

## **INSPECTION REPORT**

### **SOUTHFIELD JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Highworth

LEA area: Swindon

Unique reference number: 126197

Headteacher: Mr P White

Reporting inspector: Eileen Chadwick 19115  
Dates of inspection: 27th – 30th June 2000

Inspection number: 189997

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Shrivenham Road Highworth, Nr. Swindon Wiltshire
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body, Southfield Junior School
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Kender
Date of previous inspection:	14 <sup>th</sup> October 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Eileen Chadwick	Registered inspector	Mathematics, Information technology, Design and technology, Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve further? How high are standards? The school's results and achievements. How well are the pupils taught? How well the school is led and managed?
Tony West	Lay inspector		How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Marie Gibbon	Team inspector	English, Geography, History, Religious education, special educational needs.	
Judith Howell	Team inspector	Science, Art, Music, Physical education, English as an additional language.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Southfield Junior School educates girls and boys between the ages of seven and 11. The school has 235 pupils, which is a similar size to most other primary schools. It serves the historic town of Highworth and the surrounding area and occupies the same site as the secondary school. The overall attainment on entry is above average, but it is very wide ranging as a significant minority of pupils enter with below average attainment in literacy. The proportion of pupils receiving free school meals, at five per cent, is below average. A significant number of pupils with special educational needs join the school later than the normal point of entry. This is attributed to the success of the school in providing for pupils with special educational needs. There are 55 pupils who have special educational needs, which is above average. Four pupils have statements of special educational need. This is broadly average. Pupils' needs include physical disabilities and reading and writing difficulties and a small number enter school with behavioural difficulties. Three pupils speak English as an additional language although only one is not yet fluent.

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

This is an effective school that has made good improvements since its previous inspection. Strong, firm but sensitive leadership has engendered the will to succeed in all staff and pupils. There is a strong sense of teamwork and the school has a good capacity to continue to improve in the future. Much of the teaching is good, but not consistently so in every year. Over the past four years, the school has improved its standards in reading, mathematics and science although standards in writing remain average. The school provides well for pupils with special educational needs although higher attaining pupils do not always achieve as well as they should. The school provides good value for money.

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

- There is much good teaching and, throughout the school, this leads to standards in reading, mathematics and science which are above those found in most schools.
- The school's provision for sport and music is good and enables pupils to have a broad and relevant education.
- The school is well managed and has a clear vision and systems for continuous improvement.
- The school's climate for learning is very good and provides very well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils enjoy school and behave very well.
- The school is outward looking and links well with its infant and secondary schools. This minimises disruptions to pupils' learning when they transfer to other schools.

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

- Standards in information technology which are below those found in most schools.
- The average standards of pupils' communication skills in writing and speaking.
- Older pupils' research skills in English, problem solving in mathematics and skills in testing scientific experiments that they have designed.
- The consistency of more able pupils' achievement, including the very able, especially in English, mathematics and science.
- The consistency of good quality teaching so that all teachers teach well, not only by instruction, but by providing pupils with enough opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning.

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

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

The school was last inspected on 14 October 1996 when the headteacher had not long been in post. Since then, its improvement has been good. Standards are higher in reading, numeracy, religious education and design and technology. The school's national curriculum test results in science have also improved and the school continues to make good provision in physical education and music. Standards in information technology remain below average although pupils are now making satisfactory progress. Despite all the efforts of the school, the computers in the new suite, installed in January 1999, could not be used until this February.

The school has tackled most of the key issues well. Teaching is now good overall. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching was high at the time of the previous inspection. Virtually all unsatisfactory teaching has been eliminated. There are satisfactory improvements in teachers' subject knowledge in design technology, information technology and religious education. The school has made good progress in providing schemes of work, co-ordinators now lead their subjects well and assessment systems are much improved. However, there are still weaknesses in providing for higher achievers in a few classes. There are now close and effective links with the infant school. Teachers are kept up-to-date by watching other teachers teach and by planning together. The deputy headteacher is a leading numeracy teacher for the area and there is some high quality teaching of mathematics in this school. The library has been much improved for the benefit of the school. Overall, there has been satisfactory improvement in pupils' problem solving skills but, in a minority of classes, pupils still do not develop these skills consistently.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	C	B	C	C
Mathematics	B	A	B	B
Science	C	C	B	B

**Key**

Well above average      A

Above average          B

Average                  C

Below average          D

Well below average      E

This shows that in 1999 compared with all schools nationally, as well as similar schools, standards were average in English whilst standards were above average in mathematics and science. It also shows that, for the past three years, standards have been consistently above average in mathematics and improved in science in 1999. Standards in English and mathematics were lower in 1999 than 1998. This was because a significant proportion of pupils had special educational needs in reading, writing and numeracy and a substantial number had entered the school in Years 5 and 6.

The school's targets for the Year 2000 for the national expectation, Level 4 or above, are appropriate for English but not high enough for mathematics. The target for mathematics was exceeded in 1999. Despite a substantial proportion of pupils attaining higher levels on entry, the school has not set targets for Level 5.

### The findings of the inspection are:

By the end of Key Stage 2, standards are above those found in most schools in reading, mathematics, including numeracy, science and physical education. Standards are similar to those in most schools in speaking and listening, writing, design and technology, religious education, history, geography and art. Little class music was seen on the inspection but all the available evidence indicates that provision is good. Standards in information technology are below those found in most schools.

Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Most make good progress, including pupils' with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language. However, the achievement of more able pupils is unsatisfactory as a result of inconsistent progress through the school.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good, pupils enjoy school and are keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are very considerate towards each other and respect their teachers and other adults. They are very attentive and polite, which has a good effect on their learning.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good and this provides a very happy atmosphere. Pupils take responsibility well but older pupils' problem solving skills are inadequate.
Attendance	Above average. Pupils arrive promptly and lessons start on time.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good. Fifty-four per cent of lessons were good or better and of these, 20 per cent were very good. Ninety-eight per cent of lessons were satisfactory or better.

The quality of teaching in reading, writing and mathematics, including numeracy, is good overall. The teaching of literacy and numeracy in Year 3 is very strong and this is providing the right start for pupils as they begin Key Stage 2. This is often consistently built upon. However, in some older classes, although teachers instruct very well and are thorough, they do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to develop their research skills in English or problem solving skills in numeracy and science. The unsatisfactory teaching occurred in a Year 4 numeracy lesson when pupils spent too long writing and did not do enough mathematics. The Additional Literacy Support is taught well in Years 3 and 4. This is helping those who enter the school with lower attainment in reading, spelling and writing to succeed. The school has put good procedures in place for improving writing and these are raising standards.

The quality of pupils' learning is good overall and pupils work productively at a good pace. They try very hard and their learning is particularly successful when they not only learn and practise skills but solve problems, for example, in information technology lessons in Years 3 and 6.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is broad and relevant to pupils' daily lives. The implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is satisfactory. Extra curricular activities are very good. The requirements for control technology are not met.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good throughout the school.

Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Pupils are well supported by the visiting specialist teacher.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Spiritual development is good. Moral, social and cultural development is very good. Pupils are given a very clear understanding of right and wrong and religious education makes a strong contribution to pupils' moral development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good overall. Very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. Good assessment procedures except for very able pupils.

The school's links with parents support pupils' learning very effectively.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher is successfully improving the school and has a clear vision and procedures for improvement. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are an effective team and both lead through their own exemplary teaching. Monitoring procedures of teaching are good and subject co-ordinators are effective.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body has a good overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and help to shape the direction of the school. Financial planning and monitoring of the budget are very good.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has a clear view of its strengths and weaknesses and is now beginning to use end of Key Stage 1 assessments more rigorously to measure its own success. School development planning and evaluation are good overall.
The strategic use of resources	Good overall. Key staff are trained and support other staff very well, especially in implementing the National Numeracy Strategy. There is satisfactory use of information technology.

Staffing, accommodation and resources are good. Sports facilities are very good.

### PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They are very happy with the climate for learning and the way their children like school.</li> <li>• The school is well organised and the teaching is good.</li> <li>• They feel welcome in the school and staff are approachable.</li> <li>• The school staff and parents work hard together to achieve a fine environment for their children.</li> <li>• The teaching of pupils with special educational needs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents have mixed views on the quality and amount of homework.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive comments but considers that the amount of homework is satisfactory. However, mathematics homework is not always challenging for more able pupils.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Analysis of the national end of Key Stage 2 tests for 1999 shows that compared with all schools nationally and similar schools, standards were average in English and above average in mathematics and science.
2. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 4 and above in the 1999 tests was above the national average in English and mathematics and close to the average in science. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 5 and above was close to the national average in all three subjects. The assessments made by teachers were similar to test results in mathematics and science although in English, they were more generous at Level 5.
3. Further analysis of pupils' English results shows there was a significant difference between results for reading and writing. Results in reading were above the national average. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 4 was above the national average and, at Level 5, it was well above average. However, results in writing were below average. This was because the percentage of pupils attaining Level 4 was well below average but average at Level 5.
4. When the averages of the school's end of Key Stage 2 test results for 1999 are compared with those reached by pupils from 1996 to 1999, they show an improving trend which is broadly in line with the national trend. However, the school's results in 1998 improved more than the national trend in English and mathematics although this did not continue in 1999. The trend has been slightly better than the national trend in science. When the standards attained in 1999 are compared with the standards attained in 1996, they show that results in English are similar whilst standards in mathematics and science have improved from average to above average.
5. Over the four year period from 1996 to 1999, boys outperformed girls in English although there was no difference between their performance in mathematics or science. However, in the 1999 tests in English and mathematics, nine out of every ten girls attained the expected standard or higher whereas only seven out of ten boys did so. During the inspection, no significant differences were observed between the performance of girls and boys in any subject.
6. Analysis of the attainment on entry of the pupils who were Year 6 in 1999 shows that most pupils entered Year 3 having achieved the following results in their end of Key Stage 1 tests in 1995. In reading, standards were above average and the percentage of pupils attaining the higher level, Level 3, was well above average. In writing and mathematics, standards were above average at both Level 2 and Level 3. However, nearly 20 per cent of pupils entered the school later than Year 3, mainly in Years 5 and 6. Analysis of their attainment on entry shows a half of these new entrants entered with special educational needs and with low attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. This had an adverse effect on overall standards attained by the 1999 cohort of pupils who took the tests in reading and writing and mathematics at Level 4 by about ten per cent.
7. Comparisons of the standards attained in 1999 by Year 6 with pupils' attainment on entry shows that their achievements at Level 4 were good in reading, mathematics and science but unsatisfactory in writing. Pupils' achievements at Level 5 were satisfactory in reading and not high enough in writing, mathematics and science. In mathematics and science, pupils' attainment on entry indicates that the proportion attaining Level 5 should be at least one third rather than the quarter of pupils who achieved Level 5 in 1999.
8. The school has set formal targets, with the help of the Local Education Authority, for the Year 2000 for 82 per cent of its pupils to reach, or exceed, the expected level in the national end of Key Stage 2 tests and assessments in English. The target is for 80 per cent of pupils to meet, or exceed, this level in mathematics. This represents a satisfactory level of challenge in English but not enough challenge in mathematics. These targets were exceeded in mathematics in 1999. The school is on course to meet the targets it has set this year. Although a substantial proportion of pupils attain

higher levels in English, mathematics and science on entry, the school has not set targets for Level 5 or above in any subject, and this limits the school's ability to measure its success. The school has set challenging targets for Level 4 for both English and mathematics for the Years 2001 and 2002.

9. The current Year 6 pupils entered the school with attainments that were average overall. In reading, the proportion attaining a good Level 2 was below average. However, the proportion attaining Level 3 was well above average. In writing, standards were below average. In mathematics standards were above average. This analysis of attainment on entry takes account of pupils who entered later than Year 3 having not attended the local infant school.

10. The findings of the inspection show that, in Year 6, pupils attain standards in English that are similar to those found in most schools (average). Standards in reading are above average whilst standards in writing and speaking and listening are similar to most schools. Standards in mathematics, including numeracy, science and physical education are above those in most schools. Standards in design and technology, geography, history and art are similar to standards found in most schools but they are below in information technology. Standards in religious education meet the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Evidence indicates that standards in music are high but, because of the inspection timetable, few lessons were observed and there was insufficient evidence to make a sound judgement.

11. The standards observed on the inspection are similar to the standards in the 1999 National Curriculum apart from English. Standards in writing are higher than in last year's tests. This is because of the school's emphasis on improving writing, which is beginning to have a positive impact on standards. In reading, standards were similar at Level 4, but inspection shows that standards are not as high as indicated by the 1999 tests. This is because fewer pupils demonstrated higher order reading skills, for example, inference and deduction are less evident.

