

INSPECTION REPORT

**BRIGHTWELL - CUM - SOTWELL CHURCH OF
ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Brightwell-cum-Sotwell, Wallingford

LEA area: Oxfordshire

Unique reference number: 123144

Headteacher: Mr Roger Grant

Reporting inspector: Mrs Stephanie Lacey
3764

Dates of inspection: 13 – 16 January 2002

Inspection number: 248432

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

School category: Voluntary Controlled

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Greenmere Estate
Brightwell-cum-Sotwell
Wallingford

Postcode: OX10 0GH

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Ann Cooper

Date of previous inspection: January 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3764	Stephanie Lacey	Registered inspector	Foundation Stage, English, art and design, geography, history, music, and English as an additional language	The school's results and pupils' achievements, How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9528	Derek Bowers	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, design and technology, physical education, religious education and equal opportunities	How good are the other curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
31046	Chris Nuttall	Team inspector	Special educational needs and information communication technology	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	19
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	21
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	23
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	28
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	29
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	34

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Church of England Primary School is small village school with 106 pupils on roll aged between four and eleven. There are 13 more boys than girls. The ten children in the reception year work in a class with Year 1 pupils. There is a separate class for Year 2 pupils and two further classes for pupils in Year 3 and 4 and Years 5 and 6. Pupils come from Brightwell-cum-Sotwell, surrounding villages and Wallingford. Most pupils live in owner-occupied housing, with a few in housing authority homes. Two per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is well below the national average. Almost all families have their cultural roots in the British Isles, with only two per cent of pupils from another cultural background. English is the first language for all pupils. Children's attainment on entry to the reception year is wide-ranging, but above average overall. Five per cent of the pupils are on the school's register of special educational need, which is well below average. One pupil has a statement of special educational need.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Brightwell-cum-Sotwell CE Primary School is a good school with many strengths. Very strong leadership by the headteacher, who is supported by a committed staff team, is ensuring a clear focus on raising standards further. Teaching is good and most pupils achieve well within a caring Christian environment. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards have been well above average in Year 2 national tests in reading and mathematics for several years.
- Standards are above average in science throughout the school.
- Most pupils achieve well because of good teaching.
- The school pays very good attention to pupils' moral and social development, as a consequence behaviour and relationships are very good.
- Very good leadership by the newly appointed headteacher provides a very clear direction for the work of the school.
- The governors make a very good contribution to the work of the school.

What could be improved

- Standards in writing.
- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT).
- Consistent support for lower attaining pupils and challenge for higher attaining pupils.
- The use of information about pupils' progress to challenge them effectively.
- Planning for mixed age classes in subjects other than English, mathematics and science.

The school has already identified these as areas for development

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made sound improvement since its last inspection five years ago in January 1998. Overall standards have risen in line with the national trend. In the last few years these have been average or above average in national tests in all areas except writing. The quality of teaching has improved and this ensures that most pupils achieve well. The school has made sound progress in tackling the areas identified for improvement by the last inspection. These were related to improving pupils' progress by planning more effectively for work in different subjects and assessing how well they were doing. Developing the roles of subject managers and providing clearer information about the curriculum for parents were also highlighted for development. The school has worked hard to ensure that these areas are now satisfactory. There remains scope for further development. Raising standards in ICT remains an area for improvement. Good improvements have been made to the building and the overall accommodation is now very good. In recent years one of the main factors slowing

improvement has been a high staff turnover with an inevitable impact on the pace of change as new staff are inducted into the school's systems and procedures. Currently, with the appointment of three new staff last September and a clear agenda for improvement the school is in a good position to move forward further.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	A*	A	D	E
mathematics	B	A	C	D
science	A*	A*	A*	A

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

Similar schools are those in the same free school meals' band. Brightwell is in the 0% to 8% band.

Standards in national tests have risen since the last inspection and in most recent years have been above or well above average in both Year 2 and Year 6 tests. Standards have been in the top five per cent of all schools in Year 6 science tests for the last three years. In 2002, standards slipped in Year 6 in English and mathematics. This was directly related to the overall profile of the year group, which included a few pupils who found learning more difficult. Most pupils in this group made sound progress from their Year 2 tests. In small schools care needs to be taken in looking at statistical information related to tests, because the small numbers mean that standards can appear to fall or rise because of the performance of one pupil. However it is clear from the data available that in both Year 2 and Year 6 higher attaining pupils do not do as well in writing as in other subjects, and do not exceed the expectations for their age. Standards in Year 2 writing tests have fallen over the last few years. The school has set challenging targets for the performance of Year 6 pupils in 2003 tests, which it is working hard to meet.

The inspection found that most pupils achieve well and make at least sound progress from entry. Most pupils entering Year 1 have met the levels expected for their age and in Year 2, standards remain well above average in reading and above average in mathematics and science. They are average in all other subjects. Standards in Year 6 are average overall in English and mathematics and above average in science. Standards are average in all other subjects, except ICT, where pupils have not covered all of the curriculum. Again this year, one or two pupils who are a little behind their peers deflate the overall standards. The very small percentage of pupils with special educational needs receive good individual support, both in class and when they are withdrawn for extra help, and do well at these times. Sometimes they struggle when working unsupported within the class. Higher attainers are effectively challenged on the whole, but sometimes expectations of the amount and quality of their work are too low in writing and in subjects other than reading, mathematics and science.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are very positive about all aspects of school life. They listen attentively in lessons and are keen to do well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good overall. Pupils are sensible and very well behaved in the classrooms and playground. There is rarely any need for staff to speak to pupils about their behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Very good overall. Pupils form very good relationships with each other and the staff. Pupils' personal development is good, with older pupils particularly enjoying taking on more responsibility.
Attendance	Very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance levels

	are well above average.
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TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Overall the quality of teaching is good and this ensures that most pupils achieve well. Teaching has improved since the last inspection. All staff are good practitioners and strengths in their work include high expectations of good behaviour, very good relationships, good planning for most lessons, clear explanations and good use of class discussion to check how well pupils have understood and to challenge pupils in their thinking. In some lessons areas that are not as strong include the consistent challenge and support for higher and lower attaining pupils, planning, the use of homework to support pupils' learning and the marking of pupils' work. Both literacy and numeracy are taught well, with good attention paid to teaching pupils the basic skills. Planning is securely based on the national literacy and numeracy strategies. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the work in classrooms and provide particularly good support for pupils with special educational needs.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Sound overall with some strong features. These include the provision for pupils' personal development, extra-curricular activities and the links with the community. Some adjustments are needed to planning in subjects other than English, mathematics and science in mixed aged classes.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory overall. Good support for individuals and small groups from teaching assistants in class and in special sessions. Well-organised records with scope for more involvement from teachers in reviewing progress with the parents. Satisfactory links with parents.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Provision for spiritual and cultural development is sound. Some interesting activities are planned, especially in relation to multi-cultural education, but overall planning needs to be more systematic. Provision for moral and social development is very good and a strength of the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for pupils' health and safety very well. There are sound procedures in place to check how well pupils are doing, but the information available is not always used sufficiently to plan subsequent work.

Overall the school has a good partnership with most parents. Some help in school and most support their children at home with their work. The quality of information provided for parents, particularly about pupils' progress is good overall with some very good features such as the information leaflets for parents to help their children. The Friends of Brightwell School (FOBS) works hard to organise social and fund raising events and contributes significantly to the life of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The new headteacher has a very clear vision for the work of the school. He leads and supports staff very effectively. Senior teachers work effectively to support colleagues and take the lead in literacy and numeracy.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well. Governors use their expertise very well in the best interests of the school. The chair has played a key role in appointing and inducting the new headteacher. All statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. There are good strategies in place for checking how well the school is doing and staff and governors make good use of these to plan for future improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Financial planning is good and the school makes effective use of financial and human resources to improve provision. The school uses the principles of best value well. This area is strengthened by the outstanding contribution of the school administrative officer.

The school is well staffed by committed teachers and assistants. The cleaners, lunchtime supervisors and canteen staff also make valuable contributions to the work of the school. The quality of the accommodation is very good. Recent extensions and refurbishments have made a big difference to the overall quality of provision. The building and grounds are very well maintained. Overall the teaching resources and equipment are satisfactory.

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 behave well. • They would feel comfortable about approaching the school. • The leadership and management of the school. • The school expects their children to work hard. • The range of activities outside lessons. • Their children's progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school's links with parents. • Information about their child's progress. • The homework arrangements.

Only 28 parents returned the questionnaires sent to them before the inspection, which is a relatively low response. Eleven parents attended the meeting before the inspection. The statements in the box above are based on responses from the questionnaires and the meeting. These are the views of less than half of all parents.

The inspection endorses all of parents' positive views. It found that the school provides good information for parents and welcomes them into the school. The school will clearly need to investigate the reasons for the dissatisfaction of a few parents. Overall parents are given good information about their children's progress and staff are always happy to speak to parents outside the formal consultation evenings. The inspection agreed that work is needed in improving the homework arrangements so that all are clear about what is required.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

Starting school

1 When children start school in the reception year, their knowledge, skills and understanding are above those expected for their age. This has been the case for many years, although in some year groups children have a wider range of abilities than in others. By the time they start in Year 1 most reach the early learning goals¹ in all areas of learning².

Inspection findings

3 At the time of the inspection two children had been in school for one term. These pupils moved forward well last term. Eight had only been in school for a few days and had already settled into school routines.

Years 1 and 2

Standards in national tests

4 Standards have been well above average in national tests over the last few years in reading and mathematics. In 2001 standards were in the top five per cent of all schools in reading. In 2002, pupils at Brightwell did better than their peers in schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free schools meals in mathematics and much better in reading. Standards have fallen in writing over the last few years and in 2002 were average, with pupils not doing as well as those in similar schools. Standards are lower in writing because higher attaining pupils do not do as well as they do in reading and mathematics.

5 There are a number of factors that contribute towards the high standards in reading and mathematics. These include:

- good support for individual pupils in reading, both at school and at home;
- successful implementation of the national literacy and numeracy strategies.

6 Reasons for the relatively low standards in writing include:

- insufficient sustained challenge for higher attaining pupils;
- insufficiently developed handwriting skills. Recent improvements in the teaching of handwriting have yet to have an impact on standards;
- insufficient links with work in other subjects.

Inspection findings

Reading, writing, mathematics and science

7 The inspection found that standards remain well above average in reading and are above average in mathematics and science. They are average in writing. Pupils have a very good knowledge base in science and are competent in computational skills, but there is a lack of emphasis on investigational and experimental work.

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

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

Other subjects

8 In all other subjects most pupils reach the levels expected for their age. They do not do as well in other subjects as they do in English, mathematics and science because the school has been concentrating on raising standards in these subjects particularly.

Years 3 to 6

Standards in national tests

9 Standards have risen in national tests since the last inspection and in 2001 were well above average in English and mathematics and in the top five per cent of all schools in science. There was a fall back in 2002 in English and mathematics, although standards remained very high in science. Overall in 2002 standards were below average in English and average in mathematics. In comparison to similar school, standards were lower in mathematics and much lower in English, while remaining much higher in science.

10 There are several factors which contribute to this apparent fall in standards:

- This was a small year group and so the performance of each child had a significant impact on statistical data and one or two pupils with special educational needs deflated the overall standard. In reality most pupils attained high standards. More than average reached the expected level 4 in both English and mathematics, with more than average also reaching the higher level 5 in mathematics. Overall this particular year group made at least satisfactory progress from Year 2.
- Higher attainers did not do so well in writing and although this is a national trend, it is more pronounced at Brightwell.

Overall the improvement in standards has been in line with the national trend and the school is well set to reach its realistic targets for this year.

Inspection findings

English, mathematics and science

11 The inspection found that standards in reading are well above average and broadly average in writing, with few pupils reaching higher levels. In mathematics standards are average. Pupils have good computational skills, but do not have sufficient opportunities to apply these to investigations and problem solving. They are above average in science. Again, pupils' attainment is high in knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, but not as strong in experimental and investigational work, which is not assessed in national tests.

Other subjects

12 In most other subjects most pupils reach the levels expected for their age. In ICT, pupils achieve satisfactory standards in the work that they undertake, but older pupils have not covered all aspects of the curriculum, because planning for the subject was not sufficiently developed when they were younger. Currently pupils do not use ICT to extend their learning in other subjects.

Difference in the attainment of boys and girls

13 In Year 2 tests over the past three years girls have performed slightly better than boys in writing, boys slightly better than girls in mathematics with both similar in reading. Unusually, overall boys tend to do better than girls in Year 6 national tests although the small size of cohorts throws some doubt on the reliability of the trend. School analysis suggests that this is due to the differences in the make up of different year groups rather than any other factor and that the trend will continue in 2003, level out in 2004 and reverse in following years. Another factor is the very positive attitude that boys have towards work, which helps them to achieve well. There is nothing evident in the teaching or planning for different subjects to account for the difference in performance between boys and girls. In lessons seen both boys

and girls achieved well within their capabilities. The school is monitoring these trends closely.

Achievements of pupils with special educational needs

14 There are five pupils who have been identified with special educational needs, including the pupil with a statement. They make satisfactory progress overall towards the targets set for them in their individual education plans. Faster progress is made when pupils work on these targets with teachers or teaching assistants. However, support for pupils with special educational needs lacks consistency and learning tasks are not always matched to their needs. Support assistants are not consistently well-informed about the intervention they should provide during lessons. As a result, support for pupils with special educational needs is not as effective as it could be.

