencils, scissors and malleable materials. They have some experience of using large wheeled toys, but this is limited. Teaching is satisfactory and the curriculum is well planned within current constraints.

Creative development

84 Children achieve successfully in this area of learning. Teaching is good and gives children a wide range of opportunities for artistic and music-making activities. The school has made improvements in its provision for imaginative play. Children have regular access to role play within the classroom and in the small outdoor area. The teacher and assistant ensure that children have ready access to a range of painting, mark-making and printing equipment, as well as to dressing up clothes and a playhouse. Children show good levels of independence when using paint and printing materials and produce pleasing results, as in a lesson combining religious education and art. Children participated fully and successfully in a session of pattern-making linked to consideration of Islamic prayer mats and other artefacts. They join in readily in singing and in work on rhythms and pulse in the weekly music lesson, but during the inspection there was little evidence of regular use of songs and rhymes. The playhouse takes up considerable room and some of the equipment is old, making this area appear static and unattractive, not sufficiently stimulating as a focus for imaginative play. In another corner, the remains of Mr Grinling's lighthouse shows that more stimulating areas and themes for play are created on occasions.

Strengths

Teaching

Staff know children well as individuals

Good organisation and planning in the mixed-age setting

Calm manner of teacher creates a secure atmosphere for learning

Good home/school links for developing early literacy and numeracy

Areas for development

The outdoor secure area

The playhouse and some worn resources

ENGLISH

85 Standards at age eleven are well above average in all aspects of English. Speaking and listening skills are of a very high standard. Reading and writing skills are well above average overall, with several pupils showing very high attainment, while one or two perform at an average standard. Recent results in national tests at age eleven show consistently high attainment in English, with a high proportion of pupils achieving level 5, above the expected standard for their age. This has put the school into the top five per cent of schools nationally in three of the last four years, consistently well above similar schools.

86 Standards at age seven have been consistently well above average in reading in recent years. In 2001 they were in the top five per cent nationally. Standards were well above those of similar schools last year. In writing, standards last year were above average and in line with those of similar schools. In the previous two years they were well above average. This year, in a very small year group of mixed ability, standards at age seven are broadly average in reading, writing, speaking and listening.

87 Pupils of all abilities learn successfully in all aspects of English throughout the school, as a result of good teaching from Years 1 to 4 and very good teaching in Years 5 and 6. High levels of staffing during literacy lessons and very good organisation and planning ensure that work is closely targeted to pupils' ages and abilities. Two other factors contributing to pupils' very good achievement through Key Stage 2 are the use of extended homework challenges and the application of research and writing skills in other subject contexts. Pupils' achievements in speaking and listening are also very good because teachers consistently encourage discussion in all subjects. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because they receive well-planned support. More able pupils achieve very well because

teachers challenge and extend them very successfully, especially in Years 5 and 6. Boys and girls achieve equally well.

88 Overall the school has made very good improvement in this subject since the last inspection. Pupils in Year 6 in 2002, for example, made excellent progress through Key Stage 2. Their reading, speaking and listening skills were above average and their writing skills average when they were in Year 2 in 1998. By 2002, the standard of their work was among the top five per cent in the country.

Speaking and listening

89 Pupils in Year 1 and 2 listen carefully to their teacher or teaching assistant and make suitable responses. Several show a broad vocabulary and speak confidently, explaining what they want to say in detail. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 develop speaking and listening skills a little during literacy hours when they work as a small class, and benefit significantly from working alongside pupils in Years 5 and 6 during afternoon lessons. In this context, older pupils act as role models when discussing their understanding of investigations in science and local geography, or explaining their response to a piece of music, for example. Pupils also develop their skills through drama and the use of puppets. In the most recent Christmas production, for example, pupils explained how they had to organise themselves and collaborate to develop scripts, before expressing themselves in character. Many pupils are extremely articulate and benefit from the quality of conversation at home.

Reading

90 Most pupils throughout the school read the books they choose expressively and with understanding. In almost all year groups, the standard of pupils' reading is well above average. The few pupils who find reading difficult receive very good support and all enjoy reading. When they tackle unknown words they show good knowledge of letter sounds and use contextual clues well. A collection of books written by groups of pupils is kept in the Key Stage 1 room book collection, helping pupils identify themselves as authors and giving pleasure to each year group in turn, as they read previous year groups' stories. Older pupils explain succinctly recent events prior to the passage they read and show very good understanding of the characters. Their reading choices include classic tales such as 'Black Beauty' and 'Swallows and Amazons'. They show a wide knowledge of children's authors and very good understanding of how to access information in non-fiction books, using glossary and index.

Writing

91 Younger pupils form letters carefully as a result of regular handwriting practice. All pupils in Years 1 and 2 write in sentences, using capital letters and full stops, but a small number need reminding and support. Most enjoy using a wide vocabulary and are not afraid to attempt to spell difficult words. The school has a consistent focus on spelling and this is resulting in increased accuracy at all ages. All Key Stage 1 pupils have good opportunities to develop their writing skills in a variety of contexts. For example, they explain carefully the changes that occur when they make pancakes in the context of a science and design and technology pursuit. They write sentences contrasting life in an African village with life in Clifton Hampden in their geography work. They use vocabulary well in stories such as 'The swinging Orang Utang'. They write reports on their holiday news and use lists and labels on illustrations in history and environmental studies. They adopt Samuel Pepys' diary style to tell about the Great Fire of London.

92 Key Stage 2 pupils continue to benefit from the school's emphasis on writing in genuine contexts. In Years 3 and 4, pupils create story plans and settings, produce book reviews and play scripts. They write alternative traditional tales and their own poems. Alongside the writing in a variety of genres is a suitable focus on grammar and background exercises, but

these are related to writing for a purpose. By the time pupils reach Year 5 they have a thorough backing in writing for various purposes and audiences. This, coupled with their wide reading and considerable ability in discussion, enables most to develop their writing skills to a level well above average. Autobiographies present information clearly and in an interesting style. Stories create atmosphere through thoughtful use of vocabulary and phrasing. For example, 'On a cold, dark and gloomy night on the purple moor, a dark figure on a black horse appeared cantering down the road'... and 'I ran to the letterbox, picked up the only letter, flicked it over and to my delight it was for me!'