12. In Year 6, pupils listen very carefully and attentively to their teachers and each other. However, although pupils answer questions willingly, they speak very quietly often answering in short sentences. Many read clearly and fluently and are enthusiastic readers. Although most read an appropriate range of books, the books of higher achievers are insufficiently challenging. Pupils' research skills are underdeveloped and higher achievers do not develop their thinking skills of inference and deduction adequately. Lower achieving pupils have a satisfactory range of strategies, including phonics, to help them read unfamiliar words. Pupils write for a good range of purposes across the curriculum, including tourist brochures, instructions and arguments. Their spelling and punctuation are average. Pupils who achieve at lower levels do not punctuate and spell well enough and have a limited understanding of grammar. Nearly all write neatly in a cursive style and present their work neatly. However, there is little attainment at higher levels.

13. In mathematics, standards of numeracy are above average. Many pupils use the four rules of number accurately including multiplying numbers with three or more digits by a two digit number. Many have good understanding of place value and know how to add, subtract and multiply decimal numbers. Many change decimals to fractions or percentages. Pupils attain well in algebra and are very skilled when constructing and measuring angles. However, the oldest pupils do not use a wide enough range of approaches for calculating answers in number work. Higher achievers underachieve significantly in problem solving through few opportunities for higher level work. There is little evidence of very high attainment although a small number of pupils are capable of this level of attainment.

14. In science, many attain at least average standards in scientific knowledge and pupils know that a wide range of living things live in different habitats and that life is often interdependent. Pupils' classification skills are particularly good. Pupils know that that solids, liquids and gases have different properties and understand how to construct, switch off and draw different electrical circuits. Most attain average standards in experimental science but there are some weaknesses. Pupils' experimental skills of observation, predicting, fair testing, measuring and pattern seeking are satisfactory, but they do not ask enough questions and plan and conduct experiments that they have designed. Higher achievers do not have consistent opportunities to attain at higher levels in all aspects of the curriculum and are underachieving.

15. In information technology, standards are below those found in most schools and the current Year 6 pupils have not experienced the full National Curriculum. Pupils are now making satisfactory progress in developing their skills but standards are not high enough across the full National Curriculum requirements. In Year 6, pupils have satisfactory word processing skills and can combine words and pictures to produce advertisements to attract people's interest. However, their attainment across the rest of the National Curriculum is below average and control technology is particularly weak.

16. Pupils apply their literacy skills well to many subjects including science and geography when they present well organised accounts. There are also some good examples of writing from the perspective of biblical or historical characters in religious education and history. Pupils apply numeracy well to science and geography, especially data handling, and satisfactorily to design and technology. Information technology is used satisfactorily in all classes for extending pupils' writing and art skills. Its use in mathematics is good in Year 3 and 5, satisfactory in Year 4 but unsatisfactory in Year 6.

17. Pupils with special educational needs, and the very small proportion with English as an additional language, make good progress in all aspects of their work. Pupils' progress is observable in the systematic records that are kept in their individual files and in the regularly reviewed targets in their individual education plans as well as their achievement in lessons. Both groups of pupils make good progress because of the thorough identification procedures and systematic provision. The school's implementation of the Additional Literacy Programme in Years 3 and 4 is having a positive impact on raising the attainment of the significant proportion who enter the school from the infant school not having achieved a good Level 2 grade in literacy.

18. The small proportion of very able and talented pupils make unsatisfactory progress as their previous attainment and talents are not systematically assessed and their needs are infrequently met in English, mathematics and science. However, the school has recently appointed a co-ordinator for more able pupils who has recently attended training.

19. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. However, it is unsatisfactory for higher achievers in English, mathematics and science as the proportions attaining Level 5 or above are not high enough compared with pupils' attainment on entry. This is the result of inconsistent opportunities for higher attaining pupils to achieve at higher levels in Year 4 and Year 6. Pupils' achievement in the foundation subjects is good in physical education. It is satisfactory in the rest of the foundation subjects apart from information technology, which is unsatisfactory.

20. This school is an improving school despite the underachievement of higher attaining pupils. Since the last inspection, the school has made good progress overall in improving the standards that pupils attain. Standards in reading and mathematics, including numeracy, are higher, although standards in writing and science are similar. However, in science, standards in National Curriculum tests have improved compared with the results attained by Year 6 in the year of the last inspection. Standards in design and technology, religious education and physical education have improved. Above average standards in physical education have been maintained and evidence suggests that this is also the case for music. Standards in geography, history and art are similar. Standards in information technology have improved but do not yet meet expectations. This is because technical problems prevented the school using the new computers in the suite until February this year, despite the installation of the network over one year earlier.

21. Since the last inspection, this school has made good progress in tackling the considerable underachievement which resulted from a high proportion of unsatisfactory teaching and lack of adequate curricular planning that existed at the time of the last inspection. However, insufficient work has been done in addressing the under attainment of higher achieving pupils, particularly in older classes, and in information technology for all levels of ability.

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

22. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour, as noted in the previous inspection, are very good and continue to be strengths of the school. Throughout the school, pupils, including those with special educational

needs, are keen, enthusiastic and eager to come to school. They listen attentively, follow instructions and settle quickly to the task given. Pupils concentrate well, although when the heat builds up during the day in the temporary classrooms, this causes some loss of concentration despite their very good behaviour. The great majority of pupils work very well either independently or in small teams. For example, in information technology when pupils work in the computer suite, they often work in pairs and make joint decisions. At an evening concert performed in a large theatre with other schools, all the pupils behaved impeccably and sang and played with enthusiasm. They were a credit to the school.

23. Pupils of all abilities are interested in the life of the school and behave very well, complying with school and class rules. They know right from wrong and are polite and courteous to teachers, their peers and visitors. They open doors and wait, as well as saying please and thank you without prompting. Behaviour in the dining hall, during assembly and while pupils move about the school is always very good. Pupils form very good relationships with their peers, with adults and with older pupils. The levels of co-operation and mutual trust shown to Year 10 pupils, from the local secondary school, in a session held as part of the "Sports Leader" scheme were exemplary. Pupils are caring in their support for those with special educational needs and pupils new to the school. No examples of any oppressive behaviour, bullying, sexism or racism were seen during the inspection. Pupils understand the impact of their behaviour on others. Pupils handle resources very carefully and take a lot of pride in their work and school.

24. During discussion, pupils accept that others may have a different view or belief from their own. They take responsibility well for the school council, organise sharing assemblies and contribute to the production of their reports. However, although there has been satisfactory overall improvement in opportunities for pupils to display initiative and take responsibility for their own learning, there are a few lessons where pupils, particularly the oldest, do not have enough responsibility to do this.

25. For the last reporting period, pupils' attendance was good. Attendance was above the national average and unauthorised absence was well below the national average for the same period. The registration of pupils at the start of sessions is handled very efficiently and pupils settle down to work promptly and with little fuss. This contributes positively to their learning.

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

26. The overall quality of the teaching and learning is good and in the lessons seen, 54 per cent were good or better and, of these, 20 per cent were very good. Ninety-eight per cent were satisfactory or better whilst a very small proportion, two per cent, were unsatisfactory. The very good teaching was seen in literacy (Year 3), numeracy, (Years 3 and 5), information technology (Years 3 and 6), and physical education (Year 6). This includes one excellent lesson taken by a professional swimming instructor and one very good physical educational lesson taken by the sports leaders, who are pupils at the local secondary school. A striking feature of all the very good teaching is the teachers' very good subject knowledge so that lessons are very relevant to pupils and promote their rapid learning and enthusiasm for the subject.

27. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection when teaching was satisfactory in only 80 per cent of lessons and good in one third. The school has energetically tackled the need to improve its weaknesses and has made good progress in improving the quality of teaching. It has made good progress in improving teachers' subject knowledge in design and technology and religious education and satisfactory progress in information technology. It has improved the way that teachers match work to pupils' previous attainment and many teachers now provide some good quality opportunities for pupils to learn through investigative work or problem solving. However, in a minority of classes, there has not been enough improvement.

28. The quality of teaching and learning is at least satisfactory in all subjects and this reflects the improvement in teachers' subject knowledge. Teaching and learning are good overall in English, mathematics, science, and physical education although this is not consistent in all year groups. Teaching is satisfactory in information technology overall. Most lessons taken in the computer suite are taught very competently, but computers are not always used enough in class literacy and numeracy sessions. Teachers' knowledge of information technology is satisfactory for the aspects being taught but is still lacking in control technology. Until recently, the network could not be used for

training or teaching purposes. Physical education is well taught by class teachers with some very good teaching by outside specialists. Because of the timetable, few other subjects were observed. Evidence from pupils' work shows that teaching is satisfactory in religious education, design and technology, art, geography and history. In music, the evidence indicates that teaching is often of a high quality leading to high attainment in skills in performing, especially in singing although very little class teaching was observed during the inspection.

29. All lessons have a clear purpose and often build well on previous work. Lesson preparation is thorough. Teachers plan their work together and this helps to ensure that pupils in the same year group have similar opportunities to learn. Teachers manage pupils well, and introduce lessons carefully, often carefully questioning pupils to check their understanding of previous work. Tasks are usually well organised and often matched to the different levels. During good or very good lessons, teachers are very adept at matching the work to pupils' previous attainment, including that of higher achievers. They include a range of teaching approaches that not only include talking to the class and questioning pupils skilfully but also opportunities for pupils to take some responsibility for their own learning.

30. In a very good literacy lesson in Year 3, the pupils learned the skills of note taking through a range of teaching approaches. The teacher carefully planned the lesson so that pupils learned first through listening to instructions and then ensured that they were actively engaged in their learning when pupils were given the task of constructing their own questions. In a very good mathematics lesson for younger pupils, the teacher also skilfully altered her teaching style to suit her purpose. She provided clear instructions and excellent opportunities for practice and repetition for the whole class before moving the pupils on to working in small teams. Problem solving work, set at different levels, provided the right level of challenge for all. In a very successful information technology lesson in Year 6 the teacher, once again, used a range of teaching styles appropriately. She taught skills very clearly through instruction and allowed time for pupils to practise these before moving them on to generate ideas and create advertising posting, while working in pairs. This resulted in pupils learning rapidly from each other, especially in learning how to apply their skills to creative problem solving. In all of these lessons, the teacher provided good opportunities for pupils to learn the new vocabulary and language of the subject.

31. This contrasts with a small amount of teaching which, although satisfactory overall, has some weaker elements. In these lessons, teachers often teach well through instruction. However, they sometimes spend too long talking and pupils do not always contribute enough. On these occasions, the pupils are over dependent on the teacher and do not think enough for themselves. This kind of teaching style was often observed in Year 6 especially in literacy and numeracy lessons.

32. Another feature of lessons which are satisfactory rather than good is that, whilst there is often a good level of challenge for pupils of average or below average attainment, there are not enough opportunities for higher achievers to be challenged in their learning. This is affecting the consistency of their sound progress through the school. In the unsatisfactory lesson observed in mathematics in a Year 4 class, there was a lack of mathematical challenge for pupils as they were given far too much writing. This resulted in insufficient work in mathematics.

33. Teachers have prepared carefully for the literacy and numeracy hours and, overall, the standards of teaching are good. The school has focused upon the need to improve pupils' writing and the good quality teaching of writing is having a positive effect. Planning is detailed. English lessons often provide a balance between reading, spelling and writing and are designed to capture the pupils' interest. The Additional Literacy Support is successfully implemented in Years 3 and 4 and is having a positive impact on improving spelling and writing. Teachers plan well for the three part numeracy session and the lessons make the subject very relevant to pupils' daily lives. However, there is still some variation in the implementation of the strategy and this is linked to the perception, by some teachers, that the teacher's main role is to teach through instruction for the whole of the lesson. This does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to think for themselves.

34. The teaching of science is good overall. All staff are confident in teaching science and plan interesting lessons. Science often has a practical basis. For example, when Year 6 pupils learn about the type of animals found in different beach zones there is a good balance between theoretical and practical learning. However, although scientific knowledge is well taught, the teaching of investigative

science is not as good as there is not enough attention to developing pupils' ability to design and test their own experiments, especially for older pupils.

35. Therefore, although teaching and learning are mainly good, and there is little unsatisfactory teaching, there are unsatisfactory elements in some lessons which have an adverse effect on the consistency of good learning in this school. Additionally, the learning needs of the small proportion of very able pupils are rarely met because there is little provision for them.

36. In Year 3, teaching is always good and sometimes very good. In Year 4, teaching is satisfactory overall. In Year 5, teaching is good and occasionally very good. In Year 6, teaching is satisfactory and very good in information technology and physical education.

