

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **WEST WYCOMBE COMBINED SCHOOL**

West Wycombe

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 110236

Headteacher: Michael Cusden

Reporting inspector: Stephen Bugg  
15306

Dates of inspection: 2 – 6 October 2000

Inspection number: 224273

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	West Wycombe Combined School West Wycombe Hill Road West Wycombe High Wycombe Buckinghamshire
Postcode:	HP14 3AH
Telephone number:	01494 523318
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Dr Shemila Mirza
Date of previous inspection:	7 April 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Stephen Bugg, Registered Inspector (15306)	Mathematics Art Design and technology	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
Geraldine Osment, Lay Inspector (9646)		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?
Jane McNeil, Team Member (30711)	English Geography History Religious education	The provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
Peter Farrington, Team Member (30714)	Under-fives Equal opportunities Special educational needs Science Information and communications technology Music Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

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Dorset County Council  
County Hall  
Colliton Park, Dorchester  
Dorset, DT1 1XJ

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

West Wycombe Combined School caters for pupils aged between 4 and 11. The school is of average size, with currently 214 pupils on roll. They come from a wide area, with approximately 30% attending from outside of the school's catchment area. The school is regularly oversubscribed. The proportion of pupils eligible for a free school meal is less than 1%, well below the national average. Similarly the number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register, currently 11%, is below the national average. The main needs are identified as moderate learning difficulties. Approximately 10% of pupils come from minority ethnic groups, although none has English as an additional language. Girls outnumber boys in all classes and overall there are approximately three girls for every two boys. Pupils enter the school with a wide range of abilities. However, overall the attainment of pupils on entry to the school is above average.

At the time of the last inspection the school included a Year 7 class, but following reorganisation in Buckinghamshire in 1998 this is no longer the case. The majority of teachers, including the headteacher, are long serving and there is very little pupil mobility.

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

This is a good school where the pupils attain high standards in English, mathematics and science. As the result of good teaching, in particular of basic literacy and numeracy skills, the pupils make good progress and achieve well in all years. There are many instances where the teaching is of a very high quality. Pupils of all abilities are sensitively supported by both teachers and classroom assistants, including those with special educational needs, and consequently achieve to their potential. The pupils are very well behaved, enthusiastic and supportive of one another. This is a school with a distinct ethos and style, emanating from the effective leadership provided by the headteacher over many years. He allows the teachers considerable autonomy in their teaching and planning and ensures that great care is taken over the pupils' welfare. He has developed very close links with parents and the local community. Few teachers have satisfactorily developed their role as subject leaders. Given the pupils' high attainment, their achievements in most subjects, the quality of the teaching and the school's standing with its parents, it provides good value for money.

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

- Pupils attain standards that are well above average in reading, writing and mathematics at the age of 7 and in English, mathematics and science at the age of 11.
- The teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills in all years.
- The leadership provided by the headteacher.
- The pupils' attitudes in lessons and their behaviour around the school.
- The provision for monitoring and supporting the pupils' personal welfare and moral development.
- The provision for the pupils with special educational needs and the progress they make.
- The school's partnership with its parents.

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

- The provision for information and communications technology and the standards pupils attain.
- The role teachers play in identifying strengths and initiating improvement in the subjects they lead.

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

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

The school was last inspected in May 1996. Standards were judged to be above average in English, mathematics and science at the end of both key stages. At that time pupils entered with average abilities and therefore they achieved well as they progressed through the school. They were attaining appropriately in all other subjects apart from art, music and religious education, where they attained higher standards, and information and communications technology, where standards were below average. Pupils now enter with above average abilities and by the time they leave they are attaining standards in National Curriculum tests that are well above average. Inspection findings indicate that they are on track to improve further. This represents an improvement. There has been less progress in other subjects, in part because of the school's determination to focus on developing the pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Standards are above average in physical education and music and are average in all other subjects except information and communications technology, where they are well below, and design and technology, where they are below national expectations.

The school has been less successful in making improvements identified as areas of weakness at the time of the last inspection. Appropriate agreed procedures for regularly monitoring the quality of teaching have still to be established. The provision for information and communications technology remains unsatisfactory and there are insufficient computers, although staff training has been satisfactorily completed. Weaknesses remain in the quality of some teachers' planning in a few subjects, most noticeably art and design and technology.

## 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	A	A	A	B
mathematics	A	A	C	E
science	B	C	A	B

**Key**

well above average A  
 above average B  
 average C  
 below average D  
 well below average E

At Key Stage 1 standards have been consistently well above average over the past four years and in 1999 were very high. Pupils are on average about two terms ahead of pupils nationally in their reading and writing and at least one term ahead in mathematics by the time they complete Year 2. At Key Stage 2 they continue to attain high standards and over the past four years have regularly attained standards that are well above the national average in English and mathematics and above average in science. They are regularly two terms ahead of pupils nationally in both English and mathematics, although there was a dip in 1999 in mathematics, and approximately one term ahead in science. An analysis of pupils' performance in the year 2000 tests at the end of Key Stage 2 indicates that they have again attained high standards in all three subjects. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are high and consistent with the results attained in tests. Pupils' achievements in the end of year tests indicate they are on course to further raise standards in the coming year.

Overall, pupils enter the school with above average abilities. At the end of each stage they attain standards that are well above average. This represents good achievement. It is due in

part to the consistently high quality of much of the teaching in English, mathematics and science and in particular to the emphasis teachers place on effectively and accurately teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy.

### **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Excellent – the pupils enter into all aspects of school life with great enthusiasm.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are well behaved at all times.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are very supportive of one another and keen to take responsibility when given the opportunity.
Attendance	Very good.

The pupils' attitudes to school, their relationships with each other and their behaviour in school and at other times are important factors in why they achieve as well as they do.

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

<b>Teaching of pupils:</b>	<b>aged up to 5 years</b>	<b>aged 5-7 years</b>	<b>aged 7-11 years</b>
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good. It is very good in almost one third of all lessons and at least good in two thirds. There is almost no unsatisfactory teaching. Teaching is best in English, mathematics and science, where teachers have a very good grasp of the essential literacy and numeracy skills that pupils need to understand and acquire. Some of this teaching is outstanding. There is also some very good teaching in other subjects. In the very best lessons the teachers' sense of humour, the very high level of challenge and their ability to build precisely on the pupils' previous learning ensure that the pupils achieve to their full capabilities. Teaching is least effective in information and communications technology, where the limited equipment makes it difficult to provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to be involved in lessons. A distinctive quality of much of the teaching is the number of lessons devoted to whole-class teaching. In these lessons teachers have high expectations of pupils and therefore the majority, in particular the less able and average pupils, achieve to their potential. In most lessons more able pupils also achieve high standards, although in a few instances they spend too much time covering work already well understood. Much of the teachers' planning is thorough, particularly in English, mathematics and science. Teachers are currently adjusting to the new requirements of the National Curriculum in other subjects and in some; for example, art and design and technology, it is less developed and the work the pupils do is therefore insufficiently structured.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall. There are very effective strategies in place for the teaching of literacy and numeracy. However, there are weaknesses in information and communications technology, design and technology and art.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. They are very well catered for and as a result make very good progress towards their individual targets.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The provision for their moral development is excellent. The provision for their spiritual, social and cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides very well for the pupils' welfare, health and safety. There are good procedures for monitoring the pupils' academic progress.

The school has appropriately focused on ensuring that there is very effective coverage of all aspects of English, mathematics and science. Coverage of most other subjects is appropriate, although a lack of equipment means that information and communications technology is not adequately covered and insufficient time is allowed for design and technology in order to ensure appropriate coverage of the National Curriculum. The school takes very good steps to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety. There are very good relationships at all levels throughout the school.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides effective leadership. The role of teachers as leaders of subjects is underdeveloped.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors are supportive of the school and are clear about the school's strengths and the areas requiring development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	It is very effective in analysing pupils' performance in external tests and identifying areas requiring improvement. It is unsatisfactory in the procedures for monitoring teaching and curriculum planning.
The strategic use of resources	Good use is made of the available resources, although the provision for information and communications technology is unsatisfactory. The accommodation is unsatisfactory in some rooms at Key Stage 2.

The headteacher has been instrumental in ensuring that there is a distinct ethos in the school based upon the mutual respect of pupils and adults. He provides the teaching staff with very good support. This enables pupils to achieve to their capabilities in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. His deputy ably supports him. She plays an important role as an exemplar of very good teaching practice. Despite the effective monitoring of pupils' performance in tests, there is no established system for monitoring the quality of teaching and ensuring that the best practice is identified and shared. The role teachers play as subject leaders is under-developed. They are not all clear about the strengths and weaknesses in their subject and have not produced plans indicating areas for improvement. For example, inconsistencies in teachers' planning for some subjects have not been addressed. Although the school makes good use of its available resources and is currently making minor improvements to the accommodation, the lack of space in some classes at Key Stage 2 affects the range of work undertaken. The noise level is a problem in some classes which are not carpeted.

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

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The leadership provided by the headteacher.</li> <li>• All staff are very approachable.</li> <li>• The values the school promotes.</li> <li>• The quality of teaching is good.</li> <li>• Their children enjoy attending the school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some parents would like to see a wider range of extra-curricular activities offered.</li> </ul>

One hundred and thirty two questionnaires (65%) were returned and 20 parents attended the meeting with representatives of the inspection team.

Parents speak very highly of the school and what it achieves for their pupils. The inspection team agrees with parents that the school is well led, that the quality of the teaching is good and that pupils are very well cared for and supported. They also acknowledge that the school provides only a limited range of extra-curricular activities.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

1. Pupils enter the school with a broad range of abilities. Baseline information, the results of assessments made of them during their first few weeks in school, indicate that, although a few pupils in most years have significant learning problems, most have at least average abilities and many have abilities that are above average. Whilst in schools of this size there is variation from year to year, pupils are generally judged to have above average ability on entry to the school.

2. During their first year in the school they make good progress and achieve well. This is because the provision made for them and the quality of teaching they receive is good. This is particularly evident in the development of their personal and social skills, their basic literacy and numeracy skills and their physical development. In all other areas, including knowledge and understanding of the world and practical and creative areas, they make sound progress. By the time they complete their first year, now known as the Foundation Stage, they are attaining standards that are well above average.

3. Over the last four years the pupils have attained standards by the end of Year 2, Key Stage 1, that are well above average in the key areas of reading, writing and mathematics. Whilst there are minor yearly fluctuations, overall they are approximately two terms ahead of pupils nationally at this point in reading and writing, and over one term ahead in mathematics. When compared to those in similar schools, i.e. where very few pupils are eligible for a free school meal, the standards pupils attain are also well above average. Standards attained in 1999 were particularly high and, whilst not quite as high in 2000, they are still impressive. Almost all reach the expected standard, Level 2, in all three areas and the number of pupils attaining a higher standard, Level 3, is well above the national average. In part this is because of their abilities on entry and because of their achievements in the reception year. However, it is also because they are well taught in these two years. In particular the basic phonic skills in literacy are very thoroughly covered. In mathematics there is also some effective teaching, although the lessons are not always pitched at a sufficiently high level to meet the needs of the most able and this accounts for the slightly lower attainment.