Higher attaining pupils' achievements

15 When children start at Brightwell in the reception class, many have skills, understanding and knowledge that are advanced for their age. Some of these pupils do not move forward as fast as they should between entry and their final year in school. Higher attaining pupils do not always do as well as they could in subjects other than reading, mathematics and science, as the tasks set do not extend them sufficiently. The school is beginning to identify its more able pupils and make provision for them in English and mathematics through the use of ability grouping in lessons and some withdrawal groups taken by the headteacher. In science, practical activities provide more able pupils with opportunities to work at their own level. Overall, higher attainers only make satisfactory progress because in most other subjects of the curriculum they are not specifically catered for in teacher's planning or choice of activities. The school recognises that it has not done as much as it could for more able pupils and have planned to address this.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

Overall judgement

16 Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. The school has maintained the high standards reported at the last inspection. These contribute significantly to pupils' good achievement.

Attitudes

17 Pupils enjoy coming to school and parents report that their children are keen and eager to attend school. Children settle quickly into Class 1 and the new children this term are already confident in their new situation. Pupils' interest and their attitude to work are very good. They listen attentively to explanations and instructions and contribute enthusiastically to discussions. In a Year 3/4 session on ICT, for example, the pupils responded well to their class teacher's questions. They were eager to link what they already knew to the challenge presented to them before offering an answer. Pupils settle to their tasks quickly and maintain concentration well, striving to complete their tasks. Year 6 pupils, attending an early session before school started one morning, were keen to make the most of their extra support in literacy. They showed a determination to finish the work before the school day started. Most pupils show a good deal of commitment to their work and they are enthusiastic and eager to do their best. They co-operate well with each other and value each other's contributions. These positive attitudes help to make lessons happy occasions where pupils are industrious and this makes a good contribution to their learning.

Behaviour

18 The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour and these are achieved through the consistent application of the behaviour policy by all teachers and the positive response from pupils. Behaviour in classrooms and around the school is very good and pupils are very

polite, courteous and friendly. At lunchtime the pupils are particularly well behaved, saying please and thank you to the kitchen staff as they collect their meals. They demonstrate their acceptance of the school's behaviour policy and show care for one another, their belongings and school property. Pupils develop personal and social skills very well and are clearly motivated by the school's systems of rewards and sanctions. The introduction of a 'Gold Book' celebrates special achievements, for example, a recent entry reads *'for being considerate, thoughtful and helping to look after the new children'*.

Oppressive behaviour

19 There were no incidents of disruptive behaviour or bullying during the inspection. A slight argument in the playground was seen but the minor incident was quickly resolved. Pupils know what is acceptable and what is not and the school is quick to deal with any infringement of the school's rules. There were no indications of vandalism or graffiti in the school and the school was free of litter. There were no exclusions in the last year.

Relationships

20 The relationships pupils have with each other and their teachers are very good and have a positive effect on their development. All pupils, including boys and girls work together and mix freely. They are considerate of each other's feelings and they talk and play together pleasantly. Several pupils chose to sit quietly in the pergola at playtime and enjoyed the time to talk with friends. When pupils are required to work in pairs or in small groups, as in many lessons, they co-operate very well. In a Year 5/6 games session, pupils practised netball skills together, showing mutual support and congratulating one another on good throwing and catching. Children in Year R and 1 collaborated well in pairs, discussing various sources of information and where they are found, before reporting their ideas to the whole class.

Personal development

21 Pupils accept responsibility willingly and enjoy helping with class and school routines. Since the appointment of the new headteacher, pupils have been given more opportunities to exercise their initiative and accept responsibilities. The newly formed School Council in particular gives pupils a chance to participate actively in decisions affecting the life of the school. For example, the council is now discussing the purchase of additional resources for playtimes by seeking suggestions from all classes. Older pupils assist with a board games club for Year 1 and they also help in younger pupils' classes during indoor playtimes. More recently, older pupils have been encouraged to plan and lead assemblies and they have responded especially well to this new initiative. Opportunities to encourage the development of pupils' independent learning and research skills are improving, particularly through homework tasks.

Attendance

22 Attendance is very good and has been well above the national average for the past three years. Unauthorised absences are well below the national average. Punctuality, for most pupils, is very good. Registers are marked promptly and fully each day and the reasons for all absences are recorded.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

23 Overall the quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now good, with a higher proportion of good and very good teaching in the lessons seen than there were five years ago. This ensures that most pupils achieve well. In lessons seen the quality of teaching ranged from very good to unsatisfactory. Almost three quarters of the lessons seen were good or very good, a quarter were satisfactory and two unsatisfactory lessons were seen.

Strengths in the teaching

24 There are significant strengths in the teaching throughout the school, which provide a firm foundation for pupils' learning. These include:

- High expectations of good behaviour. Teachers expect pupils to behave well and work hard. Pupils respond well to this and are attentive to their teachers. They listen carefully in the introduction to sessions and work sensibly on the work set.
- Very good relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils like the staff and respond well to the encouragement and support that they give. Teachers are particularly successful in raising pupils' self esteem. In conversation with pupils it is evident that they feel proud of their achievements.
- Good planning for most lessons. This includes a clear focus on the main objectives for the lesson, with a range of interesting tasks prepared in order to engage pupils' interest.
- Clear explanations. All teachers explain new ideas very clearly and this helps pupils to grasp new concepts quickly.
- Good use of class discussion to check how well pupils have understood and to challenge pupils in their thinking.

25 In the very good lessons additional features that helped pupils to move forward more rapidly included:

- A very good use of excellent resources. In a religious education session, for example, a Muslim visitor brought the lesson alive for the pupils and in an art lesson, the introduction of new high quality sketch books added a new impetus to the learning.
- A very good pace to the learning. In the best lessons very good planning and organisation meant that no time was lost and pupils made rapid gains in their learning.

Areas for development

26 Within the context of good overall teaching there are some general areas for development. The most significant is related to the consistent challenge and support for higher and lower attaining pupils. Within the two-year age span in most classes there is not a tremendous gap between the lowest and highest attaining pupils and most cope well with the work set for the class. In the introduction to sessions teachers take care to challenge higher attaining pupils by thoughtful questioning. Sometimes the lower attaining pupils are not sufficiently involved or supported at these times. In most sessions all pupils work on a similar task in the activity part of the lesson. There is more scope for extending higher attaining pupils at these times.

27 The use of homework to support pupils' learning at school is also an area needing improvement. Homework is set in all classes, but the approach is not consistent through the school. Not all parents are clear about what their children are expected to do. Most of the written work seen had been marked, but the presentation of the work was not as high as is expected in class. In Years 3 to 6 teachers do not make use of the pupils' reading diaries to engage in a dialogue with the parents.

28 Staff are working on improving the marking of pupils work in order to help them to improve. At the moment there is a lack of consistency from class to class, although most comments are very positive. Marking is not always related to the learning purpose of the writing or recording activity and pupils are not always given clear pointers for improvement.

Teaching in the Foundation Stage

29 Teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall. The ten pupils in the reception year share a class with pupils in Year 1. Eight of these pupils had only been in school for a few days at the time of the inspection and the teacher was in the very early stages of

assessing what they knew, understood and could do. Already good relationships have been developed between the staff and children, who are settled and happy in their new surroundings. The teacher and assistant are warm and encouraging, providing good support for individual children in their first few days in school. Work planned is generally appropriate, although in a few sessions there were insufficient opportunities for children to learn through play and first hand experience. In the two unsatisfactory sessions seen, the weaknesses were directly related to the planning of work. The classroom is well organised with lively and interesting displays. There is scope for children to work in all areas of learning and good use is made of the outside covered area.

Teaching in Years 1 and 2

30 Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good overall. It is stronger in Year 2, where a more experienced teacher is supporting pupils well. Good use is made of teaching assistants to provide opportunities for pupils to work in small groups and parents also make a very good contribution by their help in classrooms. Interesting activities are planned. In one design and technology lesson, for example, pupils worked with small wheeled toys to evaluate which would be most suitable for a young child. All were totally involved in the activity and moved ahead well.

Teaching in Years 3 to 6

31 Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is also good. Again, the strongest teaching is in the older pupils' class, where a very experienced teacher challenges pupils effectively. Very good use is made of teaching assistants in these classes. 'Booster' classes before school, for example, are led by one of the assistants and her encouraging and supportive manner contribute towards the pupils' love of learning and good progress at these times. The headteacher takes classes throughout the school so that teachers can be released for non-contact time. This heavy commitment enables him to lead the teaching. In lessons seen his very effective teaching helped pupils to achieve very well.

Teaching of literacy and numeracy

32 Both the literacy and numeracy strategies have been successfully implemented and provide a sound framework for teachers' planning. Teachers have good subject knowledge. In literacy there is a good emphasis on teaching pupils the basic skills of reading and writing. Pupils have been taught a range of strategies to help them to read. These include an understanding of letter sounds. The school is trialling the teaching of a joined writing style from reception in order to improve handwriting further. There is more scope for helping pupils to develop their writing skills in other subjects, such as history and geography and to challenge higher attainers further. Teachers do not always use the drafting process as effectively as they might in teaching writing skills. In numeracy, teachers plan well for the development of pupils' computational skills, with more work needed on applying these to problem solving and investigations.

Teaching of pupils with special education needs

33 Teachers have a sound understanding of pupils' special educational needs and are keen to help them. They are aware of the individual education plans, which clarify pupils' needs and set specific targets. However, the work provided for these pupils does not consistently take into account their needs and the level of difficulty is not always appropriate to meet those individual needs. Teachers rarely make reference to the targets on pupils' individual education plans in their planning. Teachers establish good relationships with learning support assistants and support assistants are caring and sensitive. However, they are not always clear about when to intervene with support and when to stand back.

Teaching of higher attaining pupils

34 These pupils are not always as well challenged as they should be. Higher attaining pupils usually work on the same tasks as their peers and, as a result, the work is sometimes undemanding and the more-able pupils do not move forward as quickly as they should. For example, in a Year 5/6 ICT lesson, several of the pupils already demonstrated advanced skills when retrieving information from the Internet. However, these pupils still had to sit through the explanation that the rest of the class needed when they would have been better challenged by a different task to extend their skills and knowledge.

Equal opportunities

35 Teachers are careful to support boys and girls equally in their learning and not to favour either group in questioning, composition of working groups or allocation of tasks. In English and mathematics teachers use ability grouping when planning and organising lessons to meet the needs of all pupils including those in the mixed age classes. In all other subjects pupils follow the same work and do the same activities. This means that the needs of different ability groups, particularly the more able and the below average, and pupils of different ages are not suitably met.

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

Breadth, balance and relevance of the curriculum

36 The school provides pupils throughout the school with a broad curriculum that meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum, the Oxfordshire Agreed Syllabus and suitably covers planning for the Foundation Stage. All prescribed subjects of the National Curriculum are covered and concerns in the last report about ICT coverage have been addressed. The school is now actively looking at ways in which the good range of enrichment that it already provides through visits, visitors, links with the village and out of class clubs can be extended further. It has made sound progress in developing the curriculum since the last inspection.

Development of the curriculum

37 Following the last inspection the school correctly focused on raising attainment in English, mathematics and science. In the intervening period it has continued to update its curriculum and worked to meet new requirements. Considerable changes in staff over that time have meant that although the process has continued it has not always been as far advanced as the school would wish. Since the appointment of the new headteacher at the start of the autumn term considerable effort has been made to update and revise curriculum documentation and address the concerns of the last report over curricular planning. Visits from LEA advisers have been used well to look at the curriculum and provision for English, mathematics, science, art, music and the Foundation Stage.

Planning from year to year

38 The newly introduced curriculum map provides a clear overview of the study units for all subjects and year groups. It will help the school ensure pupils experience continuity in their learning and develop skills and understanding in a progressive manner, particularly in the mixed age classes. Although a biennial cycle had been introduced to overcome the problems of mixed age classes, varying year group sizes has meant that sometimes classes are single age. The school is now taking account of this in its planning. Sufficient thought has not always been given to the age and ability of pupils when choosing topics of study in history and geography so that some designed for older pupils have been inappropriately allocated to Years 1 and 2.

39 Teachers are making good use of both national guidance and local authority guidelines when planning their lessons. The school is also developing guidance on the skills that pupils

should acquire year by year in different subjects. This will provide clearer guidance on expectations for pupils of different abilities in each year group or of each age group in the mixed age classes. This guidance is not yet firmly embedded in planning.

40 Links are often made between subjects, as in the Year 6 work on the Mars topic seen in science, or in Year 1 the use of music and an Indian story as the basis for a dance session. However, this is not yet a systematic feature of the planning process and the school intends to draw upon recent advice from the Quality and Curriculum Authority to support the development of links between subjects. The planned development of the ICT suite will also increase the scope for using ICT to support learning in other subjects.

Strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy

41 The national strategies for numeracy and literacy are used as the basis of planning for the teaching of English and mathematics and provide teachers with good support in planning work for pupils of different ages and abilities. Numeracy skills are often consolidated as pupils employ them in relation to other tasks. There is clear evidence of pupils using literacy skills to access and complete tasks in a number of subjects and sometimes literacy is integrated with other subjects. However, opportunities for this are not yet clearly identified or planned systematically. The school is planning, for example, to make use of recent support from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority to plan links between the schemes of work being used.