93 Extended homework tasks show higher attainers composing lengthy stories in chapters and organising information from research into interesting information booklets. Both in their work in class and at home, many pupils use a wide and interesting vocabulary. They organise their writing in paragraphs, using speech marks and other punctuation accurately. Many make very good use of word-processing skills and present their work very effectively in this way. The quality of hand-written presentation is quite varied in books and in pieces on display. Some is beautifully written with a fluent joined script. Other examples show pupils still needing support to develop handwriting skills.

94 The quality of teaching is good in Years 1 to 4 and includes very good features. In Years 5 and 6 it is very good and includes some excellent features. The difference lies in the higher levels of involvement by older pupils both orally during lessons and through the clearly apparent enthusiasm in their writing. Older pupils learn particularly successfully because they are fully engaged in explaining their understanding of what they are doing to each other. The teaching focuses specifically and routinely on encouraging pupils to explain their understanding and listen carefully to each other. Strengths in the teaching include:

- High expectations that pupils will focus quickly and do their best;
- Consistent use of open questioning to involve pupils in speaking and listening to each other;
- Very good relationships between staff and pupils so that pupils feel confident that staff know what is best for them;
- Very good challenge for higher attainers in all aspects of English;
- Very good marking comments written in pupils' books in Key Stage 2 and good day-to-day oral assessment throughout the school;
- Very good organisation of teaching groups and very good planning and preparation throughout the school;
- Very good use of opportunities to extend and apply literacy skills in the context of other subjects throughout the school;
- Very good use of extended homework tasks in Key Stage 2.

The only areas needing some development are those of handwriting and presentation, where variation within year groups suggests expectations may be inconsistent at Key Stage 2.

95 English is a strength of the school. The subject is well planned and the literacy strategy is adapted very effectively to the needs of the various age groups. The staffing and class organisation shows that the subject is given a high priority. The success of the organisational arrangements is apparent in the pupils' interest in their reading and writing and in the increasingly successful application of their skills as they grow older. The subject is well resourced. Currently, there are a number of books containing collections of work that help towards teachers' assessment, but there are few examples of annotated writing apart from annual testing situations. Assessment for reading appears manageable and informative, but the assessment of writing is less well developed. It is not clear how targets for improvement are set or how these are shared with pupils and parents.

Strengths

Standards in all aspects of the subject

Teaching

Imaginative planning for the application of all aspects of English in other subject contexts

The use of ICT in Key Stage 2

Areas for development

Simplification of assessment procedures and the use of assessment information in writing

Consistent expectations in handwriting at Key Stage 2

MATHEMATICS

96 In the 2002 tests standards in Years 2 and 6 were well above average with more pupils in Year 2 achieving the higher Level 3 than nationally. In Year 6, although all achieved the expected Level 4 the proportion reaching the higher Level 5 was below the national average. Standards have been steadily improving since the last inspection, although proportions vary from year to year because of the small size and varying composition of the year groups. In the current year 2 all pupils are working within the expected level 2. In Year 6 most are working within the expected Level 4 although one or two, because of specific learning needs, are struggling to achieve this consistently. Several pupils are working at the higher level 5. As a result in both years 2 and 6 standards are currently broadly average.

97 Pupils are currently making good progress throughout the school as a direct result of the good or better teaching. Overall the school does well for its pupils and has identified several ways in which it could do better. Since the last inspection a greater focus on practising mental calculation has addressed an area noted as needing attention. In its quest to improve further the school has correctly focused on the development of pupils' use and application of mathematical skills and knowledge and sought to support and extend its higher attaining pupils by, for example, links with a neighbouring school. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to their classmates because of the good support they receive from both their teachers and the teaching assistants. They work at tasks that are suited to their needs and achieve success in their learning. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.

98 By Year 2 pupils have a sound knowledge of place value to at least 100 and many go beyond this. They add and subtract numbers up to 100 and make good use of their knowledge of number facts to at least 10 to support this and solve problems. Pupils double and halve numbers and count in 2's, 3's, 4's, 5's and 10's. Their numeracy skills are developing well and they make good use of these to solve problems including money and identifying number patterns. They recognise and describe two-dimensional shapes, measure using standard units, weigh using non-standard units and tell the time using half past and o'clock. Data about their pond dipping work is displayed and interpreted using ICT. Apparatus and practical activities are used well to reinforce these concepts and help pupils calculate the answers to problems such as how much different combinations of fruit cost. In one lesson seen all pupils, using either knowledge of tables or continuous addition, quickly calculated the correct total with several able to add the cost of up to five different items correctly in their heads. However, not all are so secure and two confused the symbols for addition and multiplication writing, for example, $5 \times 5 \times 5 =$ rather than $5 + 5 + 5 =$, or $3 \times 5 =$.

99 By Year 4 pupils are developing the speed at which they make calculations in their heads and increasing the range of strategies they use to solve problems involving addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. These skills are well applied to tasks such as data handling. In constructing their graphs to compare the speed of male and female athletes over different distances pupils showed the ability to interpret correctly and record data and to

measure accurately. The conclusions they reached and explanations they offered as to why the gap widened as the distance increased showed how their thinking was being extended both by the well-planned task and the probing questioning of their teacher.

100 Pupils in Year 6 quickly make mental calculations. They show good recall of their tables and an understanding of fractions and decimals. Pupils use written techniques to add, subtract, multiply and divide numbers up to at least 1000, with some going beyond this. They make good use of these skills to calculate the areas and perimeters of shapes and solve problems involving time, distance, length, weight and capacity. They know the names and properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes, draw and construct different types of triangles and represent data on block and line graphs, pie charts and Venn diagrams.

