

## INSPECTION REPORT

**ST JOHN FISHER RC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Oxford

LEA area: Oxfordshire

Unique reference number: 123217

Headteacher: Mrs J. Milham

Reporting inspector: Mr G.R. Logan  
11810

Dates of inspection: 25<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> November 2002

Inspection number: 248445

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 10
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Sandy Lane West Littlemore Oxford
Postcode:	OX4 6LD
Telephone number:	01865 779676
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr C. Tomline
Date of previous inspection:	October 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
11810	Mr G.R. Logan	Registered inspector	Mathematics; Information and communication technology; History; Educational inclusion.	What sort of school is it?  How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements.  How well are pupils taught?  What should the school do to improve further?
13395	Mrs J. Illingworth	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.  How well does the school care for its pupils?  How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
22182	Miss F. Robinson	Team inspector	English; Music; Special educational needs; English as an additional language	
22421	Mrs V. McGrath	Team inspector	Art and design; Design and technology; Physical education; Areas of Learning in the Foundation Stage	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
2818	Mr G. Warner	Team inspector	Science; Geography	How well is the school led and managed?

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St John Fisher RC is a voluntary aided primary school for pupils aged 4 to 10 in the Blackbird Leys district of Oxford. This is a socially disadvantaged urban area, and the school is part of the Hamilton Oxford Schools Partnership Education Action Zone. There are 139 pupils in the main school; 74 boys and 65 girls, together with 26 children, 8 boys and 9 girls full-time and 5 boys and 4 girls part-time, who attend the integrated nursery. Children enter the nursery in the year when they become four. Attainment on entry to nursery is below average; on entry to reception it is average as a result of the good progress they have made. Thirty-eight pupils have special educational needs, mostly moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is around the national average. Five of these have statements of special need. This is above the national average. There are four pupils with English as an additional language. There are two refugees and two pupils from a traveller background. Twenty-two per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is around the national average and has declined in the last year. Pupil mobility is relatively low, with around 10 per cent of pupils leaving or joining the school, other than at the normal admission and leaving dates. The school is undergoing reorganisation as a primary school. There is no Year 6 class at present.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

St John Fisher offers a sound education and provides well for the needs of its pupils. Many aspects of the school's work, such as the teaching, the curriculum, the quality of care and the partnership with parents, are of good quality. The ethos of the school is strong. Although standards by the age of seven are not as high as they might be and progress through the school is uneven at present, the school promotes good attitudes to learning. From below average attainment on entry to nursery, pupils are making better progress as a result of the high quality experience they are now receiving, following recent improvements in the Foundation Stage provision. The Foundation Stage contributes very well to children's personal, social and emotional development and to their language and mathematical skills. Support for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The headteacher is well supported by the staff and the governing body and the school's capacity for improvement is good. Levels of funding are high. Even so, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Children have a very good start in the Foundation Stage.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Pupils' moral and social development is very good. They have good attitudes to learning.
- Pupils are cared for very well. Systems for assessing their attainment and progress are very good.

#### **What could be improved**

- Standards in writing and mathematics, history and geography are not high enough in Year 2, nor are standards in physical education by Year 5.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school was last inspected in October 1997. Several areas for development were identified. There has been good progress in raising standards in science and satisfactory progress in raising standards in art and geography in the phases identified. There have been improvements in history for the older pupils, but not for the younger. While there has been some improvement in mathematics, the school's performance has slipped in relation to standards nationally. Schemes of work have been produced for history and geography. Subject co-ordinators are more effective and there are good opportunities for them to monitor. While there is more focus on provision for the more able pupils, this is an area which the school wishes to develop further. There has been good improvement in the involvement of

governors in monitoring the work of the school. Long term financial planning is secure. In other respects also, the school has moved forward. The quality of provision in the Foundation Stage has improved significantly. The overall quality of teaching across the school is better than in 1997. Standards in reading have risen. There have been good improvements in planning and the management of the curriculum. Assessment is now a strength. The high quality of care provided for pupils has been sustained. Overall, improvement has been satisfactory.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	All schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
Reading	E	E	B	A
Writing	E	E	E	D
Mathematics	E	E	E	D

**Key**

well above average      A

above average          B

Average                  C

below average          D

well below average      E

The 2002 test results for pupils at the end of Year 2 were above average in reading and well below average in writing and mathematics, compared to the national average. When compared to similar schools, standards were well above average in reading and below average in writing and mathematics. Teachers' assessment indicated that standards in science were above average. Performance in 2002 represented an improvement over 2001. The proportion of Year 2 pupils achieving the challenging level 3 was well above average in reading, above average in science, but below average in mathematics and writing. The school did not achieve its challenging targets in English and mathematics in Year 2 in 2002. Currently, standards in Year 2 are well below average in writing, below average in mathematics, history and geography but average in reading, science and in the remaining curriculum subjects. The rate of progress improves significantly in the juniors. Standards at the end of Year 5 are better. Attainment is above average in reading and average in writing, mathematics, science and all other subjects except physical education where standards are below average. Skills in ICT are developing well. Pupils apply their literacy and numeracy skills satisfactorily. The progress which pupils make is improving as a result of the very good provision in the Foundation Stage. From a below average level of attainment on entry to nursery, with restricted language, mathematical and social skills, children have a good start in nursery and reception. This prepares them well for education in the main school.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and work well together. They are well-motivated and participate eagerly in lessons and other activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave well in lessons and in the playground. The school is a very orderly community. There were no exclusions in the last school year.
Personal development and relationships	Good. The school promotes pupils' personal development effectively. Relationships in the school are very good.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance is around the national average. The rate of unauthorised absence is low. Punctuality is satisfactory.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 5
Quality of teaching	Very good	Satisfactory	Good

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

The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is good overall. Teaching in almost four-fifths of lessons observed was good or better, with no unsatisfactory teaching. Good teaching was seen in all subjects apart from geography, with strengths in the specialist teaching of music and the Foundation Stage, where the teaching is particularly effective in promoting children's personal, social and emotional development, so enabling them to make good progress. Teaching is stronger overall in the juniors, where staff are very experienced, than in the infants. There is a good working atmosphere. Staff manage pupils very well and establish very good relationships. The best teaching has a brisk pace and builds upon pupils' enthusiasm. In Years 1 and 2 the pace is occasionally too leisurely. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and manage this well. Work is generally well-matched to pupils' needs, but expectations of what the more able pupils could achieve are less secure in Year 2. The use of interactive whiteboards has had a significant effect on the quality of teaching and learning in the juniors. Questioning is used well in some classes and promotes pupils' learning well. The teaching of English and mathematics is good overall. Literacy and numeracy skills are developed satisfactorily across the curriculum, but this is an area the school wishes to develop. The partnership between teachers and support staff is a strength. Some support staff have very specific responsibilities, such as supporting the development of ICT skills. This has a positive effect on pupils' learning, including those with special educational needs.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The Foundation Stage curriculum is broad and stimulating. The main school curriculum is satisfactory. More opportunities for applying numeracy and literacy skills in foundation subjects are needed.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good, enabling pupils to make good progress. The co-ordinator is providing very good, clear educational direction.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. There is very good provision for pupils with English as an additional language; this is overseen very well by the special educational needs co-ordinator.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and is a strength of the school. Provision for the cultural development has improved and is now good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. The school takes very good care of its pupils. It monitors personal development very effectively and gives pupils very good personal support and guidance. The school has very good procedures for encouraging pupils to behave well. Procedures for assessing pupils' academic attainment and progress are very good.

The school has a satisfactory partnership with parents. The quality of information is good overall. The school works hard to develop a strong partnership with pupils' families and gets a satisfactory response from them. Home school links make a positive contribution to pupils' attainment and progress.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The school is led effectively by the headteacher. She is highly sensitive to the needs of pupils. She is well supported by a well focused senior management team. Co-ordinators are very effective overall, although some have taken up their responsibilities very recently. There is further work to do in the raising of standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors are a well-informed group. They have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Committees meet regularly and there is a well-established monitoring programme.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school monitors and evaluates its performance well and there is a shared understanding of its strengths and areas for development.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Finances are managed satisfactorily. The school commits a large proportion of funding to maintain high levels of staffing. The school applies best value principles well.

The School Improvement Plan is very thorough and identifies a range of key priorities. It is matched closely to the staff development programme and the school's budget. The school is well staffed, with very efficient administration. Support staff make a significant contribution to the work of the school. The accommodation is good and very well cared for. The school is very well-resourced.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• The school has high expectations of the work pupils will do and of their behaviour.</li> <li>• Teaching is good.</li> <li>• Good range of activities outside lessons.</li> <li>• The quality of leadership; the school is approachable.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The information provided on pupils' progress</li> <li>• How well the school works with parents.</li> </ul>

A relatively small number of parents returned the questionnaire or attended the parents' meeting. Nearly all who expressed a view were supportive of the school. Inspectors agree with parents' assessments of the school's strengths. In addition, they feel that the school provides good information on pupils' progress and tries very hard to work closely with parents.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. In the 2002 national tests for Year 2 pupils, standards were above average in reading and well below average in writing and mathematics, in relation to schools nationally. Standards were well above average in reading and below average in writing and mathematics, in relation to similar schools. Teacher assessment indicated that standards in science were above average. In 2002, the proportion of pupils achieving the challenging level 3 was well above average in reading and above average in science, but below average in reading and mathematics, in relation to similar schools. Pupils' performance in 2002 was an improvement on 2001. However, in 2002, the school did not achieve its targets in areas other than reading. There is no significant difference in attainment between boys and girls at age seven, other than in aspects of English. Between 2000 and 2002, both boys and girls at age seven achieved less well than boys and girls nationally.
2. The pattern of attainment and achievement in the school is changing. Primarily, this is a reflection of significant changes in the early educational experience of the children. Children now have a very good start to their education in the Foundation Stage. On entry to the nursery, the majority of children has restricted skills, especially in the key areas of communication, language and literacy, mathematics and in personal, social and emotional development. The implementation of the Foundation Stage curriculum, together with organisational and management changes, and supported by additional funding, have enabled the school to provide nursery children with two terms of part-time experience, together with one term full-time, before they proceed to the reception year. The current high quality of the teaching and of the overall provision in the Foundation Stage are having a profound effect upon the progress the children make. By the start of the reception year, most pupils have reached an average level, so that by the time they enter Year 1, the majority of pupils has achieved the Early Learning Goals<sup>1</sup> for the Foundation Stage. They are confident and well-prepared to cope with the national curriculum. The current Year 1 pupils are the first year group in the main school to have had the full benefit of this experience. These pupils are already on course to achieve well by the end of Year 2.
3. The standards currently attained by Year 2 pupils, part-way through the year, are broadly average in reading and science, below average in mathematics and speaking and listening and well below average in writing. However, Year 2 pupils are not always advantaged by the organisation of classes, which have pupils from two year groups. Planning for a considerable breadth of maturity and competence means in practice that the higher attainers in Year 2 are not sufficiently challenged and not enough priority is given to moving them on. This has adversely affected attainment at the end of Year 2. The situation is compounded at present by the arrival of a Year 1 group which is now much better prepared than has normally been the case. Some of these pupils are coping nearly as well as those in Year 2. At Year 5, standards are higher –

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<sup>1</sup> Early Learning Goals – these are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They refer mainly to achievements children make in connection with the following six areas of learning: communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development. There are many goals for each area of learning; for example in language and literacy, children should be able to write their own name and other things such as labels and begin to write sentences. In this school, Foundation Stage refers to the nursery and reception children.

above average in reading and average in writing, mathematics and science. This is primarily a reflection of the strength of the current teaching in the juniors which is enabling pupils to achieve better; standards are rising as a result. The school is well-resourced for meeting the needs of those pupils with special educational needs. But, overall, there is a better awareness of the needs of the potential higher attainers in the juniors than in the infants. At present, pupils make satisfactory, if uneven, progress as they move through the school. The potential exists for this to be raised to be good.

