

# INSPECTION REPORT

**MONKS RISBOROUGH CHURCH OF  
ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Princes Risborough

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 110434

Headteacher: Mr D Orford

Reporting inspector: Mrs H Ranger  
22223

Dates of inspection: 17 – 20 March 2003

Inspection number: 247003

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
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Aylesbury Road Monks Risborough Princes Risborough Buckinghamshire
Postcode:	HP27 9LZ
Telephone number:	01844 3345590
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D Kemp
Date of previous inspection:	January 2001

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22223	Helen Ranger	Registered inspector	Educational inclusion English Art and design Design and technology	How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9388	Anthony Mundy	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. The school's provision for pupils' personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
23009	Anne Hogbin	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Music Physical education Religious education Special educational needs	
5565	Bimla Thakur	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Geography History Science English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Monks Risborough is an average sized Church of England primary school. It currently has 214 pupils between the ages of four and eleven. The school is popular with parents and about two thirds of pupils come from outside the immediate area. Most are gradually admitted full-time to the school in the year of their fifth birthday. There is a further intake at Year 3 of pupils from Great Kimble and other schools, and this means that class sizes are large in Years 3 to 6. The attainment of pupils at both points of admission is above the level seen in most schools. The number of pupils in the school who are identified with special educational needs is below average. Almost all pupils are from white British backgrounds but four per cent come from families with a diverse range of ethnic minority origins. The number of pupils whose first language is not English is very low and most of these pupils are bilingual.

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

This is an effective school, which gives good value for money. Pupils make good progress as a result of skilful teaching and the oldest pupils attain standards that are well above average. The headteacher and governors provide clear leadership. They work with committed staff to promote high standards and to cater well for all aspects of pupils' development.

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

- The oldest pupils attain standards in their work that are well above average, especially in English, mathematics, science and history.
- Good teaching, often based on effective assessment, enables pupils in Years 1 to 6 to achieve well.
- Children in the Reception class are taught very well and given a very good start to school.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning, behave very well and form excellent relationships.
- The headteacher leads an able staff team very effectively and is supported very well by the governors.
- The curriculum is rich and interesting for all age groups and there is very good attention to pupils' overall personal development.
- The school sustains the confidence and approval of parents and works in a close partnership with them.

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

- Aspects of teaching in the few lessons that do not achieve the good quality generally seen in classes.
- The effectiveness of the newer subject leaders in monitoring their areas of responsibility and raising standards further.

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

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

The school was last inspected in January 2001. While standards and provision for the older pupils were very good at that time, serious weaknesses were found in the provision for pupils in Reception to Year 2. The school acted quickly and effectively to address these. It has maintained high academic standards in Years 3 to 6. It continues to show the considerable strengths that were praised in the previous report in aspects such as its curriculum, ethos and pupils' responses. This inspection has found very good improvements in the Reception class and good improvement in teaching, pupils' achievement and the management of Years 1 and 2. The weaknesses in literacy, numeracy and investigative science in these age groups have been addressed successfully. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT), which were judged to be too low throughout the school, have been raised and are now above those seen in most schools.

## 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			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	A	A*	A	A
mathematics	A	B	A	B
science	A	A	A	B

Key	
Very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Pupils in Year 6 have sustained high standards in these subjects compared with national averages. In English in 2001, performance was within the highest five per cent of schools. Pupils in this age group did very well in 2002 compared with their prior attainment at the age of seven. Over the past five years, the school's results have improved in line with the national trend. The school sets challenging targets for its pupils to reach each year but narrowly failed to meet these in 2002. In Year 2, pupils' results in the national tests have also been high for the past two years and much improved on those of 2000. In 2002, they were within the highest five per cent nationally in reading and writing and well above average in mathematics.