101 Throughout the school tasks are linked well to meaningful situations and pupils in Years 5 and 6 enjoyed comparing data about the journey times of their teachers, postulating ideas about variations and calculating time and distance. Some year 6 pupils using ICT entered the information into a spreadsheet whilst others calculated the average speed. Those using ICT understood how to create the necessary formula and ensure the PC worked in hours and minutes whilst those working on average speeds made good use of calculators. Greater relevance was given to the task and thinking extended by consideration of their forthcoming journey to Yenworthy residential centre. The teacher who had carefully planned and prepared the activities to match the age and ability of pupils ensured a suitable level of challenge was constantly maintained by revising and modifying the complexity of the task.

102 As pupils progress up the school they make increasing use of mathematical skills to solve practical situations in other subject areas or for special events such as the harvest lunch. For example Year 2 pupils had accurately measured fabric to make a hand puppet whilst in Year 6 careful measurement of card and knowledge of nets was used to create design models of trolleys for shoppers with special needs. There are also good examples of investigations into practical problems and everyday situations. Particularly good examples of this arise from the planning of the harvest lunch, including costing of items, portion control and preparation of recipes.

103 The quality of teaching and learning in the school is consistently good or better, with one very good lesson, out of the three observed, seen with pupils in Years 5 and 6. Pupils are attentive to their teachers and follow explanation and instructions carefully. They show an increasing ability to sustain concentration and work without direct supervision as they move up the school. Older pupils persevere with tasks and show an interest and tenacity in their wish to complete their work to the best of their ability. Teaching assistants and others are briefed well and support groups of pupils on specific tasks well as was seen with the use of the interactive whiteboard in Years 1 and 2 and the student teacher working with a Year 5 group.

104 Features that make teaching successful are:

- Careful planning and preparation of lessons to the format of the national numeracy strategy for all ages and abilities of pupils
- Sharing at the outset of the lesson the purpose of the learning and revisiting this at the end of the session
- Making good use of oral starter sessions to extend and consolidate pupils' mental techniques and sharpen their thinking
- Good use of questioning to check pupils' understanding and advance or extend their thinking
- Clear explanation of tasks and teachers ensuring all pupils are clear about expectations and time available

It is even more successful when:

- A very brisk pace is maintained throughout the lesson keeping pupils focused on the learning and maintaining a high level of challenge
- Errors or mistakes are explored to extend and develop pupils' understanding and different calculation methods used to demonstrate the validity of different approaches and help pupils appreciate the benefits and drawbacks of different strategies.

105 The division of Years 3,4,5 and 6 into two age-based teaching groups enables teachers to focus more fully on their specific needs and abilities. This helps raise attainment and enhance the quality of teaching and learning. A good pattern of ongoing testing and assessing of pupils provides good information about pupils' progress and is supported well by the informal assessments made through questioning, observations and marking. There are good examples of pupils using computers to complete tasks, handle data and practise numeracy skills and the school has plans to extend these further. Regular homework activities for all the age groups provide pupils with good opportunities to practise and develop their numeracy skills. The headteacher monitors the subject through her close working relationship with, and good knowledge of pupils and the teaching team. There is a recently acquired commercial scheme of work to support learning and sufficient resources to support practical activities, although these would benefit from review and supplementation.

Strengths

Good quality teaching and learning throughout the school

Improving opportunities for pupils to practise mental strategies and the use and application of mathematics

Areas for further development

Challenge for higher attaining pupils

Monitoring of teaching and learning and sharing of good practice.

SCIENCE

106 In recent years most pupils have reached the expected level in teacher assessments and national tests. Last year all pupils in Year 2 were assessed by teachers as reaching Level 2, placing them in the top five per cent of schools nationally and in comparison with similar schools, with an average proportion achieving the higher Level 3. In Year 6, although all pupils achieved the expected Level 4 slightly less achieved Level 5 than nationally, so overall standards were average in comparison with the national picture and below those of similar schools. However, with such small groups care must be taken in making comparisons particularly when the attainment of one pupil will make such a significant difference to the overall picture. The previous inspection found standards to be average in Year 2, with pupils making satisfactory progress, and above in Year 6, with pupils making good progress.

107 Recently the school has investigated possible reasons for variations in standards and identified a number of initiatives to improve them. It has already noted that although pupils achieve well in areas of scientific knowledge there is a need to focus on developing pupils' skills of scientific enquiry and the interpretation of data if it is to raise standards further and match the standards reached in English. Practical tasks are used well by teachers to capture pupils' interest, fire enthusiasm, focus thinking and extend understanding.

108 During the inspection science was not taught so evidence is drawn from analysing pupils' work, teachers' planning and talking to teachers and pupils. On the basis of this evidence pupils throughout the school are currently making good progress, with almost all working at least at the level expected for their age. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are broadly

average. The school's introduction of an additional weekly lesson for Year 6 has sought to raise standards further by focusing on enquiry and data handling. Boys and girls achieve equally well and pupils with special educational needs, who are well supported by their teachers and the teaching assistants, make similar progress to their classmates.

109 Teachers make good use of practical activities to encourage and reinforce a scientific approach to learning whilst extending pupils' scientific knowledge and understanding across all strands of the subject. Pupils in Year 2 have surveyed and classified pond creatures, observed and recorded the life cycles of frogs and butterflies and investigated how light, water and warmth are necessary for pea and bean seeds to grow well. Their work and displays show how good use was made of the school's environs to support this and of ICT to record and present data. Pupils have handled a variety of materials and learnt to classify and record both by composition and properties, noting for example which are bendable, breakable or allow light to pass and begun to consider their possible use and suitability. Pupils' work showed how when investigating the effects of different materials on the passage of toy car down a ramp they had made the test 'fair' by not pushing it. Pupils have looked at sources of light, investigated objects that make sounds and considered the difference between loud and quiet. Their recorded work shows an increasing level of understanding and attention to detail. It is neatly presented and shows how they are being encouraged to make use of the correct terminology and include careful measurements when recording and presenting their work.