4. Standards in English at present are below average overall by the end of Year 2, but average by Year 5. The progress pupils make has been particularly good in reading in the last year, but less good in writing. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress. Standards in speaking and listening are below average in Year 2, but average in Year 5. Some younger pupils have problems structuring simple sentences and their range of vocabulary is restricted. Teachers are providing more opportunities for pupils to articulate their ideas in order to promote improved communication skills. The school has been really successful in raising standards in reading. These are now average in Year 2 and above average in Year 5. Pupils enjoy reading and are keen to read aloud. There has been a considerable drive across the school to increase pupils' phonic awareness and to develop a culture of reading and this has been successful. Standards in writing are well below average by the end of Year 2, but average by Year 5. Few of the younger pupils develop sufficient confidence in their letter formation, or develop an acceptable cursive style early enough. Progress accelerates in the juniors and the standard of pupils' writing is improving. More able pupils are working at the expected level. In general, the overall quality of writing improves steadily as pupils move through the school. There are regular opportunities for extended writing. By Year 5, most pupils are tackling a suitable range of writing tasks. They have a satisfactory knowledge of grammar and spelling.
5. Standards in mathematics are below average by the end of Year 2, but average by the end of Year 5. The pattern of progress is similar to English. While there is a systematic approach to the teaching and learning of basic mathematical skills, prior experience has, until recently, been limited as pupils entered Year 1. The organisational structures did not always facilitate brisk progress in learning. Even now, expectations as to what pupils can achieve are higher in the juniors than the infants – and this is why the progress made by the older pupils is better. Over time, pupils acquire a secure knowledge of place value, as well as the procedures which enable them to add and subtract one and two digit numbers. They learn to use units of time, weight, measure and capacity and recognise the features of two- and three-dimensional shapes. They record data systematically and represent them in graphs and charts. Pupils have occasional opportunities to apply their mathematical skills across the curriculum.
6. Standards in science are currently average by the end of Years 2 and 5. This is an improving picture overall, with an increasing proportion of pupils achieving at the higher level by Year 5. They are encouraged to set up investigations. By the end of Year 2, pupils have made steady progress and are well-motivated by the practical activities. The quality of their understanding is not matched by their ability to record what they learn. Pupils are effectively challenged in the juniors and are enthusiastic learners, researching topics efficiently because of their good reading skills.
7. Pupils' attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) is around the expected level by the end of Years 2 and 5. The main focus has been on improving pupils' skills. There is a well-structured programme to meet this need and this is working well. There are some planned opportunities for pupils to use ICT to enhance their learning in other subjects. ICT has a high profile at present because of the recent introduction of interactive whiteboards in the juniors. Not only has this significantly

enhanced the quality of the teaching, but is extending pupils' confidence in managing technology.

8. By the end of Year 2, standards are average in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education. They are below average in history and geography. By the end of Year 5, standards are above average in music, average in art and design, design and technology, history and geography, and below average in physical education. No judgement is made on standards in religious education as this is subject to a separate, denominational inspection.
9. The literacy and numeracy strategies have been implemented satisfactorily, with some planned opportunities for the use of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. The school intends to develop this further.
10. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. These pupils enter school with low levels of attainment and make satisfactory progress over time by the age of seven. Progress is good over time in Years 3, 4 and 5 due to the positive effect of a high proportion of good teaching on pupils' learning. Achievement throughout the school is satisfactory with regard to the targets contained in pupils' individual education plans. Clear, comprehensive records of achievement and progress are kept, being effectively used to inform teaching and planning.
11. Most pupils from ethnic minority groups speak and read English with competence and so achieve equally as well as other boys and girls. Where appropriate they receive extra assistance with the acquisition of English. They have as equal access to the good teaching and sound curriculum as other pupils. As a result, they make the same sound progress as other pupils by the age of seven and experience the same difficulties with writing. In Years 3, 4 and 5, they make good progress over time due to the effect of a high proportion of good teaching on their learning. Pupils from a traveller background make steady progress, although their attainment can be compromised by erratic patterns of attendance. They are supported very well by the local Advisory Service for the Education of Travellers.
12. The school has assembled a range of information on pupils' prior attainment and is now using available data to set targets for groups of pupils. There is more work to be done to ensure that pupils' potential is identified from an early stage. Particularly challenging targets were identified for the standards pupils were expected to attain in the national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2002. More realistic targets are in place for 2003.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

13. Pupils have good attitudes to school. They have very good relations with members of staff and with one another, and their attendance is satisfactory. They behave very well and their personal development is good. Overall, pupils' positive attitudes and values enhance their academic attainment and progress. This is an improvement on the previous inspection.
14. Pupils are keen to come to school and feel secure and happy. All parents who answered the inspection questionnaire said that their children liked school. Pupils of all ages show good interest and involvement in activities. For example, they enjoy taking part in lunchtime and after school activities, such as the football and guitar clubs. Pupils show good attitudes to learning in lessons. They are interested in their work and want to make good progress. In the majority of lessons they settle down quickly, listen to their teachers and concentrate well in group activities and individual tasks. The

quality of teaching is the main factor influencing attitudes to learning. Pupils respond positively and work well in lessons where teachers set interesting and challenging tasks. Concentration and application to task can lapse in lessons where the teaching lacks pace. Nevertheless attitudes to learning were satisfactory or better in all the lessons observed. They were better in Years 3 to 5 than in Years 1 and 2, reflecting the general quality of teaching in these classes.

15. Pupils with special educational needs have good attitudes to their work throughout the school. They are keen, interested and involved in their work. The teachers match work well to the pupils' ability, with skilful explanations and appropriate support. This helps them to settle quickly and concentrate well on their activities. Pupils from all ethnic groups are well motivated to contribute publicly and take pleasure in receiving recognition for their efforts.
16. Behaviour in lessons is good overall, though standards vary according to the quality of teaching. Pupils behave very well in lessons in which teachers have high expectations and manage behaviour very effectively. The pupils sometimes become restless and chatty when asked to perform undemanding tasks.
17. Pupils behave very well out of lessons. They are polite, friendly, and helpful. There is a commendable absence of oppressive behaviour, such as bullying. This is the result of the school's very good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. The pupils themselves are conscious of this. They greatly appreciate the opportunity to talk in circle time about disagreements and conflicts. The school is an orderly place and a good environment for learning. It is also an inclusive community for the same reason. There is no sexism or racism, and no pupils have been excluded in recent years.
18. Relationships are very good. Pupils respect members of staff and get on very well with each other. There is a friendly and supportive atmosphere that promotes learning and progress well. Pupils' personal development is good, and is significantly enhanced by the school's curriculum for social education. Pupils of all ages get good opportunities to exercise responsibility. They can be class monitors, partner readers, or representatives to the school council. They are proud to serve their fellow pupils in this way. Independent learning is the weakest aspect of pupils' personal development, reflecting limited opportunities to take responsibility for their learning in lessons.
19. Attendance was good at the time of the previous inspection. The school has successfully maintained attendance levels at satisfactory levels. Pupils' attendance is currently around the national average for primary schools. This makes a positive contribution to their learning and progress. The rate of unauthorised absence is below the national average. At the time of the inspection a small number of pupils had attendance rates below 80 per cent owing to a combination of holiday leave and illness. The school does not have the problem of pupils who are persistently absent without good reason.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

20. The overall quality of teaching is good. Teaching in almost four-fifths of the lessons observed was of good or better quality and this leads to effective learning. There was no unsatisfactory teaching observed in lessons. This represents an improvement on the very positive situation found at the last inspection. The proportion of very good teaching is significantly higher this time. Weaker teaching in 1997 was in the juniors rather than the infants. The situation is now reversed, with relatively weaker, though still satisfactory, teaching in the infants, where staff are less experienced. Some good teaching was observed in all subjects other than geography, with particular strengths

in the specialist teaching of music and, significantly, in the Foundation Stage. Although the pattern of achievement is uneven at present, because the benefits of the significantly improved Foundation Stage provision are just feeding through the school, most pupils, including those with special educational needs, are now making steady progress from a below average starting point when they enter the school. Progress is now good up to Year 1. There have been several changes in staffing in the last two years. However, the school has been broadly successful in achieving and sustaining a satisfactory level of consistency and quality in the teaching and, consequently, in pupils' learning.

21. The quality of teaching is best in the Foundation Stage, with seven lessons in ten being very good. The focus on children's personal, social and emotional development is a particular strength, enabling them to make very good progress. The quality of planning is excellent. The teaching of basic skills is very good, catering for the full range of ability. All areas of learning are taught very well, enabling children to achieve so well, so that by the beginning, rather than the end, of the reception year they are achieving the standard expected for the Foundation Stage. All staff work very well in partnership as a cohesive unit. The quality of learning is good. Staff make very good use of initial assessments and maintain high quality on-going records which inform their planning well.
22. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good overall in Years 3 to 5. Over nine-tenths of the teaching in the juniors is of good or better quality. Relationships are usually very good. In the juniors, teachers have very good management skills and deploy both their support staff and resources well. They have consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour and, increasingly, of what pupils could achieve. In most classes, work is now matched well to pupils' needs, particularly in English and mathematics, and this is helping to push standards forward. The availability of a high number of adults contributes significantly to this improvement. Teaching in the juniors has been enhanced considerably by the introduction and use of the interactive whiteboards. Pupils find these compelling, and there has been a significant effect on pupils' learning as a result. In the most successful lessons, teachers are often making good use of other ICT applications for research purposes. Teaching in the infants is satisfactory. Staff here are less experienced, are relatively new to the school and are still developing their skills. The prior attainment of the pupils is changing and this has consequences for planning. Teachers do not yet have a clear fix on what can be achieved by the higher attainers and the very wide span of age, maturity and ability in each class is challenging. At times, there is a focus on the social needs of the pupils at the expense of the academic. Expectations as to what can be achieved by the more able Year 2 pupils now need to be raised. The school has been successful in doing this in reading across the school, but this needs to be extended to encompass other key skills. Across the school, some teachers are more effective than others in developing pupils' independence in recording of work. This is still constrained, however, by overall weaknesses in pupils' writing skills.
23. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught satisfactorily. The approach is very thorough, though the outcomes could be improved further. Standards in reading are a strength because of the very positive focus the school has placed on this in the last year. Standards in writing are weaker and much remains to be done if these are to be moved forward, particularly in the infants. Pupils' skills in numeracy are improving, particularly in the juniors, because of the skilled teaching and high expectations. This is less secure in the infants. Teachers generally make good use of learning objectives as a benchmark for success. This was evident in a number of mathematics lessons. Teachers will sometimes set goals for later sessions, as in a Year 5 literacy lesson. Staff plan opportunities for pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills across the

curriculum, although the school has identified this as an area which can be further developed. ICT skills are taught well and pupils are becoming confident in many basic procedures. However, the use of computers to support learning in other subjects varies between year groups and is currently strongest in Years 3 to 5.