Equal opportunities

42 The school has a strong commitment to equality of access for all and is reviewing and developing its arrangements to ensure that all pupils enjoy full equality of opportunity in the curriculum that it provides. Where pupils miss lessons, for example, to receive additional support in reading their teachers try to ensure they are supported on their return to the class. All pupils have equal access to clubs, sport and other activities provided by the school.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs

43 Curriculum provision for pupils with special education needs is satisfactory overall. Teachers are developing a better awareness of pupils' special educational needs although they are not regularly involved in setting the targets in individual education plans. Although pupils sometimes work in small groups outside the classroom, particularly for literacy support, the main aim is to include and support pupils as much as possible in class lessons. Withdrawn support, when it does occur, is seen as a short-term strategy to boost learning, which will ultimately lead to higher levels of inclusion in the longer term. Some pupils in Year 6 receive additional English support before school in the morning. This effective extra help, which is popular with pupils, is well managed by an experienced learning support assistant.

Extra-curricular and other activities including educational visits

44 Teachers and professional instructors provide a good range of after school clubs and sporting activities including art, netball, French, music tuition and tennis. Sports have also included participation in athletics tournaments, football, recent yoga classes and a judo demonstration. Visitors and visits, including the local clergy, an artist in residence, Viking re-enactment, dance groups, the 'Waste Bus', the Rutherford laboratories, local museums and historic houses are all used well to enrich and extend the curriculum. A residential visit to the local authority's outdoor centre Yenworthy Lodge in Devon provides older pupils with the opportunity for outdoor and adventurous activities together with environmental and local studies in a different locality. The headteacher is looking to improve this enrichment further with clubs for chess and ICT and making greater use of the surrounding area to support learning.

Links with the community and partner institutions.

45 The school has good links with the local community. St Agatha's Church and the village are visited for events during the year and local clergy are regular visitors to the school. Performances by pupils in school, the school open day, maypole dancing at the village's Jubilee celebrations and community carols in the village hall all forge good links with the wider community. There are strong links with partner schools and the local secondary school. This benefits pupils by increasing their opportunities and ensures a smooth transition to secondary schooling with taster sessions, meetings and exchange of information prior to transfer. Staff recently attended a joint training day on assessment to hear a keynote speaker talk about recent developments. Good links with the on site pre-school group support children's entry to the school for the first time.

Personal, social and health education

46 Good provision is being made for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) through a developing programme. The new draft policy for PSHE is supporting this well and the recent introduction of a programme of study and regular timetabled sessions in all classes provides good opportunities for pupils to work through specific issues. These range from considering a healthy diet and the benefits of exercise to exploration of emotions or preparation for citizenship through the work of the new school council. Links are often made to other subjects as work on feelings, sex, drugs and health education and caring for the environment support and reinforce work in other subjects such as religious education, science, physical education and geography. All are preparing pupils well for later life and this good provision will be extended as the school seeks to achieve a 'Healthy Schools Award'.

Personal development

47 The school sees pupils' personal development as an important part of its work. Overall provision for pupils' personal development is good and an improved position to that at the time of the last inspection. It is particularly strong in both social and moral development and this is clearly a strength of the school. This is because of the good systems that are in place and the school's strong focus on creating a caring family community. The school monitors the success of its provision through individual records of pupils' personal development and surveys of staff and parents.

Spiritual development

48 Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory overall. Daily class or whole school assemblies provide pupils with moments for prayer or quiet reflection on how they behave towards others. Pupils express joy in their singing, particularly their rendition of 'Hosanna Rock', and stories are chosen well to illustrate issues relevant to their lives such as New Year resolutions, trying to do better or that material goods do not bring happiness. There are good opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own feelings and emotions in the course of personal and social education. They are also given opportunities to consider the emotions of others in other subjects of the curriculum such as history and literacy. In religious education rites of passage, such as a new baby or coming of age, are explored in different faiths and pupils are encouraged to think about similarities and differences in their own lives and the significance of different artefacts in the main religions. Overall, however, opportunities for spiritual development are not being systematically planned or exploited in lessons and there is no current overarching policy to improve this. The school is currently working with the diocesan adviser to improve this area.

Moral development

49 Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. Pupils' have a strong sense of right and wrong due to the good guidance provided. All staff are very good role models for pupils both in their relationships with one another and the care they show for their pupils. Pupils

respond positively to the high expectations of adults in the school and this is well reinforced through the positive use of the reward system. Personal and social education provides opportunities to consider why rules are necessary and in religious education pupils look at those of the major faiths. In discussions and responses to questions pupils show respect for the views and beliefs of others. Older pupils, including those with specific responsibilities, show integrity in their dealings with other pupils particularly the younger ones. They care for their environment and older pupils have made power-point presentations to the whole school on the need for recycling whilst others have voluntarily cleared litter from the playground.

Social development

50 Provision for social development is also very good and is as at the heart of the school's work to create 'a caring family community'. The success of this is clearly evident in the way that pupils work together in pairs or small groups often without direct supervision. Older pupils look after the younger ones at the lunch table, and pupils generally care for one another. For example, two of the youngest ones bathed the knee of a friend who had fallen in the playground before seeking adult help. Pupils are given opportunities to develop personal initiative as they readily undertake the setting out or clearing away of resources and materials in lessons, returning registers and other similar tasks. Older pupils diligently complete monitoring roles by operating the projector in assembly, ringing the bell on time, minding the school office at lunchtimes or carrying messages. After-school clubs, visits to places of educational interest, sport and whole school productions also provide good opportunities for pupils to socialise and work together. Older pupils have the valuable opportunity of a residential visit with outdoor and adventurous activities to broaden their experience away from home. The newly formed school council is providing pupils with very good opportunities for taking responsibility within the school community. Activities such as working with the local environmental group to complete a stream survey and participating in the Jubilee celebrations with maypole dancing helps pupils develop a sense of being part of the village community. The school also encourages pupils to develop an understanding of their responsibilities in the wider world through charitable events and projects such as recycling waste.

Cultural development

51 Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory overall. Pupils are given sound opportunities to explore their own culture, for example, in the course of English, music and history. Local history and geography studies develop pupils' understanding and knowledge of their local culture, which is enhanced by visits to museums and historic houses. Opportunities also exist for pupils to develop an understanding of other cultural traditions and beliefs in religious education. Older pupils, for example, have asked a parent about aspects of Islam and younger pupils have learnt about the Jewish faith. Opportunities are also taken in literacy, art, music and geography to extend pupils' understanding. Although it has improved since the last inspection, pupils' understanding and knowledge of other cultures is not sufficiently developed to prepare them for life in a multicultural society. The school recognises this and is exploring links with a school, which has pupils from a range of cultures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

52 The school has maintained its very good care for pupils' health and safety since the last inspection and improved the procedures for assessing pupils' progress.

Health, Safety and Care of all pupils

53 The policies, procedures and practices to ensure the health, safety, care and protection of pupils, staff and visitors are good. Staff know the parents by sight and name and welcome informal and formal contacts throughout the school year. Parents are confident that the headteacher and teachers will always find time to talk to them about any concerns. Pupils causing concern for any reason are discussed at regular staff meetings.

54 Regular health and safety checks are carried out by the staff and the experienced health and safety governor. All equipment is checked annually under service contracts. Staff are made aware of potential hazards in lessons. There are well-organised arrangements for first-aid with sufficient fully-trained members of staff. Supervision throughout the day, including breaktimes and lunchtimes, is very good. There is very good mixing of all ages with the older ones caring for younger ones at breaktimes. The detailed care of staff for the pupils' welfare is illustrated well through the teaching by lunchtime supervisors of the Year 6 children to play new games. These pupils in turn are teaching the younger ones.

55 Since the last inspection the school has produced a good policy on child protection. The procedures to be followed are covered in detail with all new staff, including lunchtime supervisors. Health and safety policies and practices are also discussed in detail with all staff.

Measures to promote good behaviour and personal development

56 The school has good policies and practices for the management of the pupils and to encourage good attitudes and behaviour. The behaviour policy and any matters related to behaviour or bullying are discussed at staff meetings. This helps to ensure that all staff are well informed and are consistent in their management of the pupils. Any incidents of misbehaviour are recorded and acted upon promptly. Considerable, effective support is available from the local education authority if necessary. Good reward systems have been introduced and these give strong encouragement to the pupils. These include a 'Gold Book' and 'Certificates of Achievement' which were designed by the children themselves. These are popular with the children.

Measures to promote good attendance

57 The very good attendance reflects the efforts by the staff to ensure that the pupils enjoy coming to school. The administrator and teachers are very active in recording attendance and monitoring absences. The school receives good support from the education welfare officer who regularly monitors absences. There is close monitoring and control of late arrivals and the school has set an early cut-off time for unauthorised absence. If necessary a letter is sent to parents reminding them of the attendance procedures.

Support for pupils with special educational needs

58 The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is satisfactorily recorded and informs the writing of individual education plans. These individual plans are clear and reviewed regularly. Pupils with statements of educational need are supported well and all statutory requirements related to their statements are met.

Assessment: improvements since last inspection

59 Overall arrangements for assessing pupils' progress are satisfactory and have improved since the last inspection when formal systems were judged unsatisfactory. There are

rigorous processes in place for assessing pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science following an agreed timetable and using both optional and statutory national tests at the end of each year and teacher assessments and tests during the year. Assessment data is recorded and charted to show pupils progress through the school and inform the setting of agreed targets for English and mathematics with the local authority for the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Teachers now make their own regular assessments of pupils' progress in these subjects either half termly or at the end of units of study. Ongoing assessment procedures have been introduced for all subjects of the curriculum and teachers are beginning to annotate their curriculum plans to show how well pupils have understood lessons and to consider its implications when planning their next lesson or unit of study. However, these procedures are relatively new and are not yet being used consistently to plan for the next stages of learning or judge whether pupils have made the expected progress over time.

Developing assessment procedures

60 The new headteacher has recognised the need to develop a manageable system that clearly records what pupils know, understand and can do in all subjects, shows how they have progressed over time, sets challenging targets for improvement and clearly demonstrates whether sufficient progress has been made.

61 Teacher's planning sheets have been modified to record whether pupils have understood the objectives or lessons and unit plans are now highlighted to show which elements of study have been understood. End of unit assessments are recorded on class record sheets and are to be used to chart pupils' progress. At this stage, however, these systems are still at the early stages of development and are stronger in some classes than others. Following recent training commercial software is now being used to analyse this data and present it in a usable form. The school is using a commercial test to assess pupils on entry to the reception class and companion forms to record their progress against the six areas of learning. In all subjects teachers make informal ongoing assessments of pupils' progress based on their response to questions and the marking of work. Teachers are beginning to assemble collections of pupils' work in each of the subjects to illustrate expectations, help teachers plan future work and ensure commonality of purpose.

Use of assessment information

62 National test results and past papers are analysed to identify possible areas of weakness and to check differences in levels of achievement between boys and girls. Data from tests is compared with other schools both locally and nationally, used to identify areas requiring improvement and discussed with governors. Although pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science is tracked over time this information has not been used to set individual targets for improvement or consider whether pupils are making better than satisfactory progress over time. The school intends to make use of a software package to analyse these results to highlight whether progress could have been better and help set more informed, challenging targets for improvement. It plans to set meaningful targets for cohorts and individual pupils based on their prior ability. Individual pupil targets for mathematics are being tried in Year 2 with the intention of extending this to English, science and to all year groups in the near future. These will help pupils understand how well they are doing and how they could improve. Lack of these systems in the past and limited use of assessment information to plan for the next stages of learning explains why different ability groups have not always been suitably extended.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

Parents' views of the school

63 Most parents and carers are positive about most aspects of the school's provision for their children. Both parents and staff feel that there was an understandable plateau in the

development of the partnership during the period without a permanent headteacher. The general feeling is that there has been good improvement this year. In the questionnaires and at the public meeting high proportions of parents agreed that their children like school, behaviour in the school is good, parents would feel comfortable approaching the school, the school expects the children to work hard, the school is well led and managed, the teaching is good and that the school provides an interesting range of outside activities. There was also strong support for the views that children are making good progress and that the school is helping them to become more mature. The inspectors endorse fully these positive views.

64 A minority of parents were less satisfied about the following aspects of provision. The return of questionnaires was relatively low (28 per cent) and this probably reflects the closeness of the inspection to the beginning of term. Twenty-five percent of parents who replied were dissatisfied with the amount of homework. At the meeting parents were more positive. These parents felt that homework requirements are clear and the particular assignments are written in the homework folders. Sometimes optional extension homework is suggested. Holiday homework varies somewhat between classes and some parents felt that there was possibly not quite enough homework for Year 6 children in preparation for secondary schools. In previous years homework was not marked regularly but this has improved this year. The inspection findings broadly support these perceptions, finding that the amount of homework is satisfactory. There is scope for making homework arrangements clearer to parents.

65 Twenty-nine percent of the small number of parents who returned the questionnaire expressed dissatisfaction with the information on how their children are getting on. The staff also feel that there is some room for improvement in the reporting to parents at the end of the year so they are better informed about their child's strengths and weaknesses in learning, as well as in their personal development. The inspectors conclude that the school provides satisfactory information through the annual reports and the two consultation evenings. This should be improved further through changes in the content of future annual reports. The annual pupil reports give clear indications of standards in English and mathematics, in relation to national achievements. These include optional test results in Year 5 as well as the end of key stage results. Targets are set in the core subjects but these are sometimes rather general. All foundation subjects, religious education and personal development are covered in reasonable detail. The staff are reviewing the content of the reports with a view to providing clearer targets and further information on how well the pupils are doing.