37. The school teaches in ability sets for literacy and numeracy sessions twice each week. Overall, these arrangements provide good opportunities for pupils to learn through well-matched work, particularly for the youngest classes and for Year 5. This is also linked with the high quality teaching in these classes found in mixed ability lessons where teachers employ a variety of methods. Setting in Year 6 is effective for raising attainment of the lower achieving pupils although it is not as effective for higher achievers because, often, there is too much repetition and they are over directed.

38. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is generally good. In most lessons, work is well matched to pupils' previous attainment and to the targets on their individual education plans. These targets are usually clear, realistic and easily assessed but there is some variability in the quality of targets of pupils on the early stages of the register. Educational support assistants work effectively with pupils and their teachers to ensure that class activities are appropriate to pupils' needs. Pupils have trust and confidence in those who give support and are interested in participating and working to the best of their abilities.

39. The day-to-day assessment is satisfactory. In the best lessons, teachers fine tune their teaching to meet the needs of all pupils. Teachers use praise and encouragement well throughout the school. There is some very high quality marking that tells the pupils how they might improve their work and pupils take this feedback seriously and use it to learn. However, this high quality feedback and practice are not consistent through the whole school.

40. Homework is used effectively to extend most pupils' learning in English lessons and this is so for most pupils in mathematics. However, the work set in mathematics is sometimes too easy for higher achieving pupils. A significant proportion of parents, 23 per cent, expressed dissatisfaction with homework; some felt there was too much and others not enough. The inspection team judges that the quantity and quality of homework are satisfactory overall.

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

41. Overall, the school provides a good and broad curriculum that is relevant to pupils' daily lives. It includes all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. However, the statutory requirement for the teaching of control technology is not yet fully in place. This is because the long term technical problems which occurred in the information technology suite have prevented the school from teaching the full curriculum. The school has, therefore, not yet been able to address the key issue of ensuring statutory requirements in information technology are met.

42. Otherwise, there has been good improvement in the curriculum since the last inspection. Design and technology now meets requirements and the Agreed Syllabus for religious education is fully in place. The planned curricular time for all subjects is appropriate, with literacy and numeracy taking the largest part of the subject allocation. The school fully implements the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The curriculum promotes the aims of the school effectively and supports most pupils' intellectual, physical and personal development well.

43. The school's previous inspection report also identified as a key issue the need to improve continuity and progression in pupils' learning by continuing to produce schemes of work which detail how knowledge, skills and understanding will be developed throughout the school. The school has addressed the issue well. Each subject has appropriate documentation for planning and in addition, the school's medium-term plans contain clear well-focused statements for each subject on what the

pupils will do and what teachers hope the pupils will achieve. All areas of the curriculum are planned and taught as individual subjects. However, the two-year cycle planning structure for the lower and upper school in science and some other subjects does create some slowing down in pupils' progress in Years 4 and 6. The school is planning to change this approach and use the guidance provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority to prevent this from occurring.

44. Across the school, the literacy hour is being implemented satisfactorily and basic literacy skills are being taught well. Teachers have good knowledge of the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy and lessons are appropriately planned. Literacy skills are used effectively across subjects such as science, geography, history and religious education. There are appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop and consolidate their numeracy skills in other subjects, such as science, geography design technology and information technology

45. The school makes effective links between some subjects, for example, science, art and design and technology when Year 4 pupils create mini beasts from mouldable materials and textiles. High quality provision within each subject and good cross-curricular links enable teachers to teach a worthwhile project and make effective use of time.

46. The very small number of pupils who have English as an additional language are able to participate in all the opportunities created by the school and those that do require additional curricular provision are very well supported by the Local Education Authority's bilingual support team.

47. Pupils with special educational needs have full access to all aspects of the curriculum. Most support is given within the class. Where small group work or individual support is given outside the classroom, care is taken to ensure that pupils' full access to the curriculum is not compromised. Pupils who have statements of special educational need receive support in accordance with the requirements of their statement.

48. All pupils on the register receive good care and support and benefit from the friendly environment of the school. Setting in some literacy and numeracy sessions provides good support for pupils with special educational needs where teachers and educational support assistants know pupils well. In literacy lessons where there are no educational support assistants, the quality of support for pupils with special educational needs is more variable but is always at least satisfactory.

49. The school liaises closely with a wide range of outside agencies including the multicultural support service, which supports pupils who have English as an additional language. There is a designated governor for special educational needs who understands the needs of the pupils well and who liaises regularly with the school and with the co-ordinator for special educational needs.

50. Although not planned rigorously, the curricular provision and teaching of pupils' personal development are good. Policies for sex education and drug misuse are in place and the school participates in a 'good citizenship' scheme. Year 6 pupils are involved in the 'Streetwise' scheme run by the police. The school's aims and policies for equal opportunities are reflected in the curriculum. All pupils benefit from what the school provides.

51. Provision for extra-curricular activities is very good. There are lunch time and after school clubs for a wide range of sports, music, chess, gardening and a computer club. At least 99 per cent of the pupils participate in these clubs, and all staff and a good proportion of parents provide support. The school also provides a very wide range of experiences for all pupils that extend beyond the planned curriculum. For example, in music, a large number of pupils benefit from extra tuition and have the opportunity to perform in the school choir and band. In physical education, pupils participate in competitive sports events and Year 6 pupils benefit in many ways from the opportunity to experience sporting activities taken by the Year 10 pupils from the adjacent senior school. The curriculum is enhanced by the wide range of visits the pupils make and by visitors to the school. Year 6 pupils participate in a residential trip to the Isle of Wight.

52. The school's provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils is very good. This is an improvement as school's previous inspection report indicated good provision. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is good, whilst moral, social and cultural development are very good. The school has a very caring ethos, which ensures that every pupil is valued and his or her views are respected. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into the life of the school. Very good social and pastoral care is given to all pupils and this support is very well led by

the headteacher. The school has continued to maintain good links with the community, which enrich the curriculum for pupils. Visiting speakers and a wide range of outside visits contribute to what the parents correctly describe as a “well rounded” education. Educational visits are used well, for example, the pupils’ trip to the canal at Hungerford has resulted in much research, and high quality art and display work seen throughout the school.

53. The provision for spiritual development is good. The main focus of development is through religious education and the acts of collective worship. Those seen had an appropriate and largely Christian emphasis and fully met statutory requirements. Local clergy visit regularly. Some assemblies have multi-cultural themes when the religious and cultural festivals of different faiths are celebrated. A good contribution to spiritual development is the opportunity to sit and reflect on the music played at the beginning of assembly once pupils have grouped together in the hall. Pupils are encouraged to take an active part in assemblies, either by answering questions which clarify their own thoughts or by voicing their thoughts about aspects of their own personal development such as ‘believing in yourself’ and the importance of faith. The study of a number of faiths, as well as Christianity, in religious education, gives pupils the opportunity to develop a greater understanding of the practices and values promoted by these faiths. Pupils’ spiritual development is appropriately promoted through the curriculum, and this is particularly evident in their poetry writing. During the week of the inspection, there were a number of good opportunities within the planned curriculum although these were not always formally recognised in teachers’ planning. In science, for example, pupils exhibit great fascination and wonder in living things in the environment whilst in religious education, pupils are provided with the opportunity to consider and discuss the values of others. Pupils also have the opportunity to visit places of worship such as a mosque, the local church and Methodist chapel.

54. The school’s provision for moral development is very good. The values that underpin the school’s ethos make a major contribution and form the basis for the very good relationships in the school. Pastoral care is considered to be of key importance to all. There are clear expectations of high standards of behaviour and acceptable conduct is effectively promoted through the school’s well-implemented policies. A constructive system of rewards and sanctions underpins the rules for behaviour. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong, at levels appropriate to their ages. The school rules are on display throughout the school. The pupils helped to create them and they reinforce the moral and social teaching promoted by the school. Most parents are very happy with the attitudes and values promoted by the school and believe that the discipline is consistent. Religious education makes a strong contribution to pupils’ moral development, through stories about the teachings of Jesus and the opportunity to discuss, and reflect on, their personal experiences. Each week there is a celebration assembly when the good work and personal achievement of pupils receive recognition by the headteacher and are entered into a ‘golden book’.

55. Provision for social development is also very good and links with the strength of their moral development. Relationships in and out of the classroom are very good: the pupils are natural, open and friendly with adults. The commitment of the school to integrate pupils with special educational needs fully into everyday life is clearly evident and very effective. Parents greatly appreciate what the school is doing and believe that the pupils are proud of the school. Pupils are given appropriate opportunities to show responsibility in carrying out tasks in classrooms and to undertake duties around the school. Older pupils are given responsibilities, such as assembly duties, assisting office staff by delivering letters around the school and picking up any litter. They also run a chess and story club for pupils in the infant school. There is a school council in which pupils from each year group are enabled to make a positive and active contribution to the life of the school. Although there are some opportunities provided for the pupils to gain social skills by working collaboratively in lessons such as literacy, science, physical education numeracy and information technology, these opportunities are not fully exploited in all classes. Social development is strongly promoted through the support of a wide range of local and worldwide charities. The school has also adopted a child in India and, through carrying out fund raising activities to support him, pupils are encouraged to think of others and develop a sense of responsibility.

56. The school makes very good provision for the pupils’ cultural development, through history, music, art, religious education and literacy. Pupils have the opportunity to appreciate the work of well-known artists and musicians. In assemblies during the week of the inspection, pupils listened to and reflected on Bach’s Air from Suite No. 3. In religious education, pupils learn about a variety of

faiths, in addition to Christianity. In literacy, teachers make good use of a variety of books to introduce pupils to a wide range of cultures. Visitors invited into the school give an added cultural dimension to many areas of the curriculum. These have included science theatre groups, musicians, Wiltshire Wild Life Trust, the founder of the Indian Children's Villages and the leader of the Islamic Foundation. Pupils have the opportunity to visit places of interest, such as the local carpet factory, a mosque, Westonbirt Arboretum and the Millennium Dome. The school makes every effort to alert pupils to their historical heritage and to understand the richness of other cultures. Very good use is made of the multicultural support service to provide active support to pupils. Through the 'Sports for All' initiative, a successful black athlete was invited into the school, not only to demonstrate his skills but to present pupils with a positive role model. This is an improvement on the previous inspection when it was reported that the appreciation of the richness and diversity of other cultures was under-represented.

57. The partnerships with the feeder infant and secondary school and other junior and primary schools in the area are good and have been strengthened since the last inspection. The school has addressed this key issue well. Joint meetings for parents have been held with the infant school, on the impact of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Frequent meetings between the head teachers, senior management teams and subject co-ordinators are supporting smooth transfers for pupils between schools. Parents have praised these transitions as well as those made by the older pupils to the adjacent secondary school. Parents and staff recognise the benefits for the junior school that come from the high level of co-operation between all the local schools. Secondary students from Year 10 have also supported the junior pupils in a reading scheme, through a sports leader scheme and in music and concert performances.

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

58. The school continues to provide a safe and caring environment for its pupils as reported in the last inspection. Members of staff know pupils well and this enables them to provide good and appropriate care and support. The quality of information kept on each pupil is detailed and comprehensive to ensure that medical and personal needs are clearly identified and dealt with. External agencies, including the educational welfare service, support this aspect of the school.

59. The school's policy and procedures follow the guidelines of the local committee for the protection of children. A member of staff is the designated person responsible for child protection arrangements and other members of staff understand the school's arrangements and procedures well.

60. The school monitors attendance well, and has procedures in place to follow up absences or lateness. It complies fully with the statutory requirements for registration and the coding and recording of attendance. The school's arrangements for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good. There are few sanctions or rewards in the school, but the behaviour policy, as well as the regular reminders and promotion of the school and class rules, give pupils and parents a clear understanding of the school's expectations. The staff and parents confirm that there are very few cases of poor behaviour, bullying or racial tension in the school. Pupils' personal development is good and is supported through the school's personal and social curriculum and through the many enriching contacts enjoyed by the pupils. These include many opportunities to work with students from the neighbouring secondary school in reading, music and sport. Pupils also work with children at the neighbouring infant school.

61. The monitoring and support of pupils' academic performance and personal development are good. The school has thorough and effective systems for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science. This involves continuous assessment by teachers, the regular use of standardised tests and the tracking of targeted pupils as they progress through the school. Careful analysis of internal and national end of Key Stage 2 tests in English and mathematics has led the school to identify weaker areas and those which require further emphasis. The computerised tracking system, recently put in place, is designed to provide an exact profile of each pupil's progress as he or she moves through the school. This is a very good initiative. There is a clear policy and set of procedures that closely link planning and assessment. Three assessment activities in each of the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are given to pupils each year and their work is annotated and levelled. A moderating process takes place within the lower and upper school

planning meetings and this work is held by the class teacher in subject folders as an aid in tracking pupils' progress.