24. Teaching is good for pupils with special educational needs. Throughout the school, teachers and support staff are fully aware of the targets set for pupils with special educational needs and meet regularly with the special educational needs co-ordinator to review and plan the next steps in learning. Individual education plans are used effectively to guide work at different levels. Clear targets are set that are achievable and reviewed regularly. Pupils are fully involved in all learning activities. Their contributions are valued by teachers and other adults and pupils' self-esteem is high. They are well supported by support staff and have good access to the curriculum because of the valuable support and encouragement given to them in group activities and in lessons.
25. All pupils, including those from ethnic minority groups, are given equal opportunities. Staff monitor pupils' progress very carefully in lessons and over time. Teaching is good for pupils who have English as an additional language. Individual targets are reviewed by the special educational needs co-ordinator, where a small number of pupils have special educational needs in addition to being in the early stages of acquiring English. Pupils from a traveller background are supported very effectively by learning support staff and specialist teachers from the Advisory Service for the Education of Travellers.
26. Teachers have good subject knowledge. This enables them to present lessons in ways that capture pupils' imaginations and maintain their enthusiasm. This was the case in most lessons observed in the Foundation Stage and often in lessons with the juniors. The use of specialist teaching in music is a strength, and leads to an enthusiastic response from pupils and good outcomes in lessons. There was evidence of good subject knowledge in the group teaching of ICT – for example when demonstrating web searches in Year 5, or the use of a music composition program in Year 4. Teachers manage their pupils very well and have high expectations of how they will learn and behave. They have created a very positive climate for learning. Pupils respond well to these expectations, showing good attitudes to their learning. Teachers use a variety of teaching methods well. In most lessons, the combination of whole class teaching and opportunities for pupils to work on their own, or in small groups, is used effectively. This helps to maintain pupils' interest and enables teachers to meet their learning needs. A good example is the support the school provides for ICT, where a well-trained learning support assistant is deployed to work on a rota basis with individual pupils across the school in an effort to monitor and advance their skills. The overall support provided by the support staff is a significant strength in the school and promotes pupils' progress well, particularly those with special educational needs.
27. Time is used well in many lessons. In some classes, pupils are alerted to time passing when a child moves round the groups with a card indicating the time remaining. In other lessons, mostly in Years 1 and 2, the pace can be rather slow and time is not used so effectively. In most lessons, teachers use the final part of lessons well to assess the learning that has taken place and the progress pupils have made. This was a strong feature in a Year 3 mathematics lesson observed.
28. Everyday arrangements to assess pupils' attainment and progress are good overall. Teachers make good use of assessment information when planning future work, although this is less consistent in the infants than in the juniors.

29. Homework is used satisfactorily to extend pupils' learning. It usually takes the form of reading or mathematics and a record is kept about the progress made by each pupil.

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

30. The excellent curriculum planning in the Foundation Stage, and the very good assessment procedures, ensure the individual needs of the youngest children are met. The curriculum is stimulating and offers good breadth and balance as each aspect of each area of learning is taught each term. Appropriate emphasis is placed on personal, social and emotional development, and on communication, language and literacy. Children make good progress, and are attaining in line with expectations for their age by the reception year.
31. The curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 5. The school places emphasis on the teaching of religious education, mathematics and literacy, and this is leading to above average standards in reading by the age of seven, and improving standards in English and mathematics by Year 5. The organisation of the curriculum in 'blocks' where some subjects, including science, are taught intensively for short periods, followed by long intervals when they are not taught, may affect the steady, progressive development of the skills particular to those subjects. Also, in Years 3 to 5, in physical education, design and technology, and art and design, where pupils need more time to complete practical tasks, there is some evidence that lack of time constrains learning. The below average time allocation for physical education reduces the opportunities for pupils to improve the quality of their movements in gymnastics or to have sufficient experience of dance and games. This contributes to below average attainment in physical education by Year 5. The length of the school day meets that recommended by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) for infants, but not for junior pupils when assembly time is deducted from the overall time available.
32. Schemes of work for the teaching of personal, social and health education and sex education are incorporated within the time allocated for the recently reviewed religious education programme. All the necessary elements are in place, including sex education, drug awareness and citizenship. Some components are taught discretely, or in circle time, where pupils have an opportunity to discuss their concerns and to listen to others.
33. The quality of the curriculum has improved in several respects since the last inspection. The school has adopted the strategies for teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy with success. The National Literacy Strategy has been established, with some very good teaching observed. While opportunities for the use of literacy in other subjects are being developed, this is only spasmodically evident. The school has also implemented the National Numeracy Strategy, supporting some examples of very good teaching in mathematics. Many pupils have secure number skills, although there is limited evidence of pupils applying their understanding of number and shape in other subjects. Since the last inspection, the school has improved the provision of interactive ICT 'smart boards' in 3 classrooms. Where this is coupled with good teacher ICT skills, there is evidence of ICT supporting learning effectively across the curriculum. However, the application of ICT to support learning across the curriculum, is not consistently evident in all classes.

34. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The school implements the Code of Practice<sup>2</sup> fully. Pupils are very well supported in lessons, and in groups withdrawn from lessons. The school is aware of the need to provide additional support sensitively so as to ensure that pupils do not lose their full entitlement to the full range of curricular opportunities. Parents appreciate the amount of homework given which enables them to support their children's learning. It is an inclusive curriculum for pupils with English as an additional language. They are well supported through the high levels of staffing. In a minority of lessons in mixed age classes (Years 1 and 2), however, tasks are not planned at the right level for more able pupils.
35. For each subject there is a plan of curriculum coverage for each year group and teachers within each year plan collaboratively to ensure there is parity between parallel classes in the planned curriculum. Procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and attainment have been implemented in most subjects. In the last inspection report, a key issue required the school to monitor more effectively the curriculum and teaching. This is now established practice, involving senior managers, subject managers and governors. This indicates good improvement since the last inspection in the monitoring of the effectiveness of the curriculum. The school has identified the need to plan more links between subjects in order to ensure the use of literacy, numeracy and ICT to support learning in other subjects.
36. For infant and junior pupils, the programme for extra-curricular activities has improved since the last inspection. Successful bids for New Opportunities Funding, and voluntary support, ensures the provision of a range of clubs. These include sporting and musical activities, art based activities and breakfast and after school clubs. These opportunities make a very positive contribution to the overall curricular provision and contribute significantly to children's confidence and pleasure in learning. The vast majority of pupils in Year 4 attended a three day adventure holiday last summer. This has contributed to the very positive attitudes pupils demonstrate towards the learning opportunities offered.
37. The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and the school has maintained the strengths found at the previous inspection. The provision for the cultural development of pupils has improved and is now good. The school has worked hard to improve its provision for multicultural development through religious education and the involvement of parents and visitors. It has ensured that the development of the personal, social, moral and spiritual dimensions of the curriculum are central to its educational vision. The school aims to create happy, confident, independent and well-adjusted children and this is successfully achieved.
38. The opportunities for pupils' spiritual development are good. Collective worship is held daily. Pupils are given valuable opportunities to reflect on ideas and beliefs. In assembly pupils consider in what ways God's kingdom is one of service and love. Spiritual development is promoted effectively in the curriculum, especially through religious education, music and history. Lessons give pupils time to reflect upon this work and accept the message of caring, sharing and working together as friends.
39. Provision for moral development is very good and a clear moral code is promoted very well. The school has a very positive ethos and pupils are encouraged to think about

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<sup>2</sup> Code of Practice – this gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities, duties and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help and support to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act, 2001

care for others, especially those younger than themselves. This has a positive effect on the way pupils behave and the school's procedures are working very well. The difference between right and wrong is taught from the time the children enter the school and is very well understood. Bright, colourful displays of pupils' work promote their self-esteem and positive behaviour.

40. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. Social skills are steadily developed and pupils are encouraged to relate effectively to others. Pupils undertake jobs in the school, raise money for charity and enjoy helping others. The school makes very good use of a wide range of visits in and around the local area and this helps pupils to develop very good social skills, co-operation, communication and a sense of community. Pupils relate very well to adults and to their peers. They are able to share their views and work towards a consensus. Pupils show great respect for each other and each other's property. The school fosters a sense of community with common, inclusive values. Pupils value the social dimension of the school with a pupil commenting that school feels 'just like home'.
41. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. The school uses the diverse cultural backgrounds of its pupils well. Children are encouraged to respect cultural and religious differences and value the opportunity to celebrate festivals during the year such as Harvest, Diwali, Christmas, Chinese New Year and Easter. The school values tradition from other cultures through the study of art, music, dance, poetry, drama, food technology, geography and religious education. Books are carefully chosen which value and celebrate the variety of our world and pupils have benefited greatly from taking part in African drumming workshops, dance workshops and Young Shakespeare Theatre visits. The school's staff reflect a rich cultural diversity, which provide very good role models for the pupils. The school has a good reputation for tolerance and respect for others in the community.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

42. The school takes very good care of its pupils. It monitors their personal development very effectively and gives them very good personal support and guidance. It is a happy, friendly place where the pastoral system underpins academic progress. The quality of academic monitoring and support is also very good. The school has made good improvement since the previous inspection by building on and developing further the strengths that existed then. Parents think that the school looks after children well and is successful in promoting high standards of behaviour.
43. Procedures for child protection are good. The school has an appropriate policy, and members of staff are well briefed on child protection issues and know what to do in the event of an incident. The Home School Links Worker also makes a valuable contribution in this area through her work with vulnerable families. There are good arrangements to promote safety, and to protect pupils' health and general wellbeing. There is good provision for first aid and proper procedures for recording and reporting accidents. The governing body has an appropriate role. Its Finance and Premises Committee effectively oversees all health and safety issues.
44. The school monitors and supports personal development very well. Arrangements are mainly informal, but nevertheless very effective. Adults in the school are open, approachable and know pupils well as individuals. They quickly become aware of anyone who is unhappy and failing to make good progress, and respond to his or her needs with care and sensitivity. The school provides all its pupils with very good access to sources of guidance. It has a large number of support staff. They work with pupils on a one-to-one basis and establish very close relations with them. The school's

programme of personal and social education also provides good guidance and promotes personal development well. Circle time gives pupils the opportunity to talk about their worries and to devise strategies for dealing with them.

