

INSPECTION REPORT

BLLENHEIM PRIMARY SCHOOL

Leigh-on-Sea

LEA area: Southend

Unique reference number: 114837

Head teacher: Marianne Turner

Reporting inspector: David Marshall
27681

Dates of inspection: 24th – 27th September 2001

Inspection number: 230756

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: School Way
Blenheim Chase
Leigh-on-Sea
Essex

Postcode: SS9 4HX

Telephone number: 01702 474684

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr A F Smulian

Date of previous inspection: 25th - 26th November 1999

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
David Marshall 27681	Registered inspector	Art and design Design and technology English as an additional language	How high are standards? How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Margaret Morrissey 9769	Lay inspector		How well does the school work in partnership with parents? Pupils' personal development and attendance
Raminder Arora 16733	Team inspector	English Foundation Stage	How well does the school care for its pupils?
John Evans 20404	Team inspector	History Geography Music Special educational needs	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
John Linstead 20948	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Religious education	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
Michael Roussel 22157	Team inspector	Science Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	18
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	19
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	20
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	23
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	24
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	28

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Blenheim is a larger than average primary school with 456 pupils on roll. It is a two-form entry school – with some extra large year groups. The nursery admits up to 52 part-time pupils each year. Half of each intake comes from areas away from the school and reflects a very mixed background overall. Pupils' attainment on entry to the nursery is well below average. The majority of the pupils in the school are from a white UK background. Twenty-five pupils have English as an additional language - 12 are at an early stage of language acquisition. Last year, 128 of the full-time pupils claimed free school meals, which is above the national average. There are 104 pupils on the special educational needs register. Four of these have statements, which is just above the national average. There were three fixed period and one permanent exclusion last year. Pupil mobility is high. In Years 4, 5 and 6, almost half of the pupils have changed since they began in Key Stage 1. Several of the pupils who have come into the school have been excluded from other schools. The school is in an Education Action Zone. During the last two years, 14 new teachers have been appointed to the school.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Blenheim is a very good school in which the pupils succeed well although many do not enter the school with a wide range of knowledge and understanding. It provides a happy and stimulating learning environment for its pupils, who thoroughly enjoy being at school. Pupils work hard and make good progress and achieve well in literacy and numeracy, whatever their background or previous attainment. The overall quality of teaching is good, and teachers are particularly successful with pupils who have behavioural problems or who have experienced difficulties elsewhere. The school enhances the curriculum with a very good range of additional activities. It also provides very well for the pupils' personal development. The school has very good relationships with its parents. The leadership of the head teacher is excellent, with very good support from the deputy head, all staff and the governing body, and provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are rising in English and mathematics and pupils achieve their best by the time they leave.
- Teaching is good and staff promote a very good school ethos for learning through the very good range of additional activities that enhance pupils' learning opportunities.
- Provision in the Foundation Stage is very good and pupils make a good start to their education.
- The school is outstandingly led and managed by the head teacher, the deputy head, and key staff.
- The school provides very well for pupils' social and moral development. As a result pupils behave well, and are polite, courteous and enthusiastic. They co-operate very well, think of others, and develop very good relationships with each other.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs, and for those with English as an additional language, is good.
- The support staff, site manager and office staff make very important contributions to the effectiveness of the school.
- The school's relationships with parents are very good.

What could be improved

- The teachers should now build on the pupils' level of attainment in English and mathematics by extending their opportunities to use literacy and numeracy in other subjects of the curriculum as outlined in the school improvement plan.
- The level of achievement of pupils in history and geography is below expectations at the end of Key Stage 2.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

At the time of their full inspection in February 1998, the school was judged to be failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and was, therefore, made subject to special measures. The report at that time gave the governors and staff a number of key issues for action. As a result of the hard work and dedication of the staff and governors and the outstanding leadership of the head teacher, the school has made substantial improvement quickly. This meant that an inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectors in November 1999 concluded that the school no longer required special measures. Since then the school has

continued to make good progress on the key issues from that report. Pupils' attainment in reading and writing has continued to rise throughout the school. The quality of teaching has continued to improve as a direct result of the higher levels of teachers' expectations, knowledge and understanding of what pupils can achieve, in mathematics and science in particular. The roles and responsibilities of the head teacher and the senior managers, especially with regard to the rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning, have developed very well.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	D	D	E*	D	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	E	D	E	D	
Science	E	E	E	D	

The school's results in the annual national tests in 2000 for pupils aged seven in reading and mathematics were below the national average and well below in writing. Teachers' assessments of the overall level of attainment in science were also well below the national average. When compared to similar schools the results were average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing. Inspection evidence shows pupils in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 now make good progress and learn well. The results in the table above show pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 achieving well below the national average in mathematics and science. The results for English show pupils achieving very low scores, and in the lowest five per cent, when compared with the national average. The results in 2000 reflected the ability of that particular group of pupils and are not consistent with the good progress the school has made over the last three years since the time of the inspection in 1998. The trend has been one of steady gains in the core subjects at Key Stage 2, and above the national trend for improvement. Pupils' work in English, mathematics and science seen during the inspection shows that, although standards are below average, pupils are achieving well and are on course to exceed the challenging targets they have been set. Taking into account the very low attainment of pupils when starting school, the number with special educational needs and the high number coming and going from the school, these results show the school is successful in meeting its agreed targets for improvement. The standard of work seen in all other subjects in both key stages are in line with expectations for pupils of this age. The exceptions to this are in Key Stage 2 in information and communication technology, history and geography, where standards are below the level expected.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes to the school and their work. They are very enthusiastic and enjoy coming to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is very good. There is no sign of bullying and pupils are aware of the effect of their actions on others.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The relationships that pupils have with their teachers, other adults and with each other make a significant contribution to the school's positive ethos.
Attendance	The school has very good procedures in place and this has significantly improved attendance and punctuality. However, attendance levels are still just

below the national average.

The personal, social and emotional development of all pupils is very good. The way pupils work together so well makes a significant contribution to their overall learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very 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 overall throughout the school. Eighteen of the 86 lessons observed were very good or better and 60 were at least good across the whole school. None of the lessons observed were judged to be unsatisfactory. This is a continued improvement over the previous two inspections. In particular, since 1999 there is a much higher incidence of good and better lessons. The range of opportunities teachers create in the Foundation Stage is particularly impressive and ensures pupils make a good start to their education. The overall good quality of teaching has enabled pupils to make good progress in all key stages. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the curriculum, and of the individual needs of pupils, are good throughout the school. This means they teach English and mathematics effectively to all pupils, who learn the essential basic skills of literacy and numeracy well. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, which result in the overall good behaviour and good learning. Questions are carefully thought out and bring all pupils into class discussions, which are lively and challenging, and lessons move along at a good pace. Pupils learn to listen carefully and concentrate for longer periods of time as they get older. A wide variety of teaching methods are employed to make lessons interesting, and pupils enjoy their learning. Teachers relate very well to their pupils and they manage classes well. The teaching, and support, of pupils with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language, is good and they achieve sound standards in their work.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The planning in the Foundation Stage is very good. There are sound schemes of work in all subjects and a very good range of extra-curricular activities. Measures to enhance further the use of English and mathematics in other subjects as outlined in the school's improvement plan, should now be implemented.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good overall. Pupils are well known to all staff and well supported throughout the school. The withdrawal of some pupils for additional support means they miss some important aspects of the non-core subjects. This withdrawal needs reviewing in the light of the overall progress being made to ensure it is still appropriate.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is good. Pupils have access to the full curriculum and make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. The provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. The provision for their moral and social education is very good. The many newcomers who enter the school are enabled to settle in quickly.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for child protection and to improve attendance are very good. There are good procedures to improve pupils' behaviour and all staff work

	very hard to maintain a caring, supportive environment. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good in most subjects.
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The school works very well in partnership with parents. The quality of information provided by the school, such as newsletters, details of the curriculum and pupils' progress, is good. Parents are involved in fund-raising activities and extra-curricular activities and these provide very good support to the school in its work. The curriculum provided by the school is sound overall. All subjects have a policy and a scheme of work that underpins pupils' progress.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	The head teacher provides excellent leadership, leads by example and gives a very clear direction to the work of the school. The deputy head and key staff work closely with the head to improve pupils' standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their responsibilities very well. They visit the school regularly and understand the needs of the school well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good overall. The school monitors its provision very well. They have addressed the priorities and areas for development since the last inspection very well.
The strategic use of resources	Very good overall. Financial planning is carefully linked to the need to raise standards and the school evaluates the effectiveness of all decisions made. Best value principles are applied well.

The current level of staffing is good. Resources for learning and the accommodation are very good. The good partnership that the head teacher has created between all staff enables them to give of their best and create a supportive learning environment. The site manager, office manager, school administrator, and office staff make valuable contributions to the life of the school.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • The happy atmosphere of the school. • The teaching is good. • The head and all staff are very approachable. • Behaviour and progress is good. • The information about their children's progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount and type of homework.

Inspection evidence confirms the very positive views of the parents. The inspection team does not agree with some parents about the homework their children are given. The tasks given as homework are linked with the work being covered in lessons, parents are well informed so they can help, and pupils' progress is enhanced as a result.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. When children are first admitted, early assessments show that they begin school with very under-developed basic skills in all areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum. By the time they are ready to start in Year 1, most children achieve well and attain the majority of the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, as well as creative and physical development. In communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and the knowledge and understanding of the world, because of their low start children do not reach the expected standards. They make good progress in the reception classes as a result of very good teaching and good planning. Children with special educational needs receive good support to enhance their progress in both nursery and reception classes. The children learning English as an additional language do equally well and show good progress throughout the Foundation Stage because of the school's good provision.
2. Overall standards in English, mathematics and science throughout the rest of the school have been consistently below average when compared with the national test results of other schools, but they are improving. When comparisons are made with schools of a similar type based on the number of pupils eligible for free school meals it is clear that the school is successful. In the last four years, the school's improvements in all core subjects of the curriculum have exceeded the upward national trend. It is important to recognise that the pupils in the top three years of the school are still making up ground they lost when the school was failing to give an adequate quality of education prior to the inspection in 1998. A significant number of pupils, who have been at the school throughout their school life, are reaching the average national level at the end of the key stages. However, many new pupils come into the school during Key Stage 2, and often after having difficulties in other schools. When their results are compared with those of pupils who have been in the school over a long period, there is a negative effect on the end of Key Stage 2 results with regard to the expected average national levels. When the pupils who have been in the school since Key Stage 1 are considered, they have made good progress and consistently achieved the targets agreed with the local authority for improvement.
3. When factors such as the overall school intake, the pupils admitted after being excluded with problems from other schools, the high pupil mobility rate and the many pupils with special educational needs, are taken into account, the results being achieved are testament to how well the school is working. Unvalidated figures for the 2001 national tests show that the numbers of pupils who have achieved the expected standards of Level 4 or above in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science have risen substantially. In 2000 46 per cent of pupils reached Level 4 in English; 2001 results indicate that this has risen to 64 per cent. In mathematics the figure has risen from 54 per cent to 58 per cent. In science the rise is from 69 per cent to 89 per cent.
4. Good progress in English has been made since the last inspection, largely because there is a consistency of good teaching across the school. Pupils achieve standards in speaking and listening, reading, and writing in line with expectations in both key stages. The very effective analysis of the results of National Curriculum tests and other school assessment has led to the setting of suitable targets, especially for higher levels of attainment. This target setting has had a positive effect on the results of the 2001 National Curriculum tests, where there is a significant rise in the numbers of pupils achieving the higher levels of attainment. In the 2000 National Curriculum test results in English for Key Stage 1, standards were well below those of other schools when compared to the national average, and when compared to similar schools. In Key Stage 2 standards in English were also well below schools nationally,

and similar schools. The 2001 figures show pupils achieving standards close to average figures when compared to those in similar schools. This is a very significant improvement.