110 By Year 6 pupils have learnt about the functions of the major organs of the body, the benefits of exercise and observed its effects on pulse rates, the importance of diet and the effect of drugs. From a chiropractor's visit they know about the body's structure and have noted that it contains over 206 bones and 600 muscles. Work on food chains, micro-organisms and how creatures such as waders and crabs adapt to their habitat support and extend pupils' understanding of the natural world well. Pupils' written work shows how practical activities and observation have developed their scientific knowledge. Investigations into conductors and insulators have increased understanding of materials and that on chemical reactions sharpened this further. Pupils have looked at the effects of distance on sound, focused on specific features such as pitch and considered the part played by amplification and vibration in its transmission. Study of the relative movement of the earth, sun and moon was well linked to work on the effects of reflected light and developed understanding of night and day and time zones.

111 In Years 3 to 6 pupils are learning to record their investigations in a recognised format. By Year 6 they predict possible outcomes, record the process, reach conclusions based on findings and suggest ways to improve the process. In discussion Year 6 pupils showed good understanding and experience of the investigative process as they explained the importance of ensuring a test is fair, that it should be repeated to check and compare results and how varying one aspect at a time supports the process of deduction. Their work shows how they have designed their own investigations, into how sound travels for example, and tested materials for strength, elasticity and hardness. Work on display and in their books shows how ICT is being used to record and present data, how pupils are encouraged to interpret and explain it and how increasingly sophisticated measuring is being used with, for example, use of a temperature probe. It also confirms the increased use of subject specific terms and how pupils are encouraged to use these in their drawings and explanations. Pupils' recorded work shows a good level of presentation and detail. Discussions with pupils confirm that they enjoy the subject and in particular the practical tasks, visits and visitors.

112 Teachers carefully plan their lessons from the school's documentation, which has been developed from recent national guidance and local authority advice, with a cycle of topics preventing repetition in the mixed age-classes. Good thought is given to the different needs,

ages and abilities within the two classes and tasks suitably matched to these. The school has recognised the need to challenge and extend pupils, particularly the older ones, and recently those in Year 6 have received additional, separate sessions to enable suitable development of their skills and understanding. Good use is made of visits and visitors to capture pupils' interest and support the teaching. It is a particularly effective way of addressing some limitations in equipment, as for example with the visit from Culham labs to show the effects of a vacuum on a balloon and marshmallow. As one pupil commented in a thank you letter, 'it has inspired me to become a scientist'. Visits to museums, Little Wittenham Nature Reserve, an arboretum, and visitors from Northmoor Nature Reserve all enhance this work well.

113 A well-constructed action plan for the subject has been drawn up by the subject manager with assistance from the local authority. It will provide a good basis for future development. Resources are stored well and sufficient for current use but would benefit from further review and improvement. The school has reviewed these and noted the need to increase the quantity of reference books on the human body. Good use is being made of ICT to support learning in the subject, both in recording data and researching topics, and there are plans to extend this further through purchase of sound and light sensors. As at the time of the last inspection, homework makes a significant contribution to work in the subject in Years 3 to 6.

Strengths

Increased focus on scientific enquiry

Use of practical activities

Recognition of need to raise standards further

Areas for development

Further use of ICT to support learning in the subject

ART AND DESIGN

114 Standards are average at age seven and well above average at age eleven. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress through Key Stage 1 and very good progress through Key Stage 2. This shows good improvement since the last inspection, when standards at the end of both key stages were average and pupils made satisfactory progress.

115 No lessons were observed during the inspection, as none were timetabled, but displays of pupils' work, a video of pupils working on a variety of artistic pursuits and examples of teachers' planning provide a satisfactory evidence base for the judgements on standards. As no teaching was observed, it is not possible to give a definitive judgement on the quality of teaching, but the quality of pupils' learning suggests that teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2.

116 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 use paint boldly to portray characters from a story shared in the literacy hour. The lively display of characters who thanked Bertha Purse for making them better shows confident use of brush and colour. A collage linked to work on the 'Firebird' shows further good focus on colour, this time in collaboration with others. Pupils' illustrations in their writing books and in collections of stories are often quite detailed. Their paper weaving shows dexterity and further good focus on the effects of colours. Pupils in both Year groups have experienced the use of computer programs to create artistic effects.

117 Pupils from Years 3 to 6 work together in art lessons and the work on display shows high quality, both in thoughtful design and in the creation of the finished piece. Year 6 pupils speak animatedly about their current work based on the art of Andy Goldsworthy. They

understand how he photographed decaying materials to create different effects in photographs over time. They talk about the effects of circles, holes, arches and spirals in his work . They have collected natural materials and arranged them in artistic forms, using bark, twigs and leaves for instance. They have arranged stones and shells in a sand pit and photographed these. The samples on display show considerable care and are pleasing to the eye.

118 Most striking are the pupils' paintings of the scene of the Thames and the bridge and fields at Clifton Hampden. These paintings are in the manner of Paul Klee. Rather than asking pupils to make an imitation of his painting 'Fire in the Evening' of a river in Upper Egypt, the teacher has explained the process of his thinking, his use of colours in horizontal layers to show the sun's glow at twilight and the way obstructions affected the river's flow. Pupils have then designed sensitively and intelligently, looking at the view from their classroom and considering the effect of the midday light in Clifton Hampden, the effect of light shining through the arches of the bridge and the patterns of the fields against the river. The results are highly effective, the more so because of the clarity of thinking and planning in the design that has gone into them.

119 A Video recording of pursuits over the past year shows pupils engaged in three-dimensional work with masks, shadow puppets and some amazing creatures. They used the creatures in a performance at a local nature reserve, taking them for a walk as they operated their limbs and bodies to represent the creatures' characteristics.