45. The school has very good procedures for encouraging pupils to behave well. Its clear routines create a calm and orderly environment and successfully promote high standards of conduct. There is a whole school approach to behaviour management, based on responsibility, choice and their awareness of consequences. Teachers have high expectations and manage behaviour very well in lessons. There are sensible classroom rules that pupils regard as reasonable, and therefore try their best to respect. The school has a good system of rewards. This acts as an effective incentive for good conduct and raises pupils' self esteem by celebrating their successes. The school also promotes positive behaviour and good relationships very effectively via the provision of 'friendship corners' in classrooms, and through circle time.
46. Procedures for eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good. The large number of support staff ensures that pupils are very well supervised in the playground. This reduces the scope for aggression, fighting, and rough play. The general ethos of the school, and preventative work in personal and social education and religious education, also strongly discourage bullying, sexism and racism.
47. The school has established very good procedures for monitoring and encouraging attendance. Class teachers hold roll calls and complete registers in accordance with legal requirements. The school analyses records of attendance carefully and uses them effectively to promote good attendance. It identifies, monitors and supports pupils whose performance gives cause for concern.
48. The school has paid a great deal of purposeful attention to its assessment procedures since the last inspection. The procedures for the assessment of pupils' work are very good. There is a logical sequence to the school's work in this regard. The initial baseline assessment made in the reception class is thoughtfully built upon. The deputy head teacher has supported other teachers in systematically using an effective tracking record that feeds into daily evaluations of pupils' knowledge and understanding of their learning. Individual target setting has been introduced as a result of this careful tracking. The school's more recent focus upon improving writing skills has benefited from this process. Targets are given appropriate consideration across curriculum areas. However, there are time gaps in considering targets in some foundation subjects of the National Curriculum because of the school's system of blocking work. Nevertheless, the information gathered from evaluations feeds into the target setting and gives a consistent approach to the way that pupils' attainment and progress are being assessed. Teachers moderate work in all subjects, but less attention is given to assessing performance against the achievements of other similar schools. The in-house moderation is completed very thoroughly on an annual basis. This sets the scene for the way that the pupils need to improve in the future. This has started the process of assessment information being used more systematically to inform teachers' planning for pupils' future work. This is being used satisfactorily already throughout the school, so that pupils of different abilities are being engaged in suitable levels of tasks. Higher attainers are increasingly given equal consideration with the pupils who have special needs, in order to meet their learning needs adequately. This is, however, a weaker feature in Year 2. Academic progress is generally well supported through this careful monitoring process.
49. Procedures for recording progress for pupils with special educational needs are very good. Pupils' individual needs are recognised very quickly and support from teaching and non-teaching staff is organised very effectively. Targets for improvement are

shared with parents and carers, and gains in skills, knowledge and understanding are recorded efficiently. Targets are effectively shared with pupils and outside agencies are used very well to support pupils in their learning. Very good support is provided by the special needs co-ordinator. There are very good procedures in place for assessing the progress of pupils with English as an additional language. Their attainment and progress is thoroughly monitored and recorded. Progress of pupils from a traveller background is monitored closely and very effectively by the specialist support teacher.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

50. The school has a satisfactory partnership with parents. There has been good progress since the last inspection. Parents' views of the school have improved and strengths, such as the quality of information on children's progress, have been successfully maintained. Home school links continue to make a positive contribution to pupils' attainment and progress.
51. It has been difficult to obtain firm evidence of parents' opinions of the school. Approximately one in five parents completed the pre-inspection questionnaire and the number who attended the meeting with the registered inspector was very low. A few parents also met members of the team during the inspection. Their views agreed with those expressed in the questionnaire and at the parents' meeting. They have consistently favourable opinions of the school. All are satisfied with pupils' academic progress, personal development and standards of behaviour. They also say unanimously that their children like school and that the quality of teaching is good. Well over nine out of ten parents are happy with homework, the approachability of staff, the range of extra-curricular activities, and the leadership and management of the school. There is less satisfaction with home school links. Even so, only one in ten parents is unhappy with information on progress or thinks that the school fails to work closely with pupils' families. Inspectors do not agree with these minority views. They find that the school provides good information on pupils' progress and tries hard to co-operate effectively with parents.
52. The quality of information for parents is good overall. The school prospectus and annual report of the governing body are informative and meet legal requirements. The school also explains its curriculum and teaching strategies through workshops, information evenings and assemblies. Homework packs provide details of pupils' progress in reading and act as an effective day-to-day line of communication between parents and class teachers. There are regular newsletters and advance notices of trips and performances. The school keeps parents well informed about problems and concerns. Formal arrangements for informing parents of academic progress are good and support children's learning. The school organises regular consultation evenings and sends good quality written reports to parents.
53. The school understands the contribution that good links with parents can make to pupils' attainment. It therefore operates an open door policy and actively encourages parents to come and see what their children are doing in lessons. Families are invited to open days and class assemblies and are asked to join in celebrations of pupils' achievements. It works closely with outside agencies, such as the Peers' Early Learning Project, on initiatives to improve parents' involvement in children's learning. The school actively encourages parents to become involved with pupils' learning at home.
54. Parents of all pupils with special educational needs are actively involved at all stages of the new Code of Practice including review procedures. Details of gains in skills, knowledge and understanding are reported to parents during the termly review.

55. Overall, the level of parental involvement in pupils' learning is satisfactory. Parents attend consultation evenings on progress in good numbers. They also give good support to school performances, children's parties and fundraising events. However, workshops for parents on aspects of the curriculum, such as numeracy and literacy, are less well attended. Parents are generally supportive over attendance, discipline and homework. A few parents use homework diaries as a means of communicating with their children's class teachers. The majority greatly appreciates the homework packs provided by the school. Some parents work in the classroom with pupils, but in general as members of staff rather than volunteers. Only a small number act as voluntary helpers in lessons. It is also difficult to find enough volunteers to fill all the places on the governing body for parent governors. Parents give satisfactory support to extra-curricular activities.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

56. In 1997, the last inspection report stated that there was sensitive leadership by the head teacher with clear school aims. Routine management was found to be good. Although there was a good school development plan there was no monitoring of the curriculum nor any long-term financial strategies to support future development. The role of the co-ordinators and governors was not fully developed. Accommodation was satisfactory and well used as was an effective support staff. The role of the governing body was a key issue to be addressed by the school.
57. The school continues to be competently led by a head teacher who is sensitive to the needs of pupils. She gives clear leadership to the caring nature of the school and is well supported by an alert and effectively focused senior management team and governing body. Although there has been a continuing trend of improvement in standards, there is scope for further improvement, given the significantly improved attainment of the reception pupils as they move into the main school. The school's caring Catholic ethos is very comprehensively supported by all of those with a leadership role. The school's mission, aims and values are clear, with a shared determination to ensure future improvement. The senior management team have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and show preparedness to build upon strengths and tackle weaknesses through a carefully prepared school development plan. The deputy head teacher has developed a systematic approach to assessment. There is a carefully drawn up tracking system of the pupils' progress to inform the assessment processes accurately. There has been a well-planned monitoring programme in which all subject managers, senior managers and governors have been involved.
58. Subject managers generally undertake their responsibilities effectively as a result of having good opportunities to make their roles worthwhile. Recently appointed subject managers are still being inducted into carrying out their roles successfully. More experienced subject managers monitor and evaluate the quality of education provided systematically. They observe lessons, undertake book trawls, as well as talking with pupils, before feeding back to teachers both verbally and in writing. Planning is also checked to ensure coverage in a school where subjects, apart from English and mathematics, are completed in blocked periods of time. Collectively the senior managers and subject managers have satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the school's performance across the range of subjects.
59. The special educational needs co-ordinator is providing very good clear educational direction for this area. She plays a very effective part in raising the awareness of all staff. She manages resources very efficiently and calls upon specialist assistance when required. Time is made available for her to carry out routine procedures and to

carry out statutory reviews. The identified governor to monitor the provision for pupils with special educational needs carries out her role very well.

60. The governors are now a well-informed group. They have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have well-structured committees that meet on a regular basis. They pay close attention to their monitoring role as they link themselves to subject areas and pay visits to see the school in operation. They then report back to teachers and governors. They conduct their business efficiently and record their findings to ensure that statutory requirements are met effectively. They pay a significant amount of attention to the day-to-day life of the school and are pleased to have a role to play in its work.
61. The school's senior managers are mainly responsible for the data gathering and how this needs to be interpreted in order to generate further improvements in pupils' performance. The target setting that arises from this work supports the assessment policy effectively. Some managers have more in depth knowledge of the patterns of attainment and achievement than others. This substantial involvement has not been shared fully enough, although the shared commitment to improve upon the school's performance is good. Tracking and target setting have been applied successfully. The involvement of support staff is invaluable. There is a large number of support staff, most of whom make a significant contribution to the work of the school.
62. The school has a good performance management system that is tied in very clearly to its key priorities. These are expressed efficiently in the school development plan and matched to the staff development programme and the school's budget. The school's budget is very carefully and strategically looked after by the chair of the finance committee in consultation with the head teacher and the school secretary. The school secretary plays an effective role in ensuring the day-to-day management systems and routines in the school are run efficiently. Staff are seen as the school's prime resource and this is reflected in the budget that is set and monitored on a monthly basis. The funding for pupils with special needs is used well. New staff are looked after well by the school, ensuring that their induction into the school's procedures is good.
63. There are ample resources. A major recent initiative, which has had a very positive effect on learning, is the use of the interactive whiteboards in the junior classes. These are not yet used in infant classes. Accommodation, which is currently let, will be returned to the school before the Year 6 class is established next year as part of the re-organisation of provision. There are also firm plans for accommodation to be further improved. Although the extent of the accommodation provision is good, there are a number of difficulties with the present lay-out, such as the need constantly to go through the hall to get from one side of the school to the other. There is an intention that this will be better once it is possible to group infant and junior classes together. Accommodation is well maintained.
64. The school has been making determined efforts to move forward. This has not always been helped by increasing difficulties in recruiting staff. However, it continues to make efforts to do so in order to be able to raise standards. The challenges that it faces are well known to staff and governors. As a result of its efforts the school is judged to give satisfactory value for money.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

65. The school has made steady progress since the last inspection. To build upon what has been achieved and to raise standards further, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

1) Raise standards of attainment in English and mathematics across the school, but particularly in Year 2, by:

(a) in English:

- accelerating the implementation of the action plan strategy to improve writing skills;
- increasing the opportunities for pupils to write for a range of purposes across the curriculum;
- providing more, and more varied, opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking skills;
- ensuring that teachers have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils can achieve;

(b) in mathematics:

- raising teachers' expectations and increasing the level of challenge for the potential higher attainers, particularly in Year 2;
- making more effective use of the plenary element of lessons;
- improving the quality of pupils' independent recording in mathematics;
- improving the quality and consistency of marking of pupils' work.

*(paragraphs: 3-5; 73-85; 86-96)*

2) Raise standards in history and geography by the end of Year 2 and physical education by the end of Year 5, by:

- ensuring that sufficient time is given to the teaching of these subjects;
- raising teachers' expectations of what can be achieved;
- close monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning to ensure better standards;

*(paragraphs: 8; 112-117; 118-123; 136-140 )*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	42
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	35

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	14	19	9	0	0	0
Percentage	0	33	46	21	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y5
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	22	139
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	32

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y5
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		38

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.5
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	14	14	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	11	12
	Girls	13	11	13
	Total	25	22	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (80)	79 (70)	89 (87)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	13	14
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	25	26	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (83)	93 (87)	96 (87)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

***Ethnic background of pupils***

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

***Exclusions in the last school year***

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
72	0	0
0	0	0
15	0	0
5	0	0
6	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
11	0	0
19	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 – Y5**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16
Average class size	28

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y5**

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	292

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	13
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	30
Number of pupils per FTE adult	13

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001/02
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	£
Total income	433635
Total expenditure	433344
Expenditure per pupil	3308
Balance brought forward from previous year	48287
Balance carried forward to next year	48578

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	165
Number of questionnaires returned	30

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	73	27	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	73	27	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	57	40	0	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	47	0	3	7
The teaching is good.	73	23	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	60	30	10	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	63	33	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	50	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	43	47	10	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	67	27	7	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	60	37	0	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	63	30	3	0	3

### **Other issues raised by parents**

Very few written comments were included with the questionnaires. These related to the suitability of accommodation for older pupils and the regularity of homework. Other parents were pleased with the progress made by their children.