4. At the end of Year 6, Key Stage 2, the standards attained by pupils over the last four years have been well above average in English and mathematics and above average in science. This is best represented by the fact that pupils are on average about two to three terms ahead of pupils nationally by the end of Year 6 in English, two terms ahead in mathematics and over a term ahead in science. There are variations from year to year. For example, in mathematics there was a dip in 1999, but this has not been lasting and standards in 2000 are higher again. As at Key Stage 1 almost all pupils reach the expected standard, Level 4. For example, in 1999 only two pupils in English and one in science failed to reach this level. This picture was repeated in 2000. In mathematics rather more, about one in five, do not reach Level 4. The proportion reaching a higher standard, Level 5, is also impressive, with half attaining this level in English and science and about one third in mathematics. This represents continuing good achievement for although pupils edge only slightly further ahead of pupils nationally the differential is at least retained, a significant achievement given the pupils' high performance at the end of Key Stage 1. This is best shown by comparing the pupils' achievements with those of others who had attained similarly high standards at the end of Key Stage 1. In 1999, compared with other pupils nationally of similar ability at the beginning of the key stage, the pupils' achievements place them in the top 25% in English and science and around the 50% mark in mathematics. In 2000, although comparative information is not to hand, there is a strong likelihood that their achievements will be higher than those of similar pupils. The key factors are the good teaching, in particular the

consistency with which the key skills in literacy, numeracy and science are taught, and the comprehensive coverage of the National Curriculum.

5. Pupils also take end-of-year tests in all other years at Key Stage 2. Evidence from these tests indicates that pupils make consistently good progress each year. They also show that standards are continuing to rise and that the pupils presently in Year 6 are on course to attain higher standards by the time they take their end of key stage tests next spring. The school carefully monitors the pupils' performance in these tests, using the information to set appropriately challenging targets. Pupils are on line to at least meet these targets.

6. Inspection evidence confirms that standards are high and that pupils are attaining standards that are well above average in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 and at the time they complete the reception year. Pupils of all abilities achieve well in all years and make good progress. Whilst there are significantly more girls in the school than boys there is no greater difference in the standards they attain than is found amongst girls and boys nationally. With the exception of a few of the more able pupils in mathematics, particularly at Key Stage 1, pupils are achieving appropriately high standards throughout the school.

7. In English, pupils' speaking and listening skills are well above average. Even young pupils impress with their ability to sit still for quite lengthy periods of time listening to instructions or information being given. When given the opportunity they express themselves clearly and confidently, and in conversation, older pupils particularly are able to present a reasoned argument or strongly held view. Their standards in reading are well above average at the end of both key stages and they develop very good reading habits. Even below average pupils are reading demanding texts with confidence and fluency. Similarly the pupils' writing skills are well above average by the end of both key stages. They spell accurately, write, in the main, very neatly and develop good grammatical skills. They also produce some high-quality imagery, as was demonstrated in an assembly where pupils in Year 3 read out some of their poems, which included such ideas as: "A mushroom stealing a tree's moisture", and "Frost freezing on the window-pane", as examples of the sounds associated with silence.

8. In mathematics standards are well above average in all aspects, including pupils' ability to calculate mentally. Many pupils impress with their ability to handle numbers mentally and to reason answers from previous knowledge. For example, pupils in Year 2 are able to answer questions way beyond the area they were being taught when learning about the ordering of numbers, and other pupils in Year 4 are "fluent" when asked to subtract two numbers less than 20. A scrutiny of the pupils' books indicates that in most classes they follow the work programme expected of pupils of their age. However, the percentage of the work that is accurately completed is impressive, indicating that learning is very often secure, and this enables pupils to test their skills when attempting to answer more-demanding questions. However, at times it also indicates that some pupils are spending rather too long on work already well learnt and this is confirmed when some pupils are "tested" on their understanding of work they are doing.

9. Standards in science are also well above average in all aspects and at both key stages. Pupils in Year 2 demonstrate their abilities when required to carry out fair tests - investigations that involve making predictions, recording their results and linking cause and effect; for example, by exploring how far a toy car rolls down a ramp. Similarly, in Year 6, the pupils show detailed knowledge about living things, and are able to use books for research and to responsibly investigate the school grounds for plant and animal life. They show awareness of the need to classify living things and can talk in detail about the six signs of life, including reproduction and respiration. At both key stages the pupils demonstrate an

enthusiasm for science and an ability to work efficiently and effectively when either undertaking investigations or learning scientific facts.

10. Standards in information and communications technology are well below average at both key stages and lower than at the time of the last inspection. This is because there has been very little progress in increasing the limited number of computers and because of long-term breakdowns in equipment. It is not because of a lack of willingness amongst the teachers, all of whom have undertaken further recent training. There are no areas of the subject that the pupils are currently satisfactorily covering.

11. Standards in design and technology are also lower than at the time of the last inspection and are below national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. This is because of a number of factors. The quality of planning is unsatisfactory, although it is better at Key Stage 1 than at Key Stage 2. Insufficient rigour has been applied to tracking the range of skills the pupils undertake. In some years far more time is given to art than design and technology and this further constrains coverage. Some teachers also lack confidence in their teaching of the subject. The range of resources available is unsatisfactory; for example, there is no cooker and only a very limited range of hand-held tools. Space is also a problem in some years at Key Stage 2, making the logistics of teaching the subject difficult.

12. As in the last inspection standards are judged to be above expectations in music and are now also above expectations in some aspects of physical education. In music this is because there is a specialist music teacher employed to teach all the pupils one day each week. Through her enthusiasm and determination the pupils learn quickly and enter into lessons with gusto. Whilst standards in singing are high as a result of her approach, other aspects of the subject are also effectively taught and pupils consequently also achieve well in appraising and composing. The arrangements for games are good and the pupils experience a broad range of activities including, in Year 6, lacrosse. Teachers involved in the programme have high expectations of the pupils, and the basic skills of all games are well taught. Pupils enter into the spirit of lessons and are keen to demonstrate their abilities. As a result they achieve well.

13. In all other subjects standards are in line with national expectations. As at the time of the last inspection the pupils continue to experience a wide range of art skills, particularly in Year 6. However, standards in other years are not as high and there are too many lessons where the learning objective is not clear enough for the pupils to achieve beyond what might be expected of pupils of their age. In history and geography standards are in line with the national expectations, as they were at the time of the last inspection, and pupils are achieving appropriately. In religious education standards are in line with the Agreed Syllabus, which is lower than at the time of the last inspection. This is because the planned curriculum is not being fully covered, in particular the aspect which deals with the pupils' study of other world faiths.

14. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in all years and achieve well. This is because the school has very high expectations of them and tries to ensure that they meet the demanding targets set for them. There is good provision made for them, there are effective links between teachers and learning support assistants, and the assistants provide high-quality support. The school is rightly proud of the progress made by the two pupils with statements of special educational needs.

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

15. The youngest children have very positive attitudes to school. They come into the reception class calmly and happily at the start of the sessions. Most of the children show good levels of independence and they respond well to the clear expectations and procedures

of the staff. The positive attitudes the pupils develop during the Foundation Stage remain with them throughout their time at the school.

16. As reported at the last inspection, pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, have excellent attitudes to school and this has a very positive impact on their learning. All parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire stated that their children like coming to school. Pupils enjoy their schoolwork, settle promptly to set tasks and want to learn. There were many lessons in almost all years where this was so. For example, pupils in Year 3 were full of enthusiasm when making quadrilaterals in a maths lesson, and pupils in Year 4 took delight in improving their scores during a mathematics test. Pupils in Year 6 regularly demonstrate their enthusiasm and commitment; for example, when undertaking a science investigation in the school grounds, producing silk paintings of crazy creatures, or empathising with how it felt to be evacuated in the war and designing a bar chart in maths.

17. The pupils' behaviour, both in and out of class, is very good. Pupils respond readily to the requests and instructions of teachers, learning support assistants and midday supervisors. They are polite and courteous to each other, to all staff and visitors. They are trustworthy and show respect for property, treating the resources they use with care. There were no exclusions from the school during the year before the inspection. Inspection findings confirm the views of virtually all parents, that behaviour in and around the school is very good.

18. The personal development of the pupils is very good. They have excellent relationships with fellow pupils and adults, built on mutual respect and tolerance for the work, ideas, beliefs and values of others. Through assemblies and personal, safety and health education (PSHE) the pupils develop a very good understanding of the impact of their actions on others. They work well as individuals, in pairs and small groups and they are learning to take turns and help their classmates. The oldest pupils are keen to take responsibilities in the life of the school. For example, they undertake office duties, work in the library and are elected as the captains and vice captains of the Mars and Jupiter teams. Pupils support charities through fund raising activities including the Tear Fund, UNICEF and the Marie Curie Cancer Appeal.

19. The level of attendance is very good. It is well above the national average and is higher than that reported at the last inspection. Registers are marked correctly in the morning and afternoon sessions, and legal requirements are met. Parents are reminded in the prospectus and newsletters of their responsibility for their children's punctuality and attendance.

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

20. Overall the quality of teaching is good. There is consistency in the teaching throughout the school and it is good at all key stages. The teaching fits into three similarly-proportioned categories. In approximately one third of lessons the teaching is sound, in another third it is good and in a final third it is very good. On a few occasions the teaching is of the highest order and judged to be outstanding. The very best teaching is identified in some years at Key Stage 2. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection, when in only 10 per cent of lessons was the teaching judged to be very good and a small proportion of the teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory.

21. The most significant factor in the teaching is the consistent high quality of the teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. All teachers have a good grasp of the fundamentals of literacy and numeracy. They are able to convey these to the pupils in such a way that they learn very effectively, from early in the reception class to when they leave at the end of Year 6. For example, they are taught to use language correctly, to write neatly, to spell accurately and to develop a wide range of strategies in order to calculate accurately. The

teaching of phonic skills in English is very effective and helps to ensure that the pupils make good progress, in particular in the development of their reading skills.

22. A characteristic of much of the teaching of English, mathematics and science is the amount of whole-class teaching. When teaching English and mathematics teachers do not follow the systems developed nationally as part of National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies. For example, there are very few instances within lessons where the teachers either teach the pupils different facts or skills or where the activity is varied according to pupils' abilities. That this is successful is the result of two key factors. Many pupils enter the school with above-average abilities and therefore there is not as wide an ability level as found within classes in many schools and also teachers are adept at pitching the level of work correctly for the higher achievers. This not only meets the needs of pupils that are more able but also ensures that average pupils are also thoroughly challenged. For those pupils with special educational needs, high-quality support provided by the learning support assistants means that they are very often able to successfully complete the same work as others.