5. In Key Stage 1, pupils listen carefully to teachers and each other, follow instructions without fuss and contribute positively in discussions. In later years, the level of language used develops further and pupils become confident and willing to contribute responses to teachers' questioning and to discussions. However, a restricted vocabulary means that many six and seven year olds are imprecise or hesitant in producing answers, which keeps the overall level of attainment below average. In Key Stage 2, pupils' vocabulary is extended further and they begin to use complex and grammatically accurate sentences. Pupils attain satisfactory standards in reading. In Key Stage 1, average and below average pupils have a good grasp of letter sounds to help them tackle unfamiliar words. Most pupils make good progress and show sound understanding of what they read. Many higher attaining pupils read accurately with good expression, and confidently discuss their reading or predict what might happen next. Most pupils understand terms such as 'author', 'illustrator', 'contents', 'page' and 'index', and enjoy sharing text during the literacy hour. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are identified early and embark on well-structured literacy programmes, with realistic short-term targets. The books read by pupils in Key Stage 2 are appropriate to their interest and level of attainment. Pupils read with increasing fluency and accuracy. Most pupils talk about favourite authors with discernment, but their critical appreciation of a range of books is limited. Pupils develop good dictionary and thesaurus skills; their ability to skim and scan, and make meaningful notes, is limited. They are able to use non-fiction books to locate and retrieve information within the library and their classrooms. Pupils' writing skills in Key Stage 1 progress well. Most are beginning to write in joined script with increasing control and accuracy. Pupils are well supported to think about the overall structure of their writing. However, there are limited examples of independent extended writing. In Key Stage 2, the scope of writing for a range of purposes is suitably extended to include narrative, description, letters, instructions etc. Although a minority of pupils still struggle to express themselves clearly in writing, most pupils, and the higher attainers in particular, are able to interpret and comment sensibly on texts that they read. The amount and quality of recorded work in subjects such as science, history, geography and religious education is limited. Pupils' independent uses of information and communication technology to word-process, re-draft or edit are now developing.
6. In mathematics, pupils' levels of achievement have improved steadily from 1998 to 2001. In the 2000 national tests for pupils aged seven at the end of Key Stage 1, results were average when compared to the national average and when compared to schools with pupils from a similar background. In the 2000 national tests for pupils aged eleven at the end of Key Stage 2, results were well below average when compared to all and similar schools. The inspection findings show standards in both key stages are improving and at present they are in line with national expectations. There has been a significant rise in the numbers of pupils achieving expected levels of attainment in the 2001 National Curriculum tests. These results show the standards to be above average when compared with schools nationally and similar schools in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2, standards are below schools nationally, but improving. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language get good support and are making good progress, as are pupils of above average ability.
7. The majority of pupils enter the reception class with levels of ability below those expected for children of their age in mathematics. By the end of Key Stage 1, the majority of pupils can clearly recall addition and subtraction facts to 20 and can order numbers to 50. They can add and subtract money up to a pound, and identify a square, triangle, circle and rectangle. They enjoy solving problems. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have sound knowledge and understanding of place value, and can successfully complete multiplication and division of decimals. They know how to measure time, length and weight, and enjoy these calculations. The majority know that angles are turns and recognise acute, obtuse, reflex and right

angles. The majority are aware of the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages. Pupils make good progress throughout both key stages. Pupils with special educational needs make appropriate progress in mathematics.

8. In science, teacher assessments in 2000 show that standards were in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1. At Key Stage 2 standards in the 2000 tests for eleven year olds were below the national average for all schools and when compared with pupils in similar schools. The results in 2001 show a very significant improvement at Key Stage 2. The number of pupils gaining Level 5 was well over three times as many as in 2000. Comparisons over the last three years show a rising trend. Overall, by the end of Key Stage 1, all pupils reach sound standards in all areas of the science curriculum. Their knowledge and understanding is good. Overall, by the end of Key Stage 2, average and higher attaining pupils have reached a satisfactory level of achievement in all areas of the science curriculum. Their standard of knowledge and understanding is good. During the inspection, overall standards seen support these test results. Pupils with special educational needs and with English as an additional language make good progress in science.
9. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. The school's records show that, in relation to their prior attainment, these pupils learn well and their achievement is better than would normally be expected. Despite this good level of achievement, the very low starting point for some of these pupils and the fact that many join later in their school careers mean their overall level of attainment is below average by the time they leave the school.
10. Pupils who speak English as an additional language receive very effective support from class teachers and support assistants. This ensures their full involvement in all activities and adds to the achievements that they make. By the end of Key Stage 2, most operate well in English and many attain good standards in their work.
11. Levels of attainment in information and communication technology are average at the end of Key Stage 1, and, although they are improving rapidly, are currently below average at the end of Key Stage 2. The reason for pupils' levels of ability improving rapidly is thanks to the new co-ordinator and the improved facilities in the computer suite, and the consequent improvement in the quality of teaching. Key Stage 1 pupils can use a mouse competently to load and draw using different art packages. They can also use different word-processing programs to write simple stories and make labels for classroom displays and their books. Key Stage 2 pupils now have access to the Internet and store data in a word-processing package or database. They then add graphics to enhance the information they have collected.
12. Pupils in both key stages meet the required standards in religious education in the locally agreed syllabus. Although they make satisfactory progress throughout the school, their knowledge and understanding are limited. At Key Stage 1, pupils have some understanding of the ideas central to many religions, especially to Christianity and Judaism. However, some of this knowledge is superficial, as insufficient time has been spent on different topics. The position is very similar for eleven year olds. Their attainment meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus but again there is little depth to a lot of their knowledge. They do, though, have a good knowledge about the meanings of some of the stories Jesus told. Their knowledge of other religions has developed to the extent that pupils talk about many aspects of the Jewish religion. However, pupils are not familiar with the teachings of other religions and cannot compare the similarities, or differences, between them.
13. Attainment in art and design, design and technology, physical education and music at the end of both key stages is in line with that expected nationally. In history and geography the quality of pupils' work at the age of seven is in line with expectations for their age. However, it is often below the level expected for their age by the time they leave school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. Pupils have very good attitudes to work, to learning and to their role in the school community. This is enabling pupils, who have failed in other schools, to do well in Blenheim. The school is a very inclusive community and is committed to developing the talents of each individual child within a caring environment. Pupils, staff, parents and governors work as a team, expressing opinions and listening to the views of each other. Pupils are valued for who they are and what they may become; the very good relationship between pupils and staff give pupils the confidence to build on their talents and raises their self-esteem. Pupils are willing to learn and co-operate in all lessons. They share equipment sensibly with each other. They collaborate in class as was clearly seen in Year 4 geography when discussing the school environment and planning ways to improve it in the classroom and in the school grounds.
15. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. They understand and observe the code of conduct and Golden Rules; when in the classroom they gain very good work habits and absorb the values transmitted to them by good teacher role models. A number of pupils have behavioural difficulties; with very good support from learning assistants, teachers are able to control these pupils and ensure no lessons are seriously interrupted. The rewards system is frequently used and is much appreciated by pupils as are the new rewards for good attendance. In both instances, pupils say they are proud to receive the acknowledgement of their efforts from staff and to receive recognition in the special assemblies. No issues of bullying were observed and pupils and parents are confident that any issues of bullying will be dealt with swiftly and sensitively within the school policy.
16. Relationships are very good across the school and of high quality; this creates an environment of care and security where work and learning can progress effectively. The relationships that are developing between staff and pupils are helping pupils settle quickly into the new school year. There is a particularly good relationship between pupils: older pupils have a genuine desire to care for the younger children particularly at lunchtimes but also throughout the school day. This is contributing to the happy, industrious ethos of learning and caring which permeates the school.
17. Pupils' personal development is very good. Through the unique opportunities provided, pupils, especially those in Year 6, make a significant contribution to the life of the school and are taking good amounts of responsibility. They contribute well to the daily routine of the school in jobs they apply for to the head teacher at the beginning of the year. The school council is democratic and, whilst being supported by staff, has worked independently to achieve a number of changes and improvements in the environment for pupils, such as the open-air environment centre. Almost all pupils have small responsibilities for others and an active role in supporting the good behaviour in the school. In Key Stage 1 two pupils are chosen as buddies for the week and others seek help from them or are supported by them, particularly at break times. In Key Stage 2 pupils are 'mentors' and follow the same system: pupils feel comfortable and supported by this and even the youngest show care and consideration and a good amount of maturity.
18. Attendance is slightly below the national average but is improving. A number of pupils now achieve 100 per cent attendance each term. Pupils are mostly punctual and lessons start on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. The quality of teaching is good overall. A significant number of lessons are very good or excellent in different classes. Eighteen of the lessons (21 per cent) were very good or better and 60 (70 per cent) were at least good. No lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory. This

is a continued improvement when compared with the last inspection. The overall good quality of teaching enables pupils to make good progress in their learning in both key stages. Pupils are interested in their work and work hard, responding well to the individual targets set by their class teachers. Their ability in literacy and numeracy has improved a great deal, for example, as a result of the effective way the National Strategies have been introduced. They acquire new skills, knowledge and understanding very effectively through the provision of a wide range of interesting activities in the core subjects of English and mathematics.

20. The previous inspection report of November 1999 identified the need for the head teacher and staff to raise the levels of teachers' subject knowledge, especially in mathematics and science. The school has very successfully addressed this issue. The minor weaknesses in teaching identified in the last inspection report, and the need to build on and disseminate the existing good practice, have been at the forefront of the school's focus on improvement. The standard of teaching throughout the school has greatly improved.
21. All teachers are very aware of the differing needs of pupils, and match work accordingly. This was evident in a Year 1 English lesson where the class teacher made sure pupils had the practical activity of completing a recipe when considering instructional writing. The way the teacher involved kept emphasising the correct language – equipment, instructions, ingredients – ensured that the objectives of the lesson, that had been made clear to the pupils, were realised.
22. The very good teaching in the Foundation Stage is based on very thorough planning which identifies what individual pupils are to learn to achieve the early learning goals. Groups of pupils of very differing prior attainments begin their work on the National Curriculum at the appropriate time due to the careful use of assessment. The range of activities is always good and pupils are always on task and appropriately challenged. The fact that within any session in the nursery it is usual for pupils, some of whom had only been in the school for two days, to complete a wide of range activities leads to their good progress. In one lesson observed in the inspection, that the children had many opportunities to count, name new colours, play outside, paint 'Me', practise new words and listen carefully to a lovely story, is testament to how carefully these sessions are planned. It was also evident how much the pupils enjoy them.
23. The good teaching at Key Stage 1 reflects the overall good subject knowledge across most of the curriculum. In a Year 2 science lesson, the teacher's insistence on using the correct terminology and the lovely 'plates of food' she had prepared kept the pupils' attention well. Planning is successful and pupils are always learning at an appropriate level, despite their very wide range of prior attainments. For example, in a Year 1 mathematics lesson, the teacher had previously prepared number lines from 1 to 20 with the higher achieving pupils so they could work independently at their own level. Pupils of all abilities were given very good support that resulted in their very good progress.
24. In Key Stage 1, classroom organisation is good and all activities selected are appropriate to the identified learning objectives in the plans. The way that a Year 1 teacher spoke to the class in a very quiet voice, and read the story using a whisper in order to engage their attention was typical, and exemplary. In a Year 2 science lesson, the teacher gave the pupils 'time out' for discussions at the optimum time. She then gave her time to the higher achieving group, and the support assistants worked with the lower achievers so that they could all make good progress. As a result her group learnt through discussion how calcium helps to make bones strong, and the other groups planned a balanced diet.
25. The good teaching at Key Stage 2 is also characterised by good subject knowledge and understanding, and clear planning. The links, which the teachers make at this stage between different subjects, produce cross-curricular activities that are particularly valuable.

Again there is a strong emphasis on investigative work that leads to independence and the overall good personal development of all pupils. This was evident in a Year 4 geography lesson on looking after the school environment. The teacher's use of an overhead projector and map of the school grounds led to the pupils completing complicated scattergrams, which linked directly to their mathematics lesson earlier. It was also apparent in a Year 5 design and technology lesson where the pupils were designing a cam for a moving toy. The teacher's emphasis on the careful measuring exercise made very good use of pupils' mathematical skills. The fact that the Year 6 pupils working on complex sentences and paragraphs were using accounts of the voyages of Sir Francis Drake showed the care being taken to make links with their history projects.