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

**AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

66. Provision in the integrated Foundation Stage class is a strength of the school, providing children with a very good start to their education. Children begin nursery in the term in which they become four and are offered two terms of part-time provision, followed by one term full-time. In the term in which they become five, children are in their reception year and remain in the Foundation Stage class. This is effective in promoting continuity of experience and progression in learning. The assessments made at the start of the nursery year, and the inspection findings, indicate that the full range of attainment is represented on entry to nursery, but overall is below average for Oxfordshire. Analysis of the Oxfordshire Baseline Assessment scores, pupil profiles and the inspection findings show that children have reached an average level by the start of the reception year, and are making sound progress in their first term in reception. Curriculum planning is excellent, providing appropriate breadth and balance. The planning ensures learning opportunities cover each aspect of all areas of learning, each term. Coupled with the very good assessment procedures, this ensures that the provision is totally inclusive, meeting the needs of children of all abilities and from all backgrounds.

**Personal, social and emotional development**

67. Very good teaching of personal, social and emotional development promotes good progress in children's independence, sociability and attitudes to learning. In a calm and supportive way, teachers set high expectations for children's behaviour and autonomy. The daily routine promotes this very effectively as children make decisions about which play activities and resources to use. The balanced use of time for focused teaching, and for activities chosen by the children, is highly effective in promoting good attitudes to learning, such as concentration and perseverance. Teachers respond positively to children's ideas in discussions, so promoting their self-esteem. For example, as children listened to the story of 'The Three Little Pigs', their ideas for an ending were highly valued. On a daily basis, children collaborate well in pairs and small groups and listen respectfully to each other in whole group sessions. The excellent relationships between staff and children, coupled with very good understanding of the needs of children and the curriculum, result in good progress. Children and adults clearly enjoy working together. Children are likely to meet the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.

**Communication, language and literacy**

68. Teaching in this area of learning is very good throughout the Foundation Stage. By the first term of the reception year the majority of children is already attaining the Early Learning Goals in reading, writing, speaking and listening. The majority of children in their first reception term are able to retell stories. This is very well promoted by role play and small world play, using stimulating play people and artefacts to recreate stories. A minority are able to match sounds to letters, read common words and simple sentences. Nursery and reception children enjoy sharing their reading books with parents, and this is well supported by offering discussion points for each book. For some more able reception children, however, the text in their reading books does not fully promote independent reading skills because it offers insufficient repetition, rhythm or rhyme to enable children to recognise frequently used words or names. A wide range of attractive books engage children well as they share them with adults in groups and individually. The writing area is attractive, offering changing materials,

pictures and stories to stimulate writing for a range of purposes. Children 'write' their own picture books, letters and cards. During the inspection week, reception children did not have access to a sample of commonly used words to aid their writing. Effective and consistent teaching strategies are in place for developing children's ability to hear and pronounce sounds, and to link sounds to letters. Throughout routine activities, children's verbal contributions are promoted and highly valued. Adults listen respectfully when children are speaking and regularly engage children in conversations. This contributes to good progress in speaking and listening and early literacy skills in the nursery. Children have regular access to software to support literacy on three computers and they often use them.

### **Mathematical development**

69. Throughout the nursery and reception years, children are given daily opportunities to count, recognise numbers and develop mathematical vocabulary. In the two lessons observed in the reception year, teaching was very good. Time, resources and staff were deployed very effectively. For example, children participated at a lively pace when taught how to count the faces and corners on cubes and cuboids. This was followed by a challenging practical session, as they constructed and sorted shapes. Children have developed a good range of mathematical vocabulary and use the correct names for solid and plane shapes and their properties. They use comparative language for weight, length and capacity. Most children are able to read numerals to 20 and count up to 20 objects reliably. In both small group taught sessions and well planned play activities, the nursery children regularly experience counting for real purposes and hear and use mathematical vocabulary. Progress in mathematical development is very good, with the vast majority of children reaching the Early Learning Goals at the beginning of the reception year, rather than at the end, which is the national expectation.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

70. Throughout the Foundation Stage, teaching in this area is very good. Children make good progress, enabling the majority to attain the Early Learning Goals. The excellent indoor and outdoor learning environments enable children to observe living things closely, use books to find out about areas of interest and build understanding through their own experiences. For example, children use magnifiers to look closely at stick insects and shells. They look at pictures and books about living things. They observe the effects of the changing seasons in the outdoor environment on plants and insects. When using the computers they develop control of the mouse and are able to move pictures on the screen. They generate attractive pictures of fireworks using the paintbox software. Their skills as early researchers are also very well promoted by high quality interaction between adults and children. Adults regularly encourage children to raise questions, explore and investigate. Children frequently discuss significant events and people in their lives and show a lively interest in the relevant and meaningful planned topics. For example, they were able to recall their own observations of opening doors and windows and of the materials in houses, and applied this to their own constructions of model houses.

### **Creative development**

71. In this area of learning, children are given opportunities to engage in music-making, play, creating pictures, modelling, constructing, designing and making. Teaching in this area is very good throughout the Foundation Stage and children make good progress to reach the expected goals. The opportunities for singing, listening to music and using musical instruments are good. Children concentrate and persevere well when singing

and using musical instruments. There are large spaces available for art and construction activities and children have good access to tools and materials. Storage and presentation is very well organised, allowing children to access what they need independently. A good range of construction equipment enables children to explore forces and to create large models. Children's creativity is given emphasis during child chosen activities, by ensuring an adult is always available in the creative area to support and stimulate activity. When playing with sand, water and small-world toys, children create different environments for people and animals. The wide range of adaptable resources promotes sustained participation.

## **Physical development**

72. Teaching is very good. Children show good whole body control as they climb on, over and under apparatus. They respond with excitement and good awareness of space as they change direction, climb, balance and control wheeled toys. Children enjoy direct access to a very well equipped outdoor environment and they also use the school hall for dance and movement. This offers regular and frequent opportunities for physical activity. Children's physical development, as they handle tools and materials, is well supported by the range of modelling, painting, and constructing experiences offered and the good demonstrations and explanations offered by adults. Appropriate emphasis is placed on safety. Children handle tools and apparatus carefully. Overall, the children's achievement is good throughout the Foundation Stage and they attain the expected standards for their age in the reception year.

## **ENGLISH**

73. In the 2002 national tests, results reflected above average standards in reading and well below average standards in writing. When compared to similar schools, these pupils achieve well in reading as the results attained are well above average. Results remain below average in writing, when compared with pupils from similar schools. There has, however, been very good progress in reading in the last year and some recent improvement in writing. Inspection evidence indicates that standards at the end of Year 2 are currently below average in speaking and listening and are broadly average in reading. They are well below average in writing. Several factors influence the low standards being achieved, including a significant proportion of pupils with special educational needs, a large number of whom are boys. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress and pupils with special educational needs are well supported in class and when withdrawn. Tasks are usually matched carefully to pupils' needs and all participate fully, with good attention given to inclusion. As a result, these pupils make steady gains in their learning. By Year 5, standards are above average in reading and in line with expectations for pupils of their age in speaking and listening and writing. Pupils make good progress in Years 3, 4 and 5 because of good quality teaching which has a significant and positive effect on the quality of pupils' learning. Since the last inspection, library provision has been improved and there is a very good focus on the development of early library skills. English makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development through the use of a wide range of literature from different cultures.
74. Since the previous inspection, the National Literacy Strategy has been successfully implemented and resources improved to support this. Assessment has improved with very good assessment procedures now in place. Information is rigorously analysed to identify weaknesses, which are targeted through effective planning. For example, comprehension, non-fiction reading and boys' interest in reading are some of the aspects highlighted. Individual targets are set for pupils following a thorough analysis

of information. Monitoring of teaching and tracking progress over time have also been developed very effectively in an effort to raise standards.

75. Speaking and listening skills are below average by the age of seven. Many pupils have problems structuring simple sentences and their range of vocabulary is limited. Basic skills are soundly taught and teachers use questioning skilfully to extend pupils' understanding and their use of English but many pupils lack confidence when speaking aloud to an audience. Teachers are providing more opportunities for pupils to address the class, for example, in plenary sessions during the literacy hour. The use of drama and role play in personal and social education, religious education and history is encouraging pupils to use their speaking and listening skills more frequently. Pupils with special educational needs often reply to questions with one-word answers and find it difficult to find the words they need to describe or explain. Higher achieving pupils speak in clear sentences and articulate their ideas effectively.
76. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are average by Year 5, with higher achieving pupils articulating their ideas very clearly. For example, in a Year 5 literacy lesson in which pupils were discussing what the 'Playground Monster' was doing, a pupil said 'It's listening through the cracks in the playground.' They are full of lively ideas such as 'the metaphors make the poem mysterious.' Skilful use is made of questioning by teachers in Years 3, 4 and 5 to develop pupils' ideas in discussions. For example, in a Year 3/4 literacy lesson the teacher asked 'Why is the title of the poem so long?' which led to pupils offering a good range of suggestions. Throughout the school, whole class sessions in personal and social education provide good opportunities for the pupils to share their ideas. Older pupils make good progress in these sessions and, by Year 5, they share their feelings confidently.
77. Reading standards are in line with expectations for pupils of their age by the age of seven. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, with English as an additional language and those from a traveller background, demonstrate an enjoyment of reading and are keen to read aloud to an adult. Higher attainers read with reasonable fluency and developing expression. They talk about aspects they particularly like and use their knowledge of phonics and language structure to build unknown words. Higher and average attaining pupils know the meaning of terms such as 'title', 'author' and 'illustration.' They understand the difference between fiction and non-fiction books and know how to locate books in the school library. Some of the below average pupils are more hesitant. However, effective teaching is enabling them to develop their use of phonics to tackle unfamiliar words with confidence. They also make use of picture skills to help them. Some use is made of contextual and grammatical cues.
78. In Years 3, 4 and 5 pupils discuss their books in detail and are happy to describe what Harry Potter is like. Older pupils are encouraged to read expressively. For example, Year 5 pupils put a lot of feeling into reading their own poems which described an everyday item which had become sinister.
79. Pupils take books home regularly and records indicate which books have been read. Guided reading records are effective in enabling teachers to monitor progress throughout the school. Challenging texts are provided for older pupils and skilful use of questioning by the teachers enables the pupils to practise their advanced reading skills of skimming and scanning. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported throughout the school. There is a clear focus on basic skills and this is helping these pupils to make steady progress towards their targets.