62. All pupils with special educational needs receive good care and support and benefit from the friendly environment of the school. There is good liaison with the infant school when the pupils first enter the school. A significant number of pupils on Southfield's register for special educational needs have received support in the infant school. Additionally, a high proportion of those entering later than Year 3 have special educational needs. The co-ordinator for special educational needs provides very good information to the secondary school for those pupils who need particular attention and works hard to ensure that pupils' needs are understood and that they receive the same good level of support when they transfer.

63. Records of achievement are kept for all pupils throughout their time in the school. They take the form of a booklet that contains the pupil's annual report, a sample of work chosen by the pupil and a report written by the pupil commenting on his or her own feelings about progress and achievements. Classes have termly targets in numeracy and literacy that are sub divided for groups of pupils. The school has recently introduced a 'parent pack', where these targets are shared with parents for them to become aware of, and a partner in, the process of tracking the progress of their own child.

64. Assessment procedures in other subjects are satisfactory. Examples of pupils' work for all subjects are kept in 'big books'. However, this work is not matched to the National Curriculum attainment levels which limits the teachers' awareness of the level that pupils are achieving. Teachers keep good records. Staff keep notes and a running commentary sheet on each pupil that highlights special progress or difficulties. The end-of-year record sheet, with the results of pupils' achievement in annual tests, is completed to help teachers to monitor progress. Teachers evaluate their individual lesson plans and identify extension tasks for pupils who need them.

65. However, despite an otherwise good assessment picture, there is no register for the gifted and talented pupils in the school and the school has no systematic procedures for assessing their talents or providing for them. Since the previous inspection, a clear marking policy has been developed that provides teachers with the principles to consider when marking pupils' work and guidelines to support them. This policy is often applied although marking is more informative and supportive in some classes than others.

66. The school identifies and deals very effectively with any hazards found on site and health and safety checks, risk assessments and inspections are regularly undertaken. The school has a health and safety policy in place and the governors have just agreed to adopt the Local Education Authority model policy.

67. Members of the staff, including the head-teacher, are trained to administer first aid and the school's provision for first aid and welfare support is good, despite the lack of a dedicated welfare room. The administration of health and safety does not fully comply with all the statutory requirements but the school is aware of these minor omissions and is addressing them

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

68. Parents are very proud of the school, and say that the school is very good. In the previous inspection, the links with the parents were described as good. The school's links with parents are now very good. The school continues to place a high priority on its relationship with parents and works hard to keep parents informed.

69. The impact of the parents' involvement on the work of the school is also very good. The parents' association raises large sums of money to purchase materials and resources for the school. Parents organise social events, attend assemblies and performances, and come to the many social and curricular events, briefing meetings and parents' evenings. At the parents' meeting with the registered inspector, the only area that caused any concern was homework. Some parents felt that it was sufficient; others felt that it was not. The inspection team has carefully examined homework and judges homework to be satisfactory. It is good in English but, in mathematics, some homework is too easy for higher and very high achievers.

70. Parents are satisfied with the information they are given. They felt that the information on the

pupils' annual reports accurately described their children. These records of achievement are detailed and informative, and include details on how pupils can make further progress. Examples of pupils' work are included and pupils contribute to their own records.

71. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are well involved with the support given to their children. Parents are informed as soon as the school expresses concern and are invited to be involved in developing appropriate support for their child. There are good formal and informal opportunities for parents to discuss their concerns with the co-ordinator for special educational needs and parents have indicated their appreciation of the high level of care given to their child.

72. The school's documentation for parents is informative. It fulfils most statutory requirements except that the prospectus and governors' Annual Report to parents do not include attendance data or sufficient detail on the school's provision for special educational needs. Pupils' attendance figures were not included in the records of achievement.

73. The contribution of parents to children's learning at school and at home is also good. Parents and carers come into the school to enrich the curriculum. They have lent artefacts to the school and are encouraged to help pupils with homework projects. Parents are involved with extra-curricular activities, for example, sport and, during the inspection, parents were seen helping with the gardening club and attending to the school flower beds.

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

74. The headteacher provides strong, purposeful leadership and shows a clear sense of direction for improving the school. He leads the school with sensitivity but with firmness. He has established a very welcoming ethos that is much appreciated by parents who say that the school provides "a fine environment for pupils". He is well supported by a dynamic deputy headteacher who is also a leading mathematics teacher for Swindon. The headteacher has established very good relationships and has engendered the will to succeed in all staff, as well as the pupils. At the time of the last inspection, the headteacher had been in post for only one year and his leadership was described as "effective and giving clear direction" in a school which was in need of considerable improvement. There were weaknesses in standards of attainment across subjects and across the school. There was also a high proportion of unsatisfactory teaching as one fifth of all teaching was unsatisfactory.

75. Since the last inspection in October 1996, the school's improvement has been good and it has a good capacity to continue to improve in the future. All key issues have been effectively dealt with apart from information technology and this has been beyond the school's control. There has been substantial improvement in the quality of teaching and nearly all the unsatisfactory teaching has been eliminated. Teachers' subject knowledge has improved in areas where it was weakest including design and technology, religious education and information technology. However, there are training needs in information technology and the school has planned well for this. Procedures for assessing the pupils' attainment and progress are very thorough and are a particular strength of the school.

76. There are effective liaison procedures with the infant school and the school uses pupils' end of Key Stage 1 national assessments to help determine future provision in Year 3, including for higher achieving pupils and those with special educational needs. This is having a very positive impact on raising levels of attainment in Year 3. The school is fully aware that a key purpose is to build on the high attainment of the Year 3 pupils to secure their consistently good progress as they move through the school. The school has effective procedures for measuring this, but has not done enough work to ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently good enough in every class to make this happen. The school has addressed the need to share good practice well, particularly in literacy and numeracy and has good systems in place to ensure this happens regularly. Both the headteacher and the deputy headteacher lead by the example of their own very good teaching.

77. The headteacher and deputy headteacher, who is also the numeracy co-ordinator, successfully monitor the work of teachers and provide constructive feedback. A systematic programme includes regular observation of teaching as well as the inspection of teachers' planning and pupils' work. Through the process of appraisal and monitoring, targets have been set for teachers and these include areas for future professional development. Subject co-ordinators for literacy, numeracy, science and information technology also monitor teaching and pupils' attainment and progress.

Other subject co-ordinators monitor planning and pupils' work but have not yet monitored the quality of teaching in their subjects. The school library is much improved and is used regularly. The school has also made good progress in implementing detailed schemes of work for all subjects and planning is of a good quality. At the time of the last inspection, many were in draft form or not in place. The school is already updating some to meet the requirements of Curriculum 2000. This is a school that has made things happen since the previous inspection.

78. The school has made satisfactory progress overall in tackling the need to ensure that pupils become more self reliant in solving problems, which was part of the key issue for action related to improving the quality of teaching. This has been successfully addressed apart from in Year 6 where the teachers still over direct pupils. However, Year 6 pupils successfully solve problems in information technology when they work in pairs in the computer suite. Work remains to be done, therefore, on this key issue.

79. Since the last inspection, standards in reading, mathematics, religious education, and design and technology have improved. Standards in science in the end of national Key Stage 2 tests have steadily improved since 1996 when they were average. Standards in information technology remain below average by Year 6 although they are above average in Year 3. The school has improved the provision and progress for pupils with special educational needs. The school has not been able to implement its very good action plan for raising standards in information technology because of constant problems with the network of computers which were installed in January 1999. These were resolved last term. The school is now making satisfactory progress in tackling the need to implement fully the National Curriculum for information technology and to raise standards. In the remaining subjects, standards remain similar to the last inspection. The school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education has improved from good to very good. There have been good improvements with the links with the infant and secondary schools and these links are directed towards raising standards and providing continuity in pupils' learning.

80. The formal target setting for English and mathematics in the end of Key Stage 2 tests were modest for Level 4 for the Year 2000 but are demanding for the next two years. However, the school has not yet set targets for Level 5, despite high proportions of pupils achieving Level 3 on entry in reading, mathematics and science. The need to improve the proportion of pupils achieving Level 5 in all core subjects has been targeted on the school development plan.

81. However, the lack of numerical targets for Level 5 limits the way that the school can evaluate its success. The process of development planning is thorough with suitable targets for school improvement, including the need to improve identification procedures and provision for very able pupils. There is appropriate consultation with staff, governors and parents. Success criteria are explicit and usually quantifiable. The school development plan is well constructed except that there is no separate section for special educational needs.

82. The governing body shows a keen interest and is fully involved in the work of the school. Governors take regular training and have a good understanding of their role. They are well informed and provide valuable support. The school has satisfactory procedures for evaluating its performance in end of Key Stage 2 tests compared with the results that pupils attain on entry to the school. The school is currently introducing a new computerised system for recording the results of annual and national end of key stage tests to help it measure its performance year on year.

83. There are good systems for delegating responsibilities and teachers carry out their responsibilities well. In many subjects, their impact on standards and progress is clearly evident. The co-ordinator for special educational needs is well qualified and effective but does not have enough time for her role. She is employed for two days a week but part of this time is used to provide release time for other staff in the school. She makes generous use of her own time to ensure that the pupils, who have a broad range of special educational needs, are well supported. The school recognises her commitment and provides some additional time during the year. The six educational support assistants are well qualified and have a good range of experience. They are effectively used to provide specialised support for pupils with statements of special educational need and to teach the Additional Literacy Programme in Years 3 and 4. There is some support in literacy and numeracy lessons. However, not enough support assistant help is provided for ensuring that the high proportion of pupils on the register who have literacy difficulties receive enough support within the context of

literacy lessons.

84. The school manages its finances very well. Its financial planning supports the school's priorities in the school development plan. The governor responsible for financial management provides excellent support and there is regular assistance from the Local Education Authority. Expenditure is closely monitored and value for money is reviewed and obtained. Governors evaluate the cost effectiveness of their decisions for their impact on improving standards, and this was a weakness at the time of the previous inspection. Governors are concerned about the substantial financial costs and amount of time and effort that have been spent on training teachers in information technology and yet the suite has been little used because of very long term technical problems. The school spends its money carefully, compares its standards with those of similar schools and has begun to compare spending patterns with similar schools. The school has implemented most of the recommendations of the recent auditor's report but minor matters still need attention.

85. The school is carrying forward a large amount of its budget. This is the result of foresight and strategic planning by the school and the governing body. The proportion of pupils joining Year 3 from the infant school is much lower this September than previously. The school is using its reserves to continue to fund single aged classes as a fall in the school's budget is predicted. The lower number in new intake in September is believed to be an exceptional case. Funding for specific purposes is used to good effect including the additional funding for the Additional Literacy Programme.

86. The school has an appropriate number of qualified and experienced teachers to meet all the requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education. Staff have appropriate job descriptions and arrangements for the induction of teachers are good. Classroom support staff are well trained overall, although not all those involved in teaching the Additional Literacy Programme have received training. All staff work co-operatively to form an effective team that is dedicated to improving the standards attained by pupils and to their well being. The school makes very good use of visiting music specialist to offer high quality experiences. Physical education is also enriched by specialist provision.

87. Administrative staff are well deployed and provide the school with a welcoming and efficient service. Midday supervisors, cleaning staff and the caretaker are well organised and carry out their duties with care and efficiency. A very good feature of this school is the way the whole school staff work together, as a team, for the benefit of the pupils.

88. The in-service training of staff is well thought out and well linked to school and individual training needs. There has been a significant amount of training and support for implementing the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. For instance, the emphasis upon improving standards of writing has been well targeted and teachers have been supported through training. This is having a positive impact on raising standards.

89. Teachers use the accommodation well. On walls and in classrooms throughout the school, there are good displays of pupils' work which create a stimulating learning environment and celebrate pupils' achievement. The provision of resources is good although the school does not have enough up-to-date control technology equipment.