26. Throughout the school, teachers have appropriately high expectations of pupils, and class discussions are always lively and challenging. Questions are well focused and designed to bring all pupils into the discussions. This helps all pupils to make quick progress towards the learning objectives of the particular lesson. The excellent lesson in one of the reception classes showed how a glove puppet and a 'magic bag' can be used very effectively to hold pupils' attention and encourage their responses. Teachers use a good range of methods and groupings that are well matched to the lesson's purpose. The quality of whole-class teaching in the literacy and numeracy sessions is generally good. Teachers lead these discussions well introducing new ideas with care and clarity. For example, in a Year 6 English lesson the teacher used carefully worded questions to elicit the required responses from all pupils. She had clearly taken a great deal of time planning the questions and gradually teased out more and more meaning. She made optimum use of the time available and the pupils groaned when they were told they had to move onto their next session.
27. All teachers set a good example to pupils, and the most effective teaching ensures that other pupils are also used as good role models. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils throughout the school. They use praise well to modify behaviour and reward good work. Instructions given to pupils are very clear, and teachers listen carefully to pupils' replies and questions, and show they value them all. Teachers manage pupils very effectively even when their behaviour is challenging. This results in consistently good behaviour. The school is particularly successful in enabling pupils who have become disaffected with school to begin to enjoy learning again. This was evident in a very good Year 6 English lesson when the business-like, but amicable, atmosphere created by the teacher enabled her to allow the pupils to choose who to work with when looking at evidence to determine between fact and opinion. She quietly instructed the pupils to choose someone they could work with and "make sure it is someone you can work with well and constructively." The pupils achieved this well.
28. Over the last four years the head teacher has secured a great deal of additional financial help to enable pupils to have withdrawal support whenever required. This has had the effect of enhancing and extending the overall teaching quality in all classes. The results are apparent in the higher standards pupils are now achieving. During the inspection a number of pupils were either withdrawn for additional help, or put on a computer program during the opening session of a numeracy lesson. The effectiveness of this intervention, now that pupils are achieving higher standards, is questionable. Examples of pupils missing important aspects of science, information and communication technology, and design and technology lessons were seen. On a number of occasions it was impossible to see how pupils would make up the time they had missed.
29. There is a good school policy for marking written work that encourages the frequent use of feedback to pupils, which is related to the learning objectives of the lesson. The way that the teachers of the younger pupils were observed discussing their results with them rather than just writing on their books was very effective. Informal strategies to gauge pupils' understanding are apparent in most lessons. These are used consistently across the school in the core subjects and generally guarantee progression for all pupils at the quickest pace on a day-to-day basis. There is good practice in the marking of writing where this approach

to marking is carried out regularly. Pupils are not left in any doubt about how well they have done and how they can improve. Homework is used effectively to support pupils' progress throughout the school.

30. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional activity is good as there is a high level of awareness of the needs of the full range of pupils with these needs amongst all teaching and support staff. Teachers have carefully planned lessons, most identify good, short-term achievable tasks, and work is appropriate for different levels of attainment. Work for pupils with special educational needs matches the targets set on individual education plans. In many lessons, teachers carefully modify tasks to ensure that they closely match each pupil's needs and abilities. This enables pupils with special educational needs to progress well and gain satisfaction from their learning. There is a very good number of well-trained learning support assistants, many of whom work mainly with pupils having special educational needs or English as an additional language. Support assistants work with great commitment and effectiveness. They make an invaluable contribution to pupils' progress and in ensuring that pupils with special educational needs are fully included in class activities and the broader life of the school.

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

31. The quality and range of learning opportunities for pupils are satisfactory overall. Pupils in the Foundation Stage engage in very good learning opportunities and subsequently make good progress. The curriculum in the rest of the school is based upon national guidance and meets statutory requirements. Religious education is planned and supported by a published scheme of work, following consultation with the local education authority. These elements of the National Curriculum have enabled the school to make significant improvements in the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding since the last inspection. The curriculum is very well planned and has breadth and balance in the Foundation Stage. In the other key stages all subjects are adequately covered, but the curriculum is not sufficiently broad. The head teacher guided the school out of special measures very successfully. In this period she, and the deputy head, were right to concentrate on raising the pupils' level of achievement in the core subjects of English and mathematics. In addition they had to be able to offer the best possible education through a carefully planned curriculum to the pupils coming into the school from elsewhere. Now the pupils in the school are achieving improved standards in the core subjects it is appropriate for the head and senior colleagues to implement their school improvement plan. This clearly identifies all areas of the curriculum and details the opportunities for pupils to use the core skills of English and mathematics in other subjects, notably art and design, music, science, design and technology, history and geography. The school has already begun this process of implementing a broader curriculum for each subject. The example seen during the inspection in science where the learning support assistant was helping a higher-achieving group will achieve better coverage for the whole curriculum if implemented in all subjects. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is good and they are well supported, as are pupils with English as an additional language.
32. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been well introduced into the school. The very good analysis of pupils' progress, combined with the way that pupils are put in ability sets, has helped raise standards overall. In addition, where teachers plan for the range of abilities within each group, there is an increased challenge and a subsequent raising of standards. The monitoring of teaching and learning in the core subjects are a strength of the school. The planned meetings, held where issues are raised regarding curriculum and its delivery, have enhanced staff awareness to the differences in the learning of groups of pupils. For example, the need to clearly understand what they want pupils to learn, especially through clear lesson objectives and assessment against whether or not these objectives had been met.

33. The present curriculum has adopted national guidance for schemes of work and these are in place for science, information and communication technology, design and technology, art and design, history, geography and music. The physical education curriculum has adopted a published scheme, although the gymnastic and dance schemes of work have been revised by the subject co-ordinator in consultation with the local education authority's physical education adviser. There is a personal, social, health education scheme where the 'You Can Do It' programme was introduced in September 2000 and a Playground Peacemakers programme introduced in 2001.
34. Teachers' planning has improved since the last inspection and greater attention is now paid to work that is to be covered in the medium and short term. However, although assessments are carried out to show how successful these plans have been, there is now a need to ensure that day-to-day work is carefully reviewed to ensure increasing challenge in English and mathematics for pupils in the non-core subjects as outlined in the school improvement plan. Teachers give great attention to planning for pupils of all abilities and this significantly contributes to their good rate of progress throughout the school. However, pupils do not always receive work that covers all opportunities in geography and history. All pupils have full access and opportunity to take part and participate in the range of learning programmes within the school. However, there is a weakness in the opportunities for a few pupils who are on intervention programmes and are taken out of classes for their work. This impacts quite heavily on their access to the whole curriculum as some regularly miss the introductions and in some cases over half the lesson because of their withdrawal from the class.
35. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities for the pupils. This is a strength of the school. A significant additional contribution to the range of curricular experiences is the regular and well-considered use of outside visits made by pupils. These visits are carefully linked to the work being undertaken in class and ensure that pupils realise the practical and real importance of their learning in school. They also contribute well to pupils' social development. The school has a clear programme for sex and drug education. Pupils are aware of the issues of dangerous substances and take a strong moral stand over the issue.
36. The contribution of the community to the school's curriculum is good. The example of the 'Walking Bus' is one that has inspired other schools. The Education Action Zone provides useful additional funds to allow staff to further improve the effective links that exist between home and school. Strong links have been established with other local schools, especially the local secondary school where model lessons have been demonstrated and pupils in Year 6 spend a whole day in the school. The school has developed very good links with adult education colleges who provide learning programmes for parents in the school.
37. The school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall.
38. Its provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. Opportunities for spirituality are provided in some areas of the curriculum, most notably in religious education. In these lessons pupils are able to reflect on their own and others' beliefs. They also have opportunities to put themselves in someone else's place and ponder on what life might be like for them. A striking example is the work pupils in Year 6 did in considering the Holocaust and its victims. Likewise pupils in Year 5 considered the feelings of Anne Frank following their investigations into her life and others facing persecution and death. The collective acts of worship usually, but not always, offer pupils the chance to consider spiritual issues and often contain a prayer or time of quiet reflection. Teachers value pupils' work and offer praise and encouragement which lifts their self-esteem.
39. The school's provision for moral development is very good and plays a significant part in the lives of pupils. The school operates a positive behaviour policy in which good behaviour is rewarded and the differences between right and wrong are clearly stated and reinforced.

Pupils are familiar with the 'Golden Rules', which are prominently displayed around the school, and in the playground. Pupils who misbehave are told or asked why their behaviour is unacceptable. The school makes much of the achievements of pupils and encourages them to 'have a go' at new or more complex work. Positive attitudes are also fostered through the school's personal, health and social education policies and in 'circle time'. Teachers and support staff provide very good role models through their relationships with each other and the respect they show to pupils generally.

40. The school also makes very good provision for the social development of its pupils. They are encouraged to work together in lessons and at other times during the day. For example, work planned using the computer suite requires pupils to share equipment, which they do successfully. Older pupils are encouraged to keep a watchful eye on younger ones during playtimes and pupils assist teachers in various jobs around the classroom. Team games are encouraged with the school playing football and netball against other local schools. The after-school football and netball clubs are well attended. Teachers consult with pupils on a variety of issues, for example about improvements to the school playground. There is a school council, with the views of pupils expressed in its meetings valued and considered.
41. The school's provision for cultural development is satisfactory. The special days of the Christian religion, such as Christmas and Easter, are marked and celebrated. Through their studies in history and art and design, pupils have a reasonable understanding of their own culture. Visits, and more especially visitors to the school, enhance this. The cultures of other countries are observed through pupils' work in geography and history. In addition, visitors to the school include bands from Canada and African drummers. British and European artists' work and ideas are considered in some art lessons. The school also marks the special days of other religions, for example, the Chinese New Year, Diwali, and Hanukkah. The school has some books in dual languages and other cultures are represented in the school's fiction library. However, there is no strong emphasis on other cultures and the schools' policy on promoting multi-cultural education is only partly being carried out. The school is establishing good links with local schools through its e-mail provision, and the establishment of its own website opens up many opportunities to develop this still further.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

42. The school is a very caring community that has very effective procedures to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its pupils. Very good guidelines on child protection have been adopted and are made clear to all teachers. Clear procedures are used to identify needs and target support for pupils who are identified as having special educational needs and those with English as an additional language.
43. There has been very good improvement in this area since the last inspection. Much work has been done to address this issue. Test information, such as baseline assessment and results from national tests, is carefully evaluated and analysed to mark the performance of different groups and individuals. The school has developed effective whole-school systems for assessing and recording pupils' attainment.
44. The assessment information is used consistently to inform both teachers' planning and pupils' progress. Teachers make regular evaluations of pupils' progress towards the learning intentions in lessons and the majority makes full use of the information to plan work at a suitable level for each child. They also set individual targets for pupils in English and mathematics, and these are shared with pupils and parents. The termly target setting involves pupils in tracking their own progress. This helps to ensure a good standard of evaluation at a class and individual level. The school is now able to effectively track pupils' progress and address areas of weaknesses or concerns as they become apparent. Recently, this has begun to be applied to the non-core subjects too. The annual reports to parents contain useful information and also include comments on how pupils might improve.

45. The school provides a very good standard of health, safety and care for pupils' welfare and personal development within a happy, controlled environment. They have placed appropriate emphasis on providing an establishment where pupils are well known to all members of the school staff, giving pupils confidence to work, learn and progress.
46. Induction to the school begins in home visits. In nursery, parents and teachers feel this is making a significant difference and children are settling quicker and with less stress to them. This was evident during the inspection week which, for a number of children, began with their first day in school; by day two all were recognising the routine and mixing well with other children.
47. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' pastoral care are very good. Pupils feel confident, valued and cared for: all can identify a person they would turn to for help and support. Parents are quickly informed of any problems pupils have related to their personal welfare or academic progress.
48. Child protection procedures are very good. There is a clear policy that is well known to all staff. The designated officer has good working relationships with all relevant support agencies and overall this provides good protection for all pupils.
49. Health and safety provision is very good. The school policy is comprehensive and provides a very good basis for consistent safety provision across the school. The governors' premises committee monitors health and safety and works closely with the co-ordinator and site manager to improve and maintain all aspects of school safety. Risk assessment is up to date and all equipment is well maintained with recorded checks. During the inspection, no health and safety concerns were noted to be a danger to other pupils. There are clear notices to support procedures for fire evacuation and fire drills are taken regularly and logged. First aid provision is very good; training is up to date, current first aid certificates are held and the new provision of a medical area is working well. If there are accidents or head injuries these are reported and recorded. The school promotes healthy and safe living through a programme for personal, social and health education, and across the curriculum. The school has good relationships with a range of outside agencies and works successfully with them to improve pupils' welfare.
50. Procedures for monitoring behaviour are very good and well known to pupils and parents. Procedures for ensuring that oppressive behaviour is eliminated are also very good and effectively used. Teachers give much praise for good work and for good behaviour, following consistently the school policy; pupils respond well to the rewards system and show real pride when they are praised and given personal points. Information on the school policy is provided in the school prospectus, which supports the school's work to maintain a good standard of behaviour. The school's 'open door' policy encourages parents to play a full part in pupils' welfare both at home and in the school.
51. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance and punctuality are very good and are closely adhered to. Registers are correctly completed both morning and afternoon. The school has worked hard to reinforce the procedures, continues to give reminders in school letters and asks parents not to take extended holidays. There have been three fixed term, and one permanent, exclusions in the last year all related to pupils who joined the school with serious behaviour problems.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

52. Partnership with parents is very good. Parents are encouraged to support children's learning at home and are given very good support and information from the school to do this. Parents are genuinely pleased with the quality of education the school is now providing; they

appreciate the increased involvement in school life and the change in atmosphere and attitudes which is making Blenheim a happy, positive establishment in which their children flourish.