80. Writing skills by the end of Year 2 are well below the standard of most seven-year-olds. Most pupils know that sentences begin with capital letters and end with full stops, but this is not always reflected in their everyday writing. Although there has been a focus on handwriting which has resulted in a few pupils developing a reasonably neat cursive style, many are still insecure in their letter formation and some presentation of work is unsatisfactory with reversed and uneven sized letters. A number of higher attainers and average ability pupils use capital letters and full stops accurately and know how to use speech marks correctly.
81. The standards achieved for pupils by Year 5 are average for boys as well as girls and they are making satisfactory and sometimes good progress. Satisfactory use is made of ICT to support learning and pupils are given valuable opportunities to review and evaluate their work as they interpret instructions and information. Higher achieving pupils become more skilful at using a good range of imaginative language. For example, a Year 5 pupil writes: 'It whipped me – the tree!'/ 'It tripped me – the tree!'.
82. Older pupils use full stops, capital letters and speech marks correctly. More complex grammatical structures are well taught across the junior age range and this high quality teaching is clearly having an effect on standards. Pupils write for a reasonable range of purposes, which include stories, comprehension, descriptive writing, poems and instructions. They write letters, make lists and write a range of scientific reports and history narrative. There is a current focus on raising the standards in writing across the school and the need to write for a range of purposes across the curriculum.
83. The support for pupils with special educational needs in literacy is carefully focused and the help these pupils receive ensures that they make satisfactory progress towards the literacy targets in their individual education plans. Classroom assistants play an important part in helping these pupils to make sound and often good gains in their learning.
84. Teaching and learning are good overall in Years 3, 4 and 5 and satisfactory overall in Years 1 and 2. During the inspection, very good teaching was seen in the junior phase. In the strongest teaching, very good planning takes account of the range of pupils when setting tasks. Support staff are well deployed ensuring full inclusion of all pupils. Basic skills are carefully taught. Good use of questioning provides valuable opportunities for speaking skills to be developed and ensures pupils understand. Learning objectives are shared with pupils so that they are clear about what they have to do and pupils are well managed. In the best lessons pupils are actively involved in their learning and are well motivated to learn. Where teaching is less effective there is a loss of pace and pupils become less focused. Pupils can spend too much time sitting inactively on the carpet and the pedestrian pace to the lesson slows the progress being made. Marking helps pupils to improve their work in most cases. Teachers make very effective use of the interactive whiteboard with older pupils.
85. English is very well managed by the enthusiastic co-ordinator. Together with the headteacher, he is developing a strong focus on raising standards through the analysis and use of very good assessment information, target-setting and the careful tracking of pupils' performance over time. Extensive monitoring of teaching and learning has been undertaken.

## **MATHEMATICS**

86. When the school was last inspected, standards in mathematics were reported as below average at the end of Years 2 and 4. The progress made in mathematics since that time has been satisfactory. Although standards remain below average by the end

of Year 2, they have improved to be broadly average in the juniors, largely as a result of raised expectations and the rigorous teaching which pupils receive. Since 1997, standards at the end of Year 2 have fluctuated, ranging between above average and well below average. Although standards at the end of Year 2 in 2002 were well below average in relation to schools nationally and below average in relation to those achieved in similar schools, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard was the highest since 1999. At present, standards remain below average in Year 2. But there is compelling evidence that standards are rising both in Year 1 and in the juniors, where a significant number of pupils in Year 5 are working at the expected level. The trend is upwards.

87. Children enter the nursery with below average mathematical skills. By the time they enter Year 1, they are now working at the expected level as a result of the extended time they spend in the Foundation Stage and very good teaching they receive. Children enter the main school much better prepared than was the case previously. Year 1 pupils (the first group to benefit from the enhanced Foundation Stage) have had a better early experience than have those in Year 2 and are almost as far advanced. Across the school, tracking data indicates that between the ages of seven and nine, the majority of pupils make satisfactory progress in mathematics. Higher attaining juniors are now challenged more effectively and are achieving increasingly well.
88. In 2002, the proportion of Year 2 pupils achieving the demanding level 3 was well below the national average. This largely reflects the prior experience of the group. However, the current organisation of the Year 1 and 2 classes, where two year groups are taught together and teachers have to plan for an extremely wide range of ability and maturity and, currently, diversity in the quality of their early experience, is unhelpful. The pace of learning does not at present move able Year 2 pupils forward sufficiently quickly and this accounts to a large extent for the historic lack of higher-level attainment.
89. By the end of Year 2, the most able pupils have a growing knowledge of place value up to 100. They recognise odd and even numbers accurately. They confidently add on, totalling numbers to 20, with some working within 100. However, the more able pupils have a very similar experience to the average attainers, so that their achievement is constrained and progress is less good than it might be. At the time of the inspection, able Year 1 pupils were achieving more successfully, with opportunities for adding two two-digit numbers and undertaking subtraction within 20. They have a good grasp of linear multiplication by two, doubling and halving given numbers and recognising the attributes of two- and simple three-dimensional shapes. In one Year 2 lesson observed, the most able pupils, among whom pupils from minority ethnic groups were strongly represented, were reinforcing number bonds within 20. Some, mainly the younger pupils and those with special educational needs, still require reinforcement to support simple addition calculations within 10. A positive feature of the lesson was the focus on developing the independence of the average attainers. However, the quality of independent recording remains weak in Year 2. Pupils with identified special educational needs and those from a traveller background are very well supported by support staff. However, the overall pace at which the other pupils work is often slow and this affects their learning.
90. Standards in mathematics in the juniors have improved, although there is a very wide spread of attainment. A number are still working some way below the expected standard, particularly in Year 3. Again, work is not always sharply planned to meet the needs of the full range of ability in the year group. However, successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy and regular monitoring of its

effectiveness, raised expectations of teachers. Secure management skills and the effective use of learning support staff have all played a part in sustaining performance. The key factor, however, is the strength of teaching in Years 4 and 5, where staff are working hard to compensate for earlier weaknesses in pupils' learning.

91. In Years 3, 4 and 5, pupils undertake more systematic recording of mathematical procedures independently, although the quality of presentation is not consistently good. In Year 4, the higher attainers have good recall of a range of tables and number bonds. They can multiply and divide by a range of numbers within 10, using both the linear and the conventional bracket formats. They round numbers accurately to the nearest 10 or 100. They understand that not all numbers divide exactly. They recognise two- and three-dimensional shapes and their key attributes. In Year 5, higher attaining pupils are confident in linear division to 10, can calculate fractions of given numbers accurately, change improper fractions to mixed number fractions, convert units of length and weight and have a working knowledge of basic geometrical facts. The level of challenge for the higher attaining pupils is improving and they benefit from the rigorous teaching. However, a significant number of pupils are still working at a lower level and there is further ground to be made up.
92. Across the school, pupils have an appropriate breadth of experience of mathematics. There are some opportunities for experience in data-handling in the infants and developing understanding of shape and space, particularly in the juniors. The school is helping pupils to apply their skills when faced with number problems. Some pupils have difficulty in dealing with mathematical problems in context because their literacy skills are restricted and they cannot record work efficiently. This is particularly so in Years 1 and 2.
93. In Years 4 and 5, work is generally matched well to pupils' needs. This is a less strong feature in Year 2. The quality of marking is satisfactory overall, but good in Year 5, where the teacher's comments are both evaluative and thought-provoking for pupils. Elsewhere, there are often few developmental comments, indications as to how a pupil can improve his performance. Pupils' mental skills are developing satisfactorily. In some lessons, the pace of the oral session could be improved, with more incisive questioning to promote better learning. A strength in the best lessons is the good pace and the setting of time limits to focus pupils' attention.
94. Teaching of mathematics was good in the majority of lessons observed and best overall in the juniors. Clear learning objectives are shared with the pupils and usually displayed on the board. The key strength of the teaching in the juniors is the use of the recently introduced whiteboards which are handled so skilfully by the staff. This provides a compelling experience for pupils and engages their interest and attention. Most teachers use the end-of-lesson feedback session well to check pupils' learning, though this is sometimes rather rushed. They use questions effectively to extend pupils' thinking. Opportunities for collaborative working between pupils contributes well to their social development. Teachers create satisfactory opportunities to extend numeracy skills across the curriculum. There is good use of ICT to support learning in mathematics – particularly in the infants where pupils independently work through a programme of reinforcement material.
95. Systems for assessing pupils' attainment in mathematics have been enhanced since the new co-ordinator took over recently and are good. A range of tests and assessments give teachers a clear view of what pupils have achieved and still need to do. The use of this information is good, other than in Year 2.

96. There is a shared commitment to move standards up rapidly. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership. She has had opportunities to monitor teaching. She has a good overview of standards and makes very good use of available data to raise standards. She has made good efforts to involve parents and ensure that they are informed about developments in mathematics teaching. There is regular evaluation of pupils' written work. Resources are very good in both range and quality. The subject benefits from the good availability of well-prepared learning support staff who deal effectively, overall, with pupils who have special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. These pupils, like the others, make steady, but improving, progress overall.

## **SCIENCE**

97. The overall picture of achievement in science is one of steady improvement. The standards in both infant and junior classes are average. The judgement upon standards in infant classes is based upon the sample and displays of work. The school includes science in its system of blocked work, so infant classes had completed their science work for the term in the week before the inspection began. Although this is an unusual approach to teaching in science, the school gives the subject good coverage and meets all of the requirements of the National Curriculum. Teacher assessments of what pupils' capabilities are in science at the end of Year 2 are generous. Inspection evidence confirms that the average standards being obtained at the end of infant classes is being sustained in the junior classes with clear indications of above average standards in Year 5. The reason for the sustained standards is the consistently good teaching in Years 3 and 4 and the very good teaching in Year 5.
98. The pupils in the mixed Year 1 and 2 classes have had different early experiences in the Foundation Stage. Year 1 pupils have benefited from the recent enhancement of provision and are more prepared for the work in science than those in Year 2. Nevertheless, they all have a good range of practical work in their tasks that ensures their interest is being effectively channelled. The assessment of pupils' work sets appropriate targets to be achieved so that the good progress is being carefully monitored. The most recent focus of work in the infant classes has been on learning about healthy foods. Imaginative displays of the work that was produced enhance cross-curricular links when three-dimensional artwork is used as well as graphs to show pupils' preferences for different foods. This shows pupils' understanding of classification as they place healthy food in well-illustrated lunch boxes. When there is written recording in these classes, there is appropriate use made of work sheets. Some higher attaining pupils attempt to record their findings independently before they are ready to present them with enough care. The presentation of their work does not do justice to the good level of content. There is some lack of challenge in the tasks that they are given to do, whilst other pupils benefit from more carefully targeted work.
99. Pupils in the Year 3 and 4 classes are given interesting tasks to complete and gladly share their learning with one another. They often work in a well thought out mixture of whole class, small group and paired learning situations. Pupils' current work is effectively displayed in their classrooms. When learning about the human body, pupils make good use of books and web sites to investigate and research information. Higher attaining pupils are well challenged by teachers' expectations of them using the web site information to report back to their classmates. They are able to do this with confidence. They identify scientific names without difficulty because they are reading so competently. Their good use of accurate scientific language supports their developing literacy skills effectively. In the Year 5 class, these skills are built upon very efficiently. Their current focus on the study of space is producing very carefully thought out booklets that are well presented and have accurate and informative contents.