23. An example of this style of teaching was when the mathematics co-ordinator introduced pupils in Year 3 to the properties of shapes. This involved a discussion of isosceles and equilateral triangles (including a challenge to them to learn how to spell "equilateral"), an exploration of how many different quadrilaterals can be made with two pairs of rulers, and the learning of the names of the shapes discovered. Four pupils were withdrawn for part of the lesson so that they could receive additional support. Because of the teacher's sensitive questioning of pupils and very clear exposition, and the open-ended nature of the activity, pupils of all abilities benefited equally from the lesson. At the end the pupils had enjoyed the various challenges and had also made significant advances in their understanding.

24. There are dangers in this style of teaching, and in a few of the lessons judged to be sound teachers do not quite pitch the teaching at a sufficiently high level for there to be sufficient challenge for the more able pupils. Consequently they spend too much time repeating skills that have already been well learnt. However, this weakness is not sufficient to deem any of the teaching unsatisfactory. Whilst all available evidence indicates that the more able pupils are achieving, in sufficient numbers, the higher levels in the end of key stage tests, closer scrutiny indicates that some pupils do not cover as much of the curriculum as they are capable of. This is particularly noticeable in mathematics at Key Stage 1.

25. Teachers use a variety of strategies to motivate pupils. In some lessons humour is an essential factor. In these lessons laughter is mixed with learning and the teacher flicks expertly from one to the other in order to make a point or to instil a new skill. Competition is also used to good effect. For example, in two mathematics lessons the introduction of a test or class challenge was greeted with cries of delight and in one lesson "silent cheering" was observed – a rather unique way of showing enthusiasm.

26. The very best teaching is inspiring. A few memorable lessons were observed, including one English lesson for pupils in Year 6 where the pupils were introduced to the traumas and feelings of war-time evacuees on leaving their families. In this lesson the pupils listened to poetry and music, heard a true-life account, looked at wartime memorabilia and discussed the issues that emerged, before beginning a letter-writing activity. The result was discussion of the highest quality and some very moving writing by the pupils.

27. The quality of the teaching for those pupils with special educational needs is good and at times very good. Appropriate arrangements are made for them to be withdrawn to receive additional support in some English and mathematics lessons, whilst in others learning support assistants offer them high-quality support within the classroom. These arrangements work very well because the teachers make sure their needs are fully

considered and also because the learning support assistants offer such good support. They are sensitive in their approach, encouraging yet supportive, and they regularly feed back to teachers on what has been achieved. They often appear, as if by magic, at exactly the right time in the lesson. This ensures that they do not waste any time being involved in lessons where they have no role to play. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils with special educational needs, and targets they set for them are detailed and measurable.

28. Overall the quality of teaching in other subjects is good and in many subjects there are examples of very good teaching. This occurs in particular where the teacher gives the pupils the opportunity to try out ideas for themselves or to work with a partner or in a small group to experiment with an idea. For example, in a games lesson in Year 5 the teacher required the pupils to devise their own warm-up activities rather than telling them what they had to do. Such lessons allow the pupils to become fully involved in their learning and to demonstrate their creativity and understanding. Where lessons are less successful it is because teachers overly control the pupils' learning, allowing them very little opportunity to express or discuss their ideas.

29. Teachers' planning is varied. Whilst all plan appropriately and often thoroughly for English, mathematics and science, planning in other subjects is less consistently structured. Some teachers, most noticeably those of younger pupils, plan carefully. However, others, for lessons such as art and design and technology, do not plan with sufficient rigour. In these lessons the pupils' learning suffers as a result and they do not make the gains in skills of which they are capable.

30. There are also aspects of the teaching of information and communications technology that are unsatisfactory. However, this is not because teachers lack the necessary skills, but rather because there are so few computers that pupils have to sit for long periods listening without having the opportunity to try out skills for themselves.

31. Homework is used well to supplement the pupils' learning in class. Teachers set sufficient homework and, by the time they reach Year 6, pupils are completing a significant amount of homework each week. This work and their classwork are regularly and accurately marked. The quality of teachers' marking is sound and in some instances good. Teachers have begun to set targets with pupils to help them improve particular aspects of their work. Whilst these are not always sufficiently challenging, they have established with pupils the need to think carefully about their work and what they need to do in order to improve.

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

32. The school provides its pupils with a curriculum, which appropriately emphasises the importance of high-quality provision for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. This is a similar judgement to that of the last inspection. There have been significant changes to the National Curriculum since the last inspection. Overall the school is still coming to terms with some of these changes and has yet to put in place all aspects required of the new National Curriculum.

33. A great deal has been achieved in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. For example, the school has taken account of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy and, although teachers seldom teach in the manner identified for the "literacy and numeracy hours", they all follow the prescribed programmes of study. The thorough manner in which the programmes are covered is one of the reasons why the pupils attain high standards in these subjects. Significant amounts of time are allowed to ensure full coverage of all the various aspects of these subjects and, in addition, a considerable amount of time is allowed in all classes each week for silent reading. Whilst some of this time is well

used, this is not always the case and there are occasions when it could be more productively used for other purposes.

34. The time required for teaching the core subjects means that there is pressure on the time allowed for other subjects. Whilst sufficient time is provided to enable pupils to achieve appropriately in most subjects insufficient time is allocated to design and technology for the required coverage of the National Curriculum and this adversely affects the standards the pupils achieve. There is also insufficient time for full coverage of all aspects of history and geography, although in these subjects the pupils are able to attain the nationally expected level. In addition, the lack of computers and software for information and communications technology means that the school is not able to ensure that pupils cover the various aspects and therefore their achievement is well below the national expectation.

35. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage provided for the children in the reception class is very comprehensive. It ensures that all the requirements of the National Curriculum for pupils of this age are covered. The curriculum is planned in great detail with an appropriate emphasis upon personal and social development and speaking and listening skills. There is very good planning of learning objectives, with an appropriate emphasis on the provision of structured and child-initiated play activities.

36. In most subjects other than English, mathematics and science, teachers are following the nationally prepared programmes of study. However, there are some weaknesses in teachers' planning, most noticeably in art and design and technology, where there is a lack of consistency with some teachers teaching to topics and others to the nationally written scheme. This means that there is insufficient continuity in the pupils' learning and it adversely affects the progress they make.

37. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum. Although there are a few instances where pupils are withdrawn for support with literacy or numeracy other than in English and mathematics lessons, the teachers are sensitive to this and ensure that any loss of entitlement is minimised. The provision for pupils with special educational needs in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is very good. The curriculum is carefully structured to meet their needs, and their individual education plans are appropriate and sufficiently challenging. It contributes to the very good progress they make at both key stages. There is a well co-ordinated programme for sex education, drugs awareness and safety education.

38. The number and range of extra-curricular activities have dropped recently, but there are plans to start a wild-life club to add to the sporting activities currently available to the oldest pupils. The curriculum is enhanced by a number of links with local sports organisations such as Wycombe Wanderers. The contribution of links with the local community is very good. The school is seen as a fundamental part of the village and there are extensive partnerships with a huge number of community groups. The early years co-ordinator links with pre-school providers and there is good liaison with all receiving secondary schools. The school lives up to the headteacher's view that "It takes a village to bring up a child." There is an extremely good residential experience for Year 6, and the curriculum is enhanced by out-of-school visits for all classes.

39. There is good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and the high standards seen during the last inspection have been maintained. In particular, provision for moral development is outstanding. The ethos created is of a happy, orderly and calm working environment where the pupils' self-esteem and supportive relationships are very successfully nurtured. It is a significant factor in enabling the pupils to achieve their potential.

40. Spiritual development is well promoted through assemblies and religious education, although less successfully through other subjects of the National Curriculum. The work undertaken in religious education lessons positively supports spiritual development by providing knowledge and insight into Christianity. Pupils are given appropriate opportunities to reflect upon feelings and share experiences. For example, older pupils were asked to imagine the conflict of emotions that Samuel experienced in choosing the future king when he knew his own sons were crooks. The last inspection report judged that the quality of assemblies was high and this remains the case. The quality of the daily act of collective worship is good and often very good, both when pupils meet as a school and within key stages. The themes covered are generally of a broadly Christian character, with considerable emphasis on moral or social issues. Pupils are offered the statutory opportunity to reflect or pray each day. Spiritual opportunities occur in other areas of the curriculum. For example, in a Year 4 music lesson where pupils responded particularly sensitively to a moving piece of music. Similarly, in a literacy lesson in Year 6, a song about evacuees, alongside personal memories from a teaching assistant, prompted pupils to respond with expressions of awe and even some tears.

41. The provision for moral development is outstanding. Values are fostered through the very supportive relationships that exist in classrooms between teachers and pupils, and by the very good example set by all staff working in the school. Behaviour in the playground and general movement around the school is very good. Moral development is underpinned by the school's aims, and the pupils clearly know the difference between right and wrong. They rarely need to be reminded of shared values and principles in the day-to-day life of the school. Teachers discuss moral issues during circle time and assemblies. Parents are very appreciative of the school's role in promoting very good behaviour.

42. Social development is successfully promoted. The school ethos enables pupils to care for others and to respect property, and this they do very well. Numerous occasions are provided for pupils to share ideas within the class situation, although there are fewer opportunities for collaborative work within smaller groups. Very good opportunities for social development are provided through school trips and residential visits. Older pupils assume a variety of responsibilities and provide very good role models for the younger pupils in the school. There is a limited range of extra-curricular activities on offer, and these are mainly restricted to the older pupils. Fund raising events provide very good social occasions.

43. The provision for cultural development is good. The school successfully enriches the pupils' knowledge of their own culture through history topics at Key Stage 2. For example, in their work about the Tudors, pupils in Year 4 learn about clothes, homes and past monarchs of England. There are good opportunities to explore other cultures through aspects of music and sport. There has been insufficient depth of study of other faiths to enable pupils to become more knowledgeable about our multicultural society. Materials purchased to support the literacy hour reflect different cultures. Strong community links are maintained through fund raising activities.

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

44. As reported at the time of the last inspection the school takes very good steps to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety. There are very good relationships at all levels and all pupils feel confident that there are sympathetic adults to whom they can go with any problem. All staff work hard to maintain positive relationships and they know the pupils very well.

45. The arrangements and procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic performance are good in English, maths and science. Baseline testing, the nationally-agreed system for assessing pupils' abilities on entry to the school, is used as an aid to planning for

pupils in the reception class. Further assessment at the end of this year is used to set targets for pupils to achieve at the end of Key Stage 1. In other years pupils undertake further tests, including optional end of year standardised tests for pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5, as well as other intelligence and reading tests that enable the teachers to gauge the pupils' academic abilities and progress. By these means teachers effectively track the pupils' progress.

46. The use made of this assessment information to inform future planning is satisfactory. For example, it enables teachers to identify where extra support is required and to correctly assess pupils with special educational needs. There is also a very effective analysis of pupils' answers in nationally standardised tests at the end of Years 2 and 6. This enables teachers to see where pupils have performed less well and take this into account when planning for the next year's class. Less use is made of the results of other interim tests and from information passed on from one teacher to another. For example, in some years pupils start from the beginning of the curriculum as prescribed in the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies, even though there may be compelling evidence that some of them have already covered certain aspects. For example, at Key Stage 2, where pupils repeat already extensively covered work in fractions.