53. Parents' views of the school are very positive. They are happy with the progress that pupils make and the standards of attainment achieved. Parents feel they are well informed and that it is an open school with a head teacher who listens carefully to what they have to say. Since the last inspection they feel there have been improvements in the environment and in staffing and teaching. Parents feel well informed on pupils' progress and believe that the home school diaries are a useful communication between home and school. The overall consensus is that parents are pleased with the school. Parents feel behaviour has greatly improved and that it is a happy friendly school which pupils want to attend. Pupils are well cared for and are given many opportunities to develop independence and confidence. Parents are regarded as true partners in home school learning; they feel that the school belongs to them and their children but the real value is the partnership they have with the staff and governors; decisions are genuinely a shared process. The inspection findings totally substantiate parents' views.
54. The quality and quantity of information provided for parents are good. There is regular communication between home and school through a range of methods including the school prospectus, school policies, consultation evenings, end of year reports and a regular newsletter from the head teacher. All new parents have an opportunity to speak to the head teacher and to view the school prior to their children's entry and reception children have a home visit. Parents' evenings are well attended and these give parents a good opportunity to discuss pupils' progress and keep in regular contact with teachers. This is further enabled through pupils' home school diaries that record homework including reading, spellings, targets and areas for pupil improvement. These are well used by parents and teachers to maintain a continuing dialogue. Parents say the school is welcoming, always willing to listen to them and very keen to involve them in a wide range of ways. The governors' annual report to parents gives very good information and meets legal requirements. The school prospectus is well presented with necessary and useful information for parents and pupils; this too complies with legal requirements.
55. Parents make a positive impact on the school both as individuals and through the Friends of Blenheim Association. They provide a uniform shop and crèche facility for all school meetings and for the Early Start Programme. An average of seven parents are in school helping each day. This covers a range of activities both in the classroom and in many other areas. Playtime story reading is very popular with children: they enjoy parents reading to them, showing interest and understanding and helping to develop a love of books. A group of parents provide Story Sacks, a wonderfully exciting resource for pupils starting on their reading journey. Home School Agreements have been well received by parents and are used well to strengthen the partnership between home and school and reinforce pupils' home learning habits.
56. The school ensures that the parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed and given frequent opportunities to join in planning and reviewing provision.
57. The Friends of the School Association is a very good fundraiser and also provides many opportunities for pupils, teachers and the community to come together for recreation. They work hard with teachers, pupils and the community to provide good social and fund-raising events and keep them informed by newsletter. They have raised amazing amounts of money, all used to improve resources in the school and improve the school environment. They provide pupils with Christmas presents, are aware of other cultures and ensure that children from these are given gifts at the appropriate time. All pupils in Year 6 are taken on a fun trip and are also given a leaving present. Overall, parents make a very useful

contribution to school life and resources and to the general good relationships between parents, pupils, teachers and the community.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

58. The leadership and management of the school are excellent overall. The leadership of the head teacher is of a very high quality. She has a very clear vision of the direction that she expects the school to take to ensure the best possible education for all pupils. She is a firm and caring leader with a very high level of professional knowledge and expertise that is clearly reflected in all aspects of her work. She uses these attributes to bring together a team of dedicated and hard-working teachers who share her vision to ensure that all pupils receive the best possible education they can provide. This is despite the fact that there has been a large turnover of teaching staff in the last two years.
59. An outstanding feature of her leadership and vision is evidenced by the way in which the school has moved forward so well since the inspection in 1998 when it was deemed to be failing and requiring special measures. The school now provides an exciting place for children and parents who know that, at all times, they will be received with care and consideration to discuss matters of importance to them or to seek help when they are in need.
60. The head teacher is fully supported and complemented by an extremely capable deputy, and senior management team, who are all teachers of high quality in their own right. The deputy head, who has worked tirelessly alongside the head teacher, matches her in her enthusiasm for promoting the highest levels of education and care for both pupils and their parents. Both have a clear understanding of their roles as senior members of the school. As a result, the school is united in its approach to guiding and teaching pupils and is very successful in achieving its goals.
61. This strong leadership structure is strengthened further by the good work carried out by the co-ordinators. All co-ordinators are clear about the roles that they fulfil and they do this very well with varying degrees of effectiveness depending upon the length of time that they have held their specific responsibilities. The whole ethos of the school, and the attitudes of teachers to their work, is such that all respect the individual parts that each has to play in terms of guiding and monitoring the quality of their own work. It is significant that a school based literacy adviser employed by the local authority, who could have taught at various schools at the beginning of the year, chose to become the literacy co-ordinator at Blenheim. She gave many reasons for this – not the least being “the exciting developments already well underway”. As a result of decisions like this, made based on the work of the head and deputy, the school now has a team of teachers who work as one for the total benefit of the pupils of this school.
62. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and for those with English as an additional language is good, as is the progress they make. The school’s special needs co-ordinators are knowledgeable, enthusiastic and very effective in their work. Their support is greatly valued by colleagues. Timetabling, documentation and statutory procedures are well managed.
63. The quality of monitoring and evaluation of the school’s performance and the taking of effective action is excellent. The main focus has been on supporting the development of literacy and numeracy in particular and this has been successful. Co-ordinators monitor the effectiveness of teachers’ planning on a regular basis and ensure that these plans are put into practice. The whole staff have contributed to discussions on effective teaching and the positive results of this combined approach were clearly observed during the inspection. The head teacher monitors and evaluates each teacher in action at least once per term. The introduction of new staff to the school, including newly qualified teachers, is also very good.

This has enabled no less than eleven newly qualified teachers to join the staff successfully in the last three years. The staff booklet provides a clear set of guidance for new teachers to follow and includes a relevant induction sheet to support new teachers as they settle in. Newly qualified teachers are monitored regularly to ensure that they develop in a positive way. They receive regular guidance and targets are set to help them grow in confidence and skills. To this end, they are provided with appropriate opportunities to observe other colleagues in action and so learn from the good teaching practice of others.

64. The governing body is led by an experienced chairman and fully supports the actions that the head teacher is taking to move the school forward. The effectiveness of the governing body in fulfilling its responsibilities is good. They take their responsibilities seriously and play an important and effective role in shaping the direction of the school. Various standard committees meet on a regular basis to ensure that the management of the school is effective. These include a curriculum committee that has a close liaison with the curriculum co-ordinators so that it is kept fully informed of what is happening in each subject. Each governor has a link with a particular subject and is matched with a specific teacher so that the development of the subject can be monitored from year to year.
65. Governors understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school very well because of their close involvement with what is going on. Parents see them in and around the school as they help pupils with their work and feel that they can talk to governors. A good example of this is the governor who helps pupils in the nursery on a regular basis. The governing body also has a clear strategy for checking on the progress that is being made. For example, it works closely with the head teacher to set targets for her to achieve and monitors the progress that is being made on a regular basis. This is a strong aspect of their involvement with the school.
66. The school's improvement plan is excellent. It covers a period of three years through a general overview, with the current year broken down into fine detail. This deals with all relevant aspects of planning and action and relates various priorities accurately to the costs involved and to the budget implications. All teachers are involved with the development of this plan and co-ordinators take specific responsibilities for developing their parts of it. The head teacher and governors ensure that specific success criteria are included in the plan so that regular evaluation of its progress occurs to ensure that the school's targets are met. As a result, the head teacher guided the school out of special measures very successfully. In this period she, and the deputy head, enabled their colleagues to raise the pupils' level of achievement in the core subjects of English and mathematics. Now the pupils in the school are achieving expected levels in the core subjects it is appropriate for the head and senior colleagues to implement their school improvement plan and extend the opportunities for pupils in other subjects.
67. Since the last inspection by HMI in 1999, the school has made good progress with improvements in all areas of concern. The school has not only continued with all measures to raise standards, but also built on them effectively. The emphasis required on writing at Key Stage 2 is borne out by the improved results in English in 2001. Senior staff now have very good job descriptions and understand, and carry out, their roles in the school to very good effect. The level of ongoing appraisal and assessment of teachers at work is now of very high quality. The lesson observation and monitoring procedures adopted by the head and senior staff are a model of good practice. Both the head teacher and the governing body have an extremely clear understanding and insight on what needs to be done to improve the school further.
68. The school manages its finances very effectively. The day-to-day functions of the office are carried out professionally by the office team, and the office manager and the school administrator to ensure that all matters relating to income and expenditure are dealt with very efficiently. Specific grants are used effectively for their designated purposes, including

funds from the Education Action Zone initiative, and support the education offered to all pupils of this school. The school's use of best value principles in deciding upon purchases of resources is good.

69. There is a very good number of suitably qualified teachers and learning support assistants. This enables the curriculum to be taught very effectively and the full range of pupils' needs to be met. The school has been successful in attracting good quality, enthusiastic teachers who share a strong commitment to improvement. Teachers and support assistants are well trained and work very constructively together. There is a sense of purposeful teamwork. This improves the quality of pupils' learning and underpins the very good relationships found in most lessons. All classes receive high levels of skilful, well-organised support from learning assistants. This is helpful to all pupils, but is especially valuable in enabling pupils with special education needs to progress well and be fully included in lessons.
70. The school's accommodation is very good. There is ample, well-designed space for pupils in all year groups to follow the required range of indoor and outdoor activities. Recent building work has usefully enhanced the school's accommodation. The layout of the library has been improved so that pupils have better access to books and can carry out research more effectively. The creation of a purpose-built computer suite, adjoining the library, gives greater scope for pupils to practise and apply their information and communication technology skills. The school grounds are now outstanding. The outside areas for the Foundation Stage are very good. The rest of the outside area has been developed with a great deal of thought. It now includes a thoughtfully developed environmental area. This facility is valuable in promoting pupils' learning in, for example, science and art. The whole school is looked after with great care. The site manager is an important member of the school team. He meets with the head teacher every Monday to set the scene for the week. He takes great care over every aspect of his work and is much appreciated by all. He is trained to check all electrical appliances and does so on a regular basis. He has been able to do much minor work in the school over the years and, as a result, has saved the school a great deal of money. The school is also very well cared for internally and always clean. This efficiency is an object lesson to the children and helps to reinforce the messages that the head teacher and staff are making in their lessons and day-to-day organisation.
71. The number and quality of learning resources are very good. Resources for all subjects are carefully chosen to match the requirements of the curriculum and the range of pupils' abilities. In many lessons, teachers make good use of resources to bring variety to pupils' learning and to extend key skills. For example, in an effective history lesson, pupils used laptops to access the Internet and research ancient Greek writing. There is a very good range of recently purchased teaching support and imaging equipment.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

72. Blenheim provides a stimulating environment and is now a good place in which to learn. The weaknesses identified by the inspection, and listed below, are far outweighed by what the school does well, but they will form the basis of the governors' action plan and build on the improvements already achieved. In order to raise the overall standards of pupils' attainment the governors, head teacher and staff should jointly:
- a) Continue to raise standards of achievement in English and mathematics by providing the additional planned opportunities detailed in the school improvement plan to ensure that the pupils' skills are suitably enhanced and reinforced by use in other subjects. Ensure pupils make optimum progress by identifying clear criteria against which their achievements can be assessed for this in all subjects.

Paragraphs 31, 34, 66 and 95

- b) Raise pupils' standards of achievement in geography and history by the time they leave school by revising the current planning, and using the example of the good procedures already established in the core subjects, ensure that all pupils are appropriately challenged in all lessons. Also provide assessment procedures in these subjects that reflect these detailed medium and long-term plans in order to guarantee appropriate progress from year to year, and to ensure pupils build on previous experiences.

Paragraphs 13, 44, 122 to 133

OTHER MINOR ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- a) Build on existing aspects of cultural education to further develop the pupils' understanding of their place in a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society.

