

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. MARY'S CE SCHOOL

Aylesbury

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 110416

Acting Headteacher: Mrs Vera Oldham

Reporting inspector: Michael Best
10413

Dates of inspection: 3rd – 6th December 2001

Inspection number: 66984

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Keen Close Fairford Leys Aylesbury Buckinghamshire
Postcode:	HP19 7WF
Telephone number:	01296 482094
Fax number:	01296 339609
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Reverend Canon Tim Higgins
Date of previous inspection:	For the purposes of the current inspection, St Mary's CE School is regarded by Ofsted as a new school

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Dr Michael Best 10413	Registered inspector	Mathematics Design and technology	Characteristics of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements How well pupils are taught How well the school is led and managed What the school should do to improve further
Mr John Bayliss 19664	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values & personal development How well the school cares for its pupils How well the school works in partnership with parents
Mrs Trudy Cotton 3751	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Special educational needs Equality of opportunity Art History Religious education	
Dr Mohindar Galowalia 20832	Team inspector	English as an additional language Science Information and communication technology Geography	
Mrs Tess Galvin 21020	Team inspector	English Music Physical education	The curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils.

The inspection contractor was:

TWA *Inspections* Ltd
5 Lakeside
Werrington
Peterborough
PE4 6QZ

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Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	15
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	18
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	21
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	23
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	25
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	28
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	29
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	33

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St. Mary's CE School is situated on the Fairford Leys development on the outskirts of Aylesbury. The only Church of England primary school in the town, it draws pupils from across the town. At present, about a third of pupils come from homes near the school. The majority of pupils come from privately owned homes and employment in the area is good. There are currently 267 pupils on roll, 132 girls and 135 boys, aged between 4 and 11 years of age. Children in the reception class attend part-time in the autumn term and on a full-time basis in the spring and summer terms. There are currently 44 children in the reception year. The full-time equivalent number of pupils is 246. The school is about the same size as most other primary schools in England.

The school moved to the new building on its present site just under two years ago. It has been through a period of rapid expansion, with most of the staff appointed in the last two years or so. After a period of illness, the headteacher died in July 2001. The governing body is in the process of appointing a new, substantive headteacher for the school. Attainment on entry to the school is above that found nationally and is continuing to rise with each entry. About one per cent of pupils have free school meals, which is below the national average. Forty-seven pupils (17 per cent) are on the school's register of special educational need, which is just below the national average. Of these, 24 pupils (9 per cent) are on the register at Stage 3 or above of the Code of Practice¹; they have differing learning and behavioural needs. Four pupils have Statements of Special Educational Need. Most pupils speak English as their first language. Twelve pupils (5 per cent) do not have English as their first language; three pupils (2 per cent) are at the early stages of learning English.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a developing school. The quality of education provided is sound. Standards in literacy and numeracy in Year 2 are above average and average in Year 6. Standards in other subjects are, overall, similar to those expected nationally. The exception is information and communication technology where standards are below the national average. Staff are committed to improvement and pupils are keen and willing learners. The school recognises that, at present, the curriculum is not always as lively, rich and challenging as it could be and is addressing this. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. With the appointment of a new headteacher, the governors are now looking to the future development and expansion of the school. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards at the end of Year 2 are above the national average in English and mathematics.
- The school effectively promotes the very good attitudes, behaviour and personal development of its pupils.
- The school has very good links with parents.
- The support for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The range of extra-curricular activities available to pupils is good.

What could be improved

- Planning for the long-term development of the school.
- Standards in information and communication technology².
- Physical development through outdoor experiences in the Foundation Stage.
- The use of assessment information to raise standards further³.

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

¹ The Code of Practice gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. Pupils at Stage 5 have a statement which details their needs and the support provided for them.

² Information and communication technology is already identified as a priority for development in the current School Development Plan.

³ Assessment is already identified as a priority for development in the current School Development Plan.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests. Two pupils took the tests in 2000 and, in accordance with Ofsted guidance, their results are not published.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	All schools			Similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	N/a	*	C	D
Mathematics	N/a	*	D	E
Science	N/a	*	A	B

Key	
Well above average	A
Above average	B
Average	C
Below average	D
Well below average	E

The above table shows that, compared with all primary schools in England, standards are well above average in science, average in English and below average in mathematics. In comparison with schools in similar contexts, standards are above average in science, below average in English and well below average in mathematics. The results of the 2001 National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 2 show that, compared with all schools in England, standards are above average in reading and well above average in writing and mathematics. Compared with schools in similar contexts, standards are above average in writing and average in reading and mathematics. Standards are rising and reflect the changes in pupils' capabilities as the school expands and admits children from a wider area.

Children's skills when they start school are above average. By the end of the Foundation Stage, most children are on target to achieve above the Early Learning Goals⁴ in their personal, social and emotional development, language, literary and communication, mathematical development, creative development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. They are on target to reach the Early Learning Goals in their physical development. Inspection findings indicate that attainment in English and mathematics is above the national averages in Year 2 and similar to the national averages in Year 6. Standards are similar to the national averages in science in Years 2 and 6. Standards are above those expected nationally in history in Year 2, and art and design in Year 6. They are similar to those expected nationally in art and design in Year 2, and history in Year 6. In design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education standards are similar to those expected in Years 2 and 6. Standards in information and communication technology are below average in Years 2 and 6. Attainment in religious education in Years 2 and 6 is similar to that outlined in the locally agreed syllabus.

Progress is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and Years 3 to 6. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress in English and mathematics and satisfactory progress in other subjects. More able pupils are not consistently challenged because teachers are not secure in their judgements of what pupils know and can do. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Statemented pupils make very good progress. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress. The school has identified talented pupils in sport, who make satisfactory progress.

⁴ The Foundation Stage begins at the age of three and finishes at the end of the reception class year. Early learning goals are the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. There are many goals for each area of learning.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils show interest in school activities and try their best at all times.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. It is very good in classes and good at lunchtimes and break times. Pupils respond well to the high standards expected of them.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils have a good understanding of the effects of their actions on others and a good respect for each other. Relationships between pupils of all ages and backgrounds are very good.
Attendance	Very good. It is above the national average.

There have been no exclusions during the last reporting period.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The overall quality of teaching seen in the school during the inspection is satisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection. The Foundation Stage staff team knows their children well and promotes a very caring and supportive atmosphere. However, teachers do not closely follow the 'Stepping Stones for Learning'⁵ leading to the Early Learning Goals and children do not have sufficient opportunities to make choices. In English and mathematics, teaching is good in Years 1 and 2, and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Teaching and learning of the basic skills in literacy and numeracy skills are good in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2. It is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. In history in Years 1 and 2, and in art in Years 3 to 6, it is good. In science geography, information and communication technology, music, physical education and religious education, teaching is satisfactory.

An emphasis on teaching writing in Years 1 and 2 has raised standards considerably. Teachers' expectations of what pupils know and can do are not always high enough, particularly for the more able pupils in Years 3 to 6. Assessment procedures are only recently in place. As yet, the school does not have collections of work to help teachers check on the standards of work pupils produce. Teachers' management of pupils is good across the school and pupils are interested in learning. They concentrate well and show a good level of independence. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and enables pupils to make good progress. Support staff make a valuable contribution to the quality of teaching and learning. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are effectively supported in their learning. Teachers make good use of homework and pupils are happy with the amount of work they do at home.

⁵ The Stepping Stones for Learning are the steps in learning leading to the Early Learning Goals.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum for children at the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall, but the provision for physical development and outdoor activities is unsatisfactory. Teachers provide a satisfactory curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6 and enhance it by visits out and by clubs in school.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision is made for pupils, which enables pupils to make good progress with their learning. Statemented pupils are very well supported.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. Pupils being supported have targets for development and receive support to achieve them.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory. The provision for pupils' moral and social development is good. The provision for their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. The school ensures that pupils are happy and well settled. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are new and have yet to be fully implemented.

Parents work closely with the school. The partnership is very good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Taking into account the particular circumstances of the school, the overall quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. Many policies and procedures are new and are in the process of implementation and development. Progress in planning for the long-term development of the school has not been as fast as would otherwise have been expected.

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher are working hard to maintain the day-to-day running of the school. Team leaders and curriculum co-ordinators are becoming established in their new roles.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors have the interests of the school at heart. Statutory responsibilities are fulfilled. The chair of governors gives good pastoral support to the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school collects a considerable amount of useful information about its pupils and what it does. The analysis, use and application of this information to help the school improve are at an early stage of development.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes satisfactory use of the resources available to it and the principles of 'best value' are appropriately applied.

Staffing and resources are sufficient. There are some shortcomings in the accommodation. Some minor health and safety issues have been discussed with the school.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Twenty-eight parents attended a meeting with inspectors. One hundred and twenty-three (46 per cent) parents returned questionnaires. Others met with inspectors during the inspection.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children like school.• Behaviour is good.• The quality of support given to pupils with special physical or educational needs is good.• The school helps their children to become mature and responsible members of society.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More information about the progress made by their children.• Closer links with parents.• The range of extra-curricular activities.

The inspection team agrees with the positive views expressed by parents. There are ample opportunities for parents to discuss their child's progress. They can make an appointment at any time if they are concerned about any aspect of their child's school life. Contrary to the view of some parents, the school's provision for extra-curricular activities is judged to be good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The school is in the process of expansion. It now admits children from a far wider area than hitherto. Simple tests given to children currently in the reception class when they started school show that their skills are above those expected for their ages. The attainment of pupils entering the school is rising.
2. By the end of the Foundation Stage⁶, the majority of children are likely to exceed the Early Learning Goals⁷ in the development of their language, literary and communication skills, mathematical development, personal, social and emotional development, creative development and their knowledge and understanding of the world. In their physical development, most are on target to reach the Early Learning Goals, but their experience of outdoor play is limited by what the school is currently able to provide for them. Children make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage.
3. Inspection evidence shows that at the end of Year 2, standards in speaking and listening are above those expected nationally. Standards in reading are above the national average and well above the national average in writing. Taken together, this represents good progress in Years 1 and 2. Standards in English at the end of Year 6 are similar to the national average. Progress in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory.
4. The National Literacy Strategy has provided a good framework for teachers to develop literacy in the school. In Year 2, above average standards in writing are the result of carefully planned and well-taught lessons. Standards in literacy in Year 6 are similar to those found nationally. The basic skills are effectively taught. As their skills develop, pupils read with growing fluency and expression. In their writing, they pay increasing attention to spelling, grammar and punctuation so that standards are improving. Some of the good practice evident in Years 1 and 2 has yet to find its way through to Years 3 to 6.
5. In mathematics, standards are above the national average in Year 2. In Year 6 standards are similar to the national average. Standards in numeracy are good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 enthusiastically apply number skills and other mathematical knowledge to solving problems. This is helping them to make good progress and they gather the confidence to look at problems in different ways. Pupils' speed and accuracy with pencil and paper calculations develop as they move through the school, but the sense of discovery and enthusiasm evident in Years 1 and 2 is not maintained throughout Years 3 to 6. In these classes, pupils' skills in mental mathematics are improving, but the overall progress made in mathematics is only satisfactory.
6. The application of numeracy and literacy skills across the curriculum is satisfactory, but their development is not planned for systematically. Pupils successfully practise writing skills in word-processing work in information and communication technology but there are, for example, missed opportunities for pupils to undertake challenging writing in history and religious education. Pupils' good speaking and listening skills enable them to

⁶ The Foundation Stage begins at the age of three and finishes at the end of the reception class year.

⁷ Early learning goals are the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. ~~This begins~~**This begins** when children reach the age of three and finishes at the end of the reception class year. It is a distinct stage in preparing children for later schooling and is based on six areas of learning. These refer to communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development, but also includes 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 pupils should be able to write their own name and other things such as labels and begin to write simple sentences.

participate well in discussions and debates across the curriculum. Research skills, using library books and the Internet are satisfactorily applied in history. Pupils successfully use numeracy skills in science, geography and design and technology, but they do not have sufficient opportunities to use information and communication technology to present information in graphs or charts.