120 The school benefits from the support of some artistic parents, who organise events and a series of sessions for the pupils. The teachers have put together a scheme of work based on national guidelines. Since this is a comparatively recent development, it is not yet apparent how well teachers ensure that pupils' develop their artistic understanding, knowledge and skills year on year. The talents shown in the examples seen appear to derive more from the individual experience of the current teaching and learning than from a planned series of work on various skills. The art seen at Key Stage 1 does not include any that stands out, yet the pupils show these skills early in Key Stage 2. Informal assessment processes are not identifying high attainment at an early stage.

121 What is clear is that the work currently planned at Key Stage 2 is extremely well thought out by staff and helps pupils appreciate the sensitivity of artistic thought and design as well as using techniques well to create powerful effects. The background of thinking and discussion in the context of each art and design theme is clearly providing pupils with a wealth of experience, which they are using to good effect in each new activity.

Strengths:

Standards at Key Stage 2

Pupils' appreciation of the depth of thought and feeling in the artistic design process

Teachers' very good focus on design and technique at Key Stage 2

Areas for improvement:

Using the scheme of work to ensure year-on-year development of skills

Using assessment to track pupils' progress

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

122 Across the school, pupils generally make good progress in developing their skills of designing and making in the contexts introduced. Standards overall in Years 2 and 6 are average. This is a similar position to the last inspection. Only one lesson was seen during the inspection and evidence was also drawn from talking to teachers and pupils, viewing planning and displays, together with photographs and videos of previous work. There is no significant difference of achievement between different groups of pupils. All do equally well.

123 Throughout the school there is good attention to the process of design. Pupils in Year 1 had made finger puppets and those in Year 2 glove puppets. Photographs confirmed how prior to making these they researched the topic in books and tried stitching before making a pattern of their hand as a template for the puppet. The puppets showed a good standard of finish and had been carefully decorated with facial features. There is good emphasis on the development of making skills with work that had arisen from the story of 'The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch' showing how pupils had practised paper weaving before making the basket and explaining how they had constructed the seagull mobiles from the parts supplied.

124 As pupils progress through the school their making skills are being developed and the idea of the suitability for purpose being explored. The homework project on designing a bedroom provided good opportunities for working to a brief and use of ICT to record possible solutions. Activities such as choosing the pizzas and toppings for the harvest lunch provided cookery opportunities and the chance to participate in practical planning and realisation of a project.

125 In the lesson seen, pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 drew well on their designs to make models of trolleys that could be adapted to meet the needs of shoppers with specific needs. Their drawings showed how they had taken good account of the design brief and incorporated specific detail such as concertina arms or hydraulic lifts. Few had taken account of the need for stability but their teacher reminded them in the introductory session. Pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 worked hard to combine and experiment with different features as they used a variety of construction kits to create working models. Year 6 pupils made good use of their knowledge of nets and previous work with card to create facsimiles of their designs. Good teaching focused pupils' thinking on how to improve their trolleys well and reinforced the value of modifying a working model on the route to a finished product. The plenary was used well to investigate pupils' different solutions but opportunities for modification or revision in the light of this were not possible.

126 Year 6 pupils showed good recall of previous work and explained how they had made photo frames and Roman ballistas. They remembered how they had laminated the layers of corrugated card for strength and used triangular sections to the same end. Their explanations showed good understanding of the design process and constraints of some materials. Video evidence showed, and pupils recalled careful measurement and construction of Tudor houses on wooden frames and fairground rides with moving mechanisms the previous year. Pupils used equipment carefully and for its intended purpose, listened attentively to instructions and showed clear enjoyment in the practical activities, which they completed diligently and carefully.

127 Although pupils have good opportunities and guidance in developing the designing and making process their knowledge and experience of materials and of methods of fixing and working with these is more limited because of the restricted range they have experienced. Opportunities for the use of ICT for design or control are largely undeveloped as are the use of electrical circuits to support work in science. The school has identified this as an area to be addressed. Good use is being made of national guidance to ensure skills are developed

systematically and to support planning for the different ages and abilities in the two classes. Resources and materials are accessible but would benefit from review and a wider selection to increase the range of pupils' experience.

Strengths

Good quality of finish in examples of work seen

Range of activities that develop pupils' designing and planning skills systematically

Pupils' good attitudes and behaviour

Areas for development

Greater use of ICT to support learning in the subject

Providing wider experience of materials and components and of working with tools and equipment.

GEOGRAPHY

128 Standards are average at age seven and well above average at age eleven. Boys and girls of all abilities achieve satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2, and very well in Years 3 to 6. The school's curriculum planning shows geography topics carefully planned for each year, thus meeting National Curriculum requirements. The school's well-planned rolling programme of themes ensures that pupils build annually on their knowledge and skills without repeating themes. Work planned throughout the school is relevant and exciting, linked to studies in the locality, to visitors and to visits. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

129 The work by pupils in Years 1 and 2, comparing Clifton Hampden with an African village, shows good understanding of geographical terms. Pupils write clearly in sentences and illustrate each sentence to show the different features. The involvement of an African student and his mother visiting the school, showing photographs and talking about their village, has been a particularly significant stimulus for pupils throughout the school and the teacher has used this opportunity well to capture younger pupils' interest. In the lesson observed, pupils showed good recall of their work on the village comparison while they used photographs of the school site and locality to recognise geographical features. Pupils also considered how the environment could be improved. The teacher also made good use of ICT, involving a group in using a Roamer to develop their knowledge and vocabulary of direction.

130 Work by pupils in Years 3 to 6 during the inspection focused on contrasting environments. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 explore the differences between Abingdon and Clifton Hampden, whilst those in Years 5 and 6 have used a variety of sources to discover geographical features at Yenworthy, the destination for their forthcoming field trip. The oldest pupils show particularly good understanding of the use of maps, including grid references, and research information from a website, postcards and photographs, using contrasting sources of information to develop a view of what the North Devon coast will be like. Pupils readily postulate ideas in response to their teacher's thoughtful, open-ended questioning. In previous work throughout Key Stage 2, pupils show sound knowledge of geographical terms, for example during their detailed study of Clifton Hampden and in the work on St Lucia. In their science-related studies linked to Little Wittenham Nature Reserve they develop a good understanding of how people can either damage or improve the environment. The school's environment club is well attended and supports pupils' understanding of geography.