## 90. WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

### **(1) Improve the standards of information technology by :**

Continuing to implement the action plan and rigorously monitoring and evaluating its success;  
Speedily training teachers in control technology and in individual areas of weakness;  
Securing the necessary control technology equipment in order to implement the full National Curriculum;  
Increasing the use of classroom computers within literacy and numeracy sessions so that all pupils use them as a natural extension of their work.  
( Paragraphs 15, 16, 28, 41, 75, 79, 99, 114, 125, 137, 143, 146, 148-156 )

### **(2) Improve the standards in speaking and writing so they match those in reading by :**

Providing regular opportunities for pupils to develop communication skills by discussion in groups and through oral presentations for different purposes;  
Continuing to implement the school's writing strategy, evaluating its success and making improvements where needed.  
( Paragraphs 3, 7, 8, 10-12, 94, 96, 97, 119, 130 )

### **(3) Raise attainment in English and numeracy and science by:**

Improving the consistency of the way that literacy hour is taught through the school, especially so that older pupils are provided with opportunities to develop independent research skills in English;  
Improving the consistency of the way the mathematics lesson is implemented through the school, especially in Years 4 and 6, so that all lessons are of a high quality and pupils develop their problem solving skills;  
Ensuring that older pupils develop their ability to design and test their own experiments in science;  
Providing training for teachers where identified above in English, mathematics and science.  
( Paragraphs 11-14, 27, 33-35, 94, 95, 102, 110, 111, 116, 119, 120, 122, 125, 143 )

### **(4) Raise standards of attainment for the higher achieving pupils by:**

Providing consistent opportunities in all lessons for higher achievers to attain to their full ability;  
Putting identification procedures for very able pupils in place and providing for them especially in English, mathematics, and science;  
Reflecting carefully on the best way to provide for the very able pupils and link with other agencies where appropriate;  
Ensuring that teachers are trained to teach subjects at a rigorous enough level where necessary;  
Monitoring the progress of the higher achievers carefully and the school's strategies for teaching them.  
( Paragraphs 12-14, 18, 19, 21, 32, 33, 37, 40, 43, 65, 80, 81, 91, 92, 95, 102, 105, 108-111, 115, 119, 122, 138 )

### **(5) Improve the consistency of good teaching so that all teachers not only teach well by instruction but provide pupils with enough opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning.**

(Paragraphs 29-31, 33, 35, 37, 55, 94, 102, 106, 119, 120, 125, 129, 130, 136, 143, 145, 169 )

## **OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL**

Review the amount of time the special educational needs co-ordinator has for performing her duties.  
( Paragraph 83 )

Ensuring that the school prospectus and the governors' Annual Report to parents contain all the statutory information about special educational needs and attendance data.  
( Paragraph 72 )

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	41
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	18	34	44	2	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Y3-6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	235
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	13
<b>Special educational needs</b>	Y3-6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	58
<b>English as an additional language</b>	
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3
<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.5
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

**Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2**

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	24	33	57

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	17	19
	Girls	29	29	30
	Total	46	46	49
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	81 (79)	81 (79)	86 (79)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	18	20
	Girls	28	29	30
	Total	44	46	49
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (77)	81 (79)	86 (77)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

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

**Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	226
Any other minority ethnic group	4

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

**Teachers and classes****Qualified teachers and classes: Y3– Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Average class size	29.3

**Education support staff: Y3 – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	95

**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	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	391,991
Total expenditure	370,480
Expenditure per pupil	1597
Balance brought forward from previous year	35,000
Balance carried forward to next year	56,511

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

235

Number of questionnaires returned

54

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	66	31	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	54	41	5	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	53	41	6	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	50	14	9	0
The teaching is good.	47	50	0	1	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	34	56	6	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	27	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	38	3	3	0
The school works closely with parents.	45	46	6	3	0
The school is well led and managed.	57	37	6	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	53	3	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	63	34	3	0	0

### Summary of parents' and carers' responses

- Parents are very pleased with the broad education that the school provides. They say that it provides a "fine environment for pupils".
- Parents are pleased with nearly all aspects although their views on homework are divided. Some parents feel that there is too much homework whilst others would like their child to receive more. The inspection team considers that the amount and quality of homework are satisfactory overall. However, homework in mathematics does not always extend higher achieving pupils.

## ENGLISH

91. In Year 6, standards overall are similar to those found in most schools and reflect the results of the 1999 national tests. These tests show that, compared with all schools, standards are average. Compared with similar schools, standards are also average. Over the past four years, standards have been above average with a slight drop in 1999. This reflects the above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs in this year group, a significant proportion of whom first entered the school in Years 5 and 6. Evidence shows that the effect of later entrants to the school depressed the school's reading and writing results at Level 4 by up to ten per cent. Taking the past four years as a whole, the performance of boys in English was above the national average and the performance of girls was close to the national average. The school has set formal targets in English for 82 per cent of its pupils to reach Level 4 and above in the end of Year 6 national tests for the year 2000. This represents a satisfactory level of challenge for level 4. However, there are no specified targets for level 5 and above.

92. Although pupils in Years 3 and 4 entered the school with above average attainment, pupils in the current Year 6 entered the school with broadly average attainment in English and a higher number of pupils had special educational needs than is usual for the school. Their attainment in reading was above average. However, their attainment in writing was below average. The school has worked hard to address this weaker area and, through a range of strategies, has ensured a good rate of progress for most pupils, resulting in average standards in writing by the end of Key Stage 2. These standards in writing are slightly higher than the standards that pupils attained last year. Pupils achieve well in this school at Level 4 although there is some underachievement of higher attaining pupils.

93. The findings of this inspection are that no significant differences were observed between the attainment of girls and boys.

94. In Year 6, standards in speaking and listening are average. Pupils listen carefully and attentively in class to their teachers and to each other. They answer questions willingly but seldom at any length. Some pupils speak very quietly and their answers are not always audible. There are limited opportunities for older pupils to develop their skills of discussion and negotiation and to make planned presentations of their work in class. Although, during the week of the inspection, no discussions were observed, there were some planned opportunities within the broader curriculum. On special occasions in school, for example, older pupils discuss issues and read their work aloud to larger audiences. Younger pupils have more planned opportunities within their English lessons to work and discuss collaboratively and to develop their skills appropriately. In the school's previous inspection, standards were above average. The difference in the findings of the previous inspection and of this inspection reflects the effect of the emphasis that the school has placed on the development of pupils' writing and reading skills.

95. By the age of eleven, pupils attain above average standards in reading. Most pupils read aloud clearly and fluently from their reading books and from their work in class. Most are confident in reading materials provided by teachers. Those pupils who are less confident have a secure range of strategies to help them read unfamiliar vocabulary. Pupils are interested in reading and in talking about their books and most are able to talk about favourite authors and books. A significant number of boys are active, enthusiastic readers. Most older pupils are reading an appropriate range of books for their ability but a few are reading books which are comfortable rather than challenging. Higher achieving pupils are able to talk and write about characters in their books in some detail and to refer to aspects of the plot. However, there is little sign of higher order reading skills such as research skills and reading for inference and deduction. This was also observed in the school's previous inspection.

96. Pupils' writing in Year 6 is average. Similar standards were observed during the previous inspection but are an improvement on the standards attained by pupils in their 1999 tests. Pupils write for a good range of purposes across the curriculum and some write at a good length for pupils of this age. They write, for example, biographies of famous people, tourist brochures, newspaper reports, character studies from their reading, instructions and arguments. Most pupils have a sound understanding of simple sentence structure and the basic conventions of spelling and punctuation. Some average and higher achieving pupils are beginning to use more complex sentences and have

an appropriately developing range of vocabulary. In the best writing, pupils are using a more formal tone of writing using paragraphs and a good range of complex sentence structures. Good examples of this level of writing was seen in older pupils' work such as in a piece of argumentative writing considering 'What should happen to Babe?' Some higher achieving pupils are writing poems, which show an imaginative use of language.

97. Where writing is below average, there are often weaknesses in spelling and punctuation and a less secure understanding of structure. Throughout the school, planning of written work takes place and there is generally an appropriate emphasis on drafting and editing. The school has identified the improvement of pupils' writing as a priority for development and has worked hard to achieve this aim. Pupils use a neat cursive style of handwriting. They present their work carefully and generally take a pride in, and care with, the appearance of their work.

98. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils who have English as an additional language achieve standards which are appropriate to their previous attainment and often make good progress when they receive good, well-focused support in class.

99. There is sound development of literacy skills across the curriculum. Opportunities are used appropriately to broaden pupils' writing experiences such as well organised investigative work in science and geography, retelling stories from the Bible in religious education, and writing as slaves or slave masters in their work in history on Ancient Greece. There are good information technology links when pupils use the information technology suite and write and illustrate poetry or create advertising posters. However, classroom computers are infrequently used within the literacy hour, as older pupils only have one computer in the classroom.

100. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in English is good. In the school's previous inspection report, the quality of teaching and learning was considered to be satisfactory overall. This represents good improvement. The improvement in writing has been achieved through the well focused teaching of basic skills. The Additional Literacy Support programme is being taught well in Years 3 and 4. Educational support assistants have had training to work with pupils and to monitor their progress. Results show that pupils have made good progress. Teachers have sound subject knowledge and this enables them to plan effectively and to organise interesting activities in lessons. In all classes teachers have good relationships with pupils which creates a productive working atmosphere and enables pupils to feel confident and to be willing to do their best work. Teachers plan and teach literacy lessons on a daily basis and supplement this with additional sessions for guided reading and spelling.

101. Very good examples of the effective teaching of the literacy hour were seen in both Year 3 classes. One of the lessons focused on using a range of information books to develop note making skills. The teacher had planned the lesson carefully with a good range of resources to match the differing ability levels in the class and a good regard for the elements of the National Literacy Strategy. The teacher used questions very effectively to guide pupils in the use of their existing knowledge. She encouraged them to use skills, such as skimming and scanning, which had been developed in previous lessons and gave them a clear explanation of a methodical approach to note making. As a result of this sound foundation, pupils took part confidently in discussions in their groups and were able to proceed with their tasks with the minimum of disruption to their concentration. At the end of the lesson, pupils discussed each other's contribution and the teacher ensured that each pupil's achievement was valued and recognised.

102. Where teaching has weaknesses, mainly in lessons for older pupils, there are not enough opportunities to develop their independent learning and skills of negotiation, discussion and collaboration. Additionally, although the school has been effective in supporting average and lower achieving pupils in establishing a sound foundation for skills in English, expectations of some of the higher achieving pupils in some classes are not always sufficiently challenging. These were also issues in the school's previous inspection report.

103. Homework is used appropriately across the school to reinforce and extend class work. The quality of marking is generally good. Teachers provide encouraging recognition of pupils' achievements and in the best marking, which includes marking in Year 6, there is a good range of comments, which identify how pupils might continue to improve. Where errors or unsatisfactory work have been noted, teachers are generally consistent in ensuring that these comments are acted upon.

104. The school has a policy for the subject and appropriate long, medium term and shorter term planning procedures. This is an improvement since the school's previous inspection when the subject did not have a completed policy. The co-ordinator understands her role well. Both she, and the headteacher, monitor the other teachers' lessons and planning and provide evaluative feedback. A comprehensive programme of in service training has been planned to support teachers in their focus on developing the teaching of writing. Effective strategies are being used to ensure that parents understand how they can help their children and have included a workshop on the Literacy Strategy and reading support and writing support.

105. The curriculum for English meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The National Literacy Strategy has been fully implemented and is taught on a daily basis. Assessment procedures are good. An effective tracking system is used which provides the school with good information to measure pupils' progress and the success of their strategies. However, although testing procedures show that a small number of pupils are very capable on entry to the school in reading, the school does not systematically provide for very able pupils and monitor their progress.

106. The school's previous inspection identified the development of the library as a key issue. There has been a good improvement in this area. The school now has a well equipped, attractive space which can be used for either individual, group or whole-class work. The newly organised stock is of good quality and well organised. The school benefits from the help of a qualified librarian in its use and development. However, its use as a base for pupils' independent learning and for improving their research skills is not sufficiently developed. Resources for the subject overall are good. There are good quality resources for the teaching of literacy and a good number and range of appropriate reading books for pupils in the classroom. The subject is enhanced by the use of the Additional Literacy Support programme, by annual book weeks and visits from writers and teachers of English from the local secondary school. Older pupils enjoyed the opportunity to see Shakespearean productions at the Wyvern theatre in Swindon.

## **MATHEMATICS**

107. Standards in Year 6 are above those found in most schools and reflect the 1999 national tests. These tests show that when compared with all schools and similar schools, standards were above average. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 4 was above average and close to the average at Level 5 compared with national and similar school averages. The assessments made by teachers were similar.

108. When the averages of the school's end of Key Stage 2 test results for 1999 are compared with those reached by the school since 1997, they show an improving trend that is greater than the national trend. The combined data for the last three years show that the performance of boys and girls is above average in both cases. The school has set challenging targets for Level 4 for the Years 2001 and 2002 although the target set for 2000 was modest and was exceeded in 1999. The school has not set targets for Level 5 despite the high proportion of pupils attaining Level 3 on entry to the school.