7. In English and mathematics, pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress because of the good match of activities to pupils' needs, particularly in the development of skills in literacy and numeracy. In Years 3 to 6, however, progress in English and mathematics is not as good as it is in Years 1 and 2, and is only satisfactory. One reason for this is that the more able pupils in Years 3 to 6 do not make as much progress as they could. Although their progress is generally satisfactory, they are not consistently challenged by the work set for them. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is good in these subjects throughout the school.
8. In science, standards are similar to those expected nationally in Year 2. In Year 6, standards are similar to the national average. Pupils develop knowledge and understanding satisfactorily across the science curriculum. They have a growing understanding of what fair testing is and know how to apply it in their investigations. Progress is satisfactory, but more able pupils are not consistently challenged to take their learning to the higher levels.
9. In the 2001 National Curriculum tests taken by pupils at the end of Year 2⁸, the results in reading were above average compared with those found in all other primary schools⁹, and well above average in writing and mathematics. When compared with similar schools¹⁰, the test results were well above average in writing and average in reading and mathematics. Inspection evidence supports these results.
10. In comparison with the 2000 test results for all primary schools, these results are similar in reading. In writing, they have risen from below average. In mathematics, standards have risen from average to well above average. Standards in these subjects are rising.
11. The results of teachers' assessments in 2001 show that, at the end of Year 2, standards in science were below the nationally expected level of attainment. A contributory factor to this is that because of the introduction of a new scheme of work, materials and their properties had not been taught.
12. In comparison with all schools, the results of the 2001 National Curriculum tests taken by pupils at the end of Year 6¹¹ were average in English, below average in mathematics and well above average in science. Compared with similar schools, these results were below average in English, well below average in mathematics and above average in science.
13. Scrutiny of pupils' work from last year supports these results in English and mathematics. In science, pupils' written work over the course of the year does not reflect the high standards achieved in the science test. However, the school attributes this difference to the impact of the booster classes it provided for Year 6 pupils before the tests. The school was aware of gaps in many pupils' knowledge and understanding and took steps to address these gaps through a well-staffed revision programme, with some success. The school intends to continue with the booster classes in the future.

⁸ The National Curriculum has been written on the basis that pupils at the age of ~~seven~~ 7 years (at the end of Key Stage 1) are expected to reach Level 2. If a pupil is attaining Level 3 then he or she is reaching standards above that expected for a child of his or her age.

⁹ National Curriculum test and assessment results are compared with the national averages and schools in similar contexts at the ages of ~~seven~~ 7 and 11 years. The comparison with the national averages is with all schools in England.

¹⁰ The comparison with similar schools is based on the proportion of pupils having free school meals. It does not take into account pupils' ethnic background or their attainment on entry to school. The similar school context is therefore one of a number of ways of comparing pupils' standards.

¹¹ At Key Stage 2, at the age of 11 years, the nationally expected level for pupils to reach by the end of Year 6 is Level 4. If a pupil is attaining Level 5 then he or she is reaching standards above that expected for a child of his or her age.

14. It is too early to comment on trends over time at the end of Year 6. Two pupils took the National Curriculum Key Stage 2 tests in 2000 and, in accordance with Ofsted policy, these results are not reported. In 2001, 17 Year 6 pupils took these tests. Again, in accordance with Ofsted policy, only the overall results are reported so as not to identify individual pupils.
15. Attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) is below that expected nationally in Years 2 and 6. Standards in word processing and the use of electronic mail (e-mail) are satisfactory and pupils make steady progress in these areas. There are, however, significant gaps in pupils' skills and knowledge in the other areas of information and communication technology. The school's computer facilities have only recently become available and teachers are now waiting for training in the subject. The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is, consequently, under developed.
16. Standards in Year 2 in art and design, design and technology, geography, music and physical education are similar to those expected nationally. In Year 6 standards in design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education are also similar to those expected nationally. In these subjects, pupils make satisfactory progress. Standards in history in Year 2 and in art and design in Year 6 are above those expected and pupils achieve well. The school reports that almost all pupils achieve the national expectation in swimming by the end of Year 6. Attainment in religious education in Years 2 and 6 is similar to that expected in the locally agreed syllabus for pupils of these ages and progress is satisfactory.
17. The proportion of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is just below that found in most primary schools. The majority of pupils on the register have specific learning difficulties. In the classroom, pupils with special educational needs make good progress, particularly in English and mathematics, because teachers plan different levels of work with the needs of pupils in mind. In other subjects, planning is in place but it is not always specific enough to meet the pupils' differing needs. Nevertheless, progress is often good, because pupils are motivated and keen to learn.
18. Four pupils have statements of their special educational needs. They make very good progress as a result of the very good support they receive from adults as they work towards the clear targets set for their learning. Their learning is regularly assessed and they are motivated by their success.
19. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress. They receive support from staff with the work they are set and they readily participate in all activities.
20. Inspection findings indicate that boys and girls achieve similar standards across the curriculum. Analyses of the results of the statutory tests at the end of Year 2 confirm this. Compared with the national picture for 2001, pupils in Year 2 are ahead of those in other schools by between one and two terms. There is insufficient information to make comparisons over time in Year 6.
21. These figures fluctuate from year to year and from class to class, particularly as the numbers of boys and girls varies. It must also be borne in mind that the number of pupils in each year group varies from year to year. In addition, the number of pupils with special educational need can have a significant impact upon such analyses. The school analyses pupils' test results to check that the curriculum is covered. It does not, however, make more detailed analyses to identify where teaching and learning can be

strengthened, or to set specific targets for groups of pupils to achieve by the end of Years 2 and 6.

22. The school has recognised that there are mismatches between teacher assessments of what pupils know and can do and the results of National Curriculum tests. In response to this, it has put in place, and is implementing, new assessment procedures. The school identifies talented pupils in sport, but has yet to identify academically gifted pupils.
23. In conjunction with the local education authority, the school sets targets for pupils to achieve by the age of 11 in the National Curriculum tests in English and mathematics. The targets for 2001 were achieved in English, but not in mathematics. The targets set for 2002 are significantly higher and challenging for the school, but inspection evidence suggests that these targets are suitable for pupils' capabilities.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

24. Pupils' attitudes to learning, their behaviour, personal development and relationships are all very good. These high standards make a significant contribution to the quality of learning experienced by the pupils.
25. Pupils are polite, friendly and well behaved. They are confident and relate easily to adults. They are keen to come to school and show a good level of interest in whatever they are doing. Pupils concentrate and apply themselves well in almost all lessons even when, occasionally, the lesson is less stimulating than it might be. These features help significantly to promote pupils' learning. Inspectors confirm the view of almost all parents that the school is helping its pupils to become mature and responsible individuals.
26. Children in the Foundation Stage, particularly those attending in the morning, have settled happily into school routines at this early stage in their school life. They are building very good relationships with adults and with each other. They behave very well and co-operate with each other, amicably sharing toys and resources and taking turns. They enjoy what they do and are keen and eager to learn. They pay attention and are beginning to follow instructions well. When given the opportunity to make choices, they do so sensibly.
27. Throughout the school, pupils display very good attitudes to learning. In lessons, pupils enjoy taking part in question and answer sessions. They are happy to take turns to speak without inappropriate shouting out. They show an interest in what they are doing and readily involve themselves in whatever activity teachers present to them. They enjoy conversations with each other and adults. They listen attentively, for example, when reading to inspectors and when pupils discussed with inspectors their views of the school and the part they play in its activities. One pupil spoke of 'challenge in lessons, which is good for us'. Another said about the school that 'nothing can be perfect, but I like it the way it is'. These comments reflect mature, positive attitudes to learning and to the school's regard for the pupils in its care.
28. The standard of pupils' behaviour in classrooms, when they move about the school, and when they eat their lunch, is very good. In the playground, behaviour is good. There is some boisterous behaviour, but it is not excessive and pupils play well together. Break and lunchtimes are pleasant social occasions.
29. Pupils clearly understand the school's rules and accept them as fair. No unsatisfactory behaviour, other than of a very minor nature, was observed during the inspection. There is no recent history of poor behaviour and it has not been necessary to exclude any pupil, for either a fixed term or permanently, in recent times. There is a tradition of good

behaviour within the school. Pupils, even those relatively new to the school, respond well to the high standards of behaviour expected.

30. Everyone is totally integrated into the school community. Relationships are harmonious throughout the school. Pupils with disabilities, either physical or educational, and those for whom English is not their family language are fully included in all activities. Pupils show tolerance and respect for other people's feelings. Boys and girls get on very well with each other. Nothing was seen during the inspection to suggest that when the occasional incident of inappropriate behaviour occurs it is oppressive. There is no evidence of vindictive bullying or sexism within the school.
31. The pupils respond very well to the school's promotion of their personal development. They have a variety of opportunities to assume responsibility, which steadily increase through their school life. Pupils mature well as individuals. They become socially aware, developing soundly based views and opinions. They express these sensibly, as when Year 6 pupils talk about what they like most, and least, about what the school provides for them. They are conscientious in fulfilling their classroom and school responsibilities.
32. Pupils readily involve themselves in charitable activities showing recognition of the need to help those less fortunate than themselves. They respect the values and beliefs of others. This is apparent in the way the majority of pupils relate to each other both in lessons and elsewhere.
33. Attendance levels at the school are very good. Pupils enjoy school and attend whenever they can. There is no truancy. Despite a national trend downwards in attendance levels last year, the school's performance remained high. However, the increasing number of parents organising holidays during term time is a concern to the school, because absence at any time reduces the quality of learning for the pupils involved. Punctuality in the morning is good. When instances of lateness occur, they are of a minor nature and are not disruptive to lessons.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

34. Taking all the available evidence into account, the overall quality of teaching and learning in the school is satisfactory. The evidence from lessons observed during the inspection was good in over half the lessons observed. The final judgements on teaching and learning draw upon a wider range of evidence gathered during the inspection as well as inspectors' classroom observations.
35. Teaching is good or better in 53 per cent of the lessons seen and very good or better in 19 per cent of lessons. One excellent lesson (representing just over one per cent) was seen during the inspection. No unsatisfactory, poor or very poor teaching was seen during the inspection.
36. The quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Good teaching was observed in 44 per cent of lessons in this age group, particularly in language, literary and communication activities. The Foundation Stage staff team knows their children well and promotes a very caring and supportive atmosphere into which children quickly settle. Staff identify any children with special educational needs promptly and support them well.
37. The Foundation Stage staff team keeps the Early Learning Goals in mind but, as yet, the 'Stepping Stones for Learning' are not used clearly enough to guide children's learning. Learning does not always build upon what children can already do. There is some tendency for staff to over-direct children rather than help them to develop and make choices.

38. In Years 1 and 2, the overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Good teaching was observed in just over half of the lessons in these classes. There is good emphasis on the development of pupils' skills, especially in literacy and numeracy. In an excellent lesson observed, the quality of the match of work to pupils' needs enabled them to make good progress.
39. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory. It was good in exactly half of the lessons seen. Teachers make good provision to support pupils with special educational needs in developing their literacy and numeracy skills. However, more able pupils are not consistently challenged by the work teachers provide for them.
40. A key factor in raising standards of teaching and learning in the school is always teachers' use of assessment information to inform their planning of the next steps in pupils' learning. New procedures are recently in place in the school, but they are at an early stage of implementation. Inspection evidence clearly shows that the foundations are in place to promote both high quality and consistently good teaching and learning. The work undertaken in the last year or so on improving standards in writing in Years 1 and 2 bears witness to what can be achieved.
41. Many teachers have limited experience of working across the primary age range and some are at the beginning of their professional careers. Consequently, they are not wholly secure in what standards to expect of their pupils across the curriculum. Whereas in the majority of schools there are established staff on hand to help and advise, the newness of this school means that the majority of staff have joined the school in the last two years. The school does not have collections of pupils' work that have been annotated with National Curriculum levels to help teachers judge the standards pupils are already achieving and can be expected to achieve.
42. Teachers' knowledge and understanding are satisfactory. There is some good expertise evident in, for example, art and design and history, which is evident in the above average standards reached by pupils. Expertise with special educational needs and instrumental music also contributes well to pupils' achievements. There are, however, gaps in teachers' knowledge and understanding, particularly in information and communication technology.
43. The standard of teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy is good in Years 1 and 2 and sound in Years 3 to 6. The school follows the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy and uses the recommended planning formats effectively. The school provides effective support for pupils for whom English is an additional language to enable them to take a full part in learning.
44. In the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, basic skills are taught carefully and pupils gain confidence in using these skills in their work. In Years 3 to 6, the teaching and learning of basic skills is satisfactory. Teachers make good adjustments to cater for the differing needs of pupils who have special educational needs, but they do not consistently challenge the more able pupils by developing their intellectual and creative skills sufficiently. As a result, pupils' learning does not always move on as rapidly as it could.
45. Teachers are starting to plan for the development of skills across the curriculum but there is, as yet, no systematic approach across the school to ensure the development of literacy, numeracy and information and communication skills in all subjects. The situation has been made worse by the problems with the computer suite.