131 Pupils communicate their knowledge and understanding well both orally and in writing in geography. This is a strength of the school's provision. Teachers also ensure that pupils make good use of ICT to support work in this subject. Staff are developing the planned application of numeracy skills in geographical contexts very well, as shown in the pie charts

produced following questionnaires to parents on jobs and places of birth and in the work analysing findings from the local traffic survey.

132 Subject leadership and management are good. The subject is resourced satisfactorily and the school has adapted national guidelines for its use. An assessment sheet is kept to track pupils' progress and inform reporting to parents. The planned themes enable pupils to build sequentially on their knowledge, understanding and skills. Work in geography is not kept together at Key Stage 1, which leaves a gap when tracking what pupils have covered and assessing how well they have achieved.

Strengths

- *Standards and presentation of work by higher attainers in Years 5 and 6*
- *A relevant and stimulating curriculum with good links to first-hand experiences*
- *The use of literacy, numeracy and ICT to support the subject in Key Stage 2*

Areas for development

- *A means of keeping pupils' recorded work in Key Stage 1*

HISTORY

133 Work seen in pupils' books and on display shows standards at age seven are average and at age eleven well above average. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 1 and very good progress at Key Stage 2. The better progress at Key Stage 2 is linked to older pupils' highly proficient verbal and written communication skills, which contribute considerably to their learning in this subject. No lessons were observed during the inspection, as none were timetabled, but it is clear that the school has maintained high standards in this subject overall since the last inspection and history remains a strength of the school.

134 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 show good empathy as they imagine themselves in Samuel Pepys' position, writing a diary entry as the fire approaches. One describes how 'lots and lots of people are rowing to the other side of the river.' Such examples show the stimulating approach to the subject, but there was limited evidence of work at Key Stage 1. The school has not developed a helpful way of collecting pupils' recorded work at this Key Stage to help with assessment or to help pupils and parents gain a picture of what has been achieved. Nevertheless, pupils develop sound knowledge and awareness of historical people and events and begin to develop a sense of chronology through the themes undertaken over the two-year period.

135 Several pupils' excellent use of literacy skills in Key Stage 2 shows very good factual knowledge in the description of characteristics of past periods and in the way pupils apply their skills of historical enquiry. For example, Year 3 pupils draft a letter to Bede's world and list what they would put in their bag if they were an Anglo-Saxon invader. They make decisions about the gender, role, social status and religious outlook of the person buried, using the evidence and giving reasons for their choices. Year 4 pupils express reasons why archaeologists should not continue to excavate the Sutton Hoo site after listing questions they have framed themselves about the artefacts found. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 show very high levels of thought and imagination in their work on the history of Clifton Hampden and on invaders and settlers. Memos to the invading army from their leader, for example, offer an opportunity for pupils to bring their knowledge to life: 'Romans have left. Britain is empty. Prepare now. It will be a long journey.' Maps of the invasions illustrate the various forms of written recording. One notable piece of work, revealing pupils' ability to understand historical events from different viewpoints, is where pupils describe the views and fears of Witta and Flavia, a resident and an invader.

136 Although no lessons were observed, teaching appears to be very good in this subject, as the quality of pupils' learning is clearly very good in many of the examples of recorded work seen and pupils are show obvious enthusiasm for their historical studies. The time line across the Key Stage 2 room provides a useful aid to help pupils develop their sense of chronology. The quality of learning and the imaginative approach to teachers' planning suggests that teaching is good throughout the school and particularly strong in Key Stage 2.

137 The scheme of work is adapted from national guidelines to create a rolling programme of themes, avoiding unnecessary repetition and ensuring all aspects of historical knowledge, skills and understanding are addressed. There are good links with other subjects, notably English and ICT, but also design and technology, in the design and creation of Anglo-Saxon jewellery for example. Links with mathematics are also being developed. Assessment procedures are in place to check pupils' achievements and inform the writing of pupils' annual reports. In Key Stage 2, pupils' books offer a means of tracking what has been covered, but this is lacking in Key Stage 1.

Strengths

- *Standards in Key Stage 2*
- *Imaginative teaching*
- *Stimulating curriculum*
- *Use of visits and visitors*

Areas for development

- *A means of keeping pupils' recorded work in Key Stage 1*

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

138 Standards in Years 2 and 6 are broadly average in the work seen and in the use made of ICT to support learning in other subjects. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when standards in both year groups were below average. Since then increases in resources, raising of teacher confidence and expertise as a result of national training and the adoption of national guidelines have all contributed to this improvement. The number of computers has been increased, Internet access been established, software upgraded and supplemented and there are now plans for a computer suite. The recent purchase of laptop, projector and interactive screen has extended this capability further. Subject plans now cover the full National Curriculum programme of study and include control technology and modelling. These initiatives mean that the school is now well placed to move forward.

139 During the inspection no full lessons with direct teaching of ICT were seen although there was regular, well planned use of it to support learning in other subjects by small groups of pupils working with the class teacher or teaching assistant. Observation of these and other inspection evidence show that as a result of the good teaching and learning, pupils are making good progress and rapidly developing the skills and understanding expected for their age. Any areas that require remedy are quickly identified and addressed. Most pupils already have access to computers at home and have developed word processing skills and the ability to research information as a result. These are being extended and pupils are taught to use graphics, access the Internet, handle data and modelling and control.