66 Thirty-two percent of the small number of parents who returned the questionnaire expressed some dissatisfaction with the close working of the school with parents. The inspection found that the school's arrangements for working with parents were sound. Most parents at the meeting felt that parental links had stagnated last year during the period without a permanent headteacher and that there has been considerable improvement already this year. Parents feel that it is very easy to contact teachers, that they are always listened to and that staff welcome feedback from parents.

The information provided by the school

67 The school provides frequent letters and newsletters from the headteacher, governors and class teachers and these are also available to parents by e-mail and in the foyer. These are clear, informative and friendly in tone. They cover a good range of topics including reception arrangements, ICT developments, clubs, church services, assemblies, village events and social events. The headteacher holds an open consultation evening with the parents each term. Parents are also provided with a termly overview of the curriculum.

68 A public relations committee has been established to improve communications with parents, recruitment and training arrangements for adult helpers in school, and to produce an

introductory pack for children new to the school. Staff are keen to participate in school functions and interact with parents outside of school hours. The headteacher is considering running a regular timetabled surgery for parents from this term, providing cover for other teachers if necessary.

69 The school prospectus and governors' annual reports are informative and welcoming and are reviewed annually with parents and governors. The school sends home very good quality written guidance for parents on helping their children. The most recent ones covered learning styles, and helping with spellings and writing letters.

Parents' support

70 The school's own survey in October 2002 to seek the views of parents on the performance of the school revealed that parents were happy about the size of the school, the happy and caring atmosphere, friendly children, the community spirit, the sense of team work, high expectations, concern for children, the teaching, class information meetings and the increase in extra-curricular activities. Some parents reported that they would like improvement in information about progress, increased contact for parents of SEN pupils, further information about the curriculum, a broader curriculum and a greater involvement of parents.

71 In each class parents help regularly. Class liaison parents are the first points of contact for help with trips and in the classroom. In addition, parent governors are attached to individual classes. The very active Friends' Association organises social events and raises valuable additional funds for the school. The staff and parents agree priorities for the expenditure of the money raised by the Association.

72 Parents give good support to their children at home, particularly with reading, spellings and topic work. Parents of younger children make good use of the reading records which they are encouraged to use as a means of communication with school. All parents return the home-school agreement, which was prepared after consultation between parents, staff and governors. The agreement is renewed in Year 3 to keep parents, pupils and staff aware of its significance.

Partnership of parents of pupils with special educational needs

73 The school establishes satisfactory links with most parents of pupils who have special educational needs. Parents are informed when concerns are first raised and pupils are to be placed on the special needs register. They are invited to school to discuss their child's individual education plan and to attend review meetings. However, the individual education plan rarely indicates how parents can support their child at home in order to meet the targets set. On occasions, parents are informed of specific moderate learning difficulties but information related to consequent support is not communicated to parents.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

A clear vision

74 There is a clear vision for the school's work, shared by staff and governors. It is encapsulated in the school's mission statement:

'To provide a primary education in mind & body for all pupils entrusted in our care, in order to make the best of their abilities. We aim to serve our community by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice.'

This mission statement effectively underpins the work of the school.

Improvement since the last inspection

75 Overall the school has made sound progress since the last inspection. Good progress has been made in raising standards in English, mathematics and science and the quality of teaching has also improved. Significant progress has been made in improving the accommodation. Satisfactory progress has been made in addressing the areas for development noted by the last inspection. These were related to:

- Planning the curriculum more effectively to meet the needs of all pupils;
- Involving subject co-ordinators in supporting and monitoring teaching and learning in their subject;
- Developing more effective ways of assessing, monitoring and recording progress;
- Improve pupils' capacity for personal study, research skills and independent learning;
- Improve standards in ICT through appropriate staff training and improved planning which meets the needs of the National Curriculum;
- Improve the quality of the curriculum information provided for parents.

Most of these areas are now satisfactory, although more work is needed on all of them. Standards have improved in ICT, but pupils' attainment is still below the levels expected for their age at the end of Year 6. Progress on these particular areas was slowed by staff changes, which made it difficult to develop consistent practice through the school.

The leadership of the new headteacher

76 The current headteacher was appointed in September and is providing a very clear lead for staff and governors. He has worked very effectively with them to identify a clear agenda for improvement. His enthusiasm and teaching skills provide a very good example for staff. At the same time he provides very good support for staff. He enables them to develop their skills by drawing in outside expertise to give advice on curriculum matters and giving them time during the school day to work on their subject responsibilities or prepare for their class teaching. Currently the headteacher is taking responsibility for leading the development of work in seven subject areas and the Foundation Stage. This is a very heavy load, but manageable in the short term. It has enabled the subject leaders for English, mathematics, science and physical education (PE) to concentrate on developing work in their areas. This allocation of responsibility will be readjusted in September to share the subject leadership more evenly.

The leadership of senior staff

77 Two staff, in addition to the special educational needs co-ordinator, have responsibility points for managing subject areas (literacy and mathematics) and providing a lead for different age groups. Both are enthusiastic and provide good support for colleagues. They have had these particular roles for about two years and have a sound understanding of provision through the school. Since last September, with more time to develop their work, the leadership of these two subjects has improved. Both teachers have a detailed agenda for improving standards in both literacy and numeracy, which has been agreed with all staff.

Leadership and management of work with pupils who have special educational needs

78 A new special needs co-ordinator (SENCO) has taken over the responsibility for the area of special educational needs since September 2002. She has made a satisfactory start in addressing this area of responsibility. Her priority has been to sort out the records and statutory paperwork. As a result, records are clear and easily accessible and the new SENCO is beginning to establish better links with parents of pupils on the special needs register. At the moment there is no long term tracking sheet to indicate clearly pupils' progress over time. In addition, class teachers do not automatically attend review meetings although both the SENCO and the headteacher are committed to this happening in the future. The governor with responsibility for special educational needs is very effective and she has a good understanding of this work through her own involvement in special needs in the education sector. She keeps other governors regularly informed through both verbal briefings

and written reports. Governors are becoming more involved in evaluating the current provision and planning for the future. The school has made good progress in adapting its work to comply with new statutory regulations.

The work of the governors

79 As at the time of the last inspection, the governors are very involved in the work of the school and use their individual expertise very well to move the school forward. They have made a particularly strong contribution to the work on improving the accommodation, which is now very good. Most of their work is undertaken in committees, which report to the full governing body. In recent years governors, especially the chair, have been heavily involved in recruiting new staff. This has been time consuming, but good appointments have been made, resulting in a strong staff team. There is not such a clear focus on the retention of staff. There is more scope for governors and staff to work more closely together. Last year, for example, staff were not fully involved in planning for the development of the school and there are relatively few opportunities planned for staff and governors to work together. At the moment there are some vacancies on the governing body, but this has not detracted from its effectiveness. All statutory requirements in relation to the work of governors are met.

Monitoring how well the school is doing in order to plan for the future

80 There are good procedures now in place to monitor how well the school is moving forward. The quality of work in classrooms is monitored by the headteacher, local authority advisers and senior staff. Clear feedback is given to individual staff and general issues for improvement are discussed with the whole staff team. Governors also visit classrooms in order to develop an understanding of how the school is working and the headteacher is working with them to make these visits more focused.

81 Governors' meetings provide a forum for discussing progress towards the objectives on the school improvement plan, as well as for discussing the statistical data, which provides information about the performance of pupils in national tests. Regular meetings with the school's attached adviser also provide an opportunity for focused discussions about how the school is doing in certain areas.

Planning for the future

82 There is a detailed plan for improvement for the current year. It was developed by the acting headteacher and governors in preparation for the current academic year. It was added to by the new headteacher, who also involved staff and parents in planning for the future. The priorities for the current year are appropriate. They include work on raising standards in ICT and writing, working on accelerated learning and thinking skills, tackling work with underachieving pupils, looking at teaching and learning styles, setting up a school council, looking at healthy eating, improving school communication and team work, improving relationships with parents, improving assessment and teaching assistant staffing ratios. The school uses the local authority planning framework, which is quite complicated. It does not make it easy to identify the key areas for improvement. The headteacher, staff and governors are working on a more extended plan for the next few years.

Financial planning

83 Financial planning remains good, with the annual budgets ensuring that the school preserves its priority to provide the current level of staffing to maintain the four classes. A useful local authority financial package enables the school to prepare rolling three-year financial plans. The headteacher inherited the current budget in September and feels that although the resources are broadly adequate there has been a degree of under spending in some areas for a few years. He is now working actively with staff and governors to ensure that the budget for next year allocates money on the basis of curriculum priorities and not according to subject status. Subject managers are beginning to take a lead in selecting

priorities for expenditure. Governors have made very significant contributions to the planning and management of premises developments. These include improvements to the hall and classroom extensions, junior toilets, classroom refurbishment and a covered outdoor play area for reception and Year 1 children. A new ICT suite has almost been completed.

84 Current staffing levels can be maintained for at least the next two years. This will reduce most of the reserve by the end of this period unless pupil numbers increase significantly. The headteacher currently teaches for two days, partly to provide release time for the newly qualified teachers. This commitment could be maintained beyond the period of induction. The projections of pupil numbers indicate a steady roll for the foreseeable future but the income is sensitive to relatively small changes in pupil numbers.

Principles of best value

85 The school applies the principles of best value well. There is substantial consultation between the staff and governors in financial planning and management. Very good use is made of local authority service contracts to ensure value for money and competitive tendering. Governors have been very active in gaining extra funds, particularly for capital projects. A good example of skilful financial management is the sale of the school house which provides a significant annual income in interest from the investment in a trust fund. Governors use their expertise and professional contacts well for the benefit of the school. For example, the local educational computer company has made generous donations for the development of the hall extension. Training is clearly linked to development priorities. The school is giving good value for money.

Financial control

86 The administrator is a great asset to the school and plans and manages the finances very well in close collaboration with the headteacher and governors. The finance contract with the local authority provides additional effective support. Very good routines are in place to ensure the smooth running of the school. The administrator produces monthly summaries of expenditure for staff and governors. The governing body regularly monitors the school's spending to ensure that it responds effectively to variations from planned income and expenditure. The most recent audit of the main account confirmed that the financial procedures and records are of a good standard. Minor suggestions have all been implemented. The unofficial school fund is audited annually. Very good records are kept of all transactions. The chair of the finance committee is active and supportive and has great confidence in the staff. Income from specific grants is used properly for the purposes intended.

Staffing

87 There has been considerable staff mobility over the last two years including the appointment of a new headteacher and two newly qualified teachers this academic year. Staffing is now good with sufficient appropriately qualified teachers for the number of pupils on roll. Staffing levels for pupils with special educational needs are also sufficient. Induction procedures and support for new staff are good and the procedures for professional development are very good. The headteacher has responsibility for professional development and he ensures that all staff are included. He holds review meetings with each member of staff twice a year and all targets and training needs are linked effectively to the developmental needs of the school. Currently the headteacher takes responsibility for managing all curriculum subjects apart from mathematics, English and PE. Plans are in hand to delegate subject management to all staff at the end of this year. There is currently some work to be done on developing the roles of subject managers in order to ensure effective subject co-ordination.

88 Experienced and well-trained support assistants provide support for pupils. They are enthusiastic and committed in their work with pupils who have special educational needs and future training is planned to further develop their roles to maximum benefit of the pupils. There is also teaching assistant support in the youngest pupils' class for some sessions. At these times the teacher is able to organise effective support for the new children and older pupils. At other times this is more of a challenge and some pupils do not have the attention that they need. The very efficient administrative staff, the caretaker, kitchen staff and lunchtime supervisors all contribute considerably to the effective care of the pupils.

Accommodation

89 The accommodation is very good. A recent extension has provided excellent additional space including the Jubilee Hall, soon to be converted to a library, extended classroom, new lavatories and an early years covered outside play area. In the space where the original library was situated, work has already commenced in providing an ICT suite and this will provide a much needed resource for ICT. During the building of the extension, new double glazed windows were installed to a large section of the school. Classrooms are bright and airy and the whole school is enlivened by interesting displays that show a range of pupils' work and provide further stimulation. For example, the 'Lunchbox Challenge' shows how Year 5 and 6 used a visit to the 'Waste Bus' to think about saving waste. They followed up the visit by trying to persuade other children in the school to have a healthier lunchbox.

90 Outdoor facilities include a stimulating and secure area for the children in the Foundation Stage, a good-sized field and some adventure playground equipment. The provision of a large covered pergola provides welcome seating for those children who wish to sit and talk during playtimes and lunchtimes.