47. Day-to-day marking is satisfactory and in some instances good. Teachers give praise where appropriate and on occasions set targets for improvement. However, targets are not always sufficiently precise to ensure that pupils have a clear target and sufficient understanding of what they need to do in order to improve. There are good examples, however, as in Year 5 where personal targets have been set, and in Year 3 in mathematics, where specific targets have been shared with pupils. Overall, teachers know their pupils well and this contributes to their achievements.

48. The arrangements for assessing and monitoring the work of pupils with special educational needs are very good. The register for these pupils is kept up to date and all staff are aware of their needs. Pupils finding work difficult are quickly identified and appropriate provision is made. Individual Education Plans are regularly reviewed and updated. Arrangements for the annual review of pupils with statements are fully in place and provision specified in the statements is in place. In one instance the school has provided funds to increase the extra support provided by the local education authority.

49. The school has an appropriate health and safety policy. In response to a key issue in the previous inspection report the headteacher and governor with responsibility for health and safety undertook a risk assessment at the end of the summer term. Fire practices take place regularly and are recorded. There are suitable arrangements in place for first aid and medical support. The school has good arrangements in place for child protection issues. The headteacher is the named responsible person and has received training for this role. There is a good programme for personal, safety and health education (PSHE), which is delivered through circle time, assemblies, physical education and science lessons. The school nurse helps to deliver sex education to the oldest pupils, and guidance on drugs education is supported by the police. Road and rail safety officers have also visited the school to enhance the PSHE programme.

50. Teachers monitor attendance registers every day and instances of unexplained absence are followed up. The school receives support from the Education Welfare Service each half term. Since the last inspection the school has put procedures in place to ensure that absences are recorded correctly.

51. There are very good procedures for monitoring and encouraging good behaviour. The school has a consistently implemented behaviour policy, which includes rewards and sanctions, to ensure that pupils behave well. Praise and certificates reward good behaviour

and effort. Parents are happy that the school is helping their children become mature and responsible.

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

52. The school has a very good partnership with parents, and the pre-inspection questionnaire and meeting with parents and carers show that they hold the school in high regard. This judgement is similar to that of the last inspection. Overall, the quality of information provided for parents, particularly about pupils' progress, is very good. There are formal parent/teacher consultations every term and the written annual reports to parents are satisfactory. They provide information about pupils' progress, with grades for annual tests and effort, and indicate what pupils need to do next to improve their performance in English, mathematics and science. Teaching staff are very approachable and happy to talk to parents with concerns or to provide more information on their children's progress. Almost all parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems.

53. The school's links with parents of pupils with special educational needs are very good. Parents are informed early if there is a concern about their child's progress and they are kept informed about the provision being made. They are given clear guidance on how they can help at home. They are involved in reviews of their children's needs. The parents of the two statemented pupils have asked for their children to remain at the school for an extra year and this is a sign of the confidence of the parents in the work of the school.

54. Throughout the school English and maths homework is set regularly and the homework books and reading diaries show that many pupils are very well supported at home. A significant number of parents do not feel that the school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. The inspection team accepts the views of the parents. However, they consider that the school is providing an enriched curriculum through the range of visits and visitors.

55. Regular newsletters keep parents up to date with the day-to-day life of the school, and the prospectus and topic newsletters provide appropriate information on the curriculum. The annual governors' report to parents does not contain all of the required statutory information. A meeting was held for parents on the teaching of mathematics, and parents are regularly consulted on school issues, including behaviour and homework. They are invited to Book Week and sports day, and to use the library with their children. There are a number of parents who regularly help in school with sports, art activities and listening to reading. The good induction procedures for the youngest children into the reception class also ensure that their parents and carers feel welcome and comfortable in the school. Through the parent-teacher association parents are very supportive of the school. Significant funds are raised from a variety of events, including the autumn fete and a sponsored walk, and in recent years this money has been used to boost the school budget. All of these factors show that the school has a very good range of links with parents and carers that have a positive impact on learning.

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

56. The overall leadership and management of the school are good, although there are weaknesses. Overall there has been very little change in the quality of the leadership since the last inspection.

57. The key strength of the leadership of the school continues to be the role played by the headteacher. He knows his staff well and provides them with the support they need to enable them to effectively carry out their teaching duties. He has great respect for all his staff and

provides them with very considerable freedom to plan their teaching and to teach to a system which best suits them without undue interference. His collegiate style of leadership was positively commented on at the time of the last inspection and remains a strength. As a result of his careful and sensitive leadership the school has developed significant strengths, appreciated by parents, governors and teachers. For example, over the period of his long stewardship of the school he has developed very strong links with parents and the local community, been instrumental in developing a very effective pastoral system, and encouraged staff to concentrate on teaching basic literacy and numeracy skills, thereby ensuring that pupils attain to the best of their abilities.

58. This is a school with a very distinct ethos. It successfully meets almost all of its aims. Pupils are well looked after, they learn to tell right from wrong, relationships throughout the school are very good and all adults are committed to providing a very high quality of education. There is a tangible sense of order and care throughout the school.

59. The deputy, who plays an important role as an exemplar of very good teaching practice, ably supports him. The quality of her teaching in Year 6 is one of the reasons why the standards attained by pupils at Key Stage 2 are so high. However, her role in the management of the school is under-developed. She does not meet formally with the headteacher to discuss strategies for introducing agreed policy changes and has only a very limited role in monitoring the quality of teaching across the school.

60. Other teachers' roles in providing leadership in subjects allocated to them are also under-developed. The quality of leadership in a few subjects and areas, most noticeably in information and communications technology and for those pupils with special educational needs, is good. For example, in information and communications technology the co-ordinators have ensured that staff are kept up-to-date and have prepared and carried out a clear action plan to address some of the issues raised in the last inspection. However, in most subjects the teachers are not monitoring their colleagues' planning in sufficient detail or keeping a record of what constitutes high standards, and they are not sufficiently aware of the strengths and weaknesses in the teaching in their subjects. As a result there are inconsistencies in planning in some subjects; for example, art, and design and technology, and in all subjects the highest-quality teaching is not being identified, discussed and shared, in order to further improve the already good teaching. Most subject leaders do not prepare action plans, linked to the school's improvement plan, which identify areas requiring improvement or indicating how improvements are to be implemented. Whilst most teachers are aware of the need to develop their roles, a few do not see the important part high-quality subject leadership plays in further raising standards. It is therefore a significant weakness that requires addressing.

61. The school improvement plan is an effective tool for identifying areas for development and using the money at the school's disposal to support improvement. There are very good systems in place for monitoring pupils' achievements, in particular the standards they attain in the national end of key stage tests, and the information gathered is used to identify areas for improvement. For example, a minor blip in standards in mathematics at Key Stage 2 in 1999 led to the identification of the need to provide staff meeting time during the year to discuss how to raise pupils' confidence when undertaking mental mathematical calculations. However, the plan does not include actions identified by teachers for improvements in subjects for which they have responsibility.

62. Other strategies for monitoring the school's performance, apart from monitoring pupils' achievements in the national tests, are less satisfactory. In particular there are no systems in place for regularly scrutinising the pupils' work in order to identify strengths and weaknesses in the coverage of the curriculum. Whilst the headteacher knows his staff well and informally monitors their teaching through regular visits to their classrooms, there is no

agreed system for formally observing teaching and for feeding back on strengths and weaknesses. Whilst standards are high and the quality of teaching is good, there is still a need for a more consistent approach to identifying and sharing good teaching practice so that all staff benefit. This will also enable the school to develop its strategies for appraisal and performance management, identified as weaknesses at the time of the last inspection and still not satisfactorily addressed.

63. The governing body undertakes its responsibilities effectively. They are very supportive of the headteacher and the school. They have in place the appropriate committees and meet regularly. Some of the governors make visits to the school and observe lessons, and overall the governing body is aware of the strengths of the school and the issues that need addressing. For example, they are aware of the need to improve the provision for information and communications technology and that the accommodation still requires further attention. They are developing their ability to judge the best use to be made of the money at their disposal, although there is no system currently in place whereby the sub-committees meet on a regular basis to monitor plans and to review and plan for future needs.

64. There is a good mix of staff. A considerable number are long-serving, although recently a number of younger staff have been appointed. Overall they are well qualified and offer a good range of expertise. The learning support assistants are similarly very effective in the tasks they undertake. Despite the school's budget problems in recent years, the level of resources available to staff is satisfactory in all areas except information and communications technology, where there is a dearth of computers. The resources are well used.

65. The accommodation is less satisfactory. Whilst the grounds are delightful and the school benefits from having three quite distinct playgrounds, there are areas where the accommodation adversely affects the pupils' education. There is no designated outdoor area for the reception pupils where they can use large apparatus. One of the classrooms at Key Stage 2 is very small, making it difficult to provide a full range of activities in design and technology and art and seriously impeding the development of an appropriate area for information and communications technology. Only a few rooms are carpeted and in one room at Key Stage 2, this coupled with poor acoustics, means that there is much higher level of noise than teachers and pupils need suffer. The school is now better financed and is on target to clear its deficit budget by March 2001. Nevertheless there is still work that needs addressing if the accommodation is to be brought up to standard, including redecoration in a number of rooms.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

In order to raise standards further the governing body should now:

### **Improve standards in information and communications technology by:**

- improving the amount of hardware and appropriate software throughout the school;
- ensuring an adequate time allocation;
- providing any necessary staff training to ensure that they are fully conversant with new equipment.

(See paragraphs 10, 30, 101, 119 -122)

### **Develop the role of subject leaders by ensuring that teachers:**

- develop a clear view of pupils' achievements and the quality of teaching in their subject;
- produce appropriate action plans that pinpoint when and how improvements are to be undertaken;
- support colleagues in order that there is consistency in curriculum planning and that the needs of all pupils, including the most able, are met;
- identify the best teaching practice and pupils' work of the highest quality and share this with all colleagues.

(See paragraphs 24, 29, 32, 36, 60, 61, 86, 95, 102, 108, 112, 118, 37)

## **IN ADDITION**

### **The governors should also consider improving:**

- standards in design and technology (see paragraphs 11, 109 -112);
- the quality of the accommodation (see paragraph 65);
- the allocation of time given to history, geography, art, and design and technology, and to silent reading (see paragraphs 33, 34, 110, 113);
- the arrangements for performance management including identifying how teaching is to be effectively monitored (see paragraphs 59, 62).