46. Teachers' management of pupils is strong throughout the school. They have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils co-operate and collaborate well, and teachers foster these strengths successfully. Learning in the Foundation Stage is calm and orderly, but sometimes children are too directed by adults and do not make choices for themselves. In Years 1 and 2, pupils work at a good and productive pace.
47. In lessons in Years 3 to 6, the pace of teaching and learning is more variable. In some mathematics lessons in these year groups, the pace of the oral session dealing with mental mathematics is often brisk and the introduction to the main activity is well focused. However, the pace slows when pupils are working independently because they are not always appropriately challenged by the work set for the time available. Lesson introductions across the curriculum are usually well delivered. Review sessions for the whole class are sometimes too short and are inclined to focus on what pupils have done rather than linking key points to the next stage in learning.
48. Teachers' classroom organisation and methods are satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and Years 3 to 6, and good in Years 1 and 2. Teachers are adapting the ways in which they teach to the accommodation. Years 1 and 2 make good use of the shared areas for art and design, and design and technology. The unsatisfactory outdoor area in the Foundation Stage limits the options staff have to develop children's outdoor experiences.
49. Teachers' planning is satisfactory. Daily and weekly plans draw effectively on two yearly and termly plans. Although it is detailed, planning at the Foundation Stage does not fully take into account the 'Stepping Stones for Learning', which lead to the Early Learning Goals. In Years 1 to 6, teachers adjust their plans to take the progress made into account, particularly by pupils who learn at slower rates. However, teachers do not always have the expertise or confidence they need to depart from the prescribed work in order to challenge the more able pupils consistently, particularly in the older age groups.
50. Class teachers and learning support assistants plan together for pupils with statements of special educational needs. Pupils understand the targets towards which they are working. Very good use is made of the expertise and guidance of outside agencies to help provide effective learning targets.
51. Most support for other pupils with special educational needs, and for those for whom English is an additional language, is through providing adapted work within the classroom. The work teachers provide for them in literacy and numeracy reflects pupils' individual education plans. In other curriculum areas planning is not so sharply focused because teachers are not using the targets set to guide work. Nevertheless, pupils are motivated and keen to learn and teachers are good at including special educational needs pupils in class activities.
52. The deployment of support staff is good. Teachers involve support staff in the planning of what they are to do to support pupils' learning. Support staff successfully explain to groups of pupils what the whole class are doing and also work with individual pupils. Statemented pupils are very well supported by staff. Support staff have a clear picture of their role and have valuable expertise through in-service and independent study to degree level. They are much-valued members of the staff team.
53. Pupils' own knowledge of their learning is satisfactory. Teachers share learning objectives with pupils at the beginning of each lesson. In most cases, these objectives focus on what most pupils will be able to do by the end of the lesson, but sometimes they are not precise enough to give all pupils a clear idea of what they can achieve.

54. Pupils demonstrate confidence and insight in answering questions about their work. They are very interested in what they are doing and concentrate well. When asked, they work well independently. Adults and pupils value the contributions made by others. For example, in evaluating finished products in design and technology, pupils were in no doubt as to what was effective and what they could do to improve the designs. This confidence helps to raise pupils' feelings of self-worth as well as their ideas for future achievements.
55. Pupils' work is regularly marked, but the quality of marking varies. In the best examples, pupils are given clear guidance how they can develop their work further. Teachers' expectations of pupils' written work are also variable. The standard of presentation of work by a significant proportion of pupils in Years 3 to 6 is below that expected for their ages. It does not promote the achievement of high standards.
56. The use of specialist staff makes a valued contribution to pupils' learning, both in formal lessons and as part of the extra-curricular provision of the school. Visiting teachers give tuition in music and team games.
57. Homework is set regularly and most pupils and parents are satisfied with the amount of work that is done at home. Reading and spellings are regular features for pupils in Years 1 to 6. Inspectors judge that the amount of homework set is about right for pupils' ages. Older pupils feel that the homework set for them prepares them well for their move to secondary school.

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

58. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum for its pupils. Much is only recently in place as the school responds to the requirements of Curriculum 2000 and its own expansion. Overall, the school's curriculum helps pupils to make sound progress.
59. The Foundation Stage curriculum for the reception class covers all the recommended areas of learning for children of this age, except for children's physical development. The provision for outdoor play is unsatisfactory. This is partially compensated for by a physical education lesson each week that takes place in the school hall, but children are not achieving as well as they could in this area of their development. Across the Foundation Stage curriculum, there are limited opportunities for children to make choices and take responsibility for their own learning.
60. The school meets the requirements of the National Curriculum for pupils from Years 1 to 6 in all subjects except information and communication technology. Teaching and learning in creating and using databases, simulations and modelling, and control and monitoring have been delayed due to equipment problems. The school meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Policy documents and subject guidelines are good because they follow a common format. They provide a clear framework for teaching and learning. They are supportive to teachers, including those with insecure specialist skills in subjects, such as physical education, music and science.
61. In Years 1 to 2, teachers provide a good curriculum for English and mathematics. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are implemented successfully. Teachers plan work that matches the learning needs of all pupils successfully. They provide well-planned opportunities for pupils to write at length in addition to the time provided within the literacy hour. In numeracy, there is good development of pupils' thinking skills in mental mathematics. As a result, pupils achieve above average standards.

62. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum for English and mathematics in Years 3 to 6. In the past two years, the school has extended the age range that it provides for up to Year 6. The number of these pupils has increased each year and teachers are still adapting and developing the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies for these pupils. Many of the good features evident in English and mathematics in Years 1 to 2 are not yet embedded in teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6.
63. Across the school, teachers plan effectively to promote pupils' speaking and listening skills in English, for instance through drama lessons in Years 5 and 6, and through other subjects. This contributes positively to pupils' learning across all subjects of the curriculum. Teachers give pupils the opportunity to discuss and evaluate the performance of other pupils in music and in physical education.
64. Across the school, teachers provide well for practical work in science but, until recently, there has been insufficient work on materials and their properties in Years 1 and 2. This has now been addressed by the adoption of a two-year programme that takes account of mixed-age classes.
65. From Years 1 to 6, teachers plan satisfactorily for the non-core subjects¹² and religious education. This helps most pupils to reach average standards. Many subjects are linked together. For instance, art activities are often used in history work. This helps teachers to make the work more interesting and promotes positively pupils' learning.
66. The school has devised a programme of topics in each of the non-core subjects. This supports teachers' planning for these subjects positively, particularly in the mixed-aged classes. In information and communication technology, teachers provide well for word processing, but there is insufficient work in other areas of the information and communication technology curriculum, such as controlling devices and monitoring events.
67. In the past year, the school has implemented a good curriculum for the games element in physical education for pupils in Years 3 to 6 by providing coaching in a variety of sports, such as hockey and tag rugby. This is beginning to have a positive effect on pupils' achievement. The school's provision for swimming is very good and, as a result, pupils' achievement is high. In history in Years 1 and 2 and art in Years 3 to 6, teachers provide a good curriculum and, as a result, pupils achieve above expected standards for their ages.
68. The school makes sound provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. A new programme of work based on national guidelines is in the process of implementation. The lessons seen were satisfactory. Teachers give pupils the time to discuss and express their ideas both in small groups and in larger ones. This experience contributes positively to pupils' good social and personal development.
69. Sex education and drugs awareness are taught through science and religious education as well as in personal, social and health education lessons. The school consulted carefully with parents of the Year 6 pupils on the implementation of the sex education programme and this has contributed positively to the effectiveness of these lessons.
70. The school aims to provide systems to ensure that all groups are included fully in the activities it offers. Its aims are achieved satisfactorily in the main, but more able pupils are not consistently challenged, particularly in English and mathematics from Years 3 to 6, and in science across the school. Boys and girls have equal access to the curriculum.

¹² The National Curriculum core subjects are English, mathematics and science. The non-core subjects are art and design, design and technology, information and communications technology, geography, history, music and physical education.

Pupils who are learning English as an additional language have support from adults to help them to take part as equals in the curriculum.

71. The school is doing its best for pupils with special educational needs. It offers all, including those on higher stages of the Code of Practice and pupils with specific learning difficulties, full access to the curriculum. They are fully included in all aspects of school life. This has a positive effect on their progress and in developing their self-esteem.
72. The school takes advice from outside experts in setting targets and modifying learning, to enable pupils with special educational needs to make the best progress possible. If pupils are withdrawn from class, teachers check that pupils do not regularly miss the same lessons. In the literacy and numeracy hours, withdrawal is usually during guided group time. Work is linked to the lesson taking place in the classroom.
73. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities in information and communication technology, music and sports. These are popular and are well attended by pupils in Years 3 to 6. A few parents feel that the school does not provide enough extra-curricular activities. There are two contributory factors to these views; one is that a number of activities take place at lunchtime and the other is that, in common with many schools, these activities are not available for younger pupils due to the availability of staff. The school competes successfully in local competitions in sport, such as cross-country and netball. It provides very good additional music tuition in violin, keyboard and flute. Discussions with Year 6 pupils show that they consider the extra-curricular provision to be good.
74. The school provides a wide range of visits into the local and wider community, such as to Whipsnade and Legoland. Teachers plan these visits carefully to enhance the learning of pupils in subjects such as geography, history, design and technology and science. Strong links with the local church also promote positively pupils' learning in religious education. The residential visits for pupils in Years 5 and 6 make the curriculum better for pupils' academic and personal development.
75. The school has good links with the community, which make an effective contribution to pupils' learning. Visitors to the school make learning relevant and interesting. They include a storyteller, an orchestra and representatives from charities, such as the Red Cross and the association for hearing dogs for the deaf. Volunteers from the local community are involved in reading activities each week. The school's links with other education providers in the area are good. It has good links with local secondary schools. These help Year 6 pupils to settle quickly and smoothly into the next stage of their education.
76. One of the secondary schools is aiming to become a centre for the Performing Arts. Pupils at St Mary's, in conjunction with the secondary school, benefit from this enhanced provision. Last year the secondary school pupils helped with the music and drama productions at St Mary's and pupils from Years 5 and 6 attended drama workshops at the secondary school.
77. The school's overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Judgement on the provision for a daily act of collective worship is made separately under the concurrent Section 23 inspection by the Diocese of Oxford.
78. The school's provision for pupils' moral development is good. Pupils' moral code is guided by appropriate Christian principles and ethics. All members of the school community are encouraged to act with respect and consideration for others. There is good emphasis on respect for property and the school building. The curriculum develops

pupils' skills, attitudes and values so that they might become informed citizens of the modern world. The code of conduct is shared and displayed to remind pupils of what teachers expect of them. Pupils are required to reflect on their inappropriate actions and are expected to apologise when they are in the wrong.