Learning resources

91 Learning resources are adequate to meet the needs of almost all aspects of the National Curriculum. In the majority of subjects they are good but there are insufficient resources for pupils to work with computers in ICT. This inadequacy is already being tackled by the school as an ICT suite is under construction. There are computers in each classroom; however they are not always used to enhance learning across the curriculum. The addition of specific computers for pupils with special educational needs would greatly enhance the work being done by support assistants.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

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

- Improve standards in writing by implementing the current action plan for improvement and particularly by:
 - making links with other subjects;
 - encouraging pupils to write for a wider audience than their teacher;
 - using the drafting process more effectively;
 - expecting more of higher attaining pupils.*(Reference paragraphs: 5,6,10,32,41 and 104)*
- Improve standards in ICT by implementing the current action plan for improvement and particularly by:
 - providing opportunities for pupils to develop skills in all aspects of ICT;
 - developing the use of ICT to consolidate and extend learning in all subjects;
 - improving resources to enable whole class teaching and practice of ICT skills.*(Reference paragraphs: 12, 40 and 150 – 161)*
- Improve the support for lower attaining pupils and challenge for higher attaining pupils by:
 - ensuring that the introductions to lessons are understood by lower attaining pupils;
 - adapting the learning task to meet the needs of both higher and lower attaining pupils;
 - setting higher expectations for higher attaining pupils, especially in writing.*(Reference paragraphs: 14,15,26,33, 34 and 104)*
- Improving the use of existing assessment procedures to challenge pupils effectively by implementing these consistently through the school, especially in relation to marking and target setting.
(Reference paragraphs:28 and 62)
- Improve the planning for mixed age classes in subjects other than English, mathematics and science by:
 - clarifying the skills to be covered in each year group;
 - making links between subjects, where possible;
 - ensuring that the work planned is appropriate for the age group.*(Reference paragraphs:38 and 39)*

The school might consider the inclusion of the following minor weaknesses for inclusion in its action plan:

Homework *(Reference paragraph: 27)*

Staff and governor liaison *(Reference paragraph:79)*

Increasing levels of teaching assistant support in Foundation Stage *(Reference paragraph: 88)*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	34
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	31

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	6	17	9	2	0	0
Percentage	0%	18%	50%	26%	6%	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 two 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)	106
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	2
Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	5
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	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.5
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	7	8	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	6	6
	Girls	8	8	8
	Total	15	14	1
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	93 (94)	93 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	6	7
	Girls	8	8	8
	Total	14	14	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (94)	93 (100)	100 (94)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	7	5	12

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	7	7
	Girls	3	3	5
	Total	10	10	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (96)	83 (88)	100 (100)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	7	7
	Girls	3	3	4
	Total	10	10	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (92)	83 (88)	92 (96)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	0	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	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)	5.35
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.8
Average class size	26.5

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	86

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Financial information

Financial year	2001 - 2002
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	£
Total income	259,332
Total expenditure	272,243
Expenditure per pupil	2,778
Balance brought forward from previous year	53,820
Balance carried forward to next year	40,909

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5.8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3.8

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0.2
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)	0.2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	99
Number of questionnaires returned	28

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	50	46	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	21	68	7	4	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	29	71	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	18	57	21	4	0
The teaching is good.	25	68	7	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	14	54	18	11	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	43	57	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	25	71	0	4	0
The school works closely with parents.	11	54	32	0	4
The school is well led and managed.	46	54	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	21	64	7	0	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	50	46	4	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

93 At the time of the inspection there were ten children in the reception year. Two had been in school for a term and eight had been in school for two days. They work in a class with Year 1 pupils. Good improvements have been made to the accommodation for these pupils since the last inspection, with the addition of a sheltered, enclosed outside area leading straight out of the classroom. There is every indication that, as at the time of the last inspection, when children come into school their skills, knowledge and understanding are more advanced than other children of the same age. In lessons seen they made steady advances in learning. They are well set to reach the early learning goals in all areas of learning by the end of the reception year.

Personal, social and emotional development

94 Teaching is good in this area and consequently children are settling well into school. After only a few days children have adapted to school routines. They sit on the carpet and listen carefully to the teacher at the start of sessions, for example, and understand that they have to line up to go to assembly. They understand the class 'promise' to put up their hands to answer a question. They are settling in well because staff are clear about what is expected, while at the same time providing warm encouragement. Consequently the children feel safe and secure in their new environment. The teacher fosters independent learning successfully and in some sessions children select their own activities. In one session, for example, four boys were using the sand tray. After a few minutes they were co-operating in imaginative play related to a seaside adventure, working very well together. At the moment children are not expected to plan a series of activities and review what they have accomplished at the end. Children cope well with the long day at school and are confident in the playground and lunch hall.

Communication, language and literacy

95 Teaching is sound in this area. There are currently satisfactory opportunities for children to develop their speaking and listening skills. They are encouraged to take part in the discussions at the beginning of sessions, for example and to work in small groups on various practical activities. Children are encouraged to enjoy reading and a well-organised reading corner provides a good opportunity for children to browse. Children take books home to share with parents and carers and again this helps children to enjoy books. In the sessions seen children worked with the teacher and assistant to identify letter sounds, so that staff could assess how much they already know. Most recognise the majority of letters by sound, with some also confident in letter names. Children enjoyed playing a game with a dice, throwing it onto a large mat with letters and identifying the letter where the dice fell. Children then made letters out of 'play dough' in order to appreciate letter formation. Children who have been in school for a term have made a good start as writers. One, for example, writes independently, forming letters correctly. The other clearly understands that print conveys meaning and is beginning to form letters.

Mathematical development

96 Teaching is sound in this area and children's work from last term shows that they made steady strides in the development of their understanding of number. Children worked with numbers up to ten and clearly understood the relationship between the number 10 and ten objects. The classroom is well organised with a range of practical equipment that children can use to develop their numerical understanding as well as their knowledge of shapes and patterns. Staff take care to provide appropriate opportunities for children and in one session,

for example, the teaching assistant reinforced children's understanding of number by singing number rhymes with them.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

97 Overall the provision for this area of learning is sound, although one session seen was unsatisfactory. This was because the children were working with the Year 1 group on an activity that was unsuitable for both age groups. It was related to comparing life in Brightwell with life in a village in India. The two older reception children had looked at Brightwell last term and drawn their walk to school. They had also learnt about jobs in the village. The new children had not had this experience. The pictures used to introduce the work were of poor quality and the task of looking at the pictures for clues about Indian life was not appropriate for the children. Last term children worked on the five senses and recorded their work on smell and hearing, showing a sound understanding of what these senses are. There are computers in the classroom, but children were not observed using these during the inspection. These children worked with the whole class on an introductory session about how information is presented in a variety of ways to prepare them for related computer work.

Physical development

98 Teaching and provision in this area is satisfactory, with more scope for children to use the outside area to develop their awareness of space and movement. This is limited to some extent by a lack of large wheeled toys. Children use the school hall for physical activity on a regular basis. In one session the reception children worked with Year 1 pupils to use their imagination in order to portray the characters and animals in an Indian story. They enjoyed this, used the space in the hall well and developed an increasing knowledge of how to move their bodies to portray different characters. They have good opportunities to work with a range of small and large equipment. They use pencils and crayons well, for example and handle paint brushes with dexterity.

Creative development

99 Teaching in this area is good and children achieved well in the lessons seen. In a hall music session, for example, they joined with their older friends to explore how sounds can be changed. They used their bodies and voices to practise animal sounds, working well together in small groups. In an art session, children worked with the teaching assistant to paint a large tree, which they were going print on using an Indian block pattern. They used the paint well and worked well together. There is an interesting home bay for imaginative play. At the moment it is a 'jungle'. It was not used in the session seen, but provides a good starting point for creative play.

Strengths:

- *classroom environment and outside area;*

Areas for development:

- *planning for practical and relevant activities in some sessions;;*
- *the provision of wheeled toys.*

ENGLISH

100 Overall standards have risen since the last inspection as a consequence of the increased emphasis that the school has put on developing pupils' literacy skills. This improvement is reflected in national tests. At the end of Year 2, standards have been well above average in reading for the last four years and above average in writing for two of these. Writing skills have fallen back a little in the last two years and were average last year, largely because higher attaining pupils did not do as well in writing as in other subjects. The reasons for this are complex, the most significant being the different make up of each year group. At

the end of Year 6, standards have been well above average for three of the last four years, with a fall back last year to below average. This is largely related to the make up of the particular year group and the impact of small numbers on statistical data. The inspection found that standards are well above average in speaking and listening and reading throughout the school and broadly average in writing. Most pupils achieve well within their capabilities because of good teaching.

Speaking and listening

101 Pupils achieve very well in speaking and listening because of the importance that staff place upon helping pupils to develop their skills. In the sessions seen, the focus for work in this area was the class discussion in the introduction to lessons. At these times teachers pose challenging questions to check pupils' understanding and extend their thinking, giving pupils time to respond at length. They listen well to their teachers and friends, often sitting and concentrating for extended periods. Most pupils are clear and articulate, using more complex sentence structure as they become older. In one Year 3/4 session, for example, pupils evaluated and analysed the impact of a range of story openings. They identified how characters and setting are introduced and described what strategies the writer used to involve the reader in the story. In a Year 5/6 history session the teacher teased out what pupils already knew about World War 2 as an introduction to work on this period. Again pupils used extended sentences and grappled with the meaning of words like 'evacuation' and 'Blitz'. In some of these sessions the level of discussion is quite challenging and sometimes the lower attaining pupils in the class do not contribute, perhaps because they do not understand. In some sessions there are also opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in discussion with a partner. In conversation with pupils it is evident that they are confident in speaking to a range of audiences. Teachers identify the development of speaking and listening skills in their planning, but there is no whole school programme for the development of skills year on year. Similarly, teachers take opportunities to plan drama activities, sometimes within other subjects, but there is no planning framework to outline work in this area.

Reading

102 Reading standards are well above average and pupils are enthusiastic readers. Reasons for these good standards include:

- Good support for individual pupils when they start to read. Younger pupils especially spend time each week sharing a book with an assistant or helper on a regular basis and this helps them to build up confidence.
- Good support from home. Pupils' reading diaries show that parents share books with their children at home. There is more scope for using the diaries to provide more of a dialogue between school and home. In some classes the diaries are not monitored by teachers on a regular basis.
- A high priority is given to reading on the timetable.
- Good attention is paid to the teaching of phonic skills.
- Good attention is paid to teaching pupils about a range of genres and authors. Class libraries are well organised, with more scope for teaching pupils about writers through displays like the one in Class 2 about Shirley Hughes. Good quality writing is often used as a stimulus in the literacy hour, often in the form of extracts included in text books. Pupils do not always have the opportunity to see the book that the extract was taken from.

103 In discussion with pupils from all year groups it is evident that reading is well taught. Pupils are clear about the strategies to use in order to work out new words. They identified 'sounding out' words, 'breaking up words' and missing out the word until the meaning of the sentence gave them a clue. They are clear about the difference between non-fiction and fiction books. In Year 2, for example, most are clear about how to find information in a book

by using the contents and index pages. There has been less opportunity to use the library until the jubilee extension was opened recently. It is not used for the development of library skills on a regular basis, but when the book stock is replenished will become a very valuable resource. Currently there is a barely satisfactory number of books for a school of this size. The headteacher has arranged for the county mobile library to call on a regular basis so that pupils may select their own book. Pupils enjoy reading and many older pupils recommend books to their friends on a regular basis. Younger pupils chose their own reading book from a range of graded 'reading scheme' books, moving onto free choice as they become more confident. Older pupils are knowledgeable about a range of writers and have some firm favourites, including JR Tolkien, Jacqueline Wilson and Phillip Pullman. Teachers foster this enthusiasm by the use of good quality texts in group reading sessions. In Year 6, for example, pupils are reading Robert Westall's 'The Machine Gunners'.

Writing

104 The school is working hard to improve standards in writing. Staff have analysed their practice carefully and have not identified a reason for the lower standards in this area. The inspection found that there was no significant weakness in the school's planning or in the teaching for this area to account for the average, rather than above average standards. The accumulation of some minor areas for improvement probably deflate the overall standards. Overall the teaching of writing is sound with some good features. Strengths in the writing include:

- A good range of writing activities, many with an interesting focus to capture pupils' imagination. In Year 5 and 6, for example, pupils have been writing poetry. Some work produced was of a good quality, for example '*Pin points of light walking through the sky*'.
- A clear focus on high quality writing as a starting point for pupils' own work. Older pupils have been studying Shakespeare, for example, and visits to the theatre are a regular part of the school's life.
- The introduction of a new handwriting approach, which is already having an impact on standards. In Year 2, for example, pupils worked hard in one session seen to join e, a and r.

In some classes the following are also good features, but they are not consistent through the school:

- Positive and clear marking of work;
- The use of targets for individual pupils to improve their work;
- High expectations of the presentation of pupils' work;
- Links with work in other subjects;
- The teaching of spelling.

Some general areas which are not as strong as they could be include:

- The use of the drafting process to help pupils to develop their writing skills.
- Opportunities to write for a wider audience than the class teacher. Last term, for example, older pupils wrote thank you letters to the staff at Yenworthy for their residential visit and in some classes there are books made by the pupils for others to read. More commonly pupils' writing is confined to their literacy books.
- More opportunities for working on an extended piece of writing.
- Expectations of higher attaining pupils.

Teaching

105 Overall the teaching is good and work indicates that pupils in all classes have moved forward well this year. Planning is securely based on the National Literacy Strategy with imaginative tasks incorporated into lessons. Good use is made of texts as a basis for the work. Year 5 and 6, for example, were studying '*The Highwayman*' by Alfred Noyes in a lesson seen. Pupils are taught about stories from a range of different cultures. In a Year 2

session, for example, pupils' work on adjectives and tenses was based on a story set in India. In some classes good opportunities are taken to link work across subjects. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to supporting lower attaining pupils. They work closely with teachers to take small groups of pupils for extra support and pupils move forward well at these times. In the 'booster' sessions and 'Additional Literacy Support' session, pupils did well because the assistant's positive and encouraging manner boosted their self-esteem. Similarly in a session for higher attaining Year 3 and 4 pupils, high expectations of pupils and a good pace helped pupils to move ahead very quickly in identifying the story elements of a traditional tale. Homework is regularly set in English and helps pupils to consolidate what they have learnt in class. There is scope for making arrangements clearer to parents.