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	52
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	24

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	27	37	31	2	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		214
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		36

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.3
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 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	16	18	34

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	16	16
	Girls	17	17	18
	Total	32	33	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (96)	97 (92)	100 (96)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	16	16
	Girls	17	18	18
	Total	33	34	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (96)	100 (92)	100 (96)
	National	82 (80)	86 (81)	87 (85)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	10	18	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	8	9
	Girls	17	14	17
	Total	26	22	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	93 (80)	79 (69)	93 (69)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	8	9
	Girls	17	15	17
	Total	26	23	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	93 (90)	82 (76)	93 (86)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	16
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	197
Any other minority ethnic group	3

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

### ***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.*

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Average class size	26

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	114

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	336600
Total expenditure	329400
Expenditure per pupil	1561
Balance brought forward from previous year	-14820
Balance carried forward to next year	-7620

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	211
Number of questionnaires returned	132

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	30	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	62	33	2	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	64	33	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	51	5	1	7
The teaching is good.	67	32	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	49	40	4	0	7
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	78	21	1	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	27	3	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	53	42	2	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	77	20	2	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	71	23	2	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	18	43	28	3	8

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

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

66. The provision for the children in the reception class, now known as the Foundation Stage, is good. Standards of provision have been maintained since the last inspection. Overall, the provision in the Foundation Stage contributes very well to the success of the school. There is an appropriate emphasis on the importance of the children's personal and social development and their speaking and listening skills. The teacher and her assistant understand the needs of these very young children and work extremely well together to provide a well-planned curriculum and a caring atmosphere.

67. Children enter the reception class in the September before they are five. Attendance is part-time until Christmas, with older children attending in the morning and younger children in the afternoon. This arrangement ensures that the teacher and her assistant get to know the children very well in the first term. Virtually all the children have had some form of pre-school experience. At the time of the inspection the children had only been in school for four weeks. Therefore the work of pupils from the previous year was also used to make judgements.

68. Pupils enter the school with a broad range of abilities. Baseline information, the results of assessments made of pupils during their first few weeks in school, indicate that, although a few pupils in most years have significant learning problems, most have at least average abilities, and many have abilities that are above average. Whilst in schools of this size there is variation from year to year, pupils are generally judged to have above-average abilities on entry to the school. Attainment at the end of the reception year is well above average. By the end of the reception year all children are easily achieving the Early Learning Goals and many are working within the early stages of the National Curriculum. This represents good achievement.

69. The key reason why pupils achieve well during their first year in the school is that the quality of teaching is consistently good and often very good. Planning to meet the pupils' needs is thorough and the purpose of each activity clearly identified. The teacher and her assistant are a close-knit team. They both have high expectations of the pupils, ensure that lessons are conducted at an appropriate pace and provide regular praise to ensure that the pupils develop a belief in their own abilities.

#### **Personal and social development**

70. Children make good progress in their personal and social development, and by the end of the Foundation Stage attainment in this area of learning is well above what is expected nationally. The children quickly learn the routines of the class and the school day. They come into school very happily, co-operate with each other very well and settle to tasks with a minimum of fuss. Their behaviour is extremely good: they are polite and considerate and care for each other well. There is a caring atmosphere in the class that encourages children to form good relationships with the adults and each other. They learn to listen very carefully and to take turns and share equipment. For example, children in the role-play area share dressing-up clothes. The children are learning to become independent. They are expected to tidy up themselves. During drinks time they pour their own drinks and wipe up spills. They dress themselves for physical education lessons and are coping with zips and buttons when getting ready to go home. Their attitudes to learning are very positive.

71. Plans for this area of learning are detailed and explicit. Activities are planned for structured play which have clearly identified outcomes for personal and social development.

No opportunities are lost to reinforce the importance of sensible behaviour, polite manners and positive attitudes to equipment such as books. The teacher and her assistant are good role models, working very closely together as a team, and consistently treating the children with care and respect. They are consistent in their expectations of behaviour. They know the children very well. The assistant is skilled at intervening with support or a helpful word.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

72. During the reception year, children achieve well in relation to their attainment when they enter school, and by the end of the year attain standards that are well above average. Most of the children achieve the Early Learning Goals and are introduced to the early stages of the National Curriculum. The children listen intently and are able to express themselves clearly, with a good range of vocabulary. They sit well on the carpet and listen to the teacher and to each other. They have very positive attitudes to reading and are on track to read key words and simple texts. A scrutiny of previous years indicates that the vast majority of children can read the commonest words and know the characters and stories in the school's main reading schemes. Higher-attaining children are already reading a variety of texts fluently. Most children are already able to write their name, and have a good pencil grip, and many can write letters to represent sounds and words. Work from the previous year shows that by the end of the year most children are attempting to write independently with correct letter formation and spellings, which can easily be recognised. A few children need extra support, and spend more time copying, but their progress over the year is good.

73. The quality of teaching in this area is good. The children are well prepared for the transfer to Year 1. The teacher has high expectations for language development and plans for this by structured play as well as through her direct teaching. Children are expected to take reading books home every day to share with parents and this ensures good progress. The teacher's phonic teaching is a strength: all children are able to identify objects from a mystery bag with the initial sound "b" and go on to make a book about "b".

### **Mathematical development**

74. The children make good progress in all aspects of mathematical development. When talking about Noah's Ark, the children are confident at counting up to 40. It was not possible to observe any maths lessons during the inspection, but work from last year indicates that all but a few pupils are confident with numbers up to 20 and are introduced to addition and subtraction within 10, using correct symbols. Lower achievers are provided with a more practical range of activities, concentrating appropriately on the development of vocabulary and concepts rather than recording. The children can also recognise coins, understand one more than and one less than, measure objects, and are introduced to the kilogram and the litre. Overall, the children are on track to achieve the Early Learning Goals during the reception year and many will achieve well beyond these expectations.

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

75. During the reception year the children make good progress developing their knowledge and understanding of the natural world. They learn that an acorn is a seed from the oak tree which needs sun and water to grow into a sapling. They plant acorns and other seeds to watch them grow. There is a strong emphasis upon developing a sense of wonder about plants and living things. The children also investigate floating and sinking and how their toys can move. There is little work planned on learning about materials. Trips to the local garden centre, the supermarket and the use of the school grounds are effective in developing the children's awareness of place. They learn about how they have changed over time and how things such as toys, trains and farming have changed over time. They learn about some famous people from the past such as Grace Darling. Structured play activities provide many

opportunities for the children to learn about the vet's surgery, people who help us, and the properties of sand and water. The children's development is hindered by the lack of a computer, listening centre or other equipment, other than that shared with Year 1. This is a significant weakness in the early years provision.

### **Creative development**

76. The children have a wide range of opportunities to use a variety of media such as paint, chalks, pastels and collage, and to investigate different techniques. The quality of art on display is high and shows children's confidence, imagination and emerging skills. Children are encouraged to become inventors and make a moving toy using construction kits. They also make animal masks and cards. Opportunities for cutting, joining, and assembling with a range of materials such as food, junk materials and paper could be developed further. The children make good progress in role-play, and their skills in making up games and scenarios in the well-resourced play house are already well developed, with children taking temperatures in the hospital, writing out speeding tickets and looking after babies. In music, the children respond well to copying rhythm patterns by clapping, know the names of several percussion instruments and make very good efforts to play them loudly and quietly. The teacher introduces them to vocabulary such as "crescendo". They join in with older children in learning songs and clearly enjoy the actions which accompany them.

### **Physical development**

77. Most children can already run on tiptoe, skip, stride and find their own space to work in. Most can jump in and out of a hoop using a two-footed jump. Many can jump backwards or with a twist. They are on track to achieve beyond the Early Learning Goals in this area. They enjoy physical education lessons and are suitably stretched by the skilful teaching, which provides opportunities for pupils to try things put for themselves. The assistant is used well, particularly in her sensitive interventions with children who are less well co-ordinated. The teacher uses the hall and an outside playground for physical education lessons, and plans a range of activities throughout the year. However, large outdoor play equipment, such as ride-on-toys, to develop gross motor skills is lacking in the school.

## **ENGLISH**

78. By the end of both key stages attainment is well above average for all aspects of English. Standards are now higher than at the time of the last inspection, when they were judged to be above average. The pupils' make good progress at both key stages and achieve well in well in relation to their prior attainment.

79. In the national tests for 11 year olds in 1999, the proportion of pupils achieving both the national expectation, Level 4, and the higher Level 5, was well above average. Compared with the situation in schools where pupils had similar prior attainment at the end of Key Stage 1, the standards achieved were also well above average. This indicates that the pupils made good progress during Key Stage 2. Attainment was also above the average for schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. In real terms the pupils have almost a year's advantage in the standards they achieve by the end of the key stage over pupils nationally. There are currently no national data available with which to compare the results for 2000, but they are again high, particularly the number of pupils achieving the higher level. There is every indication that these results will compare equally favourably with the national picture and that for similar schools. There has been a steady improvement in standards during the last three years and this trend looks set to continue.

80. At the end of Key Stage 1, results for 1999 were well above average for the number of pupils attaining the national expectation, Level 2, and very high for those achieving the higher

level, Level 3. This placed the school in the top 5 per cent of schools nationally. Pupils are consistently achieving standards over two terms ahead of all pupils nationally. The school's results for 2000 are equally good, with all pupils achieving the national expectation in reading. However, there was a significant reduction in the number of pupils achieving the higher level in writing in 2000, and a slight dip in the number attaining the higher level for reading. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils currently in Year 2 are set to continue the general rising trend, with a significant number in line to achieve the higher level.

81. The inspection evidence confirms the picture drawn from the national test results, and standards are judged to be well above average at both key stages. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls or between pupils of differing abilities. At both key stages good teaching is a significant factor in the high standards the pupils' attain. Teaching is consistently good at Key Stage 1, and at Key Stage 2 two thirds of the teaching is good or better. In a few instances it is outstanding. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. In particular the basic skills of literacy are well taught. In almost all lessons teachers have a clear focus and commitment to ensuring that there is high achievement by the pupils. Grammar and spelling are taught effectively, as are handwriting and presentation skills. The teachers' subject knowledge is good. A feature of excellent teaching is the very thoughtful, imaginative and resourceful planning which precedes the lesson. A sense of passion and urgency pervades these lessons, together with excellent relationships, including a shared sense of humour. As a result there is very good learning by the pupils in these classes. Insufficiently detailed planning is a key feature of teaching that is no better than satisfactory. These lessons have a slower pace and activities do not always sufficiently challenge the more able pupils.

82. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and they achieve very well. A programme of early identification triggers a cause for concern in Key Stage 1, often about insufficient progress in reading. Education plans are established for these pupils. While these vary in quality, they mostly reflect the needs of individual pupils, and specify achievable and measurable targets for improvement. Additional support is effectively targeted to ensure that pupils make good progress and do not slip further behind. Classroom assistants provide valuable support and are well deployed across the school. The success of the intervention programme is reflected in the comparatively high standards that the vast majority of the pupils achieve by the time they leave the school.