79. The difference between right and wrong is reinforced in assemblies. The school makes effective use of a firm and fair reward and sanctions system; for example, reward stickers, loss of privilege and 'yellow and red' card system. Pupils are encouraged to show kindness and compassion in the wider world. For example, they contribute to several charities, including the Christmas Appeal 2001 for a school in Harare.
80. The school makes good provision for pupils' social development. Pupils are encouraged to co-operate in all aspects of school life. Older pupils take responsibility for playing games with younger pupils and read stories to them, especially when the weather is bad. A good range of visits and events, for example to Swanage, Blackberry Farm and several walks in the locality, is effective in developing pupils' social understanding. The school also provides a good range of clubs and inter-school events that enrich pupils' experiences. Pupils successfully take responsibility for giving out and collecting books, tidying up and taking registers to the office.
81. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Pupils reflect on the lives of other people, for example George Harrison, who died recently. In assemblies, teachers talk about Mary's journey to Bethlehem and encourage pupils to think about how she might have felt when she was going to have the baby Jesus. Pupils write about the lives of people such as Princess Diana and about Aztec and Greek gods. The school intends to develop an environment area with a large wildlife pond. Pupils enjoy the work they do on the computer, for example composing pictures,
82. Pupils' cultural development is promoted soundly. Historical accounts of Aztec gods and Greek art make sound contribution to pupils' cultural development. Visits from theatre companies, the local orchestra and dance workshops enrich pupils' experiences. Christian celebrations and talks about festivals, such as Diwali and Eid, raise pupils' awareness of their own and other cultures satisfactorily. Pupils' appreciation of the wider richness of Britain as a multi-cultural society is, however, less developed.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

83. The school's overall provision for the academic and physical welfare of its pupils is satisfactory. Parents are pleased with the way in which the school cares for their children.
84. The school aims to create a secure and happy environment, which enhances the self-esteem and confidence of each member of the school. In this, it is largely successful. It promotes pupils' physical welfare well. However, arrangements for promoting pupils' academic welfare are not yet as strong.
85. School staff and governors, who undertake regular risk assessments, have proper regard for the health and safety of the school community. Effective supervision ensures the physical well being of all members of the school community. First-aid arrangements, which include a specialist first-aid room, and the school's procedures for dealing with the occasional accident, are well organised. Records are well maintained. There are good procedures for liaison and consultation with parents. Fire safety arrangements are good.
86. At present, the school faces a number of problems with heating and ventilation, glare and sound distraction from adjoining teaching areas. These are a continuing challenge to teachers. The lack of an identified physical boundary in the teaching area for the

youngest children is a particular and unresolved concern.

87. There is a supportive atmosphere within the school, most noticeable in the way in which pupils with educational or physical special needs are looked after. Staff respond sensitively and positively to the individual needs of pupils with learning difficulties. The school works hard to identify need quickly and to provide effective support. High quality support by learning support assistants, working alongside teachers, enables pupils with statements to make very good progress. The school meets the requirements outlined in pupils' statements of special educational needs.
88. Well-organised support for pupils with specific learning difficulties draws effectively on the expertise of outside agencies. Pupils receive regular, planned support from learning support assistants, both in class and in small groups withdrawn from the classroom. The quality of support provided is of a high standard and is helping pupils to make good progress. Pupils are set clear, individual targets to improve their learning and they work hard to achieve them. Progress is monitored regularly and achievement shared with pupils and teachers.
89. The school recognises that more able pupils may also have special needs but, as yet, it does not have sufficiently sophisticated assessment procedures to provide consistent challenge for such pupils.
90. The school successfully seeks to treat all pupils equally and involve them in all activities. Lunchtime supervisory staff, who relate well to the pupils, provide effective support during lunchtimes. This has a positive effect on behaviour and safety. Pupils are happy at school and confidently turn to adults when they need help or advice.
91. Child protection arrangements are satisfactory and meet statutory requirements. However, the school acknowledges that with so many staff relatively new to the school there is a need to ensure the consistent application of procedures throughout school. The acting headteacher has plans to provide appropriate training for all staff in the near future.
92. The school's procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are satisfactory. It properly maintains records for attendance and complies with statutory requirements. There is regular liaison with the education welfare officer and parents are regularly reminded of the importance of attendance. Procedures for recording unauthorised absence are rigorous and there are good procedures to deal effectively with any unexpected absence.
93. The measures that are in place for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are good. The school's policies are well focused on the need to promote good behaviour and there is good definition of rewards and sanctions. The great majority of pupils understand and accept these well. Their positive attitudes to learning contribute significantly to the ethos of good behaviour in the school. There is a successful whole-school approach to the promotion of good behaviour and the development of positive attitudes and self-discipline. Teachers have good relationships with the pupils within their classes and use effective strategies to deal with occasional instances of inappropriate behaviour.
94. Whilst the school's procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory, the use of these findings to inform and guide curricular planning is unsatisfactory. There is, however, some good practice developing in Years 1 and 2, notably in English.
95. The school recognises its shortcomings. The school has made a positive start with the

production of comprehensive and well-written whole-school policies for assessing, recording and reporting pupils' attainment and progress. The acting headteacher has temporarily assumed responsibility for implementing the procedures, following the recent departure of the assessment co-ordinator to another school. There has been insufficient time for procedures to become fully familiar to teachers so that they are confident in their application. Much still needs to be done in this area.

96. Children are tested on entry to reception and these results are used to put them into groups. The school carries out assessments of pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science at the ages of 7 and 11, in line with statutory requirements. Optional tests are administered in other age groups in the school. The school looks for trends in test results but, at present, does not undertake any more detailed analyses.
97. In most subjects, especially in Years 5 and 6, there are no portfolios of work annotated with agreed levels of attainment, which would help teachers carry out assessments. A start has been made, especially in English, but teachers' planning is informed more by schemes of work than by information about pupils' attainment. The result of this is that pupils' needs, particularly the more able, are not consistently met.
98. The school does not use assessment information enough to plan consistently for the needs of individual pupils. Overall targets for improvement are shared with pupils and the school makes parents aware of how they can help their children. However, staff do not refine or monitor these targets regularly to ensure that they are challenging enough. This is especially the case for the more able pupils in Years 5 and 6.
99. The assessment and monitoring of pupils with special educational needs and of those with English as an additional language are satisfactory. The advice and support of visiting staff provide very useful assessments of pupils' needs. The school uses these well to inform learning on a one-to-one basis. However, teachers do not consistently use the targets in pupils' individual education plans to help match work to need, particularly in the non-core subjects.
100. The school's formal arrangements for the monitoring and support of pupils' personal development are satisfactory. House activities, a variety of school and classroom monitoring duties, involvement in charitable activities and the use of 'circle time'¹³ all help to promote an understanding and acceptance of the views of others. Assembly themes contribute successfully to the development of mature, well-rounded individuals.
101. Formal arrangements for monitoring pupils' development, including teacher records and summaries in the pupils' annual reports, are satisfactory. The objective reporting of non-academic progress included in pupils' annual reports is good. Individual personal files and achievement folders provide useful supporting evidence. These help to ensure that all pupils, whatever their background, gender or ability receive support appropriate to their individual need. These formal records are complemented by informal arrangements that benefit from teachers' knowledge of pupils as individuals. There is regular discussion amongst staff about the personal needs of individual pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

102. Parents have positive views about most aspects of what the school provides for their children. They say that their children like school; behaviour is good; teaching is good and teachers have high expectations of pupils; the school helps their children to become mature and responsible individuals.

¹³ During Circle Time pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. All pupils agree that no interruptions should occur and only one person at a time will speak. Respect for other pupils' views will occur at all times and therefore pupils feel confident that they can talk with ease and free from any form of interference or interruption from other children.

103. Inspection evidence generally supports these views, although teachers' expectations could be higher. Parents of pupils with special educational needs and those needing extra language or behaviour support are happy with the help and support provided by the school. They have no concerns about their child's equality of access to any part of school life.
104. A small number of parents expressed concerns about the amount of homework; the quality of information provided by the school, particularly about pupils' progress; the way in which the school responds to questions; how closely it works with parents; the range of activities outside lessons; and a reduction in the 'personal touch' since the school has expanded.
105. Inspection evidence finds limited support for these views. The move to a new school and the increase in pupil numbers have required a somewhat more formal arrangement for dealing with parents. There is, however, no reason for any parent to feel a lack of information, or to feel distanced from the school. Homework arrangements are similar to those found in many other primary schools. The provision of activities outside lessons, many of which take place at lunchtimes, is good.
106. The effectiveness of the school's links with parents is very good. Home/school links are supported by an agreement that provides for commitment by all to the improvement of standards. The school encourages parents and other helpers to participate in its work providing, for example, well-informed support in a music lesson, helping with computer work or assisting with the Christingle Service. In these ways, parents make a significant contribution to the work of the school.
107. There is a well-organised and very supportive home/school association that successfully fosters relationships between home and school. Its activities provide opportunities for parents, staff and pupils to socialise and raise funds that provide much welcomed and well-used additional financial support to the school.
108. The quality of information provided by the school is very good. Regular newsletters, both from the school and from the home/school association, keep parents informed about what is going on in the school. Topics for meetings with parents include the literacy and numeracy strategies. The school holds welcome sessions for parents new to the school and a variety of liaison activities throughout the year. There are regular opportunities, both formal and informal, for parents to meet with teachers to discuss their children's progress. Parents are welcome to visit the school at any time, though preferably by appointment to ensure teacher availability.
109. The school's 'Notes for Parents' document is full of useful information. It is attractive and accessible to parents. It gives very valuable advice, especially to parents of the youngest children in the school. The school prospectus is a comprehensive, though somewhat formal, document. The governors' annual report to parents meets statutory requirements.
110. Contrary to what some parents understand to be the position, the school provides parents with regular opportunities to discuss their children's progress throughout the year. Meetings are not restricted only to those parents who have concerns. An annual written report supports the meetings. The quality of reports is very good. Well-focused and objective comments make them a truly individual reflection of achievement. Reports meet statutory requirements. Teachers use the general comment section well, clearly indicating non-academic strengths and weaknesses and giving a good guide to personal development. Observations are objective and, taken together, provide a good record of personal development through the pupils' school life.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

111. Taking into account the particular circumstances of the school, the overall quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher are working hard to maintain the day-to-day running of the school pending the appointment of a new, permanent headteacher. Team leaders and subject co-ordinators are becoming established in their roles.
112. Much is, however, still at an early stage of development. There are strengths and shortcomings in staff expertise. For example, some co-ordinators have a good subject knowledge but lack experience of teaching across the school's age range, particularly in Years 5 and 6. This has a particular impact upon teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve, especially the more able, and is compounded by the lack of suitable collections of work that have been annotated against the National Curriculum programmes of study. The acting headteacher monitors teaching across the school but, at present, subject co-ordinators do not monitor teaching and learning. There are, however, plans for them to do so.
113. Most of the school's policies and procedures are new. The standard of policy documentation is good. The school has adopted a standard format for its subject policies, which makes them readily accessible. This is important as the majority of the teaching staff are new to the school and some are new to the teaching profession. Policies are still very much in the process of being implemented. There are, inevitably, some inconsistencies between policy and practice, but these are being resolved as they emerge.
114. The school has a clear set of aims. These are appropriate to its church status and include a mission statement recently formulated by the staff and governors. This is a good basis for the future development of the school. The ethos of the school is good. The school is a calm and orderly place in which to learn. Relationships are good and the support provided for pupils with special educational needs is of high quality and enables them to play a full part in the life and work of the school.
115. There is a strong commitment to raising standards in the school. Staff have been brought together by the period of adversity through which the school has been. Their capacity to succeed is satisfactory as there are acknowledged gaps in staff expertise and experience.
116. The governors have the interests of the school at heart. Statutory responsibilities are fulfilled. The chair of governors gives good pastoral support to the school. Progress in planning for the long-term development of the school has not been as fast as would otherwise have been expected.
117. The special educational needs co-ordinator manages the school's provision effectively. Records and reviews are up to date. She is working to make pupils' individual education plans at the lower stages of the Code of Practice more specific. Staff provide effective support for the few pupils who speak English as an additional language.
118. There are satisfactory procedures in place to ensure that the financial resources available to the school, which are much the same as those in many similar schools nationally, support the educational needs of its pupils properly. Governors, especially those directly involved in financial matters, feel they have full responsibility for the budget. There is a satisfactory identification of priorities related to improving the quality of education and raising standards. There is a clear cycle of financial planning and the monitoring of expenditure is secure.