Paragraph 41

- b) Reconsider the reasons for pupils being withdrawn from whole-class lessons for support to ensure that they are receiving the optimum benefit from this additional provision.

Paragraphs 28 and 34

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	86
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	32

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	17	42	26	0	0	0
Percentage	1	20	49	30	0	0	0

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

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)	26	430
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	128

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	104

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	25

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	44
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	32

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	5.4
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	1.4
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	34	28	62

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	26	29
	Girls	24	26	26
	Total	44	52	55
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	71 (69)	84 (85)	89 (87)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	28	25
	Girls	25	23	22
	Total	48	51	47
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	77 (66)	82 (66)	76 (68)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	27	21	48

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	14	20
	Girls	10	12	13
	Total	21	26	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	47 (66)	54 (61)	69 (59)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	14	13
	Girls	12	12	12
	Total	23	26	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	48 (63)	54 (61)	52 (59)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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	4
Black – other	0
Indian	3
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	5
Chinese	1
White	349
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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	3	1
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)	17.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	29
Total aggregate hours worked per week	425

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	70
Number of pupils per FTE adult	9

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	1046216
Total expenditure	1010902
Expenditure per pupil	2227
Balance brought forward from previous year	136638
Balance carried forward to next year	171952

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	12
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	14
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	461
Number of questionnaires returned	140

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	61	36	1	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	60	39	1	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	36	56	5	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	44	11	1	8
The teaching is good.	68	31	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	51	44	4	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	75	22	1	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	30	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	56	36	5	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	56	36	3	1	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62	35	1	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	40	39	9	1	11

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

73. There is a single intake of 52 children in the nursery in the September following their third birthday. All children attend part-time. They are admitted to the three reception classes at the start of the school year following their fourth birthday. At the time of inspection, most children in the reception classes were under five. Each of the three reception classes is staffed with a full-time teacher and a classroom assistant.
74. Most children's attainment on entry to the nursery is very low in all areas of learning. It is particularly poor in language and communication. This is confirmed by the initial assessments conducted at the start of the reception year. A few children are learning to speak English as an additional language and some children have speech difficulties. The quality of teaching is consistently very good in all areas of learning throughout the Foundation Stage. By the time they are ready to start in Year 1, most children achieve well and attain the majority of the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, as well as creative and physical development. In communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and the knowledge and understanding of the world, children do not reach the expected standards. These findings are not consistent with the previous inspection report of mainly satisfactory standards. This is due to the change in school's intake over the years. All children with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language make equally good progress. These young children receive good support to enhance their progress in both nursery and reception classes.
75. The Foundation Stage curriculum provides experiences that are excellent. They are relevant, imaginative and enjoyable – for example, creative work such as collage, painting or making biscuits out of playdough, and the use of the excellent outdoor areas. The planning reflects all areas of learning and is appropriately linked to the advancement of children's skills, knowledge and understanding. In the reception classes it is extended to link with the work children will experience in Key Stage 1, in the literacy and numeracy strategies. Both nursery and reception teachers plan together very effectively to provide a stimulating range of activities with clear learning outcomes. They clearly outline their weekly and daily planning with suitable learning intentions for all areas of learning, and provide a balance of teacher-directed and children's self-initiated activities. There are very effective and consistent procedures for assessing children on a day-to-day basis, in order to check and record their ongoing progress and to plan for their specific learning needs.
76. The overall quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good. The staff know how young children learn and extend their responses sensitively. The teachers' expectations of work and behaviour are very high and the tasks effectively match children's level of functioning and skill. Homework in the form of borrowing books is used particularly well to enhance children's progress. The staff work excellently as a team and support one another. Both indoor and outdoor resources for the Foundation Stage are very good and accessible. These are well organised and used very effectively for all areas of learning.

Personal social and emotional development

77. Children enter the nursery with very low personal, social and emotional skills. They are skilfully encouraged to develop their confidence and the ability to sit quietly and concentrate. This is seen in the nursery where regular opportunities to participate in activities give children the opportunities to listen to others and start to take turns at speaking in a familiar group, for example when sharing a book or refreshments. Children listen quietly, show respect for equipment and take turns fairly. They settle down quickly and feel both happy

and secure at school. In reception classes, during whole-class activities and discussion, they are encouraged to always put their hands up and wait to be asked, for example when answering questions and discussing a story about 'saying sorry'. Children are helped to form good relationships with others through many good opportunities to work as part of a group independently or with an adult.

78. By the time they leave the reception classes children have achieved most of the early learning goals in this area. This shows very good achievement and reflects the very skilful teaching of the staff. Children are constantly encouraged to feel confident about what they can achieve in a variety of learning situations. The staff act as good role models for children and explain clearly what is expected of them. Some simple classroom rules are shared with all. Children listen and concentrate for a fair length of time and clearly understand set routines for both indoor and outdoor work. They are taught the difference between right and wrong and guided to behave sensibly at all times. They are attentive and eager to learn, and enjoy sharing their work with any available adult. The teachers and classroom assistants manage children well and enjoy very good relationships with them all. The children's play and responses are supported and extended very sensitively.

Communication, language and literacy

79. All staff value children's efforts at communicating. The teaching of basic skills such as speaking clearly or holding a pencil correctly is very good. Children in the nursery are beginning to talk about their experiences and develop new vocabulary during discussions and social occasion such as 'snack time', but their communication skills are limited overall. While some willingly talk about the aspects of their work, many find speaking clearly and in full sentences quite difficult. Some older children in the reception classes are gaining satisfactory control in developing early writing skills. They draw and paint with increasing control. A significant number of reception class children write their own names unaided by the end of the year. Very good progress is made when adults work in small groups or on a one-to-one basis to give children individual attention.
80. The introduction of the literacy strategy is making a significant impact. The children enjoy using the big books such as 'Humpty Dumpty', and are given well-planned opportunities to develop new vocabulary as they collectively talk about pictures and focus on key words such as 'on' and 'the'. All the adults use talk to a very good effect and are good active listeners. Children like the imaginative play-corner, for example the shop in one of the reception classes, which is well set up using a good range of appropriate and interesting items and motivates children's talk. The assessment procedures and the regular recording of children's progress in language activities are very good. This is because all adults are very thorough and are involved in making daily observations of individual children so they can consistently build on what they have already achieved.

Mathematical development

81. Children's progress is good overall, but most do not reach the early learning goals in mathematics by the end of Foundation Stage due to their very low start. A few children are beginning to count and order accurately up to ten. Most others, although able to count to ten, do not yet recognise the number symbols. Opportunities for practical activities are well planned for children to make representations and write the number symbols correctly. A few children recognise basic shapes and gain some knowledge of capacity and weight from practical experiences with sand and water. Some older children are able to describe objects by position, shape, size, colour and quantity. Most children demonstrate limited knowledge and understanding of how to solve simple problems involving addition and subtraction, and use vocabulary such as, 'add one more' or 'take one away', 'how many altogether' and 'how many left,' by the end of the reception year.

82. Adult involvement in children's activities is very good. In the nursery the teacher gives children the opportunities in practical situations, for example counting trees outside or learning through acting out 'Five current buns in a baker's shop'. The reception teachers successfully use their baseline assessments to help plan suitable activities and useful timely assessments are made of the individual children's ongoing progress. Pupils are effectively supported to move forward, through talk and practice, for example when working with basic shapes and recognising their properties, or making repeating patterns. The effective use of number rhymes and songs further enhances children's learning.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

83. Most children enter the reception classes with limited general knowledge. Adults support children's understanding and encourage learning of, for example, how children have grown since they were babies. The children work with sand, water and playdough, and freely explore properties of malleable materials. They use paint and mix different colours, but most do not yet name basic colours correctly. There are opportunities for them to explore with everyday objects of interest in the home corner and play-kitchen or observing the gold fish in the water.
84. Teaching is very good. For example, in one lesson, the nursery teacher shared the items such as acorns and autumn leaves collected by the children outside and children practised the related vocabulary. They also learned the safety rule that children must not eat acorns, and that pigs or squirrels eat these. Children display awe and a feeling of wonder as they work in the garden in planting and watering the flowers, for example the very tall sun-flower plants. They use different materials, such as paper and textiles, and develop cutting, joining, folding and building skills. Most children confidently name main parts of the body. They have opportunities to build with construction materials, for example lego and duplo, but they have not sufficiently developed skills to ask questions to find out how things work. Most children demonstrate developing computer skills expected for their age. They show increasing control in the use of mouse, to move items on the screen. There is effective adult intervention in activities and encouragement for children to explore new ideas.

Physical development

85. Most children meet their expectations of early learning goals in this area. They have planned opportunities to use the very good range of large and small outdoor resources such as bikes and prams and a fixed climbing frame. The outdoor provision enhances children's body control skills effectively. It is spacious, very stimulating and well equipped. In the main school hall, children learn to be aware of space and develop co-ordination and control in movement. In their use of construction toys, a significant number of pupils demonstrate reasonable hand and eye co-ordination. They are developing confidence in the use of different tools and joining materials, such as sellotape and glue when the making of 'Humpty' puppets by children in the reception classes. Children select from a range of materials and use scissors carefully. Adults prepare well and provide calm and sensitive support. They have a sensitive awareness of children's safety.

Creative learning

86. Most children are on course to meet their expectations of early learning goals in this area of learning. They experiment with paint and use their observations and imagination to create pleasing results. They are given opportunities to explore colour and texture, and work with a range of materials such as sequins and coloured stickers to create collage of the first letter of their own name or to paint pictures. Children sing and clap nursery rhymes and express

enjoyment. Support staff work closely with teachers and make very positive contributions to children's learning. They talk to the children and ask relevant questions to extend their vocabulary, for example, when mixing colours in the nursery. The children explore colours and shapes as in reception class 'self-portraits', as well as use computer programs such as 'artist' or 'paintbrush' to enhance their artistic skills.

ENGLISH

87. The results of the 2000 national tests show that the standards at the age of seven were below the national average in reading and well below average in writing. When compared with similar schools, pupils' performance was average in reading and below average in writing. At the age of eleven, pupils' results were very low when compared nationally and with similar schools. The test results for eleven year olds show an upward trend from 1996 to 1999. The fall in 2000 was due to the overall lower ability of that particular cohort of pupils. The unvalidated results of 2001 show a significant improvement over the 2000 results in both key stages. Over the last four years the increase in school's results in English has been above the national trend.
88. From a low starting point, pupils' standards overall show good achievement over time. Many pupils have speech and language difficulties on entering the school, and they lack confidence in speaking, and their listening skills are generally weak. Pupils' reading skills are not well developed and very few have the required pencil control to enable them to write clearly. These limitations are addressed through consistently good teaching over time, and this enables pupils to make good strides in learning. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress in school through well-organised and focused support in small groups where specific language skills are practised and reinforced by the designated staff. This good quality support boosts their self-esteem as well as enhancing their skills.
89. By the age of seven and eleven, most pupils attain average standards in reading. However, standards in writing, although improving yearly, are still below average for both seven and eleven year olds. Pupils' speaking skills are below the expected levels in both key stages. Most pupils' listening skills are better developed than their speaking skills. Teachers have worked very hard to address weaknesses in the subject. Very effective use is being made of initiatives such as additional literacy support for the under-achieving pupils. Teachers set good targets for pupils in literacy to enable them to focus on what needs to be improved. The new co-ordinator is extremely able and gives good advice and support to colleagues.
90. The National Literacy Strategy has been successfully implemented and there is a focused approach to teaching English in all lessons. All teachers understand the basic structures in detail, using the recommended pattern, and it is well established through the school. Teachers plan in their year groups and what is taught in parallel classes to pupils of the same age is usually very similar. For example, during the inspection week, pupils in both Year 4 classes worked on the layout of a newspaper report and the composition of headlines. This means that pupils in the same year group are making the same progress. Teachers built steadily on what pupils were learning, extending it well through the use of different examples of each type of writing. Opportunities are also provided for pupils to work on non-fiction writing; for example, Year 3 pupils learn to use descriptive phrases and write about 'The Body' linking their work to science.
91. Pupils demonstrate good listening skills in most lessons. In Key Stage 1, they listen carefully to teachers and each other, follow instructions without fuss and contribute positively in discussions. For younger pupils, small group work provides opportunities for adults to act as good language models and to encourage pupils to express themselves clearly. Focusing on specific language structures is a key feature of this work. In later years, the level of language use develops further and pupils become confident and willing to contribute

responses to teachers' questioning and to discussions. However, a restricted vocabulary means that many six and seven year olds are imprecise or hesitant in producing answers, which keeps the overall level of attainment below average. In Key Stage 2, pupils' vocabulary is extended further and they begin to use complex and grammatically accurate sentences. Pupils' own reading and the teachers' use of good subject-related vocabulary in class discussions, play an important part in this development. Pupils listen well to the teachers' advice and some demonstrate growing confidence to interact and make active contributions to class discussions, opinions and ideas about stories. However, most pupils are hesitant to speak audibly and clearly, so as to engage the interest of the audience particularly in a formal situation. Although there have been insufficient, suitably planned opportunities in other subjects for aspects such as drama or debate, these are now planned for in the co-ordinator's action plan for 2001-2002.