83. Pupils' skills when speaking and listening are well above average for their age. Without exception all pupils listen attentively, both to their teacher and to each other. Even younger pupils are expected to listen, often for considerably long periods of time. The fact that they invariably do is impressive and has a positive impact on the high standards they achieve. Pupils at Key Stage 1 express themselves clearly and confidently in front of the class. By the time they leave the school many pupils use extremely sophisticated language; for example, when discussing poetry or answering the teacher's probing questions. However, in some classes there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to engage in discussion work in smaller groups.

84. By the end of both key stages, pupils' standards in reading are well above average. At Key Stage 1 reading is mostly teacher-directed, with pupils progressing through a commercial reading scheme. However, there are numerous opportunities for pupils to choose other books for enjoyment. They develop very good attitudes to reading, which they do daily at home. They develop appropriate strategies for tackling unknown words. At Key Stage 2, pupils select their own reading material from classroom libraries. Their ability to choose a book appropriate to their reading ability is very good. By the end of Year 6 even below average pupils are reading demanding texts with confidence and fluency. All pupils are able to discuss books, explain what they have read and predict what may happen next. Younger pupils understand that an author is the writer of a book. By the end of Year 6, pupils'

knowledge of authors and genres is very good. Dictionaries are in common use, particularly at Key Stage 2. With the help of volunteer parents, pupils are given the opportunity to select books from the school library every week, although taught library skills are under-developed. Even the older pupils are unclear of the terms 'reference' or 'non-fiction', referring to such books as information books. The majority have very shaky knowledge of the Dewey Decimal classification system for locating books and are unsure what the number on the spine of the book represents. 'Book week' is a popular event and helps raise the profile of reading.

85. In writing, pupils attain well above average standards for their age. Emphasis is clearly devoted to the teaching of basic skills. In some cases these skills are taught very imaginatively; for example, the use of a 'smiley face' in the teaching of speech marks in Year 3. By the end of Year 2 most pupils can write in a legible, neat, often joined script. They can spell most simple and monosyllabic words correctly and make very plausible attempts at more demanding vocabulary. The success of the teaching of basic skills is apparent in the high calibre of pupils' writing. Letter writing and poems are a strong feature of the school. Pupils in Year 3 extend their vocabulary in composing poems, 'it was so quiet that I heard...' Noteworthy responses include 'a snowflake settling on the ground' and 'a mushroom stealing a tree's moisture'. There are many examples of high-quality writing in Year 6. Some very moving responses were seen in response to recent news stories. For example, they explored the heartbreaking dilemma facing the parents of Siamese twins and admired the courage of the Olympic swimmer who had never seen a swimming pool. Although able pupils demonstrate writing at higher levels of achievement, most activities are aimed at the whole class. Therefore these pupils are not offered sufficiently demanding tasks to challenge their thinking. Marking of pupils' work varies across the school. Some is very thorough and helpful, but in some instances it does not follow the school policy by offering pupils ways in which they could improve their work.

86. The subject leader has good subject knowledge and her overall management is sound. The monitoring of standards through evaluation of the pupils' performance in end of key stage tests are very good. However, other monitoring activities are less effective; for example, the monitoring of pupils' writing or the quality of teaching. Whilst standards are high there are variations in the quality of teaching and, if progress is to be maintained and young teachers fully incorporated into the school's systems, monitoring needs to be developed and arrangements made for the dissemination of the best teaching.

87. Other subjects in the curriculum make a positive contribution to the development of literacy and language skills. In particular, history and religious education enhance the development of creative writing, letter writing and poems. Insufficient provision of computers means that the wealth of opportunities afforded by information and communications technology is not able to be used to full advantage. Homework is a significant factor in the standards pupils attain. It is regularly set. As well as reading and spelling practice there are good opportunities for extended writing to be continued at home.

## **MATHEMATICS**

88. By the end of both key stages the pupils' attainment is well above average for all aspects of mathematics. This is an improvement since the time of the last inspection, when standards were found to be above average. The pupils make good progress at both key stages and achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.

89. In 1999, in the national tests for 11 year olds, the proportion of pupils achieving the national expectation, Level 4 or above, was above the national average. However, the proportion achieving higher was well below the national average. In comparison with other pupils nationally with similar prior attainment at the end of Key Stage 1, they made average progress. However, these results for 1999 are out of line with results in previous years, when

they were much higher. They are difficult to explain. Preliminary indications are that results are again much higher in 2000. For example, whilst the number of pupils attaining Level 4 or above is again above average, three times as many pupils have gained the higher level. Overall, in the past four years the pupils' performance is well above the national average and they leave school about two terms ahead of pupils nationally. This represents good achievement. There are indications, from an analysis of the pupils' performance in end of year tests in Years 3, 4 and 5, that standards are set to rise again. For example, almost 70% of the current Year 6 are in line to achieve the higher level in the national tests in 2001.

90. Results in national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 were well above average and significantly higher than the average over the past four years. Whilst not quite as high in 2000 they are again impressive and indicate that standards overall are rising. All pupils have gained the national expectation, Level 2, in the past two years. In 1999 half, and in 2000 40% have gained the higher Level 3. Their attainment in 1999 placed them in the top 5% of pupils nationally. In comparison with that of pupils in similar schools where very few are eligible for a free school meal the pupils' performance was also well above average. Over the past four years pupils are achieving standards that are approximately one term ahead of pupils nationally.

91. The inspection evidence confirms the picture drawn from the national tests, and standards are well above average at the end of both key stages. Overall, this indicates that the pupils achieve well at both key stages. They are well above average when they start in Year 1, and as a result of effective teaching, particularly of the younger pupils, they continue to make good progress. They are taught a variety of strategies, which they can use when undertaking basic mental calculations, and consequently they quickly become confident in their ability to work out simple calculations. By Year 2 some pupils are already developing a capacity to work confidently with numbers and are adroit at estimating and checking their answers. Good whole-class teaching, with effective support from learning support assistants for the small number of pupils in both years that find mathematics more difficult, ensures that skills are thoroughly learnt. Generally the work set is sufficiently challenging, although in some lessons the most able pupils spend too long on tasks involving concepts they already understand. Whilst this does not effect the level they attain in the end of year test it does mean that they do not cover quite as much of the basic groundwork as they should.

92. They continue to achieve well at Key Stage 2 and make good progress. This is because the quality of teaching is consistently good and often very good. Some of the teaching is inspired. Pupils make rapid progress during Year 3 because of the very effective teaching of the new mathematics co-ordinator. They quickly assimilate facts about the properties of shape and demonstrate growing confidence in their ability to calculate mentally. Progress continues to be good in the following years as a result of the carefully targeted whole-class teaching, linked to effective support from learning support assistants for those who find the challenge of the lessons difficult. Whilst the National Numeracy Strategy is not followed; for example, not all lessons begin with a mental mathematics session, all teachers follow the numeracy programme. This ensures that all aspects of numeracy are covered. The teachers' skill lies in their ability to explain concepts clearly, in the way they make lessons fun yet stimulating, and in the high expectations they have of pupils both in class and when completing homework. Teachers are confident in their abilities and enjoy the freedom they are allowed to teach each aspect as they think best. No one published scheme is used. Instead teachers turn to several sources in order to effectively match the work to the pupils' needs.

93. Teachers are confident in their ability to teach pupils basic mathematical concepts and skills and most have taught the same class each year for some considerable time. Newer teachers, including the new co-ordinator, are equally adept and there are no years where progress lags. Overall, the teaching of maths is good at both key stages and often

very good. All teachers teach basic mathematical concepts very effectively and there are many examples of this throughout the school. In Year 1 they are very effectively taught differing strategies for subtracting numbers. In Year 3 they are taught the properties of shape and in Year 6 how to investigate a database and to produce a range of pie and bar charts. Pupils are taught to present their work well, are shown different ways of undertaking calculations, encouraged to develop their ability to work at pace and from the outset taught to use appropriate vocabulary.

94. A typical example of the quality of much of the teaching was observed in a Year 4 lesson. The pupils first completed a timed test in which they strove to complete twenty calculations in a shorter time than previously. They responded very well to the challenge and there was total silence as they tackled the task of beating their own personal best performance. Many achieved this goal to their obvious delight. This was followed by a very well explained introduction on how to measure the length of a perimeter. The pupils were then expected to use the basic formula to calculate the perimeter of more complex shapes. Working individually or in pairs they consulted with others and set about the task with enthusiasm. Pupils who found the work more difficult received high-quality support from the learning support assistant. At the end of the lesson a very effective plenary session allowed some pupils to explain how they had gone about the task. Such focused teaching and enthusiastic pupil participation are leading to the raising of standards.

95. The school has recently appointed a new co-ordinator. As yet she is still coming to terms with her role and has not had the time to undertake any monitoring activities or to decide on any changes that may need to be made in planning or to decide on improvements in the range of resources. Her role has yet to be developed in order to raise standards further.

## **SCIENCE**

96. By the time the pupils leave the school, attainment is well above average for all aspects of science. This represents an improvement in standards since the last inspection. In the 1999 national tests for 11 year olds, results show that almost all pupils reached the national expectation, Level 4, in science, with 40 per cent achieving the higher Level 5. Compared with those of pupils whose attainment was similar at the end of Key Stage 1, their levels of attainment indicate that they achieved well. Results in the 2000 tests, which cannot yet be compared with the national picture, look to be even better, with again almost all pupils reaching the national expectation and very nearly half achieving above expectations.

97. The standards attained by pupils in Key Stage 1 are also well above average. Teacher assessments of pupils aged seven indicate that all pupils achieved the national expectation in 1999 and 2000. This is very high in comparison with the national average. However, the school has previously assessed that no pupils exceed the national expectation. Inspection findings do not support this assessment. The school has recently put in place curriculum changes in Key Stage 1 to ensure that able pupils cover the required elements of planning investigations and carrying out fair tests in order that they can attain higher standards. This is likely to lead to the award of a number of higher levels.

98. The pupils' achievement at Key Stage 1 is good overall. They enter the school with above average attainment in science. All make good progress over the next three years, including those with special educational needs. The rate of progress does not vary from class to class and is due to the consistency of the teaching. The pupils' achievement at the end of Key Stage 2 is also judged as good, because of the number of pupils achieving the higher levels and because all groups of pupils succeed in relation to their ability.

99. At Key Stage 1, pupils experience a broad science curriculum. In Year 1 they learn that fruit has seeds inside and vegetables do not. Many demonstrate understanding that plants need sun and water. Pupils in Year 2 carry out an investigation into how far a toy car rolls down a ramp and discuss how to make the test fair, make predictions, record their results and link cause and effect. However, teachers do not always put enough emphasis on practical activities and exploration in some lessons and some areas of the work. In particular this hinders more able pupils developing their scientific skills further.