140 Pupils throughout the school confidently log on, select the program they are to going to use and know how to save work on the hard drive to be retrieved for later use. They recognise icons on the tool bar, know how to select from drop down menus and confidently use the mouse to select and confirm choices. Pupils in Year 1 creating pictures of the Village Hall made good use of the colour palette and techniques in a paint program they had

used before. They knew how to correct errors and fill the outlines with colour. In a Year 1 and 2 music session the interactive board was used well to reinforce the understanding of composition through the generation, amendment and sharing of sounds. A teaching assistant made good use of the board to practise and extend pupils' numeracy skills as they identified answers in counting tasks with clear delight. In science pupils had displayed information about creatures found when pond dipping in tabular form and block graphs.

141 Pupils' work shows how by Year 6 they are able to import pictures and combine them with text, change fonts, edit and arrange their work for maximum impact. They are beginning to understand how to prepare lists of commands that create complex symmetrical patterns and to suggest how varying instructions will affect the outcome. Information from investigations in mathematics and science is analysed and presented using tables and comparative graphs as, for example, work calculating the capacity of buildings and readings from a temperature sensor. Teachers are careful to build on pupils' previous work, practise and develop skills and encourage use of the correct terminology. Year 6 pupils learning how to use a spreadsheet to record and analyse data about teachers' journeys to school quickly grasped how to enter the correct formula and select from a drop down menu the correct settings to ensure the calculation was made in hours and minutes. Further good examples of the use of ICT in other subjects include the preparation, planning and recording of the harvest lunch, use of the Internet to research the residential centre at Yenworthy, drafting and amendment of a formal report in literacy. Good use is made of homework projects to reinforce and develop pupils' ICT skills. Examples of this include booklets produced on endangered species and designs for pupils' bedrooms.

142 Overall the teaching of ICT is good. Teachers and assistants provide good support for pupils of all ages and capabilities and promote positive attitudes to the subject. There is no difference between the performance of boys and girls, who often work together at the computers. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well by their teachers, teaching assistants and their classmates and achieve equally well. Pupils enjoy using the computers. They work well in ones, twos and threes, taking turns, making helpful suggestions, sustaining concentration for extended periods and frequently working largely independently.

143 The considerable financial investment in resources and the improved staff knowledge and growing subject confidence is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. A system for monitoring and assessing ICT is in place to ensure pupils progress at the expected rate and check they cover the planned curriculum at a level suitable for their age. Co-ordination by the headteacher ensures a good overview of provision. The subject action plan notes the need to develop further the use of ICT to support learning in other subjects, further improve the use made of resources and to continue to develop staff's skills.

Strengths

Subject leadership that provides good guidance and support for colleagues and raises expectations

Improved and improving staff expertise

Good levels of resources

Areas for development

Further development of the use of ICT to support learning in all subjects

MUSIC

144 Standards are average at ages seven and eleven. This represents an improvement since the last inspection, when standards at eleven were below average. Several of the oldest pupils show particularly sensitive understanding in their appraisal of music after listening to a piece. A few, who play orchestral instruments and guitars, show standards above average. The singing by the whole school in the assemblies is weak in comparison with their music-making using instruments. A few pupils take advantage of the school's provision for peripatetic instrumental tutors to learn the violin. All pupils play a full part in a number of annual events involving music making. In this context the subject contributes very positively to the school's ethos and to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils of all abilities achieve satisfactorily at Key Stage 1 and well at Key Stage 2.

145 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 follow simple musical picture scores to maintain rhythms when playing percussion instruments in small groups. Some maintain their rhythm successfully, but others find this difficult as they work in trios. Similarly, when trying to keep the pulse alongside a song, pupils begin successfully, but find it difficult to maintain and need more practice. The whole class participates readily in singing, but needs the strong lead of the music teacher to maintain the melody and rhythm. Pupils remember songs well and use their voices in a variety of ways to show a range of emotions from anger to kindness. Although the teacher ensured that pupils sat up straight, the quality of singing improved when they stood. Pupils responded thoughtfully after listening to an excerpt from 'Hall of the Mountain King', recognising slow and quiet sections and noticing the different effect as the music got faster.

146 Pupils in Years 3 to 6 show high levels of sensitivity when discussing the atmosphere created by a piece of music. Using 'Fingal's Cave' as a stimulus, they then created patterns and layers of sound for their own compositions. One group worked under the supervision of the teaching assistant using a computer program, arranging symbols in various orders to create a piece with a beginning, middle and end. Another group worked with a student to create a visual score that could be used alongside the reading of a poem. The third group worked with the music teacher to create layers of music and perform their own adapted excerpt from Fingal's cave. Each group achieved very well, with the performance of the excerpt, using violins and guitars to play the melodic motif, a fitting highlight. The lesson closed with pupils looking at slides of Fingal's cave, while the music played in the background. A wall display in Key Stage 2 shows how pupils have made their own percussion instruments from natural sources and then jointly created a musical score with four layers. Pupils understand the use of staves, crotchets, quavers and the use of p, f and the crescendo sign.

147 The quality of teaching seen in Key Stage 2 was very good. The lesson in Key Stage 1 was satisfactory. The higher quality in Key Stage 2 stemmed from the thoughtful use of the excerpt to stimulate pupils' thinking at the start of the lesson and the very good levels of challenge planned for each group. The deployment of staff and careful planning ensured that no time was wasted. Pupils were eager to tackle the tasks and collaborated very well during their group activities. The Key Stage 1 lesson offered less challenge and there was insufficient demand for pupils to make improvements to their work by listening to the pulse, rhythm and melody.

148 The subject is well planned and resourced. The school offers opportunities for pupils to learn to play the violin in small groups. Unaccompanied singing during assemblies did not do justice to pupils' obvious musical abilities. This area needs attention. A number of pupils learn to play instruments outside school and bring their expertise to bear in music lessons and school productions. The co-ordinator uses her expertise to support pupils in annual

concerts and musical performances in the school and church. These contribute significantly to the ethos of the school.