119. The school's administrative arrangements, and the day-to-day control of its finances, are satisfactory. The school office is well equipped and there is effective use of new technology here in support of the work of the school. The school's administrative staff, who have a good understanding of their duties, which they undertake conscientiously, make a valued contribution to the effective running of the school.
120. Financial balances (the amount of money the school holds in reserve to protect it against unexpected expenditure) are planned to increase slightly this year. At just over 6 per cent of the total budget, this is slightly above the nationally recommended level but prudent as the school has identified specific areas for additional expenditure.
121. Improvements to the buildings and grounds, maintaining the present level of educational support staff and improving the provision of learning resources are priorities in the most recent school improvement plan. There is a clear indication of responsibilities and timescales together with costings. The development plan includes procedures for monitoring and evaluating the impact of these on the work of the school.
122. The use of the specific funds element of the school's finances, and other additional funding, is well focused. Spending has a positive impact on the quality of learning for supported pupils, such as those who receive extra support to address special learning or language needs.
123. The school implements the principles of best value satisfactorily. The acting headteacher and governors are aware of the need to obtain value for money when making purchasing decisions. The school provides satisfactory value for money.
124. Governors take their responsibilities to be supportive of the school seriously, but their role as its 'critical friend' has yet to be fully developed. The school is working towards a more systematic analysis of assessment results and other statistical information. Consultation procedures are established, with governors making use of a variety of information from amongst their own number, parents, staff and the pupils. Governors make effective comparisons as to how the school's standards compare with those achieved nationally. They are aware of trends in performance within the school. There is, however, room for improvement in the way governors use this information objectively to challenge and support what the school is doing.
125. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is satisfactory. Teachers are appropriately qualified to teach the age range within the school. In common with many other schools in areas where housing prices are high, the school is aware of the difficulties in attracting and retaining staff.
126. Policies and schemes of work are now complete but in the early stages of implementation. To date, there has been very limited monitoring of standards by subject co-ordinators. The school rightly recognises the need for subject co-ordinators to undertake training to broaden their knowledge and understanding of their management roles.
127. Pupils with statements of their special educational needs and others with identified needs are well supported in class by suitably experienced staff. Members of staff are committed to the well being and support of the pupils. They work well as a team. The school has the capacity to be a provider of initial teacher training, but has not recently offered any placements due to its particular circumstances. It has, however, made good use of the specialist knowledge of a student teacher from a local college to provide training in the delivery of religious education.
128. Induction and mentoring procedures for newly qualified teachers and those new to the

school are satisfactory. At a time of rapid expansion, the school has been sensitive to their needs, providing appropriate training and release time. They feel valued and are encouraged to play a full part in the school community. Planning for the professional development of staff is linked to school needs as well as personal goals. Administration and support staff also benefit from training. The school's procedures for performance management are sound.

129. The school presents a welcoming and attractive environment that is clean and well maintained. There are specialist areas, including a hall, library, computer room, cookery and music areas as well as classroom teaching areas. There are some stimulating displays in both classrooms and shared areas. Access for pupils with physical disabilities is good, although some teaching areas are a little cramped for wheelchair users. However, despite being a new, purpose built school, the overall adequacy of accommodation for the delivery of the National Curriculum is only satisfactory for the present numbers on roll. The designated outside play area for children under five in the reception class is inadequate for the delivery of the Foundation Stage curriculum.
130. Since the school was opened, the governors have constantly tried to overcome the deficiencies in the school's design and the quality of build. This has been a frustrating experience and has exacerbated an already difficult time in the development of the school. There is much yet to be done, but most of this is out of the school's immediate control.
131. The school grounds are satisfactory. There are sufficient, good quality playground areas. There are extensive grassed areas, although they are not always available as they form part of the area's flood defences and are sometimes waterlogged. Trees and shrubs have been planted to create shaded areas. Some minor health and safety issues relating to the building and grounds have been drawn to the school's attention by inspectors.
132. Learning resource provision is satisfactory overall. Spending on learning resources has been higher than the national average in the recent past as the school has equipped itself for its increased numbers and extended age range. There is good provision for English and physical education. The library is well sited near the centre of the school and has a range of suitable reference books for pupils to use for research. No subject is wholly under-resourced, but there are some gaps in science, information and communication technology and the outdoor equipment for children under five.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

133. The governors, senior management team and staff should now:

(1) draw up and agree a long term plan for the future development of the school which:

- ensures that all staff with management responsibilities are familiar with their duties and trained to carry them out effectively;
- provides clear guidance for the governing body as to their corporate role in overseeing the development of the school and in establishing their role as the school's 'critical friend';
- makes clear the links between identified priorities and the budget available in order that the school may systematically develop and expand;

and ensure that procedures are put in place to monitor and evaluate the plan's implementation;

(paragraphs 111-132)

(2) raise standards in information and communication technology¹⁴ by:

- improving teachers' knowledge and understanding;
- ensuring that all aspects of the school's scheme of work are fully implemented and monitored;
- ensuring that computers and other forms of information and communication technology are used across the curriculum;

(paragraphs 6, 15, 42, 60, 66, 73, 194, 208, 234-242, 250)

(3) strengthen the provision for children's physical development through outdoor experiences in the Foundation Stage by:

- ensuring that the outdoor area is suitable for children of this age;
- planning for more frequent opportunities in the weekly curriculum;

(paragraphs 2, 48, 59, 132, 136, 140, 153-155)

(4) fully implement the school's new assessment procedures¹⁵ and ensure that assessment information is used to:

- raise teachers' expectations of what pupils know and can do;
- plan more rigorously to meet the learning needs of more able, gifted and talented pupils, particularly in the older year groups;
- establish closer links between individual education plans for those pupils on the register of special educational need and teachers' planning;
- set challenging, individual targets for pupils to improve the standard of their work, monitor these regularly and set new ones as pupils progress.

(paragraphs 22, 40, 51, 55, 89, 95, 100, 112, 117, 160, 164, 167, 170, 182, 188, 191, 193, 197-9, 205, 207, 210, 219, 232, 239, 250, 260)

In addition, the governors should seek to resolve the outstanding issues with regard to the school building *(paragraphs 129-131)*.

¹⁴ Raising of standards in information and communication technology is a priority in the current School Improvement Plan.

¹⁵ Developing assessment procedures and their use is a priority in the current School Improvement Plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	78
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	49

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	1	13	25	35	0	0	0
Percentage	1	18	34	47	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	246
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	12

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	47

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	12

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	21
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	19

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.4
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	18	18	36

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	17	16	18
	Girls	16	18	18
	Total	33	34	36
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	92 (90)	94 (84)	100 (94)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	15	15	15
	Girls	15	16	17
	Total	30	31	32
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	83 (87)	86 (94)	89 (90)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	8	9	17

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	11	11	15
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	65 (*)	65 (*)	88 (*)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	11	11	11
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	65 (*)	65 (*)	65 (*)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

* In accordance with Ofsted guidelines, these figures are not published to ensure that individual pupils are not identified.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	1
Indian	2
Pakistani	6
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	176
Any other minority ethnic group	11

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	27

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	141

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7.2
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.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/1
	£
Total income	458,987
Total expenditure	440,010
Expenditure per pupil	1,789
Balance brought forward from previous year	9,903
Balance carried forward to next year	28,880

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 45.7%

Number of questionnaires sent out	269
Number of questionnaires returned	123

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	76	21	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	46	45	4	0	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	48	50	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	51	7	2	2
The teaching is good.	54	40	2	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	27	43	24	5	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	54	29	15	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	72	24	1	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	43	38	14	4	1
The school is well led and managed.	58	33	3	1	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	40	2	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	41	14	6	14

Other issues raised by parents

A small number of parents feel that there has been a reduction in the 'personal touch' since the school has expanded.

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

134. At the time of the inspection, 44 children attended the reception class on a part-time basis, either for morning or afternoon sessions. In January 2002, attendance in school for these children becomes full-time. At present, nearly 75 per cent of children are 4 years of age and the rest are 5 years old.
135. The school draws from a wide range of pre-school groups, with children attending over 21 different settings before starting school. With this in mind, the school has provided a caring and safe start to school, where routines are well established and the children settle happily. A good partnership with parents helps to establish firm links between learning at home and in school.
136. Provision in the reception class is sound. Whilst relationships and care are first rate, some aspects of planning need improvement. The staff team keeps the Early Learning Goals in mind but, as yet, the 'Stepping Stones for Learning' are not used clearly enough to guide learning. This means that learning does not always follow a progressive path, building upon what has been previously learned and understood. There is no clear focus for outdoor experiences and teachers are unsure of what is to be taught and learned. In a similar way, physical experiences are not regularly planned for and there is limited use made of the school hall and outdoor space, to practise and to develop physical skills or to use large outdoor toys.
137. At the start of the reception class, simple checks show that children's skills are above the expectations for their age. Children make steady progress and by the end of the Foundation Stage, most are on target to achieve above the Early Learning Goals in all areas of experiences, except for physical development, where skills are average.
138. Teaching is sound overall. Class teaching, such as in literacy time, is good. Basic skills are taught well. Teachers encourage children to make links between the spoken and written word and to identify letters and their sounds. Staff know the children well and those with special educational needs are quickly identified and supported. In all the areas of learning, children make steady progress.
139. The small number of children from minority ethnic groups in the reception class all speak and understand English. Boys and girls have equal opportunity to contribute in lessons and there is no marked difference in their achievement. However, teachers sometimes limit children's opportunity to make their own decisions and choices. In art activities, for example, this takes away opportunities for children to create something new for themselves.
140. Within the school, the resources for learning are satisfactory. The area for outdoor experiences, particularly when all of the reception class attend school on a full-time basis, is unsatisfactory for children of this age.

Personal, social and emotional development

141. The majority of children are on target to achieve above the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. They have very good personal and social skills, which enable them to make a confident start to school life. Good teaching builds upon this learning, by encouraging children to play and share with others and to show kindness to each other. They have the confidence to join in with lessons, share their work and play

with others. Their enjoyment and interest in learning are a pleasure to see. Relationships between the staff team and children are very good and ensure that all groups work happily and with confidence.

142. Children successfully learn to understand what is right and what is wrong. They are proud of their own achievement and listen with interest to what others have to say. For instance, children in the morning group are keen to hear about the 'silver' objects other children have brought from home.
143. Most children develop a sense of responsibility and gain in independence; they remember to collect snacks at playtime and get ready for activities in the hall. However, there are too few opportunities for children to make decisions or choices about their learning during lessons because learning resources and materials are usually pre-prepared for lessons and their use planned for specifically.

Communication, Language and Literacy

144. Children are on target to achieve above the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. Skills in speaking and listening are of a high standard and benefit children's learning in all areas of experience, particularly in explaining their ideas, exploring books and understanding simple stories. Children talk eagerly and with growing competence, because their teachers value their contributions. Teaching is good. Playing with Father Christmas in his snow world or answering questions during a game of 'pass the parcel' are just two examples of when children initiate talk because they are excited about their learning.
145. Lesson plans show an appropriate balance between experimenting with early writing and developing pencil and writing skills. Children enjoy working in the writing corner and sending letters and cards to Father Christmas. They are beginning to use letters and simple words in their own independent writing. All can write their name independently.
146. Skills with reading are developing well. Children enjoy exploring books, memorise their favourite parts, recall what happened earlier and predict what might happen next in the story. They have a good knowledge of the alphabet letters and their sounds.

Mathematical development

147. Children are on target to achieve above the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. Skills with number are above average. Children count to 20 and above, sequence numbers, and count forwards and backwards. They work out simple sums and find the total of different groups of toys.
148. Children make steady progress with pencil and paper skills as they gain greater control with the size and direction of numbers to nine. They understand mathematical language, such as 'how many', 'more' and 'less' and use it across all areas of experience. An example of this clear understanding is when children compare two paper chains. They successfully explain why one paper chain is longer than the other, by counting the loops and stating how many more. There is good understanding of basic shapes and children can follow and create repeating patterns in work in collage, using circles, triangles and squares.
149. The basic skills in mathematics are taught effectively, but opportunities to develop mathematical knowledge in an incidental way, for instance, by counting children lining up or matching 'snack boxes' with their owners at play time, are often missed.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

150. The majority of children are on target to achieve above the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. When they start school, children's skills are good in this area of experience and sound teaching ensures satisfactory progress.
151. Many of the experiences seen during the inspection had a focus on Christmas. Children successfully develop a sense of the passing of time as they study the seasons and keep a simple Advent calendar. They talk about their own community and make links with sharing 'special times', such as Christmas. They experiment with 'salt play', sifting and mounding salt and exploring ways of moving Father Christmas's sledge through the snow.
152. Children who are producing collages notice that tinsel reflects light and identify that, *'The metal part of scissors shines, but the handles don't because they are made of plastic.'* Teachers effectively build upon the children's natural curiosity by, for instance, encouraging children to use their sense of touch to describe and identify unseen objects in the 'feely bag'. Skills with the use of the computer are developing steadily.

Physical development

153. The majority of children are on target to reach the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. When they start school children have similar physical skills to others of their age. Parents enhance learning by providing experiences out of school, such as dance and swimming.
154. At present, children's overall physical development is not planned for in a regular way. There is limited use of the hall and no clear focus for developing physical skills in outdoor experiences. Planning focuses on developing dexterity with fine physical skills, such as cutting, pasting and pencil control.
155. In the physical experiences observed in the hall, teaching is sound. Children learn how to 'warm up' and understand the importance of wearing the correct clothing and footwear. All make steady progress as they travel around the hall in different ways, using the larger space with confidence. Children enjoy experimenting with a 'parachute' and learn to work as a team as they follow instructions carefully. They run and jump at different speeds and move under and around the parachute with deftness.