100. At Key Stage 2, pupils in Years 3 explain what they already understand about light and shadows. They are excited by a lively lesson in which the teacher plays a game to develop the pupils' understanding of the different properties of materials. In Year 4 the pupils explore several habitats on a visit and talk about producers and consumers in a food chain. In Year 5, science is linked with physical education to develop the pupils' awareness of the importance of exercise for a healthy heart. In a very good lesson in Year 6, the pupils show detailed knowledge about living things, use books for research and responsibly investigate the school grounds for plant and animal life. They show awareness of the need to classify living things and can talk in detail about the six signs of life, including reproduction and respiration. Throughout the key stage the pupils cover a lot of work and record it in a variety of different ways. Their knowledge and understanding are regularly tested. There is some variety from year to year in the priority given to the skills of investigative enquiry rather than knowledge and content.

101. Overall, the quality of teaching in science is good. The strengths of the teaching lie in the teachers' subject knowledge, their high expectations of the pupils, the clarity of the learning objectives and the brisk pace of the lessons. Teachers provide full coverage of all aspects of the curriculum and in most cases ensure that work builds upon previous learning. All pupils throughout the school respond to science lessons with very high levels of interest and enthusiasm. These very good attitudes to learning make a very positive impact upon their progress. They listen with great concentration, respond to questions, waste no time in settling to tasks and co-operate extremely well when in groups. The pupils are often keen to take work home. The pupils are given lots of opportunities to use literacy skills in their work. However, the format for recording is invariably prescribed by the teachers and does not always allow the flexibility for the more able to extend the task. The pupils' numeracy skills are also enhanced by recording in tables, charts and graphs and by the interpretation of results. Marking of the pupils' work is limited to ticks and positive comments. It does not indicate how the work could be improved. Although pupils use CD Roms for research, overall there is a lack of opportunity for them to use information and communications technology in their science work due to a shortage of equipment and the lack of access to the Internet.

102. The leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has led discussions about the adoption of new schemes of work and has carried out a good analysis of the results of the 11 year old test papers to identify strengths and weaknesses. She has a good grasp of the need to have higher expectations of the pupils in Year 2 and to plan work from the Key Stage 2 programme of study. However, monitoring is limited to looking at the teachers' long-term plans and there is no strategy to share best teaching practice, to evaluate what is happening in every year group or to ensure that the appropriate balance is found between the teaching of content and that of investigative skills. These activities would help ensure that standards are raised further.

## ART

103. The standards achieved at both key stages are in line with those expected nationally. This is lower than at the time of the last inspection. This may in part be due to the emphasis given to raising standards in literacy and numeracy, with the result that there has been little time to consider the needs of other subjects, including art. For example, there has been almost no consideration given to the school's scheme of work beyond checking whether teachers have decided to follow the new National Curriculum for art. A scrutiny of the teachers' planning indicates a very mixed picture, with some teachers deciding to adopt this nationally-produced scheme, whilst others have continued to plan, as in the past, linking art to topics taught in other subjects. This means that skills are not systematically taught through the school. Opportunities for pupils to work with a range of materials and processes are dependent on the interests of the teachers and there is no planned entitlement to ensure that pupils regularly draw, paint, print and undertake three-dimensional activities.

104. Despite these weaknesses in some years, the pupils do receive an interesting and valuable art education. By the end of both key stages they have produced sufficient work to indicate that their technical skills, understanding of the work of other artists and ability to develop an idea are in line with pupils nationally. For example, in Year 6 the pupils are introduced to a wide and stimulating art experience. They all undertake a silk painting, and have the opportunity to weave and to make pots out of clay. In some areas the quality of their work is high, particularly in their ability to complete interesting designs from which to undertake their final work. However, drawings and paintings, whilst also carefully produced, are less impressive.

105. Drawing standards throughout the school are in line with national expectations, although in most years a few talented pupils produce very sensitive drawings demonstrating their ability to record accurately from direct observation. However, overall they do not regularly use their sketchbooks and have too few opportunities to develop their drawing skills. Pupils use colour with developing confidence, so that by the time they are 11 many have an intuitive understanding of how to arrange colours to good effect. However, again progress is haphazard and basic colour theory and colour mixing are not systematically taught. For example, in most years pupils are given a wide range of colours rather than being taught how to mix them for themselves. As a result interesting paintings of animals suffer from pupils using a pre-mixed brown rather than learning how to mix various hues of brown from the primary colours.

106. There are a number of instances where learning opportunities are missed. For example, at Key Stage 2, pupils are asked to create patterns without any clear learning objective beyond being neat and accurate. Some teachers refer to the key elements of art, shape, line, colour, pattern and texture, explaining to the pupils how through experimentation and evaluation they can be controlled and organised to significantly improve the quality of their work. As a result there are examples of interesting textural patterns in Year 3 and some delightful paintings of Kenyan landscapes in Year 4. However, elsewhere there are missed opportunities, with pupils required to work from a very tight brief which does not allow them sufficient opportunity to develop their own ideas and skills. For example, where pupils are all required to paint a picture of the union flag or to produce prints from apples using a very limited range of colours.

107. Pupils are introduced to work of other artists and in some instances use these opportunities to develop their own skills. For example, pupils in Year 5 have studied the work of both Mondrian and Degas and produced work in a similar style. However, a scrutiny of teachers' planning indicates that there is no systematic coverage of the work of other artists and overall too few opportunities are provided.

108. Whilst there are areas requiring improvement, overall the quality of teaching is sound and at the end of Key Stage 2 the teaching is at times very good. In these lessons the teacher tries to extend the pupils' range of expertise and experience and offers precise technical support. There have been very few opportunities for the staff to undertake further training in recent years and as result some teachers lack confidence in their own abilities. They are not sufficiently clear of the standards to expect or of how to plan in order to ensure that the pupils make demonstrable progress. The co-ordinator has undertaken a recent review of teachers' plans but has had no opportunity to discuss her findings with the staff. Her role, in ensuring that the staff develop their skills and provide a systematic programme of study needs developing in order to raise standards. There are sufficient resources. However, the lack of space in some classrooms at Key Stage 2 makes it very difficult to provide the full range of required art activities, particularly three-dimensional ones.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

109. Only one design and technology lesson was observed. (This was a group activity undertaken by six pupils whilst the rest of the class were working on art and information and communications technology tasks.) Judging the quality of the pupils' work was therefore difficult, made more so because teachers do not keep a record of pupils' previous work and there is no school portfolio of past projects. Scrutiny of the pupils' work identified very few examples of design and technology projects. In Year 2 they have designed and made "Joseph's coat" out of card and cloths. In Year 3 they are making boxes and in Year 5 they are making tall structures using a technical kit. From discussions with the co-ordinator and staff and from a scrutiny of the teachers' planning it is clear that overall too little time is given to the subject for the pupils to receive an appropriate range of experiences. Standards are judged therefore to be below average. This is lower than at the time of the last inspection, when pupils were attaining standards in line with those nationally.

110. Design and technology is timetabled at the same time as art and therefore approximately twenty hours are allocated per year. Whilst this is sufficient for a basic coverage of the subject, in reality a number of teachers allocate significantly more time to art and therefore insufficient time remains to ensure that the pupils receive their entitlement for design and technology. The range of resources is also limited. There is no cooker, therefore only cold food preparation can be undertaken. There is insufficient wood-working equipment and the pupils seldom have the opportunity to work with this medium.

111. In addition the quality of the teachers' planning is variable. Some teachers, particularly at Key Stage 1 and the beginning of Key Stage 2, have planned the projects they are to undertake and are working from the national scheme of work. Others do not plan sufficiently far in advance and have not clearly identified the skills and experiences the pupils will encounter. However, even where the planning is satisfactory and the national scheme is being used, projects are often reduced to the very minimum, leaving insufficient time for the pupils to develop their designing and evaluative skills.

112. The co-ordinator is aware of the weaknesses and in particular of the need to ensure that there is a more systematic approach to planning. However, given her workload, which required her to co-ordinate several subjects in the recent past, she has not had the opportunity to provide the leadership that is clearly required. The staff have yet to identify an appropriate amount of time for the subject. Furthermore, teachers do not always plan rigorously enough for each project. Consequently, pupils have few opportunities to undertake work in all aspects of the subject, such as designing, experimenting, making and evaluating, nor do they experience a broad range of processes and materials.

## HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

113. The standards achieved in history and geography are in line with those expected nationally at both key stages. This is in line with the findings of the last inspection. Pupils often attain above average standards in the work they complete. However, because of the demands on time in English and mathematics, the time available for these subjects is limited. As a result not all of the aspects required in the National Curriculum are covered and this adversely affects the overall judgement on pupils' achievements.

114. At Key Stage 1 the vast majority of pupils reach the standard expected for their age, and their achievements are satisfactory. Through learning about famous events and people they are able to understand that life in the past was different. For example, pupils in Year 2 compare hospitals of today with those in the time of Florence Nightingale. Pupils know how they themselves have changed over time. By the end of the key stage they have developed sound fieldwork skills. They know the main compass points and can use simple co-ordinates. Similarly, most pupils have a sound understanding of where they live within England and the world. They understand that climate varies in different parts of the world.

115. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are able to recall the most significant features of each period of history they study. Their chronological knowledge and understanding are as expected for their age. Older pupils can recall significant features of life in Roman, Tudor and Victorian times. Their knowledge of physical geographical themes such as climate and rivers is as expected for their age. They study contrasting locations and develop a sound understanding of different places in the world. For example, pupils in Year 4 learn about life in Kenya and how this compares to their own lifestyle. Across the key stage, pupils' ability to investigate geographical and historical questions is under-developed. The focus on whole-class teaching results in pupils with special educational needs making good progress. However, the more able pupils are capable of achieving higher standards. The overall picture is one of satisfactory achievements.

116. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, although it was very good in one Year 3 geography lesson. Here, the high quality teaching was characterised by thorough, thoughtful planning and the excellent use of resources to support learning. When looking at pictures of a landscape 'through the window', pupils could identify physical and human changes over one generation. Their achievement in this lesson was very good. They understand that humans affect the environment and that this may not always be beneficial. The teachers' subject knowledge is secure, they are well prepared and relationships are very good. All pupils listen well and pupils with special educational needs are well supported. However, there is insufficient consideration given to providing sufficiently challenging tasks for the more able pupils in some lessons.

117. History and geography complement each other well in supporting pupils' learning. There is usually some element of geography present in each history topic, particularly for the older pupils. Both subjects effectively support learning in other subjects. They provide a particularly good focus for pupils to develop their literacy skills. For example, when learning about the days of the week, pupils in Year 1 make a weekly diary. There are good examples of poems, letters and creative writing in the history topics in Key Stage 2. There is less evidence of pupils undertaking research or developing their skills of skimming and scanning. They show that they can successfully work independently, although there are insufficient opportunities for them to engage in collaborative activities. Although there are computer programs to support learning, pupils' work is insufficiently supported through information and communications technology.