Leadership and management

106 The subject leader has developed her role well this year, with more time to look at provision and standards. She has concentrated on an audit of resources and has identified areas where more books and materials are needed. She has monitored teacher's planning and given good support to less experienced colleagues. She has a clear agenda for improvement.

Strengths:

- *standards in speaking and listening;*
- *standards in reading;*
- *planning for interesting activities;*
- *support of teaching assistants.*

Areas for development:

- *standards in writing;*
- *the drafting process;*
- *home school reading records;*
- *teaching of spelling;*
- *the library area;*
- *the use of homework;*
- *marking.*

MATHEMATICS

107 Overall standards have risen since the last inspection. In the 2002 national tests Year 2 pupils were well above average and Year 6 pupils average. Overall standards are currently average in Year 6 and above average in all other year groups including Year 2. The strong focus, in the recent past, on number has lifted pupils' test results and the school has recently recognised the need to place more emphasis on pupils' use and applications of mathematics to raise overall performance. Very small year groups, with variations in size and differences in composition means that care needs to be exercised in making comparisons between year groups. The present Year 6 has slightly more pupils with special educational needs than other year groups. The school predicts that a similar proportion of pupils are likely to achieve Levels 4 and 5 in 2003 as did in 2002 with the same target being agreed with the local authority as last year.

108 The school supports pupils of all abilities well. Booster classes are being used to support pupils who find difficulty and a group of more able pupils are working with the headteacher. Up until this year the school has also provided additional support through 'Springboard' classes in Years 3, 4 and 5. Standards in the current Year 2 are above average with a good proportion of pupils likely to reach higher levels. Pupils throughout the rest of the school, including those with special educational needs, are achieving well and the

school has recognised that many should be capable of more given their good starting point. Recently boys have achieved better than girls at Year 6. School data and analysis suggests that this will be repeated in 2003 with a reversal in 2004 and that it is due to composition of the group rather than any other factor. Inspection evidence would agree with this and there is no evidence that the school or teachers favour boys more than girls or vice versa.

109 By seven most pupils have good knowledge of place value to 100 and some go beyond this. They make good use of their knowledge of number facts to 20 in mental calculations and to solve money problems. By using this knowledge and partitioning numbers into hundreds, tens and units, they are able to add numbers to 1000 in written calculations accurately. They make good use of this knowledge and basic multiplication tables to solve problems involving addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. They know the names and properties of common 2D and 3D shapes, tell the time in hours, quarters and halves, and gain an understanding of measurement as they estimate the length and weight of objects before measuring and recording the accuracy of their predictions. The speed of their mental calculations is improving and most are able to double and halve numbers to at least 20, many go beyond and some can also quarter them. They collect and record data about themselves and where they live on tables and charts and interpret simple graphs that they have created using ICT. Pupils in Year 2 ordered numbers up 100 and identified whether numbers were more or less than one another, and found the difference between them. More able pupils were able to add a collection of coins mentally that totalled £1 or more.

110 Pupils in Years 3 and 4 continue to make satisfactory and sometimes good progress in their mathematics lessons. They show increasing ability in handling numbers and use written calculations accurately to add and subtract numbers up to a 1000. Mathematical skills are refined as they recognise lines of symmetry in shapes, estimate and measure length using metres and centimetres and record time in hours and minutes. They demonstrate how their mathematical understanding, knowledge of place value and mental skills are developing as they add or subtract 100 from 4 digit numbers to create the next number in the series. They successfully managed mentally the transfer from $2913+100$ to 3013.

111 By eleven pupils are confidently and accurately working with numbers to 10,000 in written calculation and some go beyond this. Most know and use multiplication tables when multiplying numbers up to a 1,000 by a single digit. They have a good understanding of fractions and decimals and can use them when solving problems. They have detailed knowledge of the properties of 2 and 3 dimensional shapes, angles and triangles. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 show increasingly secure understanding and well developed mental strategies as they discuss the effects of brackets on the outcome of a calculation as in $(4 \times 5) + 7 = 27$ whereas $(7 + 4) \times 5 = 55$. Mental and oral starter sessions are often well used at the start of numeracy lessons to encourage and develop quick mental calculations and responses. The session seen in Year 5 and 6 was a good example of this with pupils giving rapid responses to their teacher's questions. Another feature of this lesson, seen less frequently elsewhere in the school, was the invitation to, and encouragement of, explanation by pupils of the method used in their calculations. So, for example, 44×25 could be solved by halving and doubling first to 22×50 then to $11 \times 100 = 1100$ and that 8×46 could be solved by $(8 \times 40) + (8 \times 6) = 368$ with many pupils in both year groups able to work out the answer mentally. This technique appears less developed across the school but alerts pupils to considering possible strategies, realising that all are valid and recognising that some are more efficient than others.

112 Pupils are enthusiastic about their mathematics lessons and many regard it as their favourite subject because of the sense of achievement they feel. They are very attentive to their teachers, listen well to what others have to say and are conscientious in their tasks

often maintaining concentration for extended periods. When asked to they work well together and offer supportive and helpful suggestions to their classmates.

113 Overall teaching is good. In the four lessons seen, teaching ranged from very good to unsatisfactory. In the more successful lessons thorough preparation and planning by the teacher ensured learning moved at a brisk pace through a number of varied activities that had been well chosen to build pupils' understanding. In a Year 3/4 lesson the well-briefed teaching assistants worked well with the class teacher to provide focused support to the different ability groups. In most lessons a brisk pace maintained pupils' interest and moved learning forward well. Teaching is less successful when activities are not well matched to the needs and abilities of pupils or teachers are unclear about how the learning objectives should be met.

114 Teachers often, but not always, alert pupils at the start of the lesson to what they will be learning and return at the end to check their understanding but do not often tell pupils what the next steps will be. Consequently, pupils frequently do not have a view of how well they are achieving or how their learning is linked to previous work. Marking of pupils' work is variable, largely in the form of ticks with encouraging praise, and does not often indicate to pupils how well they are doing or how they could improve. Individual pupil targets are currently being tried in Year 2 and when this is extended to all classes marking could be effectively linked to these to help pupils improve. Presentation of work is also variable and tends to improve the further pupils move up the school. Homework in the subject is set but is not being used consistently to support and extend work in lessons.

115 Use is being made of ICT to support learning in the subject and good use is made of software to practise and extend concepts being taught. However only a few pupils are able to use the class computers at a time and the planned ICT suite will make this a more effective tool for teaching and learning.

116 A robust system of regular half termly assessments of pupils' understanding and end of year testing is being used to check pupils' progress. Assessment procedures are improving and teachers are beginning to use information from the informal and routine assessments they make when marking, questioning pupils and observing their work to plan for the next stages of their learning. Assessment data has been used to set targets for pupils in Years 2 and 6 but not in other year groups or to consider whether pupils' tracked progress was good enough given their starting point. This has led in the past to insufficient challenge for pupils of both above average and below average ability with neither group achieving as well as they might. The school has recognised this and is starting to make use of the good assessment data it has to identify the different ability groups and monitor their progress. It has also begun to consider the needs of pupils in the mixed age classes and often to plan modified activities for each year group. Following recent advice of the Qualification and Curriculum Authority the school has sought to increase the focus in lessons on the use and application of mathematics and concentrate less on the formal recording of computational tasks. This will also increase opportunities for pupils of all abilities to work at their own level on investigations and practical activities. Although mathematical skills are often incidentally used in other subjects this is more a result of individual teachers' imagination than a planned intention.

117 Last year the subject co-ordinator worked with a numeracy consultant to review mathematical provision and has now drawn up a subject action plan for improvement which has been presented to governors. She has begun to have regular meetings with the numeracy governor and used non-contact time to audit resources, check pupils' work and teachers' planning, analyse past national test papers to identify areas of weakness and will be observing numeracy lessons this term. Resources are good with all classes having a good range of equipment for practical activities and larger items stored centrally. The

published scheme, recently supplemented, provides teachers with a good resource for the different abilities and ages in each class.

Strengths

- *improving standards especially as shown in last year's Year 2 test results;*
- *the overall good teaching;*
- *developing monitoring of the subject and setting targets for improvement;*
- *leadership of the subject.*

Areas for development

- *use of marking to help pupils to improve and its linkage to the setting of individual targets for improvement;*
- *specific planning for the use and application of numeracy skills in other subjects;*
- *use of tracking data to monitor pupils' progress;*
- *presentation of pupils' work.*

SCIENCE

118 In the 2002 national assessments and tests, standards in both Year 2 and 6 were very high in comparison with both the national picture and similar schools. Standards in the work seen in the current Year 2 and Year 6 are above average. This is an improvement on the last inspection when standards were average in both key stages. Over their time in the school pupils are making good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of living things, properties of materials and physical processes. Their skills of scientific enquiry and investigation have been less developed because of the strong focus in the past on learning scientific knowledge and less on carrying out practical investigations. The school has recognised this and is currently looking to develop this aspect more fully.

119 In recent years boys in Year 6 have consistently performed better in the national tests than girls. The school has investigated this and found the only significant difference to be in the make up of particular year groups. Their analysis of assessment data suggests that within the next two years the trend will reverse. The inspection found no evidence that the school favours one group more than the other or treats either differently. Teachers address questions equally to both groups and share tasks between them, neither group dominates practical activities and both boys and girls work well together. All groups learn equally well and boys, girls, more able pupils and those with special educational needs make very good progress when undertaking practical activities that allow them to work at their own level and when not constrained by the level of their literacy skills. Overall they are making good progress through the school.

120 Year 2 pupils showed good knowledge of the life cycle of the butterfly and frog. They clearly described how the tadpoles emerged from the spawn, their tail shrank and the back legs grew first. Pupils had observed this happen which had graphically reinforced the process in their minds. They had learnt that a healthy diet includes fruit, vegetables and exercise is also necessary, but were unclear as to the reasons for this. They recalled planting seeds in a jar and knew from this that light, water, rooting medium and warmth were necessary requisites for growth. The work in their books and on the classroom wall showed careful recording of the steps in the process. Pupils knew what had happened but were unclear about why as they had not investigated different scenarios or carried out detailed observations in a scientific manner. Pupils in Year 1 made good use of different descriptives in a word bank to tell their classmates about the object in the 'feely bag'. They applied the terminology well to describing and recording the 'soft' cuddly toy, the 'smooth' soap and the 'cold' bottle not only advancing their scientific understanding of the properties of different materials but also their enquiry and observational skills and practising literacy skills at the

same time. Their books showed good use of charts and tables to aid recording of work on sounds and the parts of the body.

121 As pupils move up the school they develop their scientific knowledge and understanding well. Teachers make good use of the correct terminology when talking to pupils and through repetition in questions and during lessons reinforce it well. Consequently pupils readily use it in their responses. Pupils in the Year 3/4 class explained how magnets had north and south poles, knew the relationship to poles of the earth and had observed that like poles 'repel' while opposites 'attract'. Opportunities to extend pupils' investigative skills and understanding are not always exploited and there is often insufficient focus on developing and extending these. Whilst pupils recorded which objects were attracted to the magnet this was not extended by asking them to predict the outcome, evaluate the success of their work or ensure the test was a fair one. Pupils know a great deal about their world from what they have read and been told but have been given insufficient opportunities to explore this for themselves through well-designed investigations. The last inspection noted that pupils' understanding was not extended by whole class observation of teacher's experiments. Matters have improved but too often pupils now spend time replicating their teachers' demonstration rather than designing and carrying out their own investigations.

122 By Years 5 and 6 pupils show well developed scientific knowledge of their world and are beginning to appreciate the use that can be made of this. They know the life cycle of plants and have made detailed observational drawings of seed dispersal. They have investigated the effects of exercise on pulse rates, know how the heart works and appreciate the benefits of a healthy diet and exercise. Having observed what happens when bicarbonate of soda is mixed with vinegar they used this chemical reaction to simulate the effect of a volcano and worked to predict where it would flow. Whilst activities such as this capture their imagination and reinforce what they have been told about chemical reactions and gases, opportunities for pupils to design and manage their own investigations are not as developed as they might be.

123 Pupils throughout the school work carefully and safely. They set out and clear away equipment and listen carefully to instructions. Most enjoy their science lessons, particularly the practical sessions; work well with one another sharing and taking turns. Presentation of work is variable and pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to record investigations in a systematic manner or show increasing use and sophistication of measurement in their recording.

124 Overall teaching is good. Teachers plan and prepare lessons that build well on previous learning and share this link with pupils. By ensuring that topics are carefully developed and interesting activities chosen to illustrate these they excite their pupils as was seen with the 'feely' bags used in Year 1. Teachers and the well briefed teaching assistants support pupils well especially the less able and those with special educational needs. They make good use of questioning to check pupils' understanding and to challenge and extend their thinking. At the end of lessons they briefly revisit the learning to assess and confirm pupils' understanding and occasionally explain what the next stages will be. Marking of pupils' work is largely in the form of ticks to indicate that it is correct, with praise to encourage and motivate pupils. Only very rarely does it indicate to pupils how well they are doing and beyond correcting of errors does not help them to improve. In the work seen all pupils, regardless of ability, completed the same work with the difference lying in quantity produced and interpretation. This means that, particularly in mixed age classes, work is not always suitably matched to the age or ability of pupils.