92. Given the limitations of the pupils' skills on entry to the school, they do well to attain satisfactory standards in reading. This is a direct result of the strong emphasis on the teaching and learning of letter sounds and blends. In Key Stage 1, average and below average pupils have a good grasp of letter sounds to help them tackle unfamiliar words. Most pupils make good progress as a result of an effective combination of teaching of sounds and the development of pupils' sight vocabulary and fluency. Pupils show sound understanding of what they read. Many higher attaining pupils read accurately with good expression, and confidently discuss their reading or predict what might happen next. They are fast developing a range of strategies to decipher words they find difficult in reading. Most pupils understand terms such as 'author', 'illustrator', 'contents', 'page' and 'index', and enjoy sharing text during the literacy hour. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are identified early and embark on well-structured literacy programmes, with realistic short-term targets.
93. The books read by pupils in Key Stage 2 are appropriate to their interest and level of attainment. The range of reading material is extended as the children move through the school, and more able readers are able to choose books freely. Pupils read with increasing fluency and accuracy. Most pupils talk about favourite authors with discernment, but their critical appreciation of a range of books is limited. While lower attaining pupils still interpret their reading literally, a few average and higher attaining pupils show a growing understanding of language used for effect. Most pupils find it difficult to identify meaning beyond text and appreciate the subtleties of humour in good quality children's fiction. Although pupils develop good dictionary and thesaurus skills, their ability to skim and scan, and make meaningful notes, is limited. Most pupils understand how books are arranged in libraries and how 'contents' and 'indices' can point the way to specific information. They are able to use non-fiction books to locate and retrieve information within the classroom. Most pupils make satisfactory use of their reading skills in subjects such as history, geography and religious education. The process of home-school reading is well established and has a positive effect on pupils' interest and attainment. The guided reading sessions, which are skilfully structured, enhance pupils' progress in reading. Most pupils learn that reading offers both enjoyment and information and they are beginning to appreciate the qualities of different texts. Careful monitoring records kept by most teachers include clear and relevant diagnosis.
94. The combination of a tightly structured literacy hour together with the whole-school focus on improving skills and the good teaching have had a beneficial effect on pupils' writing in Key Stage 1. Pupils are taught the skills of letter formation well and most are beginning to write in joint script with increasing control and accuracy. Throughout Key Stage 1, letter combinations and common spelling patterns are stressed. Pupils are well supported to think about the overall structure of their writing. However, there are limited examples of independent extended writing in the form of an imaginative story or an interesting account. Most pupils lack fluency in their writing and are unaware of grammatical mistakes in their work. Handwriting and presentation of pupils' work is below expected levels. Pupils often

record their written work on commercially produced work sheets, which limits their progress and independence in written work.

95. In Key Stage 2, the scope of writing for a range of purposes is suitably extended to include narrative, description, letters, instructions etc. Competence in spelling and punctuation is well emphasised, although some pupils do not consistently use a joined script. By the age of eleven, pupils are introduced to a variety of different types of writing. Although a minority of pupils still struggle to express themselves clearly in writing, most pupils, and the higher attainers in particular, are able to interpret and comment sensibly on texts that they read. However, there are not enough examples of sustained story writing with good attention to developing characters and plot. Pupils' spelling strategies and proof-reading skills are under-developed. The amount and quality of recorded work in subjects such as science, history, geography and religious education is limited. Pupils' independent uses of information and communication technology to word-process, re-draft or edit are now developing.
96. The teaching of English is good overall, with some very good features, and this promotes consistently good learning over time. Two-thirds of lessons observed were good or better and there was no unsatisfactory teaching. Teachers across the school have good understanding of how to teach reading and writing. They make sure pupils know what they are expected to learn and how this links with what they have learnt previously. Lessons are well planned and organised with a good mix of whole-class, group and individual work. In the best lessons, the teachers demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of the subject and used very good questioning techniques and clear explanations. They actively involved pupils in identifying the language features required for the text in hand, for example in a Year 6 lesson to teach pupils how to organise paragraphs to present their recount of events in the correct order. Most teachers in both key stages use suitable methods and strategies to develop good listening and improve pupils' concentration and the pace of work in most sessions. They capitalise on pupils' interest in the subject, and this makes a good contribution to learning. Most pupils are attentive and behave very well. They are eager to answer questions, and join in class discussion. The management of pupils' behaviour is very good. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and encourage good manners and social skills. In both key stages, teachers set appropriate standards for the majority and maintain a good level of support for pupils with special educational needs. They are now planning to extend the use of literacy in other subjects to challenge all pupils in speaking, reading and writing. The marking of pupils' work is generally positive. Most teachers consistently make constructive comments and give suitable guidance to pupils on how to improve their work.
97. The management of the subject is good. There is a systematic programme of monitoring teaching and learning. The literacy co-ordinator is aware of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and there is effective forward planning. The procedures for assessing pupils' progress are good, and the results of all tests are effectively analysed in order to set individual targets. Useful additions have been made to resources in classes to support the implementation of the literacy strategy. The school library has recently been extended very effectively. There are sufficient books of good quality, both fiction and non-fiction, in the classrooms.

MATHEMATICS

98. Results of the national tests for seven year olds in 2000 show attainment was below the national average for all schools but close to that of similar schools. The national tests in 2000 show the attainment of eleven year olds was well below the national average for all schools and for similar schools. At the higher Level 5 attainment was below the national average. Over the past four years, attainment has remained below the national average with little difference in the performance of boys and girls, but there has been considerable improvement. In 1997, only 35 per cent of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 reached the

average level. In 2001 this has risen to 58 per cent. Inspection evidence indicates that the 2001 tests are a fair reflection of the levels of attainment now being reached in lessons. This is indicative of the good progress the school has made since the last inspection.

99. Seven year olds know much of the two and ten multiplication tables and use these to help solve simple additions. Most pupils count on and back in ones, twos and tens successfully and have an understanding of halves and quarters. Many pupils continue to calculate rather than know the number pairs making ten with only the higher attainers routinely using these bonds to help their calculations with larger numbers. Pupils can assemble data and represent it on a bar chart and extract information from this. They know the properties of common shapes and recognise the lines of symmetry of many more.
100. By the time they are eleven, pupils have made good progress in extending their understanding and use of numbers and other mathematical concepts. These include the properties of angles and regular shapes and more complex ideas about symmetry. Pupils have learnt more multiplication tables and can use more complex fractions. They have developed their mental abilities to solve number problems, using, for example, approximation, doubling and halving techniques. More able pupils read and plot co-ordinates in all four quadrants. Despite this good progress pupils are not confident in selecting the 'correct' procedures or to applying them to solve word problems. Pupils are beginning to use mathematics appropriately in other curriculum areas, such as science or geography. For example, pupils in Year 4 produced bar charts to compare the rainfall in London to that in St. Lucia.
101. The standard of teaching in the school is satisfactory overall and in Key Stage 2 it is good. The main differences in these standards stems from recent changes in staff which have resulted in a relatively new team in Key Stage 1. Some teachers here are becoming familiar with the levels of understanding and needs of these pupils in order to match the work correctly.
102. The good quality of learning opportunities teachers provide is enabling pupils to reach the good levels of achievement of which they are capable. Underlying all provision is the very good analysis the school makes of its teaching and the results pupils, and groups of pupils, are achieving. This enables it to pinpoint exactly where they need to direct their efforts and plan accordingly to target pupils in each class needing 'extra' help with basic number skills. They make good use of resources, which includes providing the targeted pupils in each class with daily practice using the computer and an appropriate software program. Additionally, pupils use their whiteboards well to record and show their teachers not only their answers but also how these were calculated. In many lessons, especially in the older classes, teachers motivate their pupils well so that they rise to the challenges and make good progress. For example, in Year 6, pupils extended a practice of their 'nine times table' to count in nineties and were encouraged to count backwards and forwards quickly using these larger numbers. The energetic delivery and rapid-fire questioning of one teacher in Year 4 had pupils concentrating hard to come up with the correct calculations in the given time. Teachers invariably share the lesson objectives with pupils and make good checks throughout the lessons to gauge whether or not pupils are making enough progress towards achieving them. This is often done through perceptive questioning, leading to skilful handling of the responses. This was the case in one Year 6 lesson where the teacher extended the 'partitioning' activity for some pupils who could use the prescribed methods to stretch them further. At the same time she offered extra help to other pupils who could not. The new information and communication technology suite is now making a range of additional opportunities accessible for pupils to extend and consolidate their learning. Apart from the use of individual computers in the classroom for practice, these opportunities have not been available for pupils until this year.

103. Teachers are well organised and manage their pupils well. This means that throughout the school pupils work well in mathematics lessons. They readily take part in oral exchanges, settle quickly to their group assignments and concentrate well throughout the lesson. They enjoy what they do and want to succeed. Within the 'set' classes in Key Stage 2, further groupings are often made enabling teachers and assistants to work directly with pupils at a common level of understanding. Pupils with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language make good progress. A strong factor in this progress is the skilled support they receive from learning support assistants. They work closely with teachers in the planning of activities and give informed help to individuals and groups of pupils. In one Year 2 lesson for example, the teacher's questions carefully checked on the understanding of the pupils during discussions. This enabled an assistant to record this and so provide information for the planning of future activities. In the same lesson other assistants engaged in the discussions and encouraged pupils to respond by giving them unobtrusive support in the oral sessions.
104. The recently-appointed co-ordinator has enthusiasm and a clear idea of what needs to be done to raise attainment and how this is to be achieved as, for example, by setting aims for improvement in each year group and including pupil progress in numeracy in each teachers' performance management targets. All staff, including learning assistants, have received good training and have become increasingly confident in teaching, especially the different strands of the National Numeracy Strategy. They make good use of the back-up material available, which has helped raise the achievement of pupils. The school has made good use of the advice from the local authority numeracy consultant. This has included detailed analysis of the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' answers in the national tests.

SCIENCE

105. On the basis of inspection findings, attainment is below the expected standards for infant pupils and in line with national expectations by the age of eleven, when pupils transfer to secondary education. In the 2000 standard attainment tests the attainment in science was well below the national average and a similar picture when compared to schools serving a similar intake. Whilst the 2000 teacher assessments for science in Key Stage 1 placed the overall standard well below the national average, those pupils achieving the higher Level 3 were closer to the national average. However, this was not so in Key Stage 2 where the tests results showed both the pupils achieving the national average and those achieving the higher levels were well below national expectations. Inspection evidence shows that pupils of all abilities have often undertaken the same work and the brighter pupils were not always challenged enough to reach their potential in science. However, the indications in the 2001 results are of a significant increase of pupils achieving the national average or above in Key Stage 2. Judging by the improving standards in the 2001 national tests the school is now addressing this issue, and over time has made a significant rate of improvement since the last inspection when standards were well below the national average. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as a second language make good progress.
106. The school has adopted national guidance for the science curriculum and the planning is for two science units to be taught each term with an assessment at the end of each unit. Evidence gained from previous work pupils had covered showed that by the end of Key Stage 1, pupils had looked at the differences between living organisms and those that have never lived and learned about the dangers of electricity in the home. Through careful teaching, pupils learn how to set up experiments and begin to understand the need for a fair test. For instance, they learn how to make a bulb light up after creating a circuit by using a battery and connections to and from a bulb holder, or investigate what is essential to help plants grow. In the week of the inspection pupils in Year 2 investigated what animals and humans need to stay alive. They had a collection of different foods on each table and a range of tasks to sort into healthy and unhealthy food, with the aim to arrive at what constitutes a balanced diet. They were introduced to proteins, fat, carbohydrates and

calcium and demonstrated good pupil knowledge. For example, in response to the question, "Why do we need milk?" one boy answered, "Because we need calcium", and another, "To make our bones strong."