Strengths

- *Teaching in Key Stage 2*
- *Listening to music and understanding how moods and effects are created*

Areas for development

- *Singing - especially during assemblies*
- *Expectations for Key Stage 1 pupils*

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

149 As physical education was not being taught during the inspection it is not possible to reach judgements about pupils' attainment or the quality of teaching and learning. At the time of the last inspection standards in Years 2 and 6 were average and in Year 6 swimming were above average. Evidence taken from viewing teachers planning and talking to pupils suggests that all aspects of the subject are planned and taught despite the restrictions of the building.

150 Pupils of all ages enjoy fortnightly swimming tuition at Berinsfield Sports Centre, which is alternated with gymnastics work in the Sports Hall. Access to this good resource is possible because of funding by the Parents' Association and ensures that despite the school's lack of internal space all pupils have regular experience of gymnastics and apparatus work. Similarly use of the Village Hall allows for a second weekly indoor session that includes games' skills if the weather does not permit use of the hard play surface or grass. Good use is made of outside providers to coach sports such as football in the after school clubs, that are open to pupils of all ages. Links with Abingdon College students support the weekly games sessions well. Outdoor and adventurous activities for Years 5 and 6 are also part of the residential visit.

151 As a result of the regular opportunities for swimming pupils make good progress and by the end of Year 6 all are able to swim at least the expected 25 metres, with many going well beyond this. They have developed a range of strokes, together with confidence and safety in the water, a similar position to that found by the last inspection. These are all valuable skills, given the close proximity of the River Thames.

152 Year 6 pupils recalled how they had developed gymnastic sequences including high and low movements and worked with partners on mirror sequences. In games sessions understanding of attack and defence has been developed together with skills specific to rugby, football, netball, rounders, hockey and tennis.

153 Competitive matches in football and netball have been played against other schools and an annual sports day provides an opportunity for further use of the athletics skills learnt in lessons. The lack of a suitable large internal area for PE means that the school is unable to offer the full National Curriculum programme of study on site. However, imaginative use of links and off site facilities has been used well to supplement teachers' subject knowledge and provide the full range of expected activities. The school is constantly looking to extend the range of activities offered outside of lessons and next year will be part of the Cliff Richard tennis coaching programme.

Strengths

Standards in swimming

Provision of all aspects of PE curriculum despite constraints of site

Use of outside specialists

Areas for development

Teachers' expertise

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

154 Evidence from pupils' work in books and that on display, talking to pupils and teachers and viewing teacher's planning indicates that standards in Years 2 and 6 meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus, as they did at the time of the last inspection. All pupils make good progress as they move through the school. Those with special educational needs receive good support from their teachers and therefore achieve equally well. Pupils have sound knowledge of the facts about several world religions, including Christianity. However, their understanding of the meaning behind religions is less well developed.

155 In both classes pupils develop a sound knowledge of Christian religious practices and traditions, which they contrast with similar ceremonies in other religions such as Islam. Pupils in Year 2 know that the Qur'an is the Muslim Holy book, that it should therefore be treated reverently, not handled but set on a stand and 'not allowed to touch the floor', as that is 'disrespectful'. They also recall how they designed prayer mats and that prior to prayer Muslims have to wash their hands and orientate the mat towards Makkah. They learn that Ramadan is the time when Muslims fast from dawn to dusk, saving money to give to the poor, and that fasting helps them appreciate what it feels like to be without food. Their teacher explained how after a month the feast of Eid celebrates the end of fasting and pupils learn that 'Eid Mubarak' on cards means 'Happy Festival'. Good links are made to other subjects, particularly art, as pupils design prayer mats and Eid cards using repeating, symmetrical patterns to emulate the designs on the prayer mat and making cards that open backwards as Arabs write from right to left.

156 By Year 6 pupils have learnt about many of the events in the Christian calendar, including Easter, Pentecost, Christmas, Harvest Festival, St David's and St Stephen's Days and the feast of St Michael, and are developing an understanding of the significance they have for Christians. They have compared Islamic and Jewish food laws, looked in detail at symbols of Judaism and the role of these artefacts and at rules in the Shabbat, Pesakh and Seder celebrations. They know, for example, that the six outer candles of the Menorah represent the six days taken by God to make the world. Their knowledge of major world faiths has been broadened by research into Hinduism and Buddhism. As a result pupils also develop their knowledge of signs and symbols well. Opportunities for reflection occur as, for example, when pupils think about how they live and work with others or write their own harvest prayers.

157 Throughout the school pupils are introduced to stories and detail from the Old and New Testaments. Pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 have recently looked at Paul's letters to the churches, studied Augustine's pilgrimage to Canterbury and been thinking about why pilgrims undertook such journeys. A visit to support this is planned to Dorchester Abbey later in the term. Good use is made of the local church for visits and services, local ministers are regular visitors and a local mosque has been used for visits in the past. Opportunities for reflection on what they have learnt, consideration of what it means to be a member of a major faith or the significance of rites of passage in these and how they compare with their own experience do not feature strongly amongst the work seen. Discussions with pupils suggest it is not such a strong feature of provision as other aspects.

158 In the one lesson seen, which was combined with art, pupils in Years 1 and 2 made good progress and attained well because of the well focused teaching and the good use made of questioning to develop their thinking and understanding. However, the emphasis in most of the written work seen, particularly with the older pupils, is on learning about religions rather than learning from them. This results in few opportunities for pupils to consider the 'deeper meanings' of life that religions seek to explain. Pupils are attentive, show interest and concentrate well.

159 The need to update the school's scheme of work in the light of the newly published locally agreed syllabus has correctly been identified as a priority. The school is currently awaiting its publication. It will also ensure that the clear indicators for assessment provided by the syllabus support the existing ongoing informal assessments. Resources are sufficient, although not as good as at the time of the last inspection when a wider range of artefacts lent by the previous vicar supplemented them. The use of ICT to support learning in the subject is at the early stages of consideration.

Strengths

Links with local church and local ministers

Teaching of elements of major faiths

Areas for development

Greater opportunities for pupils to reflect on the spiritual aspects of religion

Updating of scheme of work in light of new locally agreed syllabus

Use of visits and visitors to learn about world religions other than Christianity