109. Since the last inspection, the school has made good progress in improving the standards of mathematics which were then average. This is the result of the very good leadership of the mathematics co-ordinator. The quality of teaching has improved from satisfactory to good and this is raising standards. However, insufficient work has been done in raising the attainment of higher achieving pupils as they are underachieving in Years 4 and 6.

110. On entry to the school, the current Year 6 pupils attained above average standards at Level 2 and nearly one third attained at Level 3. By the time they leave in Year 6, the school has sustained the proportion attaining average standards but yet only one quarter attain higher levels. On entry to the school, the current Year 3 attained above average standards at both Level 2 and Level 3. The very successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy in Year 3 is raising standards still further. As a result, standards are now well above average by the end of Year 3.

111. In Year 6, most pupils understand how to use the four rules of number and achieve well when they multiply large numbers by two digit numbers. Higher achievers understand how to do long

division and perform calculations accurately. Many understand place value and demonstrate this skill with decimals. Most pupils add and subtract decimals to two places competently and higher achievers change decimals to fractions or percentages. Pupils' understanding of algebra is good and many skilfully use simple formulae. They are very skilled when measuring and constructing angles. Pupils' understanding of probability is good although data handling is satisfactory. Many know how to make and interpret line graphs but there is little evidence of higher level attainment. Pupils' ability to calculate mentally, and the speed at which they work, are average. Their problem solving skills are underdeveloped. Pupils search for patterns and can apply a rule, for example, when applying the rule of odd and even numbers to check whether results are likely to be correct. However, they do not use a wide range of approaches for calculating answers and their ability to explain their thinking is not developed. Higher achievers underachieve significantly in problem solving through the limited opportunities provided for higher level work.

112. In Year 3, the National Numeracy Strategy is consistently applied very well and pupils' mental skills and problem solving are impressive. In Year 5, pupils also show a good level of mental agility. However, in Years 4 and 6, the National Numeracy Strategy is not implemented so well and this is affecting the consistency of the progress that pupils make in acquiring the ability to think quickly and apply their numeracy to problem solving.

113. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress through systematic identification and the provision of well-matched work. The school uses setting for mathematics twice a week throughout the school and pupils' work in these lessons is particularly well matched to their needs. Where the National Numeracy Strategy is implemented well, pupils also make good progress when taught in mixed ability classes.

114. Mathematics is applied satisfactorily to other subjects, including science and geography. In design and technology, pupils apply their measuring skills well but there is little evidence of data handling. The use of information technology within mathematics is unsatisfactory, as its use is irregular. Younger pupils use information technology well when using data handling software to analyse features of mini beasts and selecting the best graphs or pi charts for showing results. Equally good work occurs when older pupils use spreadsheets for working out the cost of ice cream.

115. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. However, higher achieving pupils underachieve in Years 4 and 6 through inconsistent opportunities to learn at higher levels particularly in problem solving. Their progress in Years 3 and 5 is good through consistent provision for higher level work. There are also a small number of pupils in this school who are very able in mathematics. However, procedures for systematically identifying their talents and providing for them are not yet in place. The school has recently appointed a co-ordinator for more able pupils and has outline plans for addressing their needs in mathematics.

116. Pupils' behave very well and have good attitudes to learning. Many younger pupils are very enthusiastic about mathematics because of the high quality provision and challenge in lessons. In Years 3 and 5, pupils can learn in a variety of ways and they take responsibility for their learning, make decisions and work in teams very well. Although the oldest pupils concentrate and apply themselves to tasks when working individually, they make few decisions and rarely work independently. There is still some work to be done, therefore, in tackling the key issue related to improving pupils' decision making and problem solving skills.

117. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Just over a half of all lessons are good which includes a small proportion of very good teaching in Years 3 and 5. The rest is satisfactory, apart from one unsatisfactory lesson observed in Year 4. This represents good improvement since the last inspection when teaching was satisfactory overall. Then there was little good teaching and the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching was higher.

118. A strong aspect of all the teaching is the way that the results of assessments are used, including the end of Key Stage 1 national assessments from the infant school, to group pupils and to plan for matching work to pupils' previous attainment. However, there are differences between classes in the quality of the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. This affects the way pupils learn. In the very good or good lessons, teachers are very adept at varying their teaching style to include instruction, questioning and problem solving. Time is used well throughout. In the first part

of the numeracy lesson, there is a lot of class teaching and focused questioning to challenge pupils of different abilities. The introductory class session also includes short opportunities for pupils to learn in small teams, engage in mathematical discussion and learn from each other. For example, when Year 5 learned to order decimals according to their place value, the teacher included a range of activities that included instruction, and paired practical work. A striking feature of the very good lessons observed in Years 3 and a lower mathematics set in Year 5 is that mathematics is fun. Teachers present the subject very enthusiastically and they are particularly skilled at developing pupils' mental skills. In these lessons, there are good opportunities for practical work and the teacher ensures that pupils of all abilities are consistently challenged.

119. In all mathematics lessons, teachers plan work that is relevant to pupils' daily lives, for example, in Year 6 pupils keep running totals of their money by calculating shopping bills. However, although the three part mathematics lesson is in place in all classes, it is not implemented as successfully in lessons that are satisfactory rather than good. In Year 6, teachers explain clearly and demonstrate well but they do not question pupils as effectively or give them enough opportunity for them to explain their thinking. Year 6 pupils are given little chance to learn through team work and to solve problems. Although all teachers use a similar weekly planning system, plans do not always show the range of teaching and learning styles. This affects the consistency of teaching and learning processes from class to class. In satisfactory lessons, although the rate of learning and the amount of consolidation and practice are suitable for average and lower achieving pupils, there is sometimes too much repetition for higher attaining pupils, even within the context of setted lessons. In the unsatisfactory lesson observed in Year 4, pupils were given too much writing which limited their time spent on mathematics and developing mathematical thinking.

120. The subject is very well co-ordinated and the teacher responsible is a leading mathematics teacher for Swindon. She sets a very good example to others by her own teaching and leads sensitively by example. There is a very good policy and scheme of work although there are still inconsistencies in their implementation in some classes. The improvement of mathematics, including the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, has been given a high priority. Since the last inspection, the school has energetically addressed weaknesses in the teaching of mathematics. There has been considerable staff training and all staff have been involved in the monitoring of pupils' work. The co-ordinator and the headteacher regularly monitor the work of teachers and support them in the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. They are fully aware that more training and support are needed to develop the expertise of all teachers to a good standard. Resources are good and the school is effective in evaluating its strengths and weaknesses. Homework supports learning in lessons well for pupils of average and below average ability but is not always demanding enough for higher achieving pupils. Marking is often supportive and usually gives the pupils a clear view of how to improve, however, it is not consistent in all classes. Assessment procedures and practices are good overall although teachers' understanding of how to assess pupils' problem solving skills is insufficiently developed. The requirements of the National Curriculum are met.

## **SCIENCE**

121. Standards by the end of Key Stage 2 are above those found in most schools and reflect the school's results in the 1999 end of Key Stage 2 national tests when compared with all schools as well as similar schools. These results are in line with the findings of the school's previous inspection, although the National Curriculum tests, taken later in the same year, were average. Trends in performance in national tests over the last four years indicate improvement that is slightly greater than the national trend. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs receive well-targeted support and make good progress. However, for older pupils, the over direction of their work by teachers results in insufficient development of their ability to take responsibility for their own learning. This was identified as an area for development in the previous inspection report. Whilst this has improved in most classes, insufficient work has been done in addressing the key issue for older pupils.

122. By the age of 11, many pupils demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of living things in their environment. They understand that there are areas within the main habitats that support different types of life. For instance, in preparation for their visit to the Isle of Wight, pupils in Year 6 understand that different animals and plants are found in each of the five beach zones and

that their survival is dependent on the different conditions. Many identify a variety of living things and have good classification skills. In life processes, pupils use scientific names for the major organs of body systems and identify their position well. Their knowledge of electricity is sound and they draw accurate diagrams of a circuit using conventional symbols correctly for bulbs, wire, battery and switches. Pupils demonstrate a sound knowledge and understanding of the phases of the moon and know that the earth orbits the sun once each year. However, pupils' investigative skills, although average overall, have some weaknesses. Their experimental skills of predicting, fair testing, measuring, pattern seeking and concluding are average. Older pupils do not plan their own experiments and, consequently, they do not all develop independent enquiry skills. Pupils do not ask questions enough or design and plan investigations to test a question. There is no systematic provision for very able pupils, and this is now targeted on the school development plan as an area for development. At present, their progress is unsatisfactory.

123. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 already recognise that feeding relationships exist between plants and animals and sequence a food chain within a land habitat that includes a plant as a producer. This is very good attainment for this age. They use and explain the terms, 'producer', 'predator' and 'prey', with understanding. Work on light by the pupils in Year 5 show that they know that when light is blocked, a shadow is formed and, when it hits a shiny surface, it is reflected. They make careful measurements of the changing shadows and record their findings in chart form. They group materials as solids, liquids or gases and learn that solids retain their own shape and liquids flow and take the shape of the container they are in. Pupils make predictions and understand the need for a fair test when, for example, carrying out an investigation to find out the strength of a plastic carrier bag. They carry out tests to find out which materials make the best thermal insulators, use thermometers to make careful measurements of the temperature of liquid in containers at regular intervals, and record their results in a suitable table form. Many pupils, throughout the school, use scientific vocabulary well with understanding and present their work in a variety of suitable formats, such as drawings, diagrams, bar charts and tabular form

124. The quality of teaching and the quality of learning in science, including that for pupils with special educational needs, are good overall. A Year 3 lesson on 'food chains' illustrated several of the strengths of the teaching in science. The teacher made good use of discussion to capture and retain the pupils' interest. Questions such as 'why does the food chain start with a green plant?' made the pupils think and, after listening to their replies, a clear and suitably detailed explanation was given to them. Emphasis is placed on the development of scientific vocabulary and pupils quickly learn to use terms such as, producer, predator, prey and consumer correctly, in relation to their work. Lesson planning overall is clear and the activities provided indicate that pupils' learning is, in general, well organised. Overall, the management of pupils is very good and promotes a good working atmosphere.

125. All staff show confidence when teaching science and, where teaching is best, provide a good range of opportunities for the pupils to become actively involved in their own learning. In these lessons, the teaching style encourage pupils to ask questions to clarify their ideas and, as a result, they know the reason for learning and achieve well. At times, however, older pupils are over-directed in lessons by the teachers. Pupils in all lessons show positive attitudes to the subject and apply their literacy and numeracy skills well in science. Information technology is regularly applied well in Years 3 and 4 and very well when pupils build their own scientific databases. Pupils use the computer very well when selecting the best mathematical chart for the purpose of showing particular trends in their evidence, for example the types of mini beasts found in a certain habitat. There is no control technology, for example, for establishing the monitoring of the outside temperature.

126. The subject is capably managed by the co-ordinator and, through her recent audit of the subject, she is well aware of the areas to be developed in the future. At present, science is taught as a discrete subject in a two-year cycle for the lower and upper school. This means that, at times, pupils in Year 4 are receiving the same level of work as those in Year 3 and, in Year 6, pupils cover the same work as that planned for Year 5. However, in September, the subject is due for review and the school is moving towards the use of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines. Medium-term plans for the subject are detailed and provide clear guidance for areas to be covered, identify what the pupils will do and what teachers intend that the pupils will achieve. Assessment procedures are good. End of unit assessments are administered to all pupils and their achievements and levels are recorded on a sheet with comments and stored in a folder for the purpose of tracking

each pupil's progress. Learning resources are good and the school has successfully developed environmental areas in the grounds that have gained awards from a telecommunications firm. The science curriculum is enriched by a good range of visitors invited into the school, such as the Kinetic and Quantum theatre groups and, very recently, the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust was involved in supporting an environmental day organised by the school. Pupils in Year 6 benefit from the residential visit to the Isle of Wight, where the focus is on the development of their knowledge and understanding of the environment. Overall, the subject makes a considerable contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. National Curriculum requirements are met.

## **ART**

127. During the course of the inspection, there were limited opportunities to observe the teaching of art. Evidence gained from the scrutiny of work, photographs and display has been used as the basis of judgements.

128. In Year 6, standards are similar to those found in most schools. This judgement is similar to the findings of the school's previous inspection. The pupils in Year 6 produce particularly high quality pencil sketches of Ancient Greek architecture. They show great attention to detail, line, shape and form. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the range and use of colour and are confident at blending and mixing colours to produce different tones and texture. The work of pupils in Year 6 where they used a small square viewfinder to look closely at a section of a pattern and then enlarged what they saw, enabled them to experiment with design and use colour to good effect. In Year 6, their sketches of three-dimensional shapes lead to the production of competent paintings of skyscrapers that show good use of colour, tone and shape. There is evidence on display, such as their work on Islamic patterns and the sketches of Ancient Greek architecture, to indicate that pupils are learning about some forms of art from around the world. However, there was little evidence of older pupils working in textiles.