Creative development

156. Children make steady progress in their learning and all are on target to achieve above the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. Teaching is sound overall. Teachers provide some interesting experiences for children involving paint, collage and play dough. At times, children create freely, but often work is too closely guided by adults. For instance, teachers limit choice and individual creativity by providing ready-made shapes for tree decorations, so that children only have to decorate them, instead of being able to design their own.
157. Children's skills with applying paint, cutting and joining materials are developing well. Children modelling with salt dough, for instance, create free-standing models and experiment with different smoothing and joining techniques as they add decoration to their work. The home corner, however, which could also encourage invention and imagination, has become a 'Christmas Workshop' with a focus on producing decorations for the classroom, rather than promoting imaginative role play activities. Children enjoy singing their favourite songs and learning new ones for Christmas time.

ENGLISH

158. In Year 2, standards in English are above average. Pupils reach standards in writing that are well above average. They reach above average standards in speaking and listening, and in reading. This is a similar picture to the school's most recent National Curriculum test results. In Year 6, standards in English are in line with the national average. Again, this is a similar picture to the school's most recent test results. The school has expanded rapidly in the past four years and this makes comparisons of test results difficult.
159. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress in English. This is because teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, particularly in writing. The challenging work that teachers set demonstrates this. Teachers in these classes successfully use the assessment information they have about what pupils can do to match the work to their learning needs. Progress in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory. The pace of progress evident in Years 1 and 2 is not sustained in these older classes. This is particularly evident in writing and also, but to a lesser extent, in reading. There are no significant differences in the achievement of boys and girls in English.
160. Across the school, standards in speaking and listening are good. Teachers provide many varied activities to extend pupils' skills, both in English and in other subjects. For instance, in a Years 5 and 6 drama lesson the teacher questioned pupils skilfully so that they related the story of Demeter and Persephone to their own experiences. Pupils discussed their thoughts and ideas in pairs and small groups and acted out a role. Most pupils portrayed Demeter's emotions of grief and despair at the loss of her daughter effectively through their actions and speech.
161. Pupils are confident about offering and sharing their ideas. Their behaviour is very good so they listen carefully to adults and to each other. Most teachers have a friendly yet firm relationship with pupils and this means that pupils are both willing and confident learners. Pupils use a good variety of words to express clearly their thoughts and experiences. Teachers give a good example by using the correct vocabulary. As a result, Year 2 pupils use accurately words such as 'phoneme' and 'blurb' and Year 6 pupils 'colon' and 'prefix'.
162. Standards in reading are above average in Years 1 and 2. Through good teaching, pupils make good gains in reading. In one Year 2 lesson, the more able pupils independently referred to a text and provided accurate written answers to the questions set. They demonstrated that they understood it well. Average ability pupils read fluently using a range of strategies, such as picture cues and the sound of letters.
163. Standards in reading in Years 3 to 6 are satisfactory. Pupils are competent in finding information from books. They use skills such as scanning the text to find the information they need because, across the school, teachers teach these skills well. Most pupils read with good expression. They confidently discuss the books they read, showing that they understand them well. Average ability pupils read with suitable fluency and the less able pupils are developing these skills well. However, teachers do not consistently challenge the more able pupils to reach the standards of which they are capable in reading.
164. Standards in writing in Years 1 and 2 are well above average. Good teaching of basic skills in these year groups, particularly in spelling and punctuation, is making an important contribution to the standards of pupils' written work. Teachers give pupils many opportunities for writing, including additional time outside the literacy hour. They make it clear that making mistakes is part of the learning process and this gives pupils the confidence to 'have a go', for instance, in using a wide range of interesting words to describe an event or object.

165. In these Years 1 and 2 classes, teachers give pupils clear targets to achieve in their work and ensure that pupils focus clearly on what they are to do. Pupils are actively encouraged to take responsibility for checking their own work. For example, Year 1 pupils have three rules for writing, 'think carefully before starting', 'write in sentences' and 'check for correct sentences when the work is finished'. As a result, pupils enjoy the work, are motivated to concentrate and write confidently. They achieve very well across a range of forms of writing, such as accounts of personal experiences and story. The writing of the more able and average ability pupils is of good quality. They accurately punctuate their work. A more able Year 1 pupil wrote from the viewpoint of Mr. Bear in the story of 'The Three Bears', *'I didn't have a good sleep last night, Mrs. Bear, because the cats were meowing.'*
166. In Years 3 to 6, teachers give considerable time to the teaching of basic writing skills, but their expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. This stems, in part, from a lack of appropriate assessment information, but also from some gaps in teachers' own knowledge and experience. A crucial factor is that teachers do not allow pupils enough time to write independently. Although more able and average pupils punctuate their work competently, the quality and length of their independent writing are less than could be expected for their age and capability. During Year 6, teachers give additional time to writing to prepare pupils for the National Curriculum tests and pupils' work improves considerably around this period. For example, a more able pupil wrote, *'In the distance it (the fox) jumped over the crest of the field and came towards the grove of trees.'* This good use of vocabulary demonstrates what pupils are able to achieve when given the opportunity.
167. Standards of pupils' handwriting are satisfactory overall. In Years 1 and 2, and in one of the Years 5 and 6 classes, pupils' writing is consistent and work neatly presented. In other classes, pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work in books are more variable. Standards vary from week to week, suggesting that teachers are not consistent in their requirements.
168. This inconsistency is also evident in teachers' marking, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Here, teachers' comments do not always point out clearly enough ways in which pupils can improve their work. As a result, pupils compound their mistakes when they copy out their work. Targets for pupils to achieve in their work are not precise enough in Years 3 to 6.
169. Teaching is good for Years 1 to 2. This is evident in the work in pupils' books as well as in the lessons seen during the inspection. Whilst the lessons seen in Years 3 to 6 were good in the main, the evidence from pupils' work indicates that, over time, it is only satisfactory. This is because the level of challenge for more able pupils is not consistently high enough. Teachers are implementing the National Literacy Strategy appropriately. In the most effective lessons, teachers structure the different parts of the lesson carefully. No time is wasted and pupils cover a good amount of work, as seen in a very good Year 1 lesson. In Years 3 to 6, the challenge of work for pupils in the group work sessions is not sufficiently well matched to the levels they are capable of achieving.
170. Across the school, teachers make good use of homework to support pupils' learning in the classroom. For instance, some Years 5 and 6 pupils used the computers they had at home to word-process autobiographies of famous people, such as Princess Diana.
171. Teachers make satisfactory use of pupils' literacy skills in other subjects, such as geography and science, but do not plan systematically for their development. There are missed opportunities for pupils to undertake challenging writing in history and religious education. Word-processing is used for drafting writing in English and other subjects.

Pupils' good speaking and listening skills enable them to participate well in discussions and debates across the curriculum.

172. Teachers make good use of visits, for instance, to performances at the Civic Centre, and visitors to the classroom, for example a storyteller, to broaden pupils' learning and understanding.
173. Across the school, pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. This is because teachers and special support assistants give them good additional support. They praise pupils frequently for their efforts and achievements. This promotes pupils' self-esteem and confidence and underpins their achievement. The quality of the support is good. In one lesson, a support assistant worked very well with a group of pupils on changing the words in a nursery rhyme. She helped them to practise the finished rhyme and this gave them the confidence to read it successfully to the whole class.
174. The school has very few pupils who are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. It has a small delegated budget for their support. The current arrangement for support is through the deployment of an experienced learning support assistant under the overall guidance of a senior member of staff. The provision is satisfactory and pupils make satisfactory progress.
175. Specific targets guide the support for pupils; for example, to be able to write simple sentences independently. Teachers review pupils' progress periodically and new targets are set. This arrangement ensures that the pupils continue to make satisfactory progress.
176. The co-ordinator is new to the role this term. She has concentrated on monitoring the subject in Years 1 to 2 and this has been successful in identifying areas for improvement. She has plans to extend her monitoring of standards across the school next term, for example, by monitoring pupils' work regularly.

MATHEMATICS

177. Standards in mathematics in Year 2 are above the national average. At the end of Year 6, standards are similar to the national average. The results of National Curriculum tests in 2001 were well above the national average at the end of Year 2. The schools' results are improving. The results of the National Curriculum tests in 2001 were below the national average at the end of Year 6. This was only the second group of pupils in the school to take the tests at this age.
178. There are, however, contributory factors to the apparent differences between the 2001 results and inspection findings. Firstly, they involve different groups of pupils and the numbers of pupils in year groups make precise statistical comparisons difficult. Secondly, the inspection took place in the first term of the academic year rather than in third term when pupils take the tests.
179. Younger pupils find different ways to make 10, with the most able group making 20. Older pupils know their number bonds to 20. They are beginning to recognise halves and quarters and tell the time to the nearest hour. The majority of pupils successfully name and identify different shapes. Pupils learn to represent information using pictures and diagrams. They are able to make a rough estimate by rounding, and use this estimation to check if their calculation is reasonable. They successfully learn about prime numbers, addition of numbers to 9,000, decimals and equivalent fractions.

180. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 because teachers are using the structure of the National Numeracy Strategy well to develop pupils' confidence and understanding with handling numbers. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because the work they do and the help they receive are tailored to their needs. In the best lessons, progress is swift as pupils discover, for instance, the relationships between shapes and patterns in number. In these lessons, pupils are actively involved at every opportunity and the pace of learning is brisk. This motivates them to think carefully about what they are doing and become really involved in their learning.
181. Progress in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory. Pupils enjoy mental mathematics, particularly when they have a knotty problem to solve. Most co-operate well as a group to find possible solutions. In the main part of lessons, they work steadily, but more able pupils are not always fully challenged by the work they are given. Although they make satisfactory progress overall, many are capable of achieving more than they do at present. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress when they receive specific support to help them achieve the tasks they are set.
182. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 for whom English is an additional language make similar progress to others because staff regularly check to see that they understand what they have to do.
183. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning and good behaviour make an important contribution to the quality of the learning that takes place in mathematics. They listen carefully to instructions and settle quickly to their work. They are interested and enthusiastic, explaining confidently what they are doing. Most concentrate well, even when the work they have to do is not particularly challenging.
184. Teachers plan lessons using the National Numeracy Strategy and support their teaching with materials from a commercial scheme. In Year 1 and Year 2, pupils are taught in mixed-ability class groups. In Years 3 to 6, pupils are taught in mixed-aged ability groups. Years 3 and 4 are organised into three groups, Years 5 and 6 into two.
185. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. There are some good, and very good, aspects of teaching and learning that are developing well, for example, mental mathematics. Teachers make good use of materials to guide their work and conduct most of these sessions at a crisp pace. This successfully captures pupils' attention and interest and helps them to achieve good standards in mental work.
186. In the majority of lessons, clear learning objectives are shared with pupils so that they understand what they are expected to learn. Teachers usually conduct the whole-class element of lessons at a good pace. In the best lessons, teachers use effective questions to guide pupils' thinking and move their learning on. This was particularly evident in a Year 1 class where the quality of teaching was excellent. Here the teacher matched her questions extremely well to the capabilities of individual pupils. All were able to achieve and gain satisfaction from their work.
187. Teachers' plans for group work include activities designed for those pupils who work at different rates. Teachers generally match these activities well to the abilities of the average and less able pupils. Activities for the more able pupils are not always stimulating enough to challenge their thinking. As a result, the quality of their work falls off.
188. Most lessons end with a review session that refers back to the learning objective and enables pupils to confirm what they have achieved during the lesson. In the best practice, this review session provides good opportunities for both pupils and teachers alike to assess the progress made during the lesson. In one of the Year 1 classes, the

teacher started the final part of the lesson by asking the pupils what they had discovered in the lesson, for example, ordering a list of times from early to late. She then turned these examples into problems and asked pupils to suggest alternative ways of arriving at the answers. They were not always successful, but pupils were cheered by the teacher's maxim, *'The best learners get it wrong then put it right'*.