Inspection findings are that pupils from all backgrounds make good progress across the school. They do well in the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup>. Because of the admission arrangements, some spend a relatively short time in the Reception class compared with many other schools nationally. They are on course to exceed the levels expected nationally by the end of the year in all areas of learning and are especially advanced in their personal, social and emotional development. There was not enough evidence during the inspection to judge attainment in Years 1 to 6 in music or physical education. By Year 2, pupils' standards are at least above average in all other subjects and they are well above average in speaking, listening and mathematics. By Year 6, standards are well above average in English, mathematics, science and history, and above average in all other subjects.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good in lessons, in the playground and around the school. Pupils are polite and show great respect to adults and other children.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils show maturity and take initiative and responsibility well. They form excellent relationships with others.
Attendance	Good. Rates are above the national average.

<sup>1</sup> The Foundation Stage begins when children are admitted to a school with a Nursery at the age of three or four. The last year of this stage is usually described as the Reception year.



## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	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.*

Teaching and learning in the school are effective. Teaching is very good for children in the Reception class in all areas of learning and gives them a rapid start to their education. In Years 1 to 6, teaching is good. English and mathematics, including the key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT, are taught well. These basic skills enable pupils to learn efficiently in all subjects. Teachers are well organised and explain tasks effectively. They give appropriate guidance to pupils in lessons on how they can improve. Most lessons meet the needs of all the pupils, although there are occasional exceptions in aspects of reading, mathematics and science. Teachers promote very good relationships, work closely and effectively with support staff and use the available time well. Pupils enjoy their work and systematically build on their knowledge, understanding and skills. They respond very well to adults but their occasional over-enthusiasm could be better controlled in a few lessons. Assessment information is used well to check and extend pupils' progress and to let them know how well they are doing, although marking is better in some classes than in others.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. A rich and varied range of learning opportunities is available to all age groups.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils' needs are identified early. They are mainly catered for well, although work is occasionally too difficult, especially in mathematics.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Most of these pupils are bilingual and take a full part in all activities. Teachers support any particular language or cultural needs that arise.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Staff promote pupils' personal development very effectively and this provision establishes a very positive climate for learning. Educating pupils about the diversity of modern British culture is an aspect that could be improved.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There are good levels of day-to-day support and care for pupils. Their academic progress is mostly assessed and supported well but this is an area for further improvement in a few subjects.

The school works in a very effective partnership with parents, to the benefit of the pupils. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is enhanced well by extra activities. The music curriculum and the outdoor play provision for the Reception class are rightly identified by the school for further improvement.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher leads and manages the school very well. He is well respected and has achieved considerable improvements over the past two years. Senior staff now have clear and appropriate responsibilities and are supporting the school's development well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors work very effectively and are led well by the chair of the governing body. Governors are now well informed, hard-working and supportive. They bring a wide range of expertise to the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has made rapid progress in its analysis of how well it is doing and acts effectively to improve further. The written development plans summarise planned action well. Teaching, learning and the curriculum are monitored well.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school's resources are controlled and monitored well. They are targeted to initiatives for improvement. The principles of 'best value' are considered effectively in planning and spending decisions. The school questions itself critically and consults widely on its development.

Staffing levels are good with effective arrangements for staff training and development. The ancillary staff make a valuable contribution to the school's success. The accommodation is good, although the classrooms are small for the large classes in Years 3 to 6. Levels of learning resources are mainly good and are being developed further for outdoor play in the Reception class.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behaviour is good.</li> <li>• The school encourages maturity and responsibility.</li> <li>• There are high expectations of children.</li> <li>• Children enjoy school.</li> <li>• The teaching is good.</li> <li>• Staff are approachable.</li> <li>• Children make good progress.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Levels of information about children's progress.</li> <li>• The homework that is set.</li> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons.</li> <li>• How closely the school works with parents.</li> </ul>

The parents of 35 per cent of pupils responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire and 13 parents attended the meeting with inspectors. The parents hold very positive views of the school; the proportion who expressed great satisfaction with the school was high and only a small number had concerns. The inspection supports the parents' positive views. Inspectors consider that the information available to parents about their children is very good and that the school works very effectively with parents. Both the homework arrangements and the range of extra activities provided are judged by inspectors to be good.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

##### **i) Standards in the Foundation Stage (the Reception class)**

1. Children enter the school with levels of attainment that are above average. They are admitted in the September or January of the year in which they are five and start full-time as they approach their fifth birthday; as a result, many often have a relatively short time in school before they reach the end of the Foundation Stage of their education. They achieve well, at times very well, because of skilled teaching. They are on course to exceed the levels expected by the Early Learning Goals<sup>2</sup> in all areas of learning by the end of the school year and they do particularly well in their personal, social and emotional development.