129. Pupils have satisfactory understanding of famous artists. They make pictures in the style of Matisse and William Morris and understand the main features of the artists' approaches. In Year 3, pupils' use of wool to create pictures in the style of a Van Gogh painting shows a good degree of skill and creativity. All pupils use their sketchbooks appropriately to develop their ideas and techniques. Art is well linked to subjects across the curriculum for younger pupils. For example, in science and in design and technology, they create mini-beast models using paper-mache and apply their art skills well. In literacy, they illustrate their work with great care to represent the feelings expressed in their poetry writing. However, there is little evidence to indicate that older pupils have the opportunity to discuss and evaluate their own work.

130. The evidence indicates that the quality of teaching and learning in art is at least satisfactory and that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress in this subject. Lessons are well planned and show that teachers have an in depth knowledge and understanding of the subject. Teachers use appropriate activities to extend pupils' artistic knowledge and expertise and clearly build on previous experiences. They introduce pupils to a varied range of tools and media for both art and design. This helps pupils to build up their skills systematically as they move through the school. Pupils' work is valued and is displayed well around the school. Where teaching has a weakness, pupils have limited planned opportunities for discussion and evaluation of their own work. Classroom assistants and parents were seen providing valuable support to teachers and helpful guidance to the pupils as they worked. Teachers often create relevant links with religious education, geography, history and science and design and technology. Information technology is used well in art and is applied particularly well in Year 6 when pupils use graphics software for design work.

131. The subject is well led by an experienced teacher, who has a clear understanding of her role. She has established appropriate priorities for the development of the subject. Since the previous inspection, the school has developed medium-term plans well to ensure the systematic development of specific art skills throughout the school. There are plans to review the policy and scheme in light of the new curriculum requirements in September 2000. Whilst the teaching of art is not directly monitored, pupils' work is displayed for public scrutiny and samples of their art work have been collected that show the range of work covered in each year group. Learning resources are of good quality and there is a good range of media and tools. The subject makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

132. Very little teaching was observed during the inspection because of the timetable. Evidence was taken from work on display, photographs of pupils' work, examination of their books, talking to pupils and observing a small group working with a parent when designing and making mini beasts in an art area.

133. In Year 6, standards in design and technology are similar to those found in most schools. Since the last inspection, the school has raised standards and has made good progress in addressing its weaknesses. At that time, work was of a low level and there was very little evidence of pupils using the full designing and making process. The school has systematically implemented a good quality scheme of work and has trained teachers. The full design and make process is understood and followed by teachers and pupils.

134. In Year 6, pupils combine their designing and making skills with knowledge of products, structures, mechanisms or electrical control. They apply their scientific knowledge particularly well when designing and making toys with moving parts such as cams and levers. Their designing skills are satisfactory. Pupils design to a clear purpose, generate ideas well and communicate ideas appropriately by drawing. They select materials carefully, although the range provided is sometimes narrow. Their craft skills are satisfactory and a good feature is the way they measure and cut wood accurately. They evaluate their work as they proceed through the designing and making process. When designing and making musical instruments, older pupils show a satisfactory understanding of users' needs and apply this knowledge when designing and making.

135. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 design and make with a wider range of materials than in Years 5 and 6 and use textiles and food. When designing biscuits, Year 3 pupils understand that people have different preferences and use this information when designing and making a biscuit for a brother, sister or friend. Year 4 pupils design and make mini beasts from papier mache, tissue paper and textiles. Strong features of the mini beast work are the creativity of pupils' ideas, the way pupils apply art and science and the quality of their end products. When younger pupils design and make torches from plastic bottles, they investigate different torches and apply this knowledge well when designing and making. Another strong feature of this project is how pupils apply their scientific knowledge of electrical circuits when designing and making.

136. Examination of pupils' previous work shows that teaching and learning are at least satisfactory and that all teachers understand how to teach the processes and skills involved in product evaluation, as well as designing and making. Product investigation is a strong feature in younger pupils' work. Older pupils investigate products well when they find out about moving parts but this is not as thorough for users' needs and preferences. For example, there is no evidence that pupils research people's product preferences and use mathematics to record and analyse the results.

137. At present, information technology is rarely applied to design and technology. Pupils apply their literacy and numeracy skills satisfactorily overall. However there is little evidence of the use of data handling. Pupils apply their scientific skills well throughout and art is applied well for younger pupils and satisfactorily for older pupils.

138. Pupils with special educational needs make the same progress as the rest of their peers. The progress of higher achievers is unsatisfactory as their talents are not identified or met and they work at the same level as the rest of the class.

139. The scheme of work supports teachers well in teaching skills, knowledge and designing and making for design and technology, although it does not show teachers how they might use information technology. The subject is well co-ordinated by the headteacher who also monitors the quality of teaching and supports teachers in their teaching. This has raised standards. However, in Years 5 and 6, food and textile technology are not included in the long term-plan which limits older pupils' skills in working with a wide range of materials. Assessment systems are in place and are built into the scheme of work. Resources are good including materials and food technology.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

140. In Year 6, standards are similar to those found in most schools. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve similar standards. During the week of the inspection, only one lesson of geography was observed due to timetabling arrangements. Judgements are based on the lesson seen, analysis of pupils' work and teachers' planning and discussions with teachers and pupils. The standards achieved are the similar to those of the last inspection.

141. In Year 6, pupils have a good knowledge of geographical features and issues of the local area. They understand how to use a sound range of maps at different scales to compare features of other local areas, such as Hungerford and Swindon, with their own area of Highworth. In their work on weather and climate, they investigate microclimates within the school and there is evidence of some research on aspects of weather, such as studies of features of violent weather. Although older pupils have an annual residential week in which they are able to conduct geographical investigations, the development of pupils' research and independent study skills is limited. This was also identified as in need of further development in the school's previous inspection report. However, this area has improved for younger pupils. Younger pupils conduct investigations into services in contrasting areas and make good use of numeracy skills to record their findings in charts of different kinds. In their work on Chembakoli in India, they are able to use a range of photographs and written material to make well formed observations about life in an Indian village and make comparisons with their own lives.

142. On the evidence available, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers' subject knowledge, particularly of the local area, enables them to plan a range of interesting activities, which builds appropriately on pupils' own knowledge. In the one lesson observed, pupils developed their understanding of a good range of geographical vocabulary because it was specifically taught. The teacher built well on previous work and on pupils' knowledge of both Hungerford and Swindon, to develop well their understanding of how land use changes as settlements grow. The lesson was effective because the teacher established a clear focus for the lesson, set a challenging pace and used well targeted questions. However, there were too limited opportunities for pupils to explore issues independently or to present their findings to the rest of the class. Analysis of pupils' work shows that pupils make satisfactory progress overall and present their work neatly and carefully. However, there is little provision for very able pupils especially in developing and using research skills to solve a geographical problem.

143. The policy and scheme of work meet requirements. There is an appropriate allocation of curriculum time. This is an improvement since the last inspection which identified shortcomings in the scheme of work. As part of the school's rolling programme for subject reviews, geography is due for review early in the next academic year. The co-ordinator has identified the need to consider the incorporation of aspects of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's guidelines into the existing scheme of work in order to develop the environmental element. This aspect of pupils' work is currently incorporated into the science curriculum and does not sufficiently focus on geographical issues. The school is also reviewing the existing two year cycle for this subject and intends to improve the links with pupils' previous learning by structuring the curriculum year on year. The curriculum is effectively enhanced by visits to Hungerford and the Isle of Wight. Geography makes a sound contribution to pupils' awareness of their own and other cultures. The subject contributes effectively to pupils' literacy and numeracy development. Resources for the subject are satisfactory with an appropriate range of materials for studies of other localities and a good range of maps, atlases and globes. The school library has an appropriate range of books for the subject but these resources are not sufficiently used to develop pupils' research skills. There is little evidence of the use of information technology in geography.

## **HISTORY**

144. In Year 6, standards are similar to those found in most schools. This is similar to the judgement of the previous inspection. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs and with English as an additional language achieve satisfactory standards, relative to their previous attainment. There were no opportunities to observe the teaching of history during the week of the inspection due to the structure of the curriculum. Judgements were made on the analysis of pupils' work, displays, teachers' planning and discussions with teachers and pupils.

145. In Year 6, pupils have an increasing depth of factual knowledge and understanding of Ancient Greece, Ancient Egypt, Tudor times and the Victorian period in Britain. They have gained a sound insight into some aspects of the way that people live at different periods and into some of the important events that shaped their lives. In their study of Ancient Greece pupils learn about the lives of Greek slaves and how the Acropolis was built. Younger pupils learn to compare houses in Tudor times with their own houses. They know about some of the Tudor monarchs and how they affected the lives of the people at that time. They show an appropriate understanding of chronology when they develop family trees of the Tudor dynasty and construct simple time lines from their knowledge. Pupils develop a suitable range of specialist vocabulary and write with increasing detail and accuracy. Opportunities are missed for older pupils to develop independent research skills and to consider reasons why the past is represented and interpreted in different ways. Information technology is rarely used for this purpose.

146. Indications are that the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. This was similar to the previous inspection. The good range and breadth of pupils' knowledge indicate that teachers are confident in their knowledge of the subject and have an interest in exploring an appropriate range of activities. Good use is made of the local area and also of the range of places of historical interest near the school. However, there is an over reliance on worksheets in some classes and the school makes little use of the resources available through information technology.

147. A sound policy and scheme of work support the teaching of the subject. The co-ordinator is an experienced teacher who has a good understanding of her role. She is currently considering amalgamating aspects of the units of work in the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority into the existing scheme of work. There has been no opportunity for the co-ordinator to monitor teaching but she has been able to monitor pupils' work and teachers' planning and has frequent informal discussions with colleagues. Assessment in the subject follows the whole-school pattern. There is an effective overview of pupils' development in the tracking of their work but this does not allow sufficient opportunity for teachers to evaluate and record the development of individual pupils' historical skills. Literacy and numeracy support pupils' learning in history well, for example, time lines, letter writing as factory workers in Victorian times and note making and annotating in older pupils' work on the building of the Acropolis. Resources are adequate to support teaching and are well supplemented through the local Museum and Library loan service. The curriculum is enhanced by visits to Cirencester and Oxford Museums and by days such as Young Archaeologists' Days organised by the Wiltshire Advisory Service. The subject makes a sound contribution to pupils' cultural and social development.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

148. Pupils in Year 6 attain standards in information technology that are below those found in most schools. Pupils' skills in information technology are improving rapidly now because of the regular use of the network of computers in the information technology suite. The school's overall progress in improving the low standards in the subject since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. The school is now making satisfactory progress

149. The school energetically addressed the weaknesses identified in the last inspection report by training teachers immediately, producing a good scheme of work and securing agreement from the Local Education Authority that a network of up-to-date computers was to be installed. Installation delays led to the suite being installed in January 1999. Subsequent technical problems with computers, and software, rendered the suite unusable until February this year. The installation company fell into difficulty, which caused many delays. The governors have written many letters of complaint in order to put this matter right. The school has, therefore, only recently been able to ensure that each pupil spends the required time using an up-to-date computer. Classes in Years 5 and 6 are large and it has not been feasible to raise standards for older pupils by the sole use of classroom computers. The infant school's inspection report in February 1999 shows that the current Year 3 pupils attained above average standards as Year 2 pupils in information technology. These standards are being maintained in Year 3. In this year, there is considerable expertise and there are more classroom computers, which are used regularly, than for older pupils.

150. In Year 6, pupils' word processing skills are satisfactory and they manipulate word processing and graphics programs satisfactorily. These were weaknesses at the time of the previous inspection

that the school has recently successfully tackled. Pupils in Year 6 design advertisements for products or magazines showing good awareness of their audience. They also produced some good work when designing posters to advertise Southfield School's non-uniform day. Pupils satisfactorily combine graphics with text and create good quality end products. They use the key board competently and understand how to access a satisfactory range of word processing applications. They successfully change the sizes, style and colour of fonts for their purpose. They edit their stored work when creating Night Poems and combine their words with graphics in order to illustrate their poems. However, pupils' ability to handle data, interrogate information for research purposes through using CD-ROM, and use the Internet is underdeveloped. Pupils' understanding of how to use control technology is weak. Although the network provides access to control technology for controlling screen robots, the school has not purchased software and hardware to monitor external events, for example, light and temperature sensors. Statutory requirements for control technology are, therefore, not met. The school has the software and control equipment for teaching pupils to write programs for controlling output devices such as electric motors, lights and buzzers, but pupils' access is limited as the equipment can only be used with two older computers.