189. Sometimes, however, the time available for this part of the lesson is too short or teachers give too much emphasis to sharing work rather than building upon gains in knowledge and understanding. In a Years 5 and 6 lesson, for instance, only one group recounted what they had done. The rest of the class were not involved in the process and so the lesson did not help them to progress to the next stage of learning.
190. Teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving are not fully secure. The school does not have collections of pupils' work from previous years that it can use to compare standards. Another difficulty for those teaching mixed-age groups, particularly in Years 5 and 6, is that assessment information as to what pupils have learnt in earlier years, often in different schools, is incomplete. There are gaps in teachers' knowledge and understanding with the result that pupils spend time on unnecessary activities. In these lessons, teachers do not take pupils' learning forward as rapidly as possible.
191. Resources are usually well organised and suited to the work. For example, teachers use whiteboards effectively during mental mathematics at the start of lessons. Teachers manage pupils well and relationships are good. Teachers use praise and encouragement effectively. Support from learning support assistants is well directed and very effective, particularly for those with statements of special educational need.
192. Support for pupils who have difficulties with mathematics is good overall, but some teachers' planning makes only limited reference to pupils' individual education plans. There are no significant differences in attainment and progress between boys and girls and all pupils are involved in lessons. Pupils from ethnic minority groups have effective adult support and make similar progress to other pupils.
193. There is evidence of pupils using mathematics to help their learning in other lessons. For example, they discuss the numerals on the 'Twelve days of Christmas' display and experience graph work in geography and science. The use of information and communication technology is starting to develop following a number of problems with the school's facilities but, at present, it is under-used in mathematics.
194. The quality of teachers' marking of work varies. In the best examples, it identifies what pupils need to do to improve and sets them achievable targets. Standards of presentation are not high enough in some of the Years 3 to 6 groups and this affects the accuracy of their written work.
195. The co-ordinator has been in post just over a year and has drawn up a scheme of work. She has attended various courses, including the five-day numeracy training, and supports her colleagues with advice on planning and resources. Learning resources are satisfactory. There is a detailed numeracy action plan that successfully shows the way forward in the subject.

SCIENCE

196. Standards of work seen in Years 2 and 6 are similar to those expected nationally. These findings differ from the 2001 National Curriculum tests in Year 6 and teacher assessments in Year 2. Because the school changed its topic cycle, there was insufficient coverage of materials and their properties in Years 1 and 2. This omission has been corrected for subsequent year groups. The test results in Year 6 were well above the national average. Pupils' written records do not reflect such standards, which the school attributes to the quality of booster classes in the run up to the tests.
197. Standards in Years 1 and 2 are average. Pupils respond positively to suggestions about how to find things out, for example, when they compare properties of various materials. They use simple equipment, for example, a torch to look for a material with the shiniest surface. Pupils know that light is needed to see colour. They name external parts of the human body and classify common foods into groups such as fruits and vegetables, cereals and meat, fish, eggs and dairy products. Scrutiny of last year's work shows that Year 2 pupils distinguish between a complete and an incomplete circuit, and habitats of different animals. However, work on naming familiar animals and their babies was not challenging enough for more able pupils.
198. Standards are average in Years 3 and 4. Pupils have sufficient opportunities for scientific investigations. They have a growing understating of fair testing. They know how to apply it in their investigations. They successfully compare the heat insulating properties of materials such as cotton wool, newspaper, bubble wrap and tin foil. Their accuracy in reading a thermometer is improving. Pupils successfully record their results in tables and are beginning to draw bar graphs. More able pupils have a greater understanding of fair testing and are starting to explain their conclusions. For example, they can explain that cotton wool is best in retaining heat because it traps pockets of air.
199. Pupils reach average standards in Years 5 and 6. Investigative skills are satisfactory. Pupils investigate the effect of heating on the temperature of water, make a series of observations and present data as a line graph. They draw conclusions that are consistent with the evidence; for example, they find that the temperature of water cannot rise beyond its boiling point. Pupils use keys based on observable external features to identify groups of living organisms systematically, for example snails, spiders and butterflies. They use information on what different animals eat and construct food chains.
200. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have a growing understanding of the significance of fair testing. In their investigation of the effect of air resistance on the speed of landing of parachutes, they understand that they have to use the same amount of material. However, they do not record if they should drop their parachutes from the same height and do it at the same time; and they do not explain why the bigger parachute hit the ground last. Pupils' learning is also sometimes inconsistent with the experimental evidence that they have recorded. This was evident in work on floating or sinking, where pupils' thinking was not sufficiently clear as to what could be the reasons for this.
201. The majority of pupils are keen learners. They listen carefully and concentrate well. Pupils work well with each other and share materials and equipment. Their good attitudes and behaviour contribute to a good learning atmosphere. This makes teaching and learning pleasant for both teachers and pupils.
202. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. In most lessons, the management of pupils is good. In some lessons, the quality and quantity of learning dip when pupils are not sufficiently challenged by the work they have to do. The amount of learning in a lesson, the level of challenge and the use of questioning are better in some classes than others.

In one lesson in Years 3 and 4, the systematic use of questioning gripped pupils' attention and provided them with the stimulus to learn well. Consequently, the rate at which pupils make progress is inconsistent. Demonstrations are usually effective and pupils attentive. Teachers' use of scientific vocabulary is often good but, at times, they miss opportunities; for example, by using the term 'world' instead of 'earth'.

203. Some teaching is very good and it leads to very good learning. In one lesson in Years 5 and 6, pupils observed a complete cycle of the moon. The discussion that followed captured their interest. They acquired new vocabulary such as 'crescent', 'gibbous', 'waxing' and 'waning'. Effective modelling of the lunar cycle enhanced pupils' understanding of how phases of the moon are caused.
204. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not consistently high enough, particularly for the more able. For example, pupils make and record observations on the effect of heat on various materials, but they do not record whether the changes are reversible or irreversible. Pupils undertake investigations as to the effect of adding lemon juice to sodium bicarbonate to learn how to make and collect gas, but do not develop their thinking about irreversible change and the creation of new products.
205. Pupils' achievement and progress are satisfactory. Those with special educational needs and the very few who are learning English as an additional language make similar progress to other pupils. This is because good provision is made to support and guide them, where necessary, in practical activities that are particularly tailored to their particular needs. Boys and girls achieve similar standards due to teaching and learning that meets their respective needs equally.
206. A good quality policy has been written and is being put into practice. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are developing as part of the school's policy. However, the school does not analyse assessment information sufficiently to set pupils challenging targets for improvement. The monitoring of teaching has begun, but the process is not yet rigorous enough to ensure the systematic development of skills and consistency between parallel classes.
207. The use of information and communication technology in science is limited due to problems with the computer equipment. However, the contribution of numeracy, for example tables and bar graphs, and of literacy is satisfactory. The quality of learning resources is satisfactory.

ART AND DESIGN

208. In Year 2, pupils achieve similar standards to those found nationally. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make steady progress as they express their ideas and feelings through their experiments with paint, printing and collage. Teachers make good links between art and other subjects, which allow pupils to communicate in a creative and imaginative way. Observational drawings and paintings of 'old teddies', displayed in the class museum, show how clearly pupils have depicted the torn clothes and worn fur of the older bears. Pupils make links with lessons in geography as they create collages of different buildings found in the local environment. Experiments with mixing paint, and producing light and dark colours, also enhance learning about light in work in science.
209. In Year 6, attainment in art is above average. Good standards of work are being achieved in Years 3 to 6 because skills with drawing and painting are taught effectively in each year group. This expertise develops well over time. Both teachers and pupils have high expectations of the quality of finished work and so pupils are keen to improve and modify their original ideas. Work in sketchbooks is of a good standard and shows how

experiments with line and tone have helped to improve drawing skills. The range of work covered is wide. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 look at changing viewpoints and draw from the stimulus of other artists, such as David Hockney. They reflect the artist's tonal range in their own original work. In Years 3 and 4 good progress is made with careful observational drawings of still life groups of shells, with pupils keen to capture the detail of both pattern and texture.

210. Pupils have good social skills and so share ideas and resources amicably. They enjoy explaining their intentions for their work and are willing to make improvements. An example is when pupils test out different colour washes to find the best match for their work on landscape. Behaviour in lessons is good and so learning moves on at a good pace.
211. Teaching in art is sound in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. All teachers plan their work well and encourage pupils to experiment with a range of different materials. Lessons in Years 3 to 6 benefit from the expertise of the co-ordinator and the good skills teaching of all teachers. Lessons are well managed and paced. Pupils with special educational needs are supported in taking a full part in lessons. Those for whom English is an additional language are also given support to ensure that they understand instructions and specific terms.
212. The co-ordinator has a clear focus for the way forward for the subject. To date, she has had greater opportunity to influence teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 than in Years 1 and 2. Resources are accessible in lessons and appropriate for the support of learning.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

213. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are similar to those expected nationally.
214. Year 1 pupils are looking at ways of improving their playground. Their brief is to design and make models of the sort of playground equipment they would like to have in the school and then evaluate these. They discuss their ideas freely with adults and each other and sketch out their plans with the teacher's encouragement. When they come to translate their plans into models, they show that they are familiar with various ways of joining materials. They are willing to adapt their ideas and to listen to suggestions; for example, the teacher's indication that designs would benefit greatly from having each component labelled.
215. Year 4 pupils successfully evaluate the use of pneumatics from another groups' work before designing and making their own. Their good speaking and listening skills enable them to ask searching questions and describe, both in detail and with accuracy, the mechanisms they are studying. Through this, they are able to identify what works and what could be improved. This provides a good basis for their own designs.
216. The way in which pupils collaborate and co-operate is a consistently good feature of the discussions and activities seen. Pupils demonstrate a mature approach to their work and are keen to discover and share their thoughts and make suggestions. Boys and girls work well together and all participate equally in activities.
217. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Explanations of what pupils have to do are clear. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and provides pupils with a good basis for their work. Teachers actively encourage pupils' imagination and use of language. Relationships are good and there is appropriate use of technical vocabulary.

218. There is, at times, a tendency for teachers to be prescriptive in the amount of guidance they provide and in the choices they allow pupils to make of materials and methods. Teachers are aware of the need to achieve an appropriate balance in this respect. At present, more able pupils are not always fully challenged by the tasks provided for them, but pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make similar progress to other pupils. Pupils for whom English is an additional language also benefit from support with understanding technical terms and instructions and they also make similar progress to other pupils.
219. The subject co-ordinator has clear plans for its future development. The school has based its teaching programme on nationally available guidance that reflects the requirements of the National Curriculum. Staff now have the space and the learning resources available to develop pupils' skills in a more systematic way. At present, arrangements for assessing pupils' progress are at an early stage of development and the co-ordinator is about to start monitoring teaching and learning regularly.

GEOGRAPHY

220. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 achieve nationally expected standards. Years 1 and 2 pupils have good understanding of the world map. They confidently locate countries such as Australia, New Zealand, St Lucia, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia and Britain on a world map. They are knowledgeable about local environmental issues, such as people dumping shopping trolleys in the local river. They draw sketch maps of imaginary places and label geographical features.
221. Year 6 pupils compare the geography of their own locality with others in terms of shops, pubs, doctors' surgeries, chemists and tourism and leisure facilities. They have good knowledge of changes in the local area; for example, of the changes in land use on the nearby Hartwell Estate. They know that the fields used to get flooded before the land was raised to build the Fairford Leys village. They know, from first hand experience, that the school field is now part of the area flood defences. They go on local walks and learn about the local trees, hedgerows and wildlife.
222. The scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, receive effective support to take a full part in lessons. There are no significant differences in the achievements of boys and girls.
223. Visits to Swanage and several walks in the area provide first hand knowledge and experience of different environments. Pupils use various sources of evidence and information and communication technology in their investigations. They acquire sound geographical knowledge. For example, they know the length of the river Nile, the countries that it flows through and the environmental impact of the Aswan Dam. They know the position of several countries on the world map and the time difference from England. Pupils have a growing understanding of tropical rainforests.
224. As little teaching was observed, it is not possible to make detailed judgements on the quality of teaching and learning. However, on the basis of the scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils, it is judged to be satisfactory.
225. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. A satisfactory programme of learning, derived from the national model scheme of work, is in place. Monitoring of teaching and learning is to begin in the spring term 2002. The contribution of the subject to pupils' development in literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. The use of

information and communication technology is improving now that the school's computer suite is up and running.