107. Pupils in the juniors continue to build on their knowledge and understanding and further develop their skills through investigations, which are planned carefully to cover all aspects of the National Curriculum. They study parts of the body and their functions, such as the skeleton, muscles, including the heart, teeth and the functions of the incisors, canines and molars in eating food and what drinks can damage teeth. They learn to classify different materials, liquids and solids and undertake tests, such as filtration and separation to see which soil has the best drainage. As pupils progress through the school they revisit previously learned topics for revision and to build on their knowledge and understanding at a higher level. Of the lessons observed, pupils in Year 4, for example, were undertaking an investigation to identify the best material to keep ice cubes from melting. They were in the process of planning the experiment and were discussing the need for a fair test and predicting what they thought would be the best thermal insulator. Year 6 was heavily involved in a study of light and shadow and could use the relevant scientific vocabulary when explaining what they had learned in a previous lesson. In the following lesson, pupils investigated the relationship between shadow height and the distance from the light source by using an overhead projector as a light source and a card puppet. This investigation was carried out as a class group. Although inspection evidence shows there has been a weakness in providing challenging tasks and opportunities for more able pupils to take more responsibility in developing their own learning, an attempt has already been made to address this. For example, in the lessons planned across the school there has been an emphasis to plan for all pupils to undertake the same task regardless of ability. However, in Year 6 some attempt has been put in place to give more able pupils the opportunity to work together in a team under the direction of a learning support assistant, with the overall aim of extending their learning. This was carefully planned for in the Science Action Plan as part of the School Improvement Plan and is in its infancy as a development. Therefore, the monitoring of the learning and resulting planning for future lessons for the more able pupil is now being developed.
108. Most pupils are interested and enjoy science and were keen to talk about what they had learned and were doing in their science lessons. Their use of science vocabulary was developing well and this is testament to the very good monitoring undertaken by the previous co-ordinator and subsequent targeting of the weakness. Pupils are particularly keen on practical experiments and could talk about what constitutes a fair test and the recording of their results. Behaviour in classes is generally good and there are examples of good relationships developing. Where this is best the teacher, teachers' assistant and learning support assistants demonstrate good role models that encourages pupils to emulate the examples set them. These positive attitudes are demonstrated by most pupils, resulting in them acquiring scientific skills consistently well throughout the school. As a result progress over time is satisfactory and in some lessons it is good.
109. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with some good features, particularly where the lessons are well planned, have clear learning objectives and ongoing assessment to inform future planning. Planning is consistent with the national guidance in the subject. However, across a year the teaching and learning may vary in quality depending on how well the lesson objectives are understood, both by the teacher in subject knowledge, and understanding and clarity by the pupils on what they are going to learn. The school has taken the initiative to ensure the lesson objectives are pupil friendly. Pupils with special educational needs and with English as an additional language are well catered for. Teachers provide a clear focus for the work to be undertaken by lower and average attaining pupils. The co-ordinator has focused on the fact that teacher expectations for the more able have not been high enough in the past with an emphasis mainly on direct teaching. She has made her colleagues aware that this approach does not always challenge and motivate

pupils to take more responsibility for their own learning. From interviewing pupils it was clear that many were capable of undertaking their own extended investigational research.

110. A new science co-ordinator has just taken over the responsibility at the beginning of term and is very keen to add her own expertise to the development of the subject. Previously science has been very well led by a subject co-ordinator who had given high priority to raising the profile of science and quality of teaching in the subject. This has been achieved by regular observation of teaching and learning in the classes. The monitoring of the subject overall is very good and has made a huge contribution to the rise in the quality of teaching and learning in the school. The policy has recently been re-written and a new scheme of work is now in place.
111. The use of information communication technology is as yet under-developed. However, the school has invested heavily in information and communication technology equipment and there is a computer suite where the opportunity for scientific work is now being developed. For instance, the recently purchased electronic microscopes have been used to project images on to the computer screens and then printed out for display in the classrooms. The subject leader has identified the need to develop staff confidence still further in the teaching of science and also, importantly, the need to extend the use of literacy and numeracy for all pupils. There have been effective links with other schools and demonstration lessons in science have been given by teachers from the local secondary school to support the teaching and learning in the school.
112. Resources for science are generally good and effective monitoring of the subject has ensured that purchases have been targeted where there is a need. The school has an environmental area that is used in the spring and summer terms and residential visits for Years 5 and 6 are used to support the learning in science.

ART AND DESIGN

113. Pupils throughout the school make satisfactory progress in art and design including those pupils with special educational needs. They achieve standards appropriate for their age in painting, printing, collage and observational drawing. Pupils are introduced to an appropriate range of media, including clay, pencils, paints, pastels and weaving. There is a systematic progression of drawing skills throughout the school, as pupils become increasingly adept at observing closely and translating observations into representational forms. This confirms the position found at the time of the last inspection.
114. Work is effectively linked to topics covered in other subjects. In Year 1, the pupils experiment with a wide range of media and have produced some colourful pictures for their topics. In a Year 2 class, pupils make sound progress in observational drawing when they sketch a variety of objects. Satisfactory progress is made in using pastels and coloured pencils when sketching fruit. Pupils in a Year 3 class have produced some effective mosaics for their history topics. Their intricate Islamic patterns in religious education are particularly good. Year 4 pupils extend their knowledge of famous artists by studying the works of modern artists like Chagall, Klee and Mondrian. By the time they are eleven most pupils produce work to a satisfactory standard in drawing, painting and collage. Their knowledge of the work of famous artists is above average. This again is similar to the position at the time of the last inspection.
115. The art lessons seen during the inspection, and the work and wall scrutiny, indicate that teaching is satisfactory and often good in the majority of classes. The present art scheme provides breadth and balance, and ensures a systematic and even development of skills in all aspects. Effective and regular use is made of sketchbooks to experiment and practise skills and techniques. The new information and communication technology suite is now being used for pupils to explore colours and shapes in a variety of software.

116. There is sufficient recording of pupils' work and some formal assessment. This enables pupils of all abilities, including those with English as an additional language, to make sound progress. The co-ordinator is given good opportunities to monitor progress and standards, both formally and informally. There is now a good range of resources and materials. This is a considerable improvement on the position at the time of the inspection in 1998.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

117. Work seen during the inspection shows that standards in design and technology by the age of seven and eleven are in line with expectations for pupils of that age, and they are all making sound progress. Older pupils in discussion show they are developing a consideration of the quality of their final models and artefacts.

118. At Key Stage 1, pupils are able to consider different foods when planning a sandwich. They are given many opportunities to explore and experiment with different foods before making something for the 'Blenheim Sandwich Factory' to sell. Pupils give good reasons for their final choice of design, which show creative and imaginative thought. Pupils were engrossed in their work, showing a good level of interest and concentration. Activities planned are exciting, relevant and motivate pupils to do well. This is particularly true of pupils with special educational needs and with English as an additional language. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and use this to structure lessons to develop pupils' designing, making and evaluation skills.

119. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are able to follow the design and make process over a number of weeks and this allows them to refine and improve their work following careful evaluation. This is reflected in the quality of work on display made by pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5. In Years 5 and 6 pupils continue to think about the quality of their finished work by concentrating on what they are doing. They take a great deal of care in the design phase, using rulers to get precision in their drawings. This was very clear in a Year 5 lesson on the planning and making of cams for moving toys. This is an improvement since the last inspection, which found the design aspect less secure. It also reflects the very good attitude pupils have to their work. Pupils follow the safety rules closely in response to teachers' quiet but firm reminders about the rules and procedures for using a range of cutting tools. They use these with good ability under the close supervision of adults. Pupils evidently enjoy making, joining in enthusiastically and patiently sharing equipment.

120. The quality of teaching at both key stages is at least satisfactory. A strength is teachers' planning, which is detailed and supports all aspects of the design and make process. Safety issues are carefully considered and reinforced in the classrooms. Pupils are given sufficient time to plan and make their designs and the practical sessions are of an appropriate length. Similarly, pupils in Key Stage 2 are able to investigate how a range of different toys work before planning their designs. Support is given when necessary and pupils are encouraged to take care at all times to improve the quality of their work. The fact that pupils are withdrawn for lessons for other learning support is having a negative effect on the progress they are making

121. The co-ordination of the subject is good. Steps are taken to make sure that all teachers follow the scheme of work. Monitoring of learning has taken place and this has given good insight into teachers' awareness of pupils' skill levels throughout the school. Feedback is given in staff meetings and appropriate steps taken to moderate the curriculum if necessary. Monitoring of teaching and learning to evaluate standards more closely is planned to take place and this will enable standards to rise even further. Suitable links have now been identified with information and communication technology and these are integrated into lessons when appropriate. There are good resources to support teaching and learning for the subject.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

122. Pupils' attainment in history and geography is in line with the expected levels by the age of seven but below the expected levels by the age of eleven. This shows that whilst pupils make sound progress in Key Stage 1 classes, they make unsatisfactory progress overall in Key Stage 2. This judgement is made from observation of lessons, analysis of pupils' work and discussions with pupils.
123. Examination of pupils' past work and discussion with pupils show that, in both history and geography, the younger pupils have barely covered the required curriculum while, in the junior classes, coverage has been poor. This is reflected in the amount of work seen in pupils' books, which is sparse and, particularly with the older pupils, of uneven quality. This is explained by the school's decision to focus strongly on English, mathematics and science with a view to improving standards in these subjects by the time pupils leave the school, while giving less emphasis to other subjects, including history and geography. This approach has resulted in significant weaknesses in pupils' geographical and historical knowledge and skills. Valuable opportunities to extend pupils' thinking, for example, through evaluating historical evidence and to develop pupils' writing through subjects other than English have been missed. This means the position now has deteriorated since the time of the inspection in 1998.
124. Evidence from lessons seen during this inspection shows that teachers are now beginning to cover the required aspects of history and geography much more thoroughly. Planning, based on national advice, clearly shows the ground that is to be covered in both subjects and the order in which knowledge and skills are to be taught. Better coverage has already begun this term and this is already leading to greater progress.
125. By the time they are seven, pupils compare holidays in the past with holidays taken now, identifying some similarities and differences. They contrast aspects of home life in the 1960s with life now and begin to gain a sense of the passage of historical time. They learn about some important historical figures such as Guy Fawkes and Grace Darling. The more able pupils express opinions about the actions of figures such as Guy Fawkes, saying whether they consider them good or bad, but few provide reasons to support their views.
126. By the time they leave the school, pupils have some factual knowledge of history, including, for example, some knowledge of ancient Greece and Victorian London. They draw comparisons between, for example, the ancient and modern versions of the Olympic Games and the lives of rich and poor children living now and in Victorian times. Pupils learn about some famous historical figures, such as Pythagoras, and about some aspects of the culture of the ancient Greeks, including their theatre, the deities they worshipped and features of their language.
127. However, pupils have insufficient understanding of dates and chronology. In discussion, most were very unclear about when the Vikings lived and could not explain how the different periods they had studied related to one another. By the time they leave the school, pupils are gaining insufficient knowledge and experience of the investigative aspects of history and know very little about how to evaluate and draw together different types of historical evidence. Again, this is due to the school's decision to focus strongly on the core subjects, while giving less emphasis in their planning to subjects such as history and geography. The planned use of information and communication technology in these subjects will enable pupils to gain valuable experience in the investigative aspects of both history and geography. This is an area that has been largely neglected in the past.
128. In geography, younger pupils show a suitable knowledge of their own locality and its main features. They show some knowledge of other places in the world and the ways in which

they differ from their own locality. They begin to understand how the physical features of a place impact on peoples' lives. For example, they understand that the lives of people in Bangladesh are made hazardous by natural phenomena such as the monsoon rains and tidal waves. However, pupils do not readily recall detail or use correct terminology.