##### **ii) Standards in English, mathematics and science in Years 1 to 6**

2. In the National Curriculum tests for Year 2 in 2002, the school's results were high compared with national averages. Compared with schools with similar intakes, results were in the highest five per cent in writing and well above average in reading and mathematics. Results for this age group had been well above average in 2001 when they showed a great improvement on the previous year. In three out of the past five years, results for pupils in Year 2 have been considerably higher than the national average. Teachers' assessments of attainment in science in 2002 showed that an average proportion of pupils achieved at least the expected Level 2, while a well above average proportion reached Level 3<sup>3</sup>.
3. Inspection findings are that, in the three 'core' subjects, the pupils currently in Year 2 attain above average standards in English and science, and well above average standards in mathematics. Within English, their attainment is well above average in speaking and listening and above average in reading and writing. Pupils' attainment in the key skills of literacy and numeracy is good and supports their progress across the entire curriculum. Compared with the judgements of the last inspection, standards are considerably higher in all these subjects and pupils' achievements are now good. The weakness in pupils' skills in investigative science has been remedied. The previous report was also critical of the proportion of pupils who achieved the higher levels in tests. This has also improved sufficiently, although there are indications in English and science in pupils' current work that they may not quite repeat this year the very good performance that was achieved last year.
4. In the 2002 tests in Year 6, pupils' performance was well above the national average in all three core subjects. In English, it was well above the average for similar schools, and in mathematics and science it was above similar schools. Compared with their prior attainment at the age of seven, pupils did very well. The school has sustained high performance in this age group over time and has succeeded in maintaining overall rates of improvement that are in line with national trends. The results of boys and girls have varied from year to year, with boys doing a little better than girls in English and mathematics. These results indicate that the school has addressed the issue of boys' underachievement in writing that was identified by the last inspection. The school's targets for pupils' attainment in tests are challenging and rigorous, supporting well the drive to raise standards further.

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<sup>2</sup> The Early Learning Goals are the levels in all the Areas of Learning that children are expected to reach by the end of the Reception class. The Areas of Learning are the Government guidelines for the curriculum for children in Nursery and Reception classes.

<sup>3</sup> The nationally expected level for pupils to reach by the end of Year 2 is Level 2 and by Year 6 is Level 4. If a pupil is attaining Level 3 by Year 2 or Level 5 by Year 6, then he or she is reaching standards above those expected for a child of his or her age.

5. Inspection findings are that the pupils now in Year 6 attain well above average standards in English, mathematics and science. Very few fail to reach Level 4 and a large number are working confidently at Level 5. Again in this age group, high standards of literacy and numeracy equip the pupils well in the rest of the curriculum. Pupils' very good standards of speaking and listening are also a factor in their high attainment.
6. In these subjects, the achievements of pupils from all backgrounds are at least sound and often good, compared with their attainment on admission. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is mainly good but could be improved in some mathematics lessons where activities are sometimes too complex for them. This group of pupils is supported well by teachers and the learning support assistants. The most capable pupils do well. There are a small number of bilingual pupils in the school and their achievements are in line with their peers. Any particular language needs in this group are identified and supported well by teachers. The school has maintained the high standards identified by the previous inspection for this age group.

### **iii) Standards in other subjects**

7. During the inspection, there was not enough evidence to give overall attainment judgements in music and physical education. In the elements of these subjects that were seen, and particularly in singing, gymnastics and games, standards were at least at expected levels and sometimes higher.
8. By Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' attainment is above average in art and design, design and technology, geography and religious education. Pupils of all levels of prior attainment and from all ethnic backgrounds make good progress. Standards in history are above average by Year 2 and well above average by Year 6, where pupils' historical skills are unusually well developed for their age.
9. A key area for improvement from the last inspection was in ICT where pupils were judged to be underachieving. There have been rapid improvements in this subject; pupils now make good progress and standards across the school are above average.
10. It is not possible to judge the overall trend in standards in subjects since the last inspection; it was a short inspection that did not report in detail in most subjects. Art and design was judged then to be well above average. While it is not quite as strong now, the subject is above average compared with the standards seen in most schools.