Learning is made meaningful for them by the practical nature of the demonstration by their teacher of the way the sun stays still whilst the earth moves around. They sit in a circle in a blacked out classroom to observe a torch being held at different heights and a globe moving around a toy figure of a human being. This clarification ensures their complete understanding of the cycle of the day.

100. The good teaching evident across the school is founded on teachers' secure subject knowledge. Teachers plan with thoughtfulness to make activities practically meaningful from this firm base. They use resources well. They make particularly good use of the interactive whiteboards and web sites. They gradually develop the pupils' enquiry skills. The tasks are often presented to the pupils imaginatively. A buzz of excitement is created in much of their work, particularly in the Year 5 class being taught by the deputy head teacher. Teachers regularly make accurate assessments of the pupils' learning and moderate work with care. This helps to ensure that the learning is part of a continuous process and that pupils' successes build up to make their progress good.
101. Pupils are very interested as a result of good teaching. They concentrate well. They share learning willingly. They make sensible contributions to whole class discussions. They work collaboratively in researching a variety of scientific questions and so learn the principles of fair testing. They are aware of the need to be exact in their research if their findings are to be valid. The investigative nature of much of their work is increasingly well recorded. All pupils, regardless of their ability levels, gender or ethnicity, work at a good pace and achieve at an appropriate level in relation to their prior learning.
102. The subject co-ordinator gives good support to both pupils and teachers. She is well informed. She keeps her own knowledge of the subject up-to-date through regular attendance at courses. This knowledge is shared with other teachers in a systematic way at staff meetings. The challenge for the subject is to raise standards in the recording and presentation of work throughout the school.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

103. Only one art and design lesson was taught during the inspection, but further evidence from display work, planning documents, discussions with pupils, staff and a school governor, indicates that standards in art and design by Years 2 and 5 are in line with national expectations. At the previous inspection, standards were below national expectations by the end of Year 2. For this age group this indicates a good improvement. Standards were judged to be in line with national expectations for pupils by Year 4 in the last report, and therefore, standards have been satisfactorily maintained in Years 3, 4 and 5. Pupils' achievement is generally satisfactory and some whole school initiatives, involving artists working in school and visits to museums, have produced some good work. Pupils with special education needs make good progress, due to the high levels of individual support they receive. Pupils with English as additional language and those from a traveller background respond and progress satisfactorily in this practical subject.
104. Each class completes one art and design project each term. This ensures that the basic curriculum is covered, but it does not lead to good progression in skills, knowledge and understanding, particularly in investigating and exploring a variety of materials and processes. In Years 1 and 2 pupils have made self portraits using tissue paper and have illustrated their work on healthy living with pencil and crayon. In Years 3 and 4, pupils have made paintings portraying relationships, but the range of materials used is limited, with the same type of paper and paint for all pupils. The

generous amount of time identified for each art and design unit in the planning is not reflected in the narrow range of work produced.

105. In Year 5 good teaching was observed during a lesson on painting a still life picture of fruit. Good learning in this lesson included the appreciation of the work of other artists, using ICT to view paintings by a range of Western artists. There was good understanding of how paintings could communicate different moods, and awareness of the effects of viewing the arrangement from different perspectives. The pupils demonstrated considerable enthusiasm and were reflective in their discussions about their own work and that of others. However, attainment in creating art by applying their knowledge of elements such as colour, line, tone and shape was at an average level, reflecting limited previous experience in exploring and refining these elements. Given the amount of time identified in the long term planning, and the progressive teaching of knowledge and skills identified in the units of work, it would be reasonable to expect the higher attaining pupils to be producing work of a higher standard by the end of Year 5. The good teaching observed in Year 5 has not yet been sufficiently shared through the school to promote pupils' good achievement. Teaching is satisfactory overall.
106. During discussions with pupils, they recalled with enthusiasm the opportunities to engage in whole school initiatives in previous years. These included making designs for mugs and producing glazed self portrait tiles. They particularly enjoyed making observational drawings of Greek artefacts on a visit to the Ashmolean Museum, and of butterflies and insects on a visit to the Butterfly Farm. Pupils demonstrated very limited previous experience of using ICT to support their learning in art and design. They showed a good understanding of the techniques they had used in printing, using potatoes and polystyrene. During the one art lesson observed, pupils worked purposefully, with high levels of confidence and concentration. Pupils' attitudes to art and design are very good. When given opportunities to work practically, they show a responsible attitude, although the opportunities for pupils to select from a range of materials, or to decide which scale to work at, are constrained because these decisions are made for them.
107. The subject co-ordinator, who has recently taken on the role, needs to ensure that the art and design curriculum offers sufficient breadth of experience and enables good progression. In this subject the process of monitoring teaching and pupils' work has not yet started. Teachers cannot yet see how the progression of skills, knowledge and understanding can be promoted throughout the school. The time allocated for art and design in the whole curriculum plan is not yet used effectively. Pupils need sufficient practical opportunities to improve their skills. An adequate range of materials is now available, but they are not always made easily accessible to pupils. The limited opportunities for pupils to develop their own ideas, select the media to use and use ICT does not build effectively on the good practice now established in the Foundation Stage. The management of the subject is satisfactory. There is clear action planning to ensure adequate resourcing, and a review of the inclusivity of the curriculum is planned.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

108. By the end of Years 2 and 5, attainment is in line with that expected nationally, as was the case at the last inspection. Since then, the curriculum has been developed to ensure units of work are better planned. This has underpinned the good teaching observed - an improvement since the last inspection, when teaching was satisfactory.

109. During the inspection, lesson planning and pupils' work were reviewed; discussions were held with pupils and staff and two lessons were observed. Pupils are taught the correct way to handle tools and how to work safely. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, are well motivated to complete their work to a satisfactory standard. There is a strong emphasis on designing, making, evaluating and improving. All pupils are fully included in all aspects of the curriculum. In Years 1 and 2, pupils have created scenes of Bethlehem and moving characters, using crayon, paper and card. They have used construction kits and designed, made and decorated model houses. Pupils in Year 5 recalled their work in previous years when they designed and made purses from leather, made air propelled vehicles and 'Jack in the Box' toys using a spring mechanism. Progress over time, as pupils move through Years 1 to 5, is satisfactory overall, though improving.
110. The quality of teaching ranges from good to very good, and is good overall. Objectives are shared effectively with pupils at the start of lessons. Good opportunities are offered for the evaluation of work and pupils are encouraged to make changes and adapt their work when making their designs. Where teaching is very good, pupils clearly understand how to design for a purpose. For example, when designing boxes for muffins they considered how to make a package which would keep food fresh, undamaged and be attractive as a gift. Pupils were given access to card, paper, cellophane, kitchen paper, cotton wool and ribbon on each table for this task. They selected materials for a purpose, having drawn and labelled designs before working practically. Effective use of time ensured the design stage did not erode time for working practically. However, pupils' own ideas could have been developed further had the decision about the size and shape of the box been left to the pupils. Some pupils, particularly those in Year 4, were not given the opportunity to design their own nets for the boxes; rather, they cut out a box drawn for them. In Years 1 and 2, pupils developed a good understanding of how a sliding mechanism could work both horizontally and vertically, but the range of materials and tools made available to the pupils limited their opportunities to choose materials, tools and techniques to make their products.
111. The co-ordinator provides satisfactory educational direction for the subject, using the national scheme of work to guide planning in each year group. There are under-developed strategies in place, at this stage, for monitoring teaching and moderating pupils' work. This is planned for the near future. In the lessons observed, teachers demonstrated good subject knowledge relating to the design and evaluation process. Their awareness of the knowledge and skills to be developed through working with a range of tools, equipment, materials and components is less well developed.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

112. Since the last inspection the school has reviewed its work in geography and has produced a suitable scheme of work. The scheme has more recently been supplemented by the national guidance. This ensures that teachers have a clear understanding of what geographical skills need to be included in their pupils' learning. This is an important factor because of the school's decision to block the work in the National Curriculum foundation subjects. As a result of this decision, pupils have an intensive amount of time given to a subject and then do not return to it for another half term. This meant that it was not possible to observe any lessons in geography in the junior classes during this inspection. However, from a sample of work and discussions with Year 5 pupils and the subject co-ordinator it is clear that standards in junior classes are what would normally be expected, whereas in infant classes they are

below those standards. However, the range of geographical experiences being given in the infant classes, prepares the pupils well for their work in the juniors.

113. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are beginning to study their local environment with a more focused approach. They build upon the information that they gather from studying the school grounds to many other features in the local area such as the shops, library and park. They are thoughtfully supported in doing this through the good use of digital photographs. Mapping skills have been initially recognised as useful ones to develop after their walk around the school grounds. Pupils are beginning to make satisfactory progress in their learning.
114. In the junior classes, pupils approach their learning in geography through giving more careful consideration to the similarities and differences between their own locality and places in the Indian sub-continent and the Caribbean. Pupils are very aware of both similarities and differences and are able to talk about them with confidence because they have recorded their knowledge and understanding appropriately. Much of the work focuses upon issues, such as water supply in their own country and contrasting countries. The 'issues' approach to geography is a thread that runs throughout their lessons as they continue local studies. They consider the appropriateness of the location of shops in the area. Through this focus on location, pupils see the purposefulness of the use of local and world maps. Pupils are very aware of the sources of information and they make expert use of web sites and photographs as research tools. Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress in the juniors, because they build on the experiences gained in the infant classes. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make similar progress to the others.
115. Teaching is satisfactory throughout the school. The scrutiny of work confirms that teachers are paying appropriate attention to developing the skills of geography. Basic skills are being covered adequately, but not enough attention is being given to pacing work more carefully, particularly in infant classes. Too long is being spent on explanations which means that pupils sit too long without enough activity. However, teachers are explaining clearly and so pupils are able to tackle their tasks with confidence. A key strength of the learning for junior pupils is the teachers' focus on developing their research skills. The pupils often develop their shared learning in pairs or small groups and this has a positive influence on their social skills.
116. Pupils' satisfactory attitudes in geography lessons are well supported by the good relationships that all adults develop with them. As pupils of all levels of ability are given careful consideration in the level of the tasks presented to them, they are able to work with growing confidence. Geography makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural understanding of the world and its different peoples.
117. The subject manager is enthusiastic and committed to developing pupils' geographical skills effectively. She has ensured that there is an appropriate scheme of work in place that supports teachers appropriately. Suitable use is made of ICT resources but these are limited. Assessment procedures are being used as effectively as in all subjects, in a determined effort to drive standards higher.

## **HISTORY**

118. Standards in history in Year 5 are in line with what would be expected. However, standards are below those expected by the end of Year 2. Progress in pupils' learning, unsatisfactory in the infants, improves in the juniors to be satisfactory. There has been satisfactory progress in history since the previous inspection, in that standards have now improved for the older pupils, a broad curriculum is planned in line with national

guidance, good resources are available and good opportunities are now provided for first-hand research using ICT.