HISTORY

226. Standards in Year 2 are above those expected nationally. In Year 6, standards are similar to those expected nationally. The school has recently put in place a well-planned programme for learning in history based upon nationally available areas of study. This is helping to raise standards. Pupils achieve well because lessons are interesting, well planned and teachers have the subject knowledge to move learning on. Pupils are well motivated by the topics they are studying. They successfully add to their learning by undertaking research at home and making visits to museums and places of interest with their families.
227. In Year 2 pupils are keen to talk about their 'class museum' of old toys. They recall the past history of their toys, begin to sequence toys by age and make simple time-lines to show the newest and oldest toy. They communicate their findings in a guidebook to the museum and begin to understand the importance of finding factual historical evidence.
228. Teachers encourage pupils in Years 3 and 4 to share information as 'experts' in collaborative work in small groups. Some interesting debate about the role of Aztec gods stemmed from these discussions, with all pupils researching further information to support their own point of view.
229. In Years 5 and 6, pupils study the Ancient Greeks in depth. There is a clear outcome for this work in the production of a poster depicting the roles and attributes of the gods. Pupils successfully make decisions about what is important and what can be included or left out. They skim and scan texts for information using research and information technology skills, and they communicate their findings clearly.
230. Pupils work hard in history lessons and enjoy their learning. Their good social skills and behaviour means that they share resources and ideas amicably. Staff support pupils with special educational needs well in class and enable them to contribute confidently in lessons. Boys and girls work well together and there is no marked difference in their learning. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are given support to enable them to participate fully in lessons.
231. Teaching in the lessons seen during the inspection was good. Many teachers have good subject knowledge. Lessons move at a good pace and teachers use resources well to enliven learning. Good use is made of questioning, which helps pupils to sift fact from fiction and communicate their ideas in discussions. Teachers' expectations of the quality, amount and presentation of written work are not always high enough, especially for the more capable pupils. Across the school, the range of writing in history is limited. Teachers' planning does not yet include sufficient attention to literacy so that pupils' learning might benefit.
232. The co-ordinator has drawn up a useful action plan for the way forward for the subject. She has yet to monitor work across all year groups. Resources are satisfactory and teachers and pupils enhance provision by sharing artefacts from the past.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

233. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are below average. Pupils' learning and achievement are satisfactory in the use of word-processing and e-mail. However, pupils do not reach the required standards in creating and using databases, simulations and modelling, and control and monitoring. As a result, the use of information and communication technology in different subjects is only partially developed.
234. There are a number of contributory factors to this situation. Firstly, the school's computer suite is only recently up and running. This lack of facilities has contributed to the significant gaps in pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. Pupils have not had sufficient time to catch up. Secondly, at present there is no large screen or multimedia projector for teaching in the computer suite and this makes learning less effective. It is difficult for the pupils to follow instructions based on using icons, because the icons are too small to see when the teacher tries to demonstrate them to the whole class. And thirdly, teachers have not yet started nationally specified training and their subject expertise in the subject is insecure.
235. In Year 2, pupils use the keyboard soundly to enter their work; for example making speech bubbles, using the shift key for capital letters and other keys such as enter, return and backspace to delete. They save and retrieve their work. Some pupils do this with their teachers' help, but others are quite independent.
236. By Year 6, pupils have good knowledge, skills and understanding of how to construct and use e-mail addresses. Their word-processing skills are satisfactory. They combine different forms of information from a variety of sources, for example 'word-art' and 'clipart'. They show a positive awareness of audience and purpose and use devices such as different fonts, size, underlining, italics, bold and colours.
237. Pupils show good interest in their work. They concentrate well and relationships in lessons are good. These attributes all help them to make progress.
238. Given the current situation, the overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. A number of good lessons in word-processing were observed during the inspection. Positive relationships, good management and efficient organisation enable pupils to work hard and make steady progress. Pupils show good interest and many demonstrate good levels of independence for their ages. In some lessons, however, the challenge and pace could be better to ensure more rapid progress by the more able.
239. Weaknesses in teaching relate to teachers' knowledge and understanding in specific areas of the subject. With the school's equipment now working, nationally funded training has been arranged for all staff to address this.
240. Boys and girls make similar progress. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language have similar opportunities for learning. Both groups of pupils receive what extra, individual support they need to take a full part in lessons. As a result, they make similar progress to other pupils. Teachers are conscious of the need to include all pupils in learning and achieving comparable standards. There is, however, a shortage of suitable software to support learning for pupils with special educational needs.
241. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory, given the problems the school has faced. The computer suite is now established and working after long and frustrating delays. A scheme of work, based on national guidelines, is agreed but it is not yet fully applied as staff are awaiting training. Procedures assessing pupils' attainment

and progress are not yet in place. The co-ordinator has yet to receive specific training to help her to support other teachers as fully as she would wish.

MUSIC

242. Inspection evidence indicates that by Year 2 standards are similar to those found in other schools. There is no significant difference in standards between boys and girls. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Through careful questioning and encouragement teachers make sure that all groups of pupils are included fully in the activities. As a result, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and pupils who are learning English as an additional language, achieve steadily. The school has not identified any gifted and talented pupils in music.
243. Standards of singing are satisfactory in Year 6. Discussion with pupils in Years 5 and 6 suggests that they had few opportunities for composing their own music until the last academic year. Their knowledge of musical terms, such as the correct names for percussion instruments, is less than that expected for their ages. Discussions with teachers and scrutiny of lesson plans show that composition is now taught. Teachers place a strong emphasis on using the correct subject vocabulary. This is beginning to have a positive effect on pupils' learning. For instance, in the Years 5 and 6 lesson, the pupils made good gains in recognising the symbol for a 'rest'.
244. A volunteer helper who is a specialist in teaching singing contributed significantly to the Year 2 lesson seen. Such enthusiastic teaching of technique enabled pupils to sing with clear diction and increasing control of the dynamics of their voices, pitch and rhythm. Because of satisfactory support from classroom staff, pupils used percussion instruments with increasing competence and awareness of rhythm.
245. Teachers add to pupils' learning by inviting visitors into the school, such as an orchestra. The school also enhances the learning of some of the pupils in Years 3 to 6 by providing recorder clubs. Instrumental lessons in flute, keyboards and violin are taught by visiting specialist teachers. As a result of high quality teaching, Year 3 pupils who have been playing the violin for only one term have made very good gains in bowing techniques, which enables them to play simple tunes successfully.
246. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. In the most effective lessons, teachers manage pupils' behaviour well by using lots of praise and encouragement and dealing with them fairly yet firmly. Pupils respond very well and their behaviour is very good.
247. Teachers successfully encourage pupils to listen carefully to the performances of others. Pupils successfully discuss and evaluate what works well and what they can do to bring about improvement. Pupils' confidence as performers is well promoted because their efforts are praised and valued. Groups of pupils in Years 5 and 6 performed confidently, for the whole class, a new song, *Now light one thousand Christmas lights*. They evaluated the performances of other pupils competently.
248. In another lesson with Years 3 and 4, the pace of the lesson was rather pedestrian. Although the pupils responded with interest to questions about instruments and notation, they were not sufficiently challenged and their performance of the songs they had learnt over the term lacked sparkle.
249. Teachers promote pupils' literacy skills satisfactorily, for instance through using musical scores in lessons and the overhead projector in assemblies. Speaking and listening skills are effectively developed. Teachers do not yet use information and communication

technology to support pupils' learning in music. They assess informally pupils' achievements in lessons, but formal assessment is not yet in place.

250. The school does not have an enclosed space for music-making activities, for instance, for instrumental teaching and for practising group compositions. Teachers are aware of the adverse effect that the sound of music lessons has on the work in other classroom areas so they try to take some music lessons in the hall, when it is available. However, this is not always successful because of the hall's acoustics, and pupils' learning is adversely affected.
251. The co-ordinator is new to the role this term and has clear plans for developing the subject in the future, for instance, for monitoring teaching and learning. Recently written guidance for the subject and a commercial programme of work are being implemented. These aids to planning support non-specialist teachers effectively in the progressive teaching of music skills throughout the school. Although resources for the subject are adequate, there is not a wide enough variety of instruments.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

252. Standards in physical education are similar to those expected nationally in Years 2 and 6. The school reports that all pupils achieve the nationally expected standard in swimming by the end of Year 6. This is higher than that achieved in most primary schools.
253. Pupils throughout the school, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve steadily. There are no significant differences in standards and achievement between boys and girls. The school has identified pupils who are gifted and talented in cross-country and swimming. They are progressing well.
254. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers' planning for the subject ensures that they give full attention to all areas of the curriculum throughout the year. They carefully plan the warm-up and introduction to lessons. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils concentrated well as they dribbled a ball around their partner. They dribbled the ball with increasing co-ordination and developing accuracy.
255. Pupils progress steadily because teachers use effectively team games to extend and develop the skills pupils learn in lessons. For example, in a Years 5 and 6 games lesson, pupils dribbled the ball around a number of obstacles in order to develop and improve their ball control before applying this in a game situation.
256. Teachers promote pupils' social skills and personal development positively. They use games lessons to develop pupils' understanding of the need to work as a member of a team in order to achieve success.
257. Teachers assess pupils' achievement in lessons. They have started to implement a formal system for recording this. They share the learning targets with the pupils and encourage them to discuss and evaluate whether these have been achieved towards the end of the lesson. Some teachers use individual pupils to demonstrate the skills they want all pupils to practise. They use these demonstrations to offer good coaching points to help pupils improve their performance. In a Years 3 and 4 gymnastics lesson, this helped pupils to improve their sequence of movements.
258. In most lessons, teachers manage pupils' behaviour well through a friendly yet firm approach. Pupils respond very well, enjoy the work, listen carefully and respond promptly to instructions. In some lessons, however, teachers do not challenge or interest pupils

enough. In such lessons, the pace of learning slows and attention focuses on the minor misdemeanours of a few pupils rather than the active involvement of all pupils in meaningful activities.

259. The enthusiastic co-ordinator has brought about some good developments in the subject in the short time that she has been in charge of it. These have improved the opportunities available to pupils in Years 3 to 6, by bringing in coaches to teach hockey, tag rugby and football. Staff run clubs in cross-country and netball and the school successfully participates in local competitions. The co-ordinator knows the strengths and weaknesses in the subject. She is active in bringing about improvements, such as organising training for teachers and getting external advice on improving the assessment procedures. There are plans to monitor teaching and learning later this academic year.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

260. In Years 2 and 6, attainment in religious education is satisfactory and meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.
261. At the time of the inspection, the school was preparing for Christmas celebrations and lessons had a predominantly Christian focus, with pupils learning about Christmas and discussing its meaning for Christians. In Year 1, pupils listened carefully to the story of the birth of Christ and added their own thoughts about Jesus being important and growing up to be good and kind. They made links with other Bible stories, such as the 'Good Samaritan', and reflected on how they feel when something important or good happens. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 asked deeper questions about the meaning of Christmas and considered why God chose ordinary people to receive his message. Good questioning by the teacher opened up a debate about what being rich means and what message God might send to us today.
262. In their work in religious education, pupils study other faiths and beliefs. They look at the importance of celebration and symbolism in other religions, such as Judaism and Sikhism. Parents of minority ethnic group pupils within the school community share their expertise to widen understanding when they come in and talk to classes. Years 5 and 6 pupils enjoyed visiting a local chapel to learn more about different points of view and to celebrate Christmas. The school has yet to establish firm links with other places of worship, such as the Mosque and Gurdwara.
263. Teachers give pupils time to think quietly about aspects of their own life in religious education and in personal, social and health education lessons. For instance, sharing memories of 'special times' in their life, or deciding on what qualities make them a 'good friend' to others. Some imaginative work with 'Wanted' posters, advertising for a friend, successfully draws together work in lessons.
264. Behaviour in lessons is good and pupils are keen to share their own experiences with others. Their good speaking and listening skills enable them to successfully add their own point of view. For instance, one pupil suggested that God's message to teachers today might be for them to check up on their spelling before they start lessons.
265. In the lessons observed, teaching was satisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge and value the pupils' personal response. However, some of the written tasks they set lack challenge and do not allow pupils to communicate in depth the knowledge and understanding they have learned.
266. Pupils with special educational needs are given effective support that enables them to take a full part in lessons. Those for whom English is an additional language receive

support from staff to ensure that they can take an equal part to others in discussions and written work.

267. The subject co-ordinator has a clear focus for future development, but has had limited opportunity to monitor the subject throughout the school. Resources are satisfactory.