118. The subject co-ordinator is enthusiastic and knowledgeable, although she has not acquired a clear vision for long-term development of either subject and has therefore yet to

make a significant impact on curriculum planning or standards. Resources to support learning are adequate and very good use is made of artefacts to do so. For example, a Year 5 lesson on Victorian Britain was significantly enhanced by the introduction of a Victorian iron, carpet beater and candle snuffer for the pupils to handle and discuss. Provision is very effectively enhanced by day trips and residential visits. For example, the Year 4 visit to Sulgrave Manor enhances the pupils' learning about Tudor life. Similarly a residential visit to Snowdonia makes a major contribution to their learning in geography and history. It is one of the highlights of the school year for pupils in Year 6.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY**

119. By the time pupils leave the school, standards in information and communications technology (ICT) are well below average. This subject was an area of weakness at the time of the last inspection. There has been significant improvement in the areas over which the school has direct control, such as improving teacher confidence and expertise. These are now satisfactory. However, although new equipment has been provided since the last inspection, the shortage of computers and other peripheral equipment means that pupils are not able to spend sufficient time on developing their skills to the level expected. For example, the school is not yet connected to the Internet and this means that it cannot deliver the revised National Curriculum. Several areas of the curriculum; for example, using simulations and exploring models, particularly at Key Stage 2, are not covered.

120. The pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory at both key stages. Pupils in Year 1 use the mouse to carry out undemanding click and drag activities. In Year 2, pupils can direct a turtle around a maze. In Year 3 they can change the font, size and colour of text and use copy, cut and paste. In Year 4, pupils use a CD Rom to research into living creatures and in Year 5 are learning what a floppy disc is and how to produce a database. In Year 6, with lots of adult help, they can load a photo via a scanner and save it as a bitmap and then crop it. However, word-processing skills are not highly developed. A scrutiny of work and discussions with teachers show that the shortage of equipment limits the amount of time that pupils have to spend using a computer and severely limits the range of activities which can be delivered. Pupils of all ages have not developed the independence or level of skills expected.

121. Due to the shortage of computers, most pupils use the one computer in the classroom on a rota basis. However, because of the demands made of teachers in other subjects there is insufficient time to spend supporting the pupils on the computer and as a result very often it is not being used at all. In Years 4, 5 and 6 an external consultant has been employed and two lessons were observed. Whilst subject knowledge is very good and planning is detailed, the difficulties of demonstrating to a large class on a single machine limit the effectiveness of the learning. There is too much time spent on the introduction, which limits the amount of time left for pupils to gain "hands-on" experience. In these sessions the teacher provides insufficient opportunities for the pupils to undertake tasks themselves and they are too dependent on her support.

122. Despite the current poor provision for ICT, the leadership of the subject is good. The co-ordinators have ensured that staff are kept up-to-date and are fully prepared for the time when the school is better equipped. They have also prepared and carried out a clear action plan to address some of the issues raised in the last inspection, especially teacher confidence and expertise. There is now a sense of frustration from the teachers that more cannot be done to provide the pupils with their curriculum entitlement. The school has not yet received the significant government grants that are available to connect schools to the Internet and to increase levels of equipment. The school's recent difficult financial position has meant that it has been difficult to address the severe shortage of computers. It now needs to ensure that future grants are used wisely to improve provision and that sufficient time is allocated so that pupils cover the requirements of the revised National Curriculum.

## **MUSIC**

123. By the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 the pupils are achieving above the national expectation, and the standards seen at the last inspection have been maintained. Pupils make good progress throughout the school and achieve well. This is primarily because of the quality of the teaching of the specialist part-time music teacher who teaches all lessons in Key Stage 2 and shares the teaching in Years 1 and 2.

124. The curriculum provided covers very well all the areas of performing, listening and composing. The singing of the pupils in both key stages is enthusiastic, tuneful and expressive. Good use of actions is evident in Key Stage 1. The pupils know a wide range of songs, many of which are favourites. In Key Stage 2 they learn a new song very quickly, despite the challenge of changes in tempo and rhythm. In Year 1 the pupils join in with a range of activities to develop their ability to copy rhythm patterns. The vast majority succeed. In Year 4 the pupils show that they can listen and evaluate the film music of John Williams. They identify instruments used, record whether the piece is fast, slow, loud or quiet and think hard about its mood. Their responses to the particularly moving "Schindler's List" are extremely thoughtful and sensitive. In Year 6 the pupils demonstrate understanding of a range of terms such as 'pentatonic', 'time signature', 'stave', 'crotchet', 'quaver' and 'minim'. This enables them to compose a short melody.

125. The pupils' attitudes in lessons are very positive and are a factor in why they achieve so well. They respond with enthusiasm to music lessons and demonstrate very positive attitudes. They listen intently and clearly enjoy being involved.

126. The teaching seen was good or very good. The teacher has very good subject expertise, maintains a brisk pace and has a good relationship with the pupils. Her sense of humour means that lessons are fun as well as having a serious purpose. The use of resources such as rhythm flash cards is also effective. An effective feature of her teaching is the planning of a range of activities with one learning objective that keeps pupils motivated and on-task, although technical vocabulary, such as 'dynamics', 'texture' and 'tempo', could be introduced to pupils earlier to increase their ability to discuss music. Limitations in the space and accommodation available also interrupted the pace of the Year 6 lesson.

127. The co-ordinator works well with the teachers of Key Stage 1, helping them with planning, and teaching demonstration lessons on a rota. She also arranges opportunities for the pupils to experience a range of music and this effectively supports their learning. For example, the pupils have enjoyed a concert by the Mozart orchestra and performed with other schools in a Millennium concert. Pupils have the chance to take up guitar, flute, recorder and violin taught by peripatetic teachers. However, there are no extra-curricular clubs such as a choir. The shortage of instruments from other cultures, mentioned in the last inspection, has been addressed; for example, there are some steel drums and African instruments. However, the school needs more tuned percussion and keyboards to give the older pupils greater opportunities to perform their compositions.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

128. By the time the pupils leave the school, standards are above the national expectations in games and all pupils can swim at least 25 metres. In addition, the Year 6 residential trip to Snowdonia provides the oldest pupils with demanding outdoor adventure activities. However, it was not possible to observe any gymnastics, dance or athletics and therefore to make a judgement on these aspects. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

129. In Year 1 pupils show above expected levels of skills in dodging and side-stepping. They have a very good awareness of space, and are well co-ordinated and in control of their bodies. In Year 2, the vast majority of boys and girls are able to throw accurately and catch a large ball consistently. In a lively Year 3 aerobics lesson, the pupils show a range of movements requiring a high level of stamina. Girls and boys can skip well. Girls in Years 3 and 4 can all throw a netball from the shoulder and catch it most of the time. All boys in Years 5 and 6 can pass a football accurately and at speed. Many can control a pass quickly and some are aware of the need to run into space to receive a pass. A few boys demonstrate well-above-average skills, with very few below average. The girls in Years 5 and 6 can perform overhead netball shots with a good level of accuracy and can run, jump and catch off the ground. Many girls can perform a variety of complicated skipping routines.

130. The pupils clearly enjoy PE lessons, respond with enthusiasm and sustain high levels of effort. Older pupils are given appropriate levels of responsibility for working independently in groups or small team games. This is effective in developing their skills. The girls in Years 5 and 6 are able to organise their own warm up and stretch routine. The older girls help the younger ones with coaching tips, such as how to defend against a netball shot. Pupils in Years 1 and 3 respond well to the teacher's enthusiasm.

131. The teaching of physical education is good overall and is the significant reason why standards are above average. There are examples of very good practice. There is a clear structure to all lessons which focuses upon individual skills, paired work and small team games. All teachers stress the importance of physical activity for a healthy life-style and in most cases they communicate that physical education is fun. The teachers have good subject knowledge. Where the teaching is only satisfactory, this is due to the teacher setting closed tasks which do not allow the more able to improve their skills. There are not enough opportunities provided for the pupils to evaluate their own performance.

132. The leadership of physical education is good. For example, training for new staff has been provided and the co-ordinator is responsible for the consistency of approach in lesson planning. There are extra-curricular opportunities for soccer and netball and the school participates in a range of inter-school competitions, such as athletics. There are many examples of links with local sports organisations that significantly extend the variety of experiences offered to the pupils. These include lacrosse, tag rugby and football with Wycombe Wanderers. These have a very positive impact upon standards.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

133. Standards in religious education were above average at the time of the last inspection and standards were judged to be above expectations. There has been a slight dip in overall attainment, and standards are now in line with the expectations of the agreed syllabus by the end of both key stages. This decline is a direct result of the planned curriculum not being fully covered, which has resulted in gaps in learning. The area where this is most apparent is in knowledge and understanding of major world faiths. While pupils' learning of the Christian faith is in line with expectations they have a very limited recall of alternative religions. Long-term planning for pupils in Key Stage 2 includes a comprehensive study of Hinduism in Year 3 and Islam in Year 5, but these religions were not taught last year. As such, pupils' knowledge and understanding of these religions are now below expectations at both key stages.

134. There are areas within religious education where pupils continue to achieve well. The implicit aspects of spirituality, where pupils share and explore opinions, values and beliefs, are well covered and standards are above expectations in all classes. For example, pupils in Year 6 responded sensitively when asked to imagine the conflict of emotions that Samuel experienced in choosing the future king when he knew his own sons were crooks. Similarly,

Year 1 pupils produced some delightful work about Mothering Sunday. Their written work, based on 'I love my Mum because...', included 'she gives me pocket money' to more reflective comments, such as 'she lets me do things Dad doesn't let me do' and 'she loves me too'.

135. A key feature helping the pupils' achievements in these aspects is the quality of teaching. It is at least satisfactory and in most lessons good. Where teaching is good it is characterised by trusting relationships, consolidation of previous learning and opportunities for reflection and the sharing of ideas. Good teaching often includes effective links with other areas of the curriculum. For example, when studying the Old Testament story of Ruth, the teacher introduced role-play to enhance the pupils' learning. Here, there was good participation by all, with the main characters showing good expression in their first reading of the script and other pupils leading the narration. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good and were a strong feature of all lessons observed. They are enthusiastic and listen very well, both to their teacher and their peers. However, where teaching becomes less effective, pupils are expected to listen too long and have insufficient time to discuss together or work independently. This also affects the quantity of recorded work produced during the course of a year, which was generally found to be insufficient.

136. The reflective nature of religious education successfully pervades other areas of the curriculum and is one of the reasons why the caring ethos of the school is of such a high calibre. For example, in their history project, pupils in Year 5 imagine how their life would compare to that of being born a wealthy or poor Victorian child. Provision for religious education is greatly enhanced through assemblies. These are of a very high standard, both when pupils meet as a school and within key stages. They offer a meaningful, often moving, experience for the pupils and their teachers. As at the time of the last inspection, religious education continues to make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

137. The subject co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has good subject knowledge. However, there has been no monitoring of the quality of planning, pupils' work or teaching and therefore she has not been able to address the weaknesses in curriculum coverage. An action plan identifying key areas for improvement has yet to be established and is now a priority for the future development of the subject. The last inspection reported that there was a lack of artefacts to support the teaching of other major world faiths. This has yet to be addressed, although the school makes good use of loans. Visits to local places of worship in Year 5 enhance the curriculum, but few opportunities for other classes have been identified.