125 Good links are often made with other subjects, as for example, the volcanoes in Year 5/6, which are part of the class project on Mars, the extension of literacy skills in Year 1 or the use of numeracy skills as pupils measure and record data. However, these currently occur

more as teachers' exploit opportunities than as part of a planned and systematic approach. The same is currently true of ICT with little evidence of its use in pupils' work and occasional use such as that seen in Year 3/ 4 by some pupils to record their observations.

126 The headteacher is currently caretaking the subject during an interim review of responsibility. Past test papers have been analysed to identify areas of weakness and assessment arrangements recently strengthened and improved so that they will give an overview of standards and record how pupils are progressing. Good use is being made of recent national guidance for planning supported by a commercial scheme. Resources are in good condition, well stored and sufficient for current use. Visits are sometimes used to support work in the subject as for example to the Rutherford laboratory.

Strengths

- *very high standards in last year's Year 6 test results and Year 2 teacher assessments;*
- *teaching throughout the school;*
- *pupils' enjoyment of practical activities and enthusiasm for the subject.*

Areas for development

- *methods of recording investigations;*
- *greater opportunities for pupils to pose questions, test ideas and evaluate the outcomes and for older pupils to design and carry out their own investigations;*
- *marking of pupils' work;*
- *continue to focus on the development of pupils' investigative or enquiry skills.*

ART AND DESIGN

127 Standards are average throughout the school, although in lessons seen pupils achieved well because of good and very good teaching. Planning has improved since the last inspection and standards have risen at the end of Year 2.

128 Pupils have experience of working with a range of materials and have used these to draw, paint, print and make collages. There is less evidence of three-dimensional work and work with textiles. All classes have their own supply of art materials and so pupils have easy access to the equipment that they need. There is more scope for giving pupils more choice in what they use. In one lesson seen, for example, the teacher gave all pupils the same size and colour of paper for their painting, rather than encouraging them to select from a range.

129 The school's planning framework incorporates guidance on the teaching of skills and in the very good lesson seen the work was based on the development of pupils' drawing skills. In this session, pupils in Years 5 and 6 worked in pairs to sketch a simple figure, modelling for each other. They persevered well, even although many found the task difficult. They were encouraged by the constant support from the teacher and the provision of very high quality sketch books. There is also evidence of a block of work in which older pupils learnt about using oil pastels. Their work on fruits and flowers is displayed in the hall and shows a sound grasp of the way that pastels can be used. Pupils also develop painting skills systematically. In Year 1, for example, pupils used big brushes to paint lively and colourful trees. They used the paint confidently and made good use of the large paper. By the time that they reach Years 5 and 6 pupils work with water colours. In the examples seen pupils had captured their impression of a sunset effectively.

130 Good opportunities are provided for pupils to evaluate and learn from the work of famous artists. In a Year 3 and 4 session, for example, pupils looked at photographs of Anthony Gormley's 'Angel of the North' in relation to their work on art and how it can improve the

environment. This followed an extended discussion on the place of art and particularly sculpture in the natural environment, which was very well managed by the teacher. Pupils used their evaluative skills well and responded very thoughtfully. Similarly, in a Year 1 lesson, the teacher showed pupils an example of Indian art as a stimulus for their work. In Years 5 and 6, pupils compared the work of Breughal and Lowry in relation to their work on drawing figures.

131 The quality of teaching was consistently good in the sessions seen, with one very good lesson. Consequently pupils moved forward well, both in the development of their skills and in their understanding. Resources are well organised and of good quality. There is scope for using teaching assistants more effectively in some sessions. Currently the headteacher is leading work in this area effectively and has a clear view of what needs to be improved. He has organised additional support from the local authority adviser in planning work. Work in art and design is enhanced by an after school club run by adult volunteers.

Strengths:

- *work based on famous artists;*
- *good teaching;*
- *pupils' enthusiasm;*
- *after school art club.*

Areas for development:

- *work involving a range of techniques;*
- *the use of teaching assistants.*

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

132 Standards in the subject in both key stages are broadly average, as at the time of the last inspection. Only one lesson was timetabled during the inspection and evidence is therefore also drawn from talking to both teachers and pupils, work on display and in books and photographs of both this year and previous year's work. Based on this it is evident that the skills of designing and making are being taught well and pupils in both key stages are making at least satisfactory progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of the process and in creating well made artefacts. There is no significant difference in achievement between different groups of pupils and all do equally well.

133 Teachers plan their lessons and activities well ensuring pupils' experience and understand that researching, developing and refining ideas are integral parts of the design process. They also make good links with other subjects of the curriculum to support and extend pupils' learning although this is not yet a consistent feature of the planning. In the very good lesson seen in Year 2 there was a very good introduction to a design and make task which involved pupils in handling and discussing a variety of moving toys. They then evaluated the merits of the teacher's four different 'roly poly' cardboard toys. They thought about how each moved differently, which would appeal to a young child and how they might be decorated to enhance this before choosing their own design. The teachers' careful questioning focused and extended their thinking well and the well planned and resourced lesson quickly and very successfully moved pupils' learning and understanding forward. Good links were made to literacy through a poem about three 'roly polys'.

134 As pupils move up the school their understanding of the designing and making process increases and the quality of designs and finished products improves. Photographs and work in books showed how pupils in Years 3 and 4, working with food technology, had produced their favourite sandwich. Their sandwich designs showed evident care with detailed step by step instructions given for replicating them and annotated diagrams showing how the

ingredients were assembled. Some had reviewed their work and suggested how they might improve it. They had all clearly enjoyed the task and their enthusiasm was clear in the quality of their work and the evocative titles chosen such as the 'Mississippi Mud' sandwich.

135 By Years 5 and 6 pupils' designs are very well researched with suitable consideration of their suitability for the intended purpose. Pupils had used books, pictures and the Internet to research, consider and evaluate shelters from past and present. These came from different climate regions of the world and ranged from an Iron Age roundhouse, to a pioneer log cabin and a Lapp skin hut. Their designs in the hall showed very good attention to detail and consideration of construction techniques and covering materials. Year 6 pupils recalled how they had experimented with different methods for fastening the frame of their shelters and tested fabrics to ensure they were waterproof before making them. Those on display showed a good standard of construction and attention to detail. Most showed how pupils had recognised the inherent strength of triangles when constructing a frame or to give stability.

136 Although these activities all provided pupils with good experiences of the design and make process, their overall experience of using a range of materials and their suitability for different purposes as well as methods of joining, shaping and finishing them is more limited. Pupils have not had opportunities in the past to work with systems and control and this is an area that the school is looking to develop together with the use of ICT to support learning in the subject.

137 The headteacher is currently caretaking the subject and has already undertaken some of the teaching as a way of developing it. National guidance is being used well as the basis for planning in the subject and the school is looking to developing its own scheme of work based around this. Assessment arrangements are still at the early stages of development and as such do not yet provide a clear record of pupils' experiences or the development of their knowledge and understanding. Resources, which include a food technology area, are well maintained and adequate for current usage but would benefit from review and inclusion of motors and control devices.

Strengths

- *Quality of teaching*
- *Strong emphasis on design process*
- *Quality of finished items*

Areas for development

- *Evaluation of finished artefacts and identification of possible improvements*
- *Resources for mechanisms and control*
- *Experience of a wider range of materials and construction techniques*
- *Assessment arrangements*
- *Monitoring of teaching and learning*

GEOGRAPHY

138 Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and remain broadly average at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6.

139 Pupils develop their map work skills satisfactorily through the school. Pupils in Year 1 have drawn their route to school and presented these well, using clear pictorial symbols. Year 2 were engaged in a similar task during the inspection, with more detail expected, but no further skills identified for development. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 also worked on local maps during the inspection in order to devise symbols that could act as a key. These pupils also had experience during the lesson of identifying the British Isles on a globe and Oxfordshire on a map of the United Kingdom. Opportunities were lost in this lesson to introduce the concept of scale. In conversation with Year 6 pupils it is clear that they have used Ordnance Survey maps, but have not yet undertaken any work on the use of co-ordinates.

140 Local studies work provides an opportunity to develop a range of skills. In Year 2 pupils have represented the different ways that pupils travel to school on a graph, in order to draw various conclusions. During the inspection they were still at the stage of inputting information onto the computer, which they managed well. Older pupils in Year 6 recalled previous work undertaken on the River Thames and talked with enthusiasm about their visit to the river at Henley. There is more scope for using the rich resource of Brightwell itself for further study.

141 Work is also undertaken on learning about places and contrasting and comparing them with Brightwell. Year 2 pupils have looked at the imaginary Island of Struay and those in Years 5 and 6 have compared the area around Yenworthy with Brightwell. The work covered in this study was appropriate, but lacked any difference in expectation of the pupils from different year groups or of different attainment levels.

142 Overall teaching is satisfactory, with a range from unsatisfactory to good in the lessons seen. Strengths in the teaching included good links with ICT and in some lessons and good use of resources. In two lessons planning was the weakest element, with an inappropriate activity in one and lack of clarity about the purpose of the lesson in the other. In all mixed age classes there is insufficient emphasis on planning for the progression of skills from one year to the next.

143 Planning is based on a government published scheme, which provides a useful starting point for work in this area. It incorporates different units of work for each age group. At the moment staff are teaching one or two of these units out of sequence, using a Year 4 unit with Year 1, for example. This means that the work planned is not appropriate for these young pupils. Teachers also make good use of the Year 5 and 6 field study trip to Yenworthy to help pupils to compare and contrast different localities. The headteacher is currently the leader for this subject. There is a draft document outlining the skills expected for each year group, which will provide a useful checklist for teachers.

Strengths:

- *use of field study trips;*

Areas for development:

- *the curriculum map;*
- *planning for the development of skills from year to year;*
- *use of the local area.*

HISTORY

144 Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and remain average at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. Standards are higher in some elements of history and generally pupils do better in this subject than they do in geography.

145 In many of the units of work undertaken in the school the subject is brought alive by interesting visits. Year 6 pupils talked with enthusiasm about trips to the Pitt Rivers and the Ashmolean Museums in Oxford and to Sulgrave Manor. Quite clearly these trips had not only fired their enthusiasm, but helped them to have a real grasp of the period that they were studying. However in the work seen and in discussion with pupils there was not an obvious emphasis on using primary sources to build up a picture of the past. Pupils in Year 2, for example, were not clear about how people do find out what happened long ago. As in geography there is more scope for using the local area as a source for enquiry into the past. Enquiry skills based on secondary sources were taught well in a Year 5 and 6 lesson about the origins of the Second World War. In a challenging session pupils worked with a written extract to pull out key points about events, leaders and dates.

146 Pupils are developing a sound knowledge base about the periods that they have studied. Younger pupils described the differences between holidays in Victorian times and today. They remembered that spades were made of metal, not plastic and that people wore different clothes. They talked about the work that they had done about the Great Fire of London and explained that Samuel Pepys had buried his cheese to save it from burning. In Years 3 and 4, pupils' work on invaders and settlers shows that they have looked at key events in the conquest of Britain. They have studied figures like Boudicca and King Alfred and looked at particular features, such as Viking longships.

147 There is less emphasis on helping pupils to develop a chronological understanding. Time lines are not a feature of pupils' own work, for example, although a twentieth century line is displayed in the Year 5 and 6 classroom. Similarly there is little evidence of work related to the different ways that the past can be represented in the work seen.

148 Only one lesson was seen during the inspection and this was good, ensuring that pupils achieved well. There were high expectations that pupils could work with a difficult text and most managed this well. Pupils' work indicates that there is little difference in the work expected for pupils in different year groups in the same class, but that most of the lessons planned are interesting and relevant. In some classes the expectations of well presented work are higher than in others.

149 Again the headteacher is currently the leader for this subject. As in geography there is a draft document outlining the skills expected for each year group, which will provide a useful checklist for teachers. Planning is also based on government guidelines. In some of the study units undertaken links are made with other subjects. The current Year 5 and 6 work on World war 2 is a good example of this. There is room for providing further links across the curriculum

Strengths:

- *use of trips to bring the subject alive;*
- *pupils' enthusiasm.*

Areas for development:

- *use of the local area;*
- *development of chronological skills.*

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

150 Standards have improved since the last inspection. They remain unsatisfactory, by the time pupils leave the school although they have improved in Year 2, where pupils now reach the expected level. This is mainly because Year 6 pupils have not covered all aspects of the curriculum. In addition, the lack of suitable resources has hindered the amount of time pupils have to practise their skills and to learn new ones. The school now provides more opportunities for pupils to develop confidence in their computer skills than at the time of the last inspection. Currently this is still restricted to the computers available in classrooms and results in fewer opportunities to have 'hands on' experience. This is soon to be addressed by the opening of a computer suite. Word processing and data handling are developed well, although the use of ICT in other subjects is not well established.

151 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 gain a secure understanding of the use of the computer keyboard. They learn to use the mouse and keyboard and acquire a range of basic skills. In Year 2, pupils are provided with the basic commands to enable them to classify information and present their findings. They learn how to create a simple bar chart on the computer having collected data about the type of houses they live in. However, there is little evidence of pupils questioning or interpreting their results in order to extend their understanding. Whilst pupils in Year 2 are provided with a range of experiences, including word-processing and data handling, these are not covered in sufficient depth to promote more rapid development of skills.