129. Pupils in Key Stage 2 study, for example, the water cycle and features of rivers, and learn to use some appropriate terminology, such as 'tributary' and 'estuary'. They begin to discuss the pros and cons of tourism in mountain areas. They understand that people can damage the environment and have a responsibility to care for it. However, by the time they leave the school, pupils do not know enough about other countries or understand in sufficient depth and detail how, for example, changes in the physical features of a place affect the lives of people who live there. Pupils' skills in map-work are not at a high enough level and pupils' capacity to draw conclusions from geographical evidence is insufficiently developed.
130. Because of the school's timetabling arrangements, too few lessons were seen during the inspection to allow a secure judgement on the overall quality of teaching in either history or geography in the infant classes, or in geography in the junior classes. Those lessons seen were of sound quality or better. Teachers managed pupils securely, they planned well and brought interest and purpose to pupils' learning. Relationships were very good. These features enabled pupils to enjoy their lessons and make suitable gains in knowledge.
131. The teaching of history seen during the inspection in the junior classes was good. There is clear evidence that teachers are now covering the subject curriculum in greater depth and range and are now giving careful attention to important skills such as the evaluation of evidence. Very constructive relationships, underpinned by confident, thoughtful management, promoted good behaviour and resulted in effective learning for pupils of all abilities. Teachers are particularly careful to include pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language in all discussions, and this enhances their overall progress.
132. Pupils' attitudes to learning, in the history and geography lessons seen, were good. Pupils behave well, listen carefully to the teacher and show respect for each other's contributions. They settle promptly to their work, concentrate well and show a good sense of personal responsibility. In group work, pupils co-operate and support one another well. When working individually, pupils follow classroom routines sensibly and show suitable independence.
133. The history co-ordinator has been in post for a short time only and the geography co-ordinator is new to the school. Both are enthusiastic and suitably experienced and have gained an accurate grasp of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects. There are clear plans to implement the curriculum for both subjects more fully and to achieve better depth and range. There is good capacity for improvement.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

134. The attainment of seven year olds overall is in line with that expected of pupils this age. Pupils' basic keyboard and mouse skills enable them to operate and use computers well. They have well-developed word-processing skills, changing fonts and letter sizes as well as amending and correcting their own text. They use painting software to create their own pictures and are beginning to produce different diagrams and charts to show data they have collected. They show independence when using headphones and cassette players to listen to stories.
135. Pupils have made less progress in Key Stage 2, and so by the time pupils are eleven their attainment is below that expected of pupils of this age. This is primarily because they have not had the opportunities to develop their skills and understanding, through a lack of computers and associated technology. Pupils are familiar with some of the more advanced

desktop publishing features and can, for example, import pictures and combine text. Again though, as yet they have had insufficient opportunities to practise this so that there are few examples of pupils' finished presentations. Pupils in Year 6 have programmed a screen robot to trace out a pentagon. However only very recently have pupils had the opportunity to use technology to program, control or simulate so that their knowledge of these actions is undeveloped. On the other hand older pupils are able to use a multi-media package to present their ideas, as pupils in Year 6 are currently doing. Pupils in both key stages use the Internet in their investigations and can download information from CD-ROMs. Older pupils have also begun to use the digital camera and video cameras available to them. Pupils in Year 3, for example, photographed each other and used these in their science investigations on 'teeth'.

136. Too few lessons were observed to make a judgement about the overall standard of teaching. However, in the lessons seen, teaching was satisfactory in both key stages. Teachers are becoming familiar with the new equipment recently purchased. This includes the new computer suite and teachers are quickly learning the possibilities this offers. During the inspection good use was made of this facility. For example, in Year 6, one teacher used her expertise and the 'smartboard', to show her pupils how to access the different functions of a multi-media program. This enabled the pupils to experiment for themselves, with guidance, and make rapid gains in their understanding of what was possible. They quickly learnt how to incorporate moving text and images to illustrate the particular effect they wanted. In a Year 1 lesson, the teacher made good use of the touch screen to show and explain to pupils what they had to do. She very clearly demonstrated to all pupils how to hold and drag words and pictures to put them together. This led to all but two pupils being able to do the same by the end of the lesson. The use of technology in other curriculum areas is developing slowly, again as teachers become familiar with what is available and receive training in how to use equipment. Teaching also takes place in the after-school computer clubs, which are attended by a large number of pupils and well supported by teachers and other volunteers.
137. The computer clubs are very popular which bears testimony to the interest and enthusiasm of pupils for the subject. This is apparent in the lessons observed which took place in the computer suite when all pupils were able to practise at the same time. In other lessons, where pupils had direct access to computers, they also worked well and were absorbed by their work. For example, pupils in Year 6 used laptops to access the Internet to find information about the Greek alphabet. They confidently moved about and between sites, discussing and sharing equipment well with their partners.
138. The recently appointed co-ordinator has made great strides in a short time in order to make use of the equipment newly arrived in the school. The school is now very well equipped with, for example, digital still and video cameras, a digital microscope and three separate networked computer systems. In addition, the school is continuously adding to its software, has a web site and several e-mail addresses. The co-ordinator has drawn up action plans to ensure that staff receive training in order to make the best use of the equipment available. He has also drawn up a very good policy and guidelines to ensure pupils are protected from inappropriate material when accessing the Internet. The school also takes care to protect the anonymity of pupils when images are produced for use in work or school publications.
139. Although attainment by the time pupils leave the school is below expectations, the school is clearly very well placed to address this. Special funds have been well used to purchase equipment and pay for training and expertise. In addition the co-ordinator makes good use of the Education Action Zone links for advice and consultation with other schools. The enthusiasm of the co-ordinator, the increasing confidence of the staff in teaching and the plans the school has to achieve its high aims all suggest improvements will quickly be made.

MUSIC

140. Timetabling arrangements allowed only two music lessons to be seen during the inspection. These were both in the junior classes and so no secure judgement on the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' response to their learning can be made.
141. In the lessons seen, pupils' attainment was satisfactory. Pupils copied rhythmic patterns correctly and developed simple variations of them. They began to evaluate each other's performance and to offer constructive comments. When performing together, pupils maintained their own parts securely. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils accurately repeated a longer and more difficult sequence, controlling pitch and tempo satisfactorily. They followed a brief, graphical score and controlled the pitch and volume of their voices to reflect different emotions.
142. The teaching of both lessons showed some significant strengths that added to the effectiveness of learning. Both lessons were purposeful and well planned, containing a good mix of activities that challenged pupils and maintained their interest. As a result, pupils' attitudes to learning were good in the lessons seen. They enjoyed the lessons and, with very few exceptions, behaved well. Teachers questioned pupils with precision and careful consideration for their individual strengths and needs, enabling pupils of all abilities to make gains in understanding and skill. They listened with interest to each other's performances and, when performing together, co-operated well. The management of both lessons was secure. Teachers used humour skilfully to engage pupils and increase their pleasure in learning. Relationships were very good. In both lessons teachers successfully used praise and encouragement to increase pupils' confidence in performing.
143. Planning and informal observation indicate that the required curriculum is in place and that provision is satisfactory through the school. There is clear, well-informed guidance to teachers on the knowledge and skills that are to be taught and how best to plan for good progress. Provision is further secured by effective joint planning arrangements.
144. The school has identified some weaknesses in teachers' subject knowledge and has responded purposefully by arranging appropriate training. The subject co-ordinator was appointed very recently. She is committed to raising standards and has well-formulated plans for doing so.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

145. Pupils in both key stages make sound progress and achieve standards appropriate for their age and benefit a great deal from the teaching they receive. This is a similar judgement to the previous inspection in Key Stage 1 but an improvement in Key Stage 2 where they were below the standards expected for their age. However, it was noted by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools during their visit to the school in 1999 that physical education was taught regularly and systematically. This demonstrated the attention that had been paid to dealing with any weaknesses in Key Stage 2 found in the previous inspection.
146. Infant pupils develop their basic control and co-ordination of movements. They link previously learned skills to produce a series of movements and understand that exercise is good for keeping healthy, but must be done with regards to safety. For example, In a Year 1 class pupils were practising different types of jumps and were using floor mats for the first time. The teacher had emphasised the safety rules and pupils took part in the activities with an eagerness that led to some over-exuberance. The rapid intervention by the teacher and learning support assistant soon dealt with this. Pupils knew the importance of warming up and cooling down and were beginning to be aware of their feelings when taking exercise and how it is necessary to let their bodies cool down after taking part in very active exercise.

147. A range of physical education activities were observed that included gymnastics, netball skills, dribbling skills in football and initial preparation for composing and preparing a dance motif. Pupils' display well-practised skills in each activity and it was clear that a number of pupils with specific ability in sport were involved in the lessons. For example, in the football dribbling skills many pupils were seen to improve their control and position to ensure they could take the ball confidently across the playground. The opportunities for sport in after-school clubs support this skill development, as explained by one pupil who was extremely confident and took part in school clubs and played in a local youth football team. Pupils' behaviour is never less than sound and good relationships enhance the teaching and learning in physical education.
148. The quality of teaching was satisfactory and often good in the sample of lessons observed. The subject co-ordinator has identified gymnastics and dance as areas for development and he has written a scheme of work for these areas of the physical education curriculum. A published scheme of work supports teaching and learning in all the other areas of the curriculum. Links have been created with the local education adviser to develop these areas and it is also an aim to get more involved in the local community with regards gymnastics and dance. These aims are being enhanced with the arrival of two new teachers who have special skills in gymnastics and dance. Furthermore, there is an aim to get more involved in competitive sport and have after-school clubs with the development of pupil coaches. However, in a gymnastics lesson it was clear that good progress is being made in the development of gymnastics. For example, pupils were developing sequences of movements consisting of balance, roll, turn, balance, and roll. The sequences were executed with confidence and good support was given by the learning support teacher, who was clearly a gymnast herself.
149. The subject co-ordinator has been in post for a year and has undertaken an audit of the development of physical education within the school. He has written an action plan that is being implemented and achieving good results in terms of attitude and commitment by the staff. The subject co-ordinator has also concentrated on the attitude and sportsmanship of the pupils, and this was particularly impressive, a strength that was obvious in the lessons observed. Resources for the subject are very good.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

150. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make sound progress, and therefore the attainment of seven year olds is in line with the expectations prescribed in the locally agreed syllabus. However, there are weaknesses in some areas. Pupils have some understanding of the ideas central to many religions, especially to Christianity and Judaism. They know religions have special days and celebrate significant events like Easter or Hanukkah. However, some of this knowledge is superficial as insufficient time has been spent on different topics. Pupils consider ideas about friendship, forgiveness, love or being 'special' and can relate these to their own circumstances.
151. The position is very similar for eleven year olds. Although their attainment meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus, there is little depth to their knowledge. They do, though, have a good knowledge about the meanings of some of the stories Jesus told. For example they are able to translate the parable of the Good Samaritan to modern times and identify the subtle differences in the reasons why people did not help the wounded man. Their knowledge of other religions has developed to the extent that pupils talk about many aspects of the Jewish religion. They recall many details of a visit to a synagogue, of the artefacts and the customs used, for example that caps are worn as 'you are in the presence of God'. Pupils are not, however, familiar with the teachings of other religions and cannot compare the similarities or differences between them as, for example, the similarities in the Christian and Muslim beliefs about Lent and Ramadan.

152. The standard of teaching overall is satisfactory. Teachers initiate appropriate discussions on the lesson topics and generate interest in the work so that pupils concentrate well. In one Year 6 lesson pupils were told to close their eyes and listen out for certain points as their teacher read the parable of the Good Samaritan. This they did and recalled the salient features very well in the ensuing discussions. These oral sessions are managed appropriately by all teachers who deal with pupils' ideas and questions effectively. In Year 4, one lesson began with a very useful 'brainstorming' session that elicited a good range of words and phrases from the pupils. These were used later in the lesson by small groups of pupils to write their own prayers. Pupils take part in discussions readily and have their own ideas, which they express confidently. They are attentive, settle quickly to work and interact well with their learning assistants. In a Year 1 lesson, the teacher made good use of her voice and language to engage the interest and attention of the pupils. This resulted in a minute of perfect silence while one pupil was chosen to hold a Shabbat candle. The main part of most lessons is oral with teachers' planning concentrating on the value of discussion to the learning of the concepts and ideas involved. However, the lack of recording in most lessons is not aiding pupils' progress as they have few opportunities to reinforce the learning in the oral sessions. Pupils are also denied the opportunity to practise writing skills learned in literacy lessons and there is little for them to refer to when reconsidering their work. Teachers' knowledge of some aspects of the agreed syllabus, notably about other religions, is not always secure. This affects their confidence and ability to provide pupils with the quality of learning experiences needed to ensure their understanding becomes deeper.
153. The co-ordinator has correctly identified priorities for raising the standards of teaching and pupil attainment. This has meant an improvement in the resources available to teachers and in modifications to the organisation and planning of work. She will shortly introduce improved lesson plans for teachers in Key Stage 2. The school is also considering other methods of recording work including the use of video cameras.