119. The curriculum for Years 1 and 2 is planned to provide a broad range of experience so that pupils develop some awareness of past events and people and a sense of chronology. The limited evidence available indicates that the teaching of history is not a strength. By the end of Year 2, pupils extend their knowledge of famous people from history including Florence Nightingale. They learn about the Fire of London. They make a connection between past and present through looking at the changes in homes over time, how seaside holidays have changed and they compare toys from the past and present. However, the only work available to indicate coverage in the current term is very limited, with a few poorly drawn and incomplete sketches of toys. These are not annotated and there is no other contribution to the development of pupils' literacy skills.
120. Standards are higher in Years 3, 4 and 5. In Years 3 and 4, pupils study invaders and settlers including the Anglo Saxons. Within the two-year programme, they also study Ancient Egypt, Tudors and the current topic, World War 2. They develop a secure sense of chronological sequencing and compile wall displays to show the periods in history that they have studied. Throughout the juniors, there is a good emphasis on chronology in the teaching of history and this helps pupils to place their own lives in relation to events and people in the past. In one Year 4 lesson, pupils were being shown the rations permitted to families during the war and this was neatly cross-referenced to what families might consume today and in particular, to the availability of sweets. This helped pupils to develop a more realistic feeling and was a stimulus to historical understanding. Overall, good use is made of research material to stimulate pupils' interest. Some pupils have talked to their grandparents about their wartime experiences, while others have made good use of books or of material accessible through the Internet to explore the experiences of evacuee children. There is some opportunity for independent writing and this is supportive of the development of pupils' literacy skills. The quality of independent writing is better in Year 4 than in Year 3.
121. In Year 5, pupils have recently studied the Victorians, looking at the Royal Family, schools, factory life and mining. There is good use of a timeline to locate events and, again, there have been good opportunities for research and to examine artefacts of the period. The focus on aspects of the period which are close to their own experience, such as schools and the working lives of children, increases the intrinsic interest of the topic. In discussion, a number of pupils were very motivated by the work they had covered. They knew about the Factories Act, child labour and Queen Victoria's family and descendants. They could recall other topics they had covered, could sequence Ancient Greek and Roman periods correctly and were enthusiastic about past visits to the Ashmolean Museum and the Pitt Rivers Museum. Overall, history contributes well to pupils' cultural development.
122. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make steady progress, particularly where they have support in lessons. In the one lesson seen, the teacher used good questioning techniques to encourage pupils to think about the work. Overall, the work seen in Years 3, 4 and 5 indicates that the teaching is often good. Teachers show enthusiasm for history and pupils respond positively to this. Planning is sound and makes use of the national guidance. There are good resources to support the teaching of the various topics. ICT is used well to support research and the digital camera is used to record visits.

123. The history co-ordinator has recently taken over the subject and manages it satisfactorily. Monitoring of history includes work sampling, but has not yet included lesson observation or class visits to support colleagues.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

124. At the last inspection, standards in information and communication technology were judged to be average overall, with pupils making satisfactory progress across the school. This situation has been sustained, in the context of a good improvement in provision and increasing expectations nationally. Attainment is in line with what would be expected for the majority of pupils across the school. This is the result of the implementation of a programme for the development of pupils' ICT skills, enhanced by individual teaching and regular opportunities for pupils to practise their skills. Rising standards are being achieved in the context of a relatively small number of pupils having access to computers at home. The school has made satisfactory progress in improving the cross-curricular use of ICT particularly in mathematics, although this is a stronger feature in some year groups than in others. There is no suite at present, because of space limitations. All classrooms have retained stand-alone computers. However, these machines are not always fully used during lessons.
125. By the end of Year 2, pupils access programmes with confidence and use the mouse competently. They are beginning to develop typing skills - identifying letters and capitalising; they can use the space bar and delete and insert material. They produce versions of 'Red Riding Hood'. They use a word bank to assemble a piece of text and scan in their photograph. They use a paint program to draw a picture, using the paintbrush, pencil and rubber tools. They use CD-ROMs to research sharks. Year 1 and 2 pupils receive very good individual support from a support assistant with well-developed ICT skills.
126. By the end of Year 5, pupils are able to load and save material, insert clipart and organise information in different forms. They undertake regular word-processing from Year 3, changing font size and type face (although word-processing is only spasmodically evident in display or in pupils' work samples). They produce brief autobiographies with scanned photographs. They access encyclopaedias to search for information. They use paint programs and print off their work – sometimes produced in the style of famous artists. In Year 4, they use a branching database, explore simulations and model effects using both a screen and a floor turtle. They produce repeating patterns as part of their work on graphic modelling. Some pupils are confident in their use of the Internet and demonstrate good skills in using search engines. All, however, receive good training in how to search for information and to refine such searches so that the information available is manageable. In one lesson observed, the introduction to a three-week unit of work in Year 5, pupils were being shown how to seek out information about the relationship between earth and sun, using a search engine. Making use of the interactive whiteboard, this was an effective presentation which progressed pupils' understanding well and held their interest successfully. In several other lessons observed, such as art and science, pupils were successfully using the Internet or CD-ROMs as sources of information. Year 4 pupils were learning how to access and use a music composition program. In most year groups, pupils' work in mathematics is enhanced through data-handling, database or spreadsheet work. However, the main way in which ICT supports mathematics is through the use of the dedicated computers and programs relating to the work of the Hamilton Mathematics Project. Pupils make regular use of a digital camera to record school events.

127. Pupils' attitudes to ICT lessons are good. They listen attentively to instructions and act upon them enthusiastically. Pupils throughout the school are well behaved whilst on task and show interest in their work, sustaining concentration well. Those with special educational needs, with English as an additional language and those from a traveller background benefit from the good support of teachers and support staff. Pupils treat equipment with respect.
128. Teaching was at least good in both lessons seen. All teachers have undergone recent training and their subject knowledge is good. Lessons are well planned, the learning objectives being shared with pupils and achieved by the majority of them. Procedures are well explained. A key strength in the juniors is the progress made by staff in the use of the interactive whiteboards. These are being used well and significantly enhance the quality of teaching and learning.
129. The co-ordinator gives a strong lead. He has brought good experience to the post and provides good support for the work of his colleagues. The latest national guidance has been adopted, with good assessment procedures in place. Resources are good.

## **MUSIC**

130. Attainment in music has been maintained for the seven-year-olds since the last inspection and is in line with what would be expected for pupils of this age. In Years 3 and 4, standards have improved from being satisfactory to good and, by Year 5, pupils' attainment is above expectations. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2 and good progress in Years 3, 4 and 5. Curriculum planning is good and the quality of teaching is very good for the older pupils. This is due to the effective use of a specialist teacher who works on a weekly basis with the oldest pupils.
131. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' singing is tuneful and expressive. They have a good sense of pitch and are given valuable opportunities to practise their performance by the teachers. They sing 'Little Donkey' tunefully and sensitively and have a satisfactory understanding of rhythm and beat. They perform the song well, with bells ringing and a plodding donkey beat. Pupils control the instruments very well and make effective use of percussion instruments to create the effect of the stars twinkling. Pupils are encouraged to listen carefully to music and valuable opportunities are provided for them to evaluate and refine their performances.
132. Pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 make very good progress as they sing 'Christmas has started', 'Sing Song' and 'Silent Night.' They are given valuable opportunities to practise and refine their performances and good quality instrumental accompaniments are added. There is pure enjoyment from Year 5 pupils as they give an enthusiastic performance of 'Rock Around the Shop.' Pupils listen attentively to music and make appropriate comments about the mood of the music, the rhythm and the tempo. Very good, clear explanations given by the teacher help pupils to gain a secure understanding of symbols, notes and rests. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, enjoy making music in preparation for their Christmas performance and they make very good progress.
133. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. Lessons are thoughtfully prepared with well-chosen songs. There are valuable opportunities for singing, composition work, percussion work and listening and appraising. The specialist teacher has very good subject knowledge and understanding and very high expectations of the pupils' performance. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are

developed well through song and rhythmical composition. They co-operate well in group work, listen carefully and have very good attitudes and this helps them to make good progress over time.

134. The main improvement since the previous inspection has been a strengthening and enriching of the curriculum resulting in good planning. Currently the school has identified the need to develop the use of ICT in composition work – and an example of this was observed in a Year 3 and 4 ICT lesson. Good use is made of assessment to inform curricular planning and the subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
135. The co-ordinator provides very good clear educational direction for the subject and valuable opportunities are provided for pupils to share their skills in performances in the school and out in the community. Annual Partnership concerts have included 'The Owl and the pussycat' and 'Christopher Columbus.' There have been valuable opportunities for pupils to learn African drumming and ten pupils worked intensively with a local musician to learn how to play a Naira. Older pupils have the opportunity to learn descant and treble recorders, guitar, drums and the electric keyboard. Good links are made with other areas of the curriculum, such as science and dance, and music club is a very popular out-of-hours club.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

136. There has been unsatisfactory improvement in PE since the last inspection, when standards were judged to be in line with expectations for pupils at the age of seven and nine. During the present inspection, gymnastics lessons were observed in each year group. Pupils acquire skills in gymnastics to a standard expected for pupils by the end of Year 2, but are not meeting expected standards by the end of Year 5. In Years 1 and 2, pupils demonstrate satisfactory control of movement when linking travelling and balancing movements in sequences. They are beginning to evaluate their work and identify ways to improve it, and they safely move and use low level gymnastics apparatus. They are making satisfactory progress. In Years 3 to 5, pupils continue to combine movements in balancing and travelling sequences, but the level of control and the quality of their movements show unsatisfactory progress. The physical education programme is fully inclusive and children with special educational needs are actively involved and adequately supported.
137. The quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 ranges from satisfactory to good and is satisfactory overall. Where teaching is satisfactory, emphasis is placed on the reinforcement of known skills rather than the improvement of them. The pupils' tasks are carefully planned, but there is little challenge to refine the quality of movements. Where teaching is good, the pupils observe one another with good attention to detail. The teacher draws out the positive features in the gymnastics, showing very good knowledge of which skills are being performed well. This supports good learning because the pupils understand, as a consequence, what they need to do to improve. The teaching in Years 3 to 5 ranges from satisfactory to good in gymnastics, and is good overall. There is an appropriate balance of rehearsal of familiar movements and development of new skills. For example, pupils in Year 5 continue to create sequences of balancing and travelling movements, and also develop paired balances, using pushing and pulling forces. In Years 3 and 4, the good teaching encourages pupils to refine their transition movements, as they move from one balance to another. In the junior classes, however, lack of time is a contributory factor leading to unsatisfactory progress in attaining gymnastics skills.

138. Pupils are very enthusiastic to participate and, when given the opportunity, are keen to discuss how to improve their performance. Behaviour and attention to health and safety issues are very good. An extensive extra-curricular programme enhances pupils' learning in physical education and contributes to their enjoyment of the subject.
139. No other activities in the PE curriculum, such as dance, games or swimming, were observed during the inspection. Discussions with pupils indicate they have previously had limited opportunities to experience dance. Similarly their experience of using the playing field for physical education is narrow. Across the school, pupils have one and a half hours of PE per week, which is less than the two hours typical in most primary schools, and less than the recommended minimum. Some lessons offer insufficient challenge, partly because the time for physical activity is reduced by time taken to change, waiting in line while equipment is rearranged, or for their turn to perform. The current timetable does not maximise use of the hall during morning sessions.
140. The present co-ordinator has good knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject, and has supported teachers well through training and documentation. There has been an improvement in the quantity and quality of equipment since the last inspection, due to the foresight of the co-ordinator. However, the time allocation for PE and the constrained access to the hall, playground and playing field, are limiting attainment in the subject.