156 In Years 3 to 6 pupils now make satisfactory gains in their learning and meet the expectations for their age in the areas that they cover. Year 3 and 4 pupils are taught how to use the software 'Colour Magic'. By using the graphics program, they explore different ways of assembling pictures using repeating patterns. They experiment with tiling and tessellation, which helps to reinforce their mathematical understanding. However, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to use computers. This will be resolved when the new computer suite is operational.

157 Older pupils in Years 5 and 6 learn how to use the Internet to access various sites and copy text for their own use. They gain a good understanding of the wealth of information available on the Internet although few have the opportunity to practise the skills of retrieval due to lack of sufficient computers. Good challenges are set for pupils in Years 5 and 6 and include a recent one to make a Power Point presentation to persuade other children to have a healthier lunchbox. Through the use of text, pictures, charts and sound the pupils co-operated well together in groups to produce their presentation. They were then given the opportunity to present their findings to other children who, in turn, voted for the most persuasive and well produced presentation. In addition, pupils from Years 5 and 6 on the newly formed School Council, make effective use of ICT in the production of the school magazine. They use the digital camera to good effect by taking pictures of teachers being interviewed and pupils who have achieved sporting success outside of school. There are fewer opportunities to develop skills in other aspects of ICT, such as spreadsheets, control and modelling

158 Pupils have good attitudes to learning and are enthusiastic users of the computers. They co-operate well in pairs and support each other in lessons. They treat resources with respect and behaviour during lessons observed was good. Pupils are highly motivated and remain on task when working at classroom computers although they have insufficient time to practice and extend their skills.

159 Throughout the school, the quality of teaching and learning in ICT has improved since the last inspection and it is now good overall. The strengths of the teaching can be seen in

the good planning that is firmly rooted in the adapted national guidance. It provides a clear structure for lessons and for the systematic development of basic skills as pupils move through the school. In a successful Year 5/6 lesson, the teacher demonstrated his confidence by calmly responding to unforeseen technical difficulties. All teachers have benefited from the recent training under the New Opportunities Fund (NOF) and this has increased their confidence to use new resources like the computer projector for demonstrations. Teachers have a better understanding of what needs to be taught and are beginning to develop assessment records of pupils' progress. Opportunities to use ICT in other subjects are less well developed with classroom computers remaining idle for the majority of time.

160 The school has recognised the lack of suitable resources especially for whole class lessons in ICT. Work is currently taking place to create a fully networked computer suite that will accommodate full classes. Roamers are available for younger pupils to use although there was no evidence of these and other types of control technology being used regularly. The school recognises that this is an area needing to be developed and has plans in place to improve this provision. Good use is made of the portable projector and the school has identified the need for interactive whiteboards to enable teachers to demonstrate new skills and techniques further.

161 The headteacher currently takes responsibility for the management of this subject. He sets good examples in his own teaching and leads the subject well. He is keen to support staff in their training needs and to continue to raise standards for all pupils. The school is now well placed to continue to improve teaching and learning, having demonstrated an improvement since the last inspection.

Strengths:

- *pupils' enthusiasm for learning;*
- *good subject leadership;*
- *teachers' commitment to improving their own expertise and raising pupils' standards;*
- *standards in word-processing and data-handling.*

Areas for development:

- *improve standards in Key Stage 2;*
- *provide opportunities for pupils to develop skills in all aspects of ICT;*
- *develop the use of ICT to consolidate and extend learning in all subjects;*
- *improve resources to enable whole class teaching and practice of ICT skills.*

MUSIC

162 Standards are broadly average in both Year 2 and Year 6. This marks a slight fall back in Year 6 since the last inspection. At that time the previous headteacher, who was a music specialist, led the work in the school. There is now a clear agenda for improvement in this area and the school is working with the local authority music adviser to move the area forward.

163 In Years 1 and 2 pupils worked on controlling sounds and listened carefully to recall sounds that they heard. In both lessons pupils were actively involved. Younger pupils used their bodies and voices well to emulate the sounds that animals make. They clicked, whistled and squeaked, for example, to sound like a dolphin. In Year 2, pupils worked with instruments to accompany the song '*Make your sound the same as mine*'. By the end of the session they clearly understood the difference between tapping, scraping, blowing and vibrating. They recognised how musical elements can be used to create different effects, they showed physical control in playing their instruments and they sang confidently.

164 In Years 3 and 4 pupils worked on developing their appraisal skills. They listened to three tracks of music from other cultures and wrote down the pictures that the music painted in their minds. They were fully engaged in this and their work reflected some imaginative ideas. They moved on to recording the instruments that they could hear in different sections of the music. Some managed this well, but many needed more support in identifying the different sections. Assemblies are also used as an opportunity to help pupils to develop their appraising skills. An interesting display in the hall provides information about the composer for the week and good reference to this is made in the assembly itself.

165 In Years 5 and 6 in the session seen pupils worked on developing an understanding of timbre by listening to, performing and arranging different versions of the song 'Wimoweh'. They responded to this well and listened carefully to the video of pupils and musicians performing. They sang the song tunefully, but there was no expectation that they took different parts. They listened carefully to their teacher and most seemed to grasp the concepts of timbre and pitch. The time allowed for them to work in groups to compose an accompaniment was limited by the long introduction and the proximity of one group to another made it hard for them to hear what they were doing. The teacher sensibly called the class together and pupils worked as a class on listening to the effect created by different instruments.

166 In lessons seen teaching ranged from very good to satisfactory, with the strongest teaching in Years 1 and 2. Teachers' planning for work is good, but less confident teachers sometimes miss out key features in their plans, such as the development of musical language. In the very good lesson seen the teacher's explanations were very clear and pupils listened very attentively. There was a very good pace to the lesson, which meant that a good deal of ground was covered and the use of instruments was very well organised. In the satisfactory lessons features for improvement included the support given to pupils in recording their work and the organisation of groups working with instruments, so that they were not so close together.

167 Musical provision is enhanced by additional instrumental teaching for some older pupils. In these sessions pupils achieve well and some reach high standards. In a lunchtime recorder group, for example, five pupils played 'Scarborough Fair' in two parts to a high standard. They did well because of the good support and high expectations of their tutor. Several pupils learn the piano on a fee-paying basis in after school sessions and there is a brass instrumental class, again fee-paying, which is well supported. Some of these pupils make good contributions to school performance, such as 'Hosanna Rock', which took place before Christmas. The instrumentalists included a flute, clarinet and cornet player. The school has a satisfactory range of musical instruments, which are well organised and accessible to all classes. These include a number of instruments from other cultures.

Strengths:

- *opportunities to discuss and evaluate;*
- *multi-cultural links;*
- *teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2;*
- *instrumental tuition.*

Areas for development:

- *teachers' subject confidence.*

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

168 Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 in physical education are average, which is a similar position to that found during the last inspection. All aspects of the subject including dance, gymnastics, games and athletics are planned during the year. Older pupils enjoy outdoor and adventurous activities through a residential visit and the school is looking to extend that area of activity by introducing orienteering for all ages. During the year all ages have the opportunity to go swimming at Berinsfield pool and a concern in the last inspection report over the time lost in travelling has been largely addressed by setting out during the lunch hour. As a result of this good provision pupils achieve well and by Year 6 almost all pupils swim 25 metres with many swimming well in excess of this. Boys and girls achieve equally well as do pupils with special educational needs who are fully integrated into lessons.

169 Pupils in Year 2 showed increasing awareness of their movements and those of others as they practised balancing on parts of their body. They worked well with their partner to improve their performance and by the end of the lesson were holding their balance for extended periods with some more able gymnasts completing head and shoulder stands. In Year 1 pupils retold through dance the story of Suraya and the Sun King, portraying the peacock, king and the young girl in stylised moves with their partners. They showed increasing awareness and use of space and by the end of the lesson were developing a repertoire of dance moves that would be used to convey the story. Good links were made through this Indian story to the literacy and music of other cultures. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are making sound progress as a result of the well chosen tasks they undertake and opportunities to practise and refine the quality of their movements.

170 In Years 5 and 6 pupils were developing their ability to pass and receive a ball accurately and the tactical skills of defence and attack as they tried to block the passage of the ball or move it quickly across the court. The explanations and timely reminders of their teacher improved their knowledge of the rules of netball. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 showed improving gymnastic skills as they travelled over and along the apparatus. They showed increased awareness and understanding as they made well thought out suggestions for improvements to classmate's sequences.

171 Teaching is good overall and ranges from satisfactory to good. Lessons are well planned and prepared and teachers are suitably aware of safety issues. They ensure lessons begin with warm up activities and end with cool down sessions. Pupils, who are attentive to their teachers and clearly enjoy their PE lessons, are suitably clad and apparatus is handled with care. Suitable explanation of the tasks and a brisk pace support learning well but this is sometimes lost as pupils wait for a turn or queue for apparatus. Teachers often make good use of pupils to demonstrate particular points. Pupils throughout the school make sound progress. They would achieve more if opportunities to improve their own performance in the light of observing and evaluating those of their peers were a more regular feature during lessons rather than occurring at the end. More and better timed interventions by teachers would increase the level of challenge and help to coach specific skills. Whilst pupils are aware of the effects of exercise and its benefits for health through work in PSHE and science opportunities to reinforce this in PE are not exploited.

172 The subject is currently co-ordinated by a part time teacher. Good use is made of a well known commercial scheme to supplement national guidelines as the basis for planning in the subject. Monitoring of teaching and learning in the subject is largely through viewing teacher's planning. Assessment arrangements have just been reviewed and should now provide a continuous record of pupils' experience and progress. The large hall, field and hard play area provide good facilities for the subject. Equipment for small games has been improved since the last inspection and is now of good quantity and quality, accessible and well stored. The large apparatus for gymnastics is adequate but its size and weight limits its use with younger pupils and its limited range restricts teaching in the subject. Provision is

extended well by after school clubs and activities such as tennis, netball, football, athletics, judo and yoga

Strengths

- *swimming provision;*
- *extra-curricular sporting activities;*
- *well-planned and thoroughly prepared lessons;*
- *attention to safety;*
- *pupils' enthusiasm and enjoyment.*

Areas for development

- *improving teachers' subject knowledge to support coaching of skills and raise expectations;*
- *large apparatus for gymnastics;*
- *assessment arrangements.*

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

173 Pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious education are average in Year 2 and Year 6, meeting the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Evidence from pupils' work, teachers' planning, talking to pupils and the two lessons seen indicates that pupils' progress in the subject is sound.

174 Lessons are planned well to build on pupils' knowledge and experiences and to develop their understanding of Christianity and the world's leading faiths. As a result of visits to the local church and the strong links that the school has with local clergy pupils have satisfactory knowledge of some of the important features of the Christian religion. Older pupils know the main features of Christian worship, and younger pupils the significance of festivals such as Harvest and Christmas and about 'special' people such as Moses and Jesus. Pupils are developing an understanding of what it means to belong to a religion other than Christianity and learning the significance of symbols and religious artefacts in the Jewish and Islamic faiths. Older pupils are beginning to appreciate the similarities and differences between the major religions and have compared the Lord's Prayer with the Jewish Shema and Christian baptism with the Muslim welcoming of a baby. Pupils' work showed how difficult emotions had been explored through stories such as *'Badgers' Parting Gift* to focus on bereavement with younger pupils and the implications of being part of a community and its attendant responsibilities explored with older ones.

175 Overall the teaching is good. A strength of the lessons seen was the good relationships that teachers have with pupils and the atmosphere of mutual trust this created in which pupils spoke sensitively about their own beliefs, learnt about other views and shared experiences. This was coupled well to interesting activities that captured pupils' attention and the good use of resources to support learning in these well planned and prepared lessons. A brief video extract and good use of artefacts helped pupils in Year 2 recognise that the Torah is precious to Jewish people because it was a gift from God and that this is reflected in its decoration and how it is used. They understood that out of reverence it is not touched but opened on rollers and a 'yad' used to follow the text. In the Year 5/6 class pupils made good use of questions that they had prepared and researched to find out more about specific features of the Islamic faith from a parent visitor. The very good interaction and the artefacts brought by the parent helped pupils to learn about the Islamic book of prayer, the significance of the Qur'an and how it influences the lives of Muslims. By the end of the session they were beginning to see and contrast the similarities and differences between Christianity and Islam and their own lives and experience.

176 The school makes good use of a range of religious artefacts from other faiths to help pupils develop the correct terminology to describe them and to understand how they are used as symbols to express belief. Although the school is largely mono-cultural good efforts are made to help pupils hear authentic accounts from other faith believers or through use of video extracts, although opportunities to visit other places of worship are limited.

177 The school makes suitable use of the locally agreed syllabus and the QCA scheme of work as the basis for planning in the subject. Although this ensures that the requirements of the agreed syllabus are broadly met, there is insufficient guidance on how the needs of each age group should be addressed within the two year rolling programme of themes for the mixed age classes. This results in older pupils working on the same tasks as younger pupils and does not ensure that all abilities make the progress they are capable of.

178 The headteacher is co-ordinating the subject temporarily. Monitoring is largely through viewing teacher's planning and improved assessment arrangements are at an early stage of development.

Strengths

- *good range of artefacts from major faiths;*
- *well planned and resourced lessons;*
- *good relationships and an atmosphere of mutual trust.*

Areas for development

- *clear exemplification of expectations for pupils in mixed age classes and planning to meet need of all abilities;*
- *assessment procedures*