151. A striking feature of the computer work of all pupils is their ability to understand the relevance of information technology to their daily life. Pupils in Year 5 use spreadsheets and understand how formulae help them to calculate the cost of different numbers of different kinds of ice cream easily. Year 4 pupils understand how the computer helps them to store information and to gain easy access at a future date, for example when storing their letters for persuading a town mouse to live in the country. Year 3 pupils know that searching through data for classifying mini beasts is much more efficient when they use the computer to help them analyse the data they have stored.

152. Pupils with special educational needs have made unsatisfactory progress over time, similar to the rest of their peers, although the progress they are now making is satisfactory. The very able pupils' progress is poor over time as a small minority of them enter the school with advanced understanding and skills. There is little provision for them.

153. Pupils apply information technology well to all subjects in Year 3 including mathematics and science as well as English. There are more class computers in this year and these are used regularly in literacy and numeracy lessons. In the remaining classes, although the suite of computers is now used regularly there is little use of class computers in literacy and numeracy lessons. Although work in the suite supports literacy and mathematics lessons well, the lack of classroom time on computers limits pupils' ability to use information technology as a natural extension to their work in other subjects.

154. Pupils' attitudes are very good and they use the computer confidently and independently. They generate ideas and solve problems well and this is particularly the case when Year 3 and Year 6 work in pairs in the computer suite.

155. The quality of teaching and learning is now satisfactory overall. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when teaching was unsatisfactory, largely because of the lack of expertise of teachers and the lack of regular instruction in skills for each pupil. Both these aspects have improved. Several teachers have good subject knowledge in all aspects of the subject although there are still some weaknesses in data handling and control technology. The school has a systematic programme in place for training teachers to use software and then to use it to teach information technology skills using the network. This is proving to be effective. In the lessons observed, all were at least satisfactory and most were good or better. Two were very good. In the very good lessons observed, in Year 6 and Year 3, teachers' management of pupils, use of time and subject knowledge were all very good. In both of these lessons, there was a very good balance between instruction and opportunities for the pupils to work in pairs and make decisions for themselves. The pace of learning was rapid in these lessons and there was an atmosphere of excitement and purposeful activity. However, as there is limited use of class computers during literacy and numeracy sessions in some classes, teaching is only satisfactory overall.

156. The co-ordinator was absent during the inspection week but examination of her file, her work with the pupils and her strategic action plan for the subject shows that she has a very good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The action plan is very good and is being systematically applied now that the suite is in action. The scheme of work is good and the school plans to fully implement the national guidance in the Year 2000. There is a systematic training programme for the

whole staff and extra individual training needs have been identified. The co-ordinator successfully monitors pupils' work and observes teaching. One weakness, however, is that there are no systematic plans for helping teachers to use the computer more effectively within literacy and numeracy sessions. Resources are good overall. There is a good proportion of up-to-date computers and satisfactory software because of the addition of the network. However, all the necessary control technology equipment has not been purchased.

## **MUSIC**

157. Few class music lessons were observed during the inspection because of the timetable. Also, a substantial number of pupils attended rehearsals at the Wyvern Theatre in Swindon at some point for part of the week, which further limited observations of music lessons. Pupils were preparing for the Millennium Music Festival that they performed during that week. However, pupils were observed and heard singing in the choir, in assemblies, and at the concert and playing a wide variety of musical instruments. These observations indicate that pupils are provided with a very broad range of musical experiences and that they can achieve highly when performing. This is generally in line with judgement of the previous inspection.

158. In the concert itself, the school choir sang a medley of songs that included some singing in two parts. The quality of singing was very high and performed with maturity. As a choir, their use of diction and phrasing when singing, 'Sing, sing a song' was quite exceptional. Pupils in the school band also participated in the concert, performing with a full orchestra that included strings, brass and woodwind instruments and recorders. They played confidently and used their musical knowledge and skills well during the performance. In the two lessons observed, when many of the pupils were missing, the singing showed that pupils have a good understanding of pulse and basic musical structure.

159. At all ages, a high number of pupils are learning orchestral instruments. They are challenged effectively in their lessons and have the opportunity to perform to an audience. During assemblies, pupils show appropriate skills when listening to the music played and learn to recognise ways in which music can be used to create a particular atmosphere. However, there is less evidence of pupils composing pieces of music in graphic or traditional notation to demonstrate their knowledge and communicate their understanding to others.

160. There is very little evidence from which a sound judgement can be made about the quality of class teaching, although the quality of pupils' learning by the age of 11 in performing indicates that it is good. Lessons are planned clearly and all teachers make good use of radio programmes in the lessons. These programmes cover all the main aspects of music and ensure that the curriculum for the pupils is broad. In the two lessons observed, teachers set challenging singing tasks for the pupils and used the programme well to teach the appropriate skills.

161. The music co-ordinator assumed the responsibility just over a year ago after originally supporting the previous post holder. She has specialist knowledge of the subject, an enthusiasm for it and overall, provides strong leadership. The existing policy, scheme and radio programmes are helpful to all teachers and ensure that pupils' musical skills are developed in a logical way as they move through the school. Strategies are not in place to monitor the teaching of music. The school has a very good range of tuned and untuned instruments, including keyboards, a sound system and some multi-ethnic instruments. This shows an improvement in resources since the previous inspection, when it was noted that there was a need to improve the range of instruments. Instrumental teaching is available and is partly subsidised through the Swindon Borough for lessons in guitar, flute, clarinet, piano, cello, violin, viola, brass, percussion and recorders and many pupils take these opportunities. The school is involved in the annual music festival and the school choir and band meet on a regular basis for rehearsals. All pupils have the opportunity to join in weekly singing assemblies and a music club also takes place once a week after school for anyone who is keen. Overall, music makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning experiences. Through concerts, extra-curricular activities and visitors invited into the school, music enhances the school's ethos and effectively contributes to the pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

162. In Year 6, standards in physical education are above those found in most schools. During

the inspection, only games and swimming were observed as no teaching of gymnastics or dance was planned for this period. Athletics and adventurous activities are planned for, and occur, during the summer term. In the previous inspection, standards were said to be 'in line with or above national expectations although some attainment is below average'. In Year 6, pupils have acquired a good range of skills and strategies which lead to playing recognised team games. Boys and girls show good levels of accuracy when catching and throwing a ball in rounders and learn to bowl over arm and develop their wicket keeping skills in cricket practice. They learn to strike the ball with some precision when playing these games and become agile and skilful at retrieving and returning the ball. They are confident swimmers and almost all pupils can swim unaided for at least 25 metres. Pupils from Years 5 and 6 successfully take part in swimming galas and also achieve success in the area athletics. The opportunity for pupils in Year 5 to participate in adventurous outdoor water activities at South Cerney is clearly developing not only their physical skills but also their endurance as they engage in the activities. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with physical disabilities, make good progress and benefit physically and socially. They play a full part in lessons and whole-school activities.

164. The quality of teaching and the quality of learning, including pupils with special educational needs, are good. The previous inspection found teaching to be inconsistent, ranging from good to unsatisfactory. Lessons are well planned and the content is well matched to pupils' age, stage of development and previous work. Warm-up activities are appropriate and keep the interest of pupils, who work at a good rate. The lessons are developed by challenging and varied activities that are appropriately related to the aims of the lesson and which encourage pupils to work and play as part of a team. Teachers show confident knowledge of the subject in the instructions and demonstrations that they give and these factors, along with their use of pupils to demonstrate, help to ensure that the pupils understand what they are doing and acquire new skills. This was evident in a games lesson when, at the end of an activity, the teacher made good use of the pupils to demonstrate their understanding and to evaluate the success of the task. Very good use is made of the local swimming pool and the expertise of the instructors to teach swimming to all pupils in the school. Twice a year, in the autumn and summer terms, Year 10 pupils from the nearby senior school work with the pupils in Year 6 as part of their 'Sports Leaders' course. This is extremely well organised and promotes rapid progress of the Year 6 pupils. It is however, not only beneficial to developing their physical skills, but also provides them with the opportunity to meet and work with the pupils from the senior school before they transfer. Pupils enjoy physical education and take part in all activities with enjoyment and energy. They also learn to work together and play as part of a team. This makes a good contribution to their moral and social development.

165. The curriculum is broad. It is implemented effectively and meets the needs of all pupils. A good range of extra-curricular activities enhances and extends physical education. The subject co-ordinator is well qualified and provides colleagues with good advice and support. The written policy is sound and the school makes good use of a commercially produced scheme for games and gymnastics. Dance is an aspect of physical education that has been identified by the co-ordinator as an area for development. In general, it is taught through the use of the BBC produced programmes. There is good range of resources that are suitable for all pupils. The hall is of an appropriate size; it has a good floor and standards of caretaking are good. Pupils in all year groups make good use of the local open-air swimming pool in the summer term. The outdoor, hard play area is sufficiently large, but it is not in good condition. The grassed playing fields are level and are of a good size. Very good use is made of specialists for swimming and parents' expertise in helping with extra-curricular activities.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

166. Standards of attainment meet the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus and are similar to those found in most schools. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language achieve satisfactory standards relative to their previous attainment because they receive good support. These standards represent a good improvement since the last inspection when standards were below average in one third of lessons. In this inspection, judgements have been made based on classroom observations, analysis of pupils' work, teachers' planning and discussions with teachers and pupils. In Year 6, pupils have an understanding of the basis of Christianity and know about some of the most important festivals in the Christian church. Through their visits to local churches and the regular visits of local clergy, they know some of the aspects which make these places special to the people who worship there.

167. They learn about traditions and celebrations of the Jewish faith and begin to appreciate how some values and beliefs are shared in both the Christian and Jewish traditions. They have some good opportunities to explore their own responses to values and beliefs and to respect the views of others. This was seen during the week of the inspection when younger pupils built effectively on their knowledge of Muslim traditions and beliefs when they listened and discussed their responses with a Muslim visitor. There are good links with literacy when older pupils discuss issues explored in their reading of books such as 'I am David' and linked it with an exploration of the writing of the biblical King David. Pupils know that books like the Bible, the Qur'an and the Torah have a special significance for believers. Carefully planned sessions of collective worship contribute effectively to pupils' experience of worship in the Christian tradition.

168. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Pupils enter the school with very variable experience of religious tradition and practice and, for those whose experience is more limited, teachers build their confidence, respect and understanding well. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when some of the teaching was considered to be unsatisfactory.

169. Teachers have sound knowledge of the subject and understand what is appropriate for their pupils to learn. In the best teaching, teachers plan interesting activities which are well matched to pupils' levels of ability and encourage them to develop their thinking and their understanding. This was seen in a Year 6 lesson where the teacher gave pupils opportunities to discuss the values that were important to them and to link these with the values which are important to people of the Jewish faith. Resources were well adapted to pupils' needs and the teacher's sensitive respect for all pupils' responses developed well their confidence to contribute their ideas. In this lesson, pupils were involved well in the lesson and were able to share their ideas with other pupils and to appreciate that there are some values that are common to all cultures and traditions. However, opportunities such as these are not sufficiently evident in all aspects of teachers' planning. Opportunities for reflection and personal responses are less evident in pupils' work and teachers' planning. Teachers make good use of their links with local churches and support for representatives of the Muslim faith to enable pupils to experience a range of traditions and beliefs. They give good encouragement for pupils to have respect for ideas and values that are new or different from their own.

170. Since the last inspection, the school has made good use of the Agreed Syllabus to develop a sound policy, scheme of work and an appropriate range of resources. The school now meets the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. The co-ordinator for the subject is the headteacher who regularly monitors teaching and teachers' planning. The school has worked hard since the last inspection to improve teachers' confidence and expertise and to provide an appropriate curriculum. The time allocated to the teaching of religious education is satisfactory. Currently, the subject is taught in a two year cycle. This does not always allow for the most effective links with pupils' previous learning. However, the school is reviewing this area of the curriculum and intends to ensure a more closely linked development of pupils' learning by structuring the curriculum on a yearly basis. Literacy skills are soundly developed in the subject, and older pupils are given some appropriate opportunities to write at length, such as in the writing of the story of the Good Samaritan. They develop their analytical skills in their work on the information in St. Luke's gospels on Christ's birth. Assessment in the subject follows the current school pattern of reporting to parents' annually. It does not make sufficient use of the assessment arrangements outlined in the syllabus for the local area. The school has already identified this as an area for further development. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.