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

11. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning. Ninety-five per cent of parents who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire confirmed that their children like school. Inspection evidence endorses this very positive view. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour have maintained the high standards noted in the previous inspection report.
12. Pupils come to school very enthusiastically, and they greatly enjoy lessons and other activities. In all year groups, they work independently in their classrooms, without needing close supervision. They listen attentively to their teachers and to each other and respond to questions with lively anticipation. Very good attitudes were seen in Year 5, when pupils engrossed in mathematics did not want the lesson to stop. Excellent attitudes were seen in a Year 1 personal education lesson during a class discussion on kindness to others. Bilingual pupils are enthusiastic about their learning and show positive attitudes towards their work. They mix well with their peers and show very good levels of interest in their day-to-day routines. Other pupils are friendly and show welcoming attitudes towards the bilingual pupils. Even the youngest pupils in Reception have a good understanding of their thoughts and feelings and readily support them when there are any difficulties.

13. Behaviour is very good in the open areas of the school, and in classrooms. Behaviour is particularly good in Year 6, where pupils have inadequate working space in their classroom. In all year groups, very good behaviour contributes to pupils' good progress because, without frequent pauses or distractions, teachers move lessons ahead at good pace. Pupils are thoughtful and mutually respectful. Incidents of aggression or bullying are very rare, and are managed promptly and sensitively when they do occur.
14. Pupils' personal development is very good because the school makes very good overall provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are reverential in assemblies, following the examples of the headteacher and other staff when praying and singing. They are generous of spirit, fund-raising enthusiastically for local and national charities. During the inspection, in a very good religious education lesson, Year 1 pupils thoughtfully used the story of 'The Good Samaritan' to demonstrate the qualities of good and bad neighbours.
15. All pupils know that school rules embody concepts of right and wrong and they understand the importance of rules in school and in society. Pupils are spontaneously kind, thoughtful and mutually supportive. They accept a variety of responsibilities in their classrooms and, in Years 3 to 6, as elected members of the school council. Council decisions are influential and often creative. For example, the council is currently proposing that pupils entertain parents with activities and displays at open evenings.
16. Pupils understand the importance of self-discipline and they know that actions have consequences. When working in small groups, they happily exchange ideas and share materials. They are very proud of their school and are careful to avoid damaging the many attractive artefacts and displays. Pupils are co-operative, friendly and respectful to their peers and teachers. No pupil has been excluded from school within the past five years.
17. In all year groups, boys' and girls' interest in a wide range of sport, dance and other activities enables them to work amicably together, without tension or embarrassment. In practical music lessons, they are lively and motivated. They have good understanding of western culture and reasonable understanding of a number of other faiths and cultures. During the inspection, pupils in a Year 5 English lesson were intrigued by the cultural differences between an Indian family living in Leicester, and their relatives living in India.
18. Attendance is good and has maintained the standard noted in the previous inspection report. The number of unauthorised absences is significantly below the national average for primary schools. Pupils arrive punctually at school and settle quickly to work; prompt and regular attendance has a positive effect upon their attainment and progress. Registration periods are very efficient, and lessons begin promptly. Class registers are completed neatly and conform with legal requirements.

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

19. The quality of teaching is very good for children in the Reception class and is good in Years 1 to 6. It promotes effective learning by pupils. During the inspection, no lesson was less than satisfactory. Four fifths of lessons were at least good and half of these were very good. This is a substantial improvement since the last inspection. The school has worked swiftly and effectively to remedy weaknesses that were identified in the last report, most notably in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2.
20. The teaching is very good in the Foundation Stage (the Reception class) and has improved considerably from the findings of the previous report. It is having a particular impact on standards in reading, writing and numeracy, including boys' achievement in literacy which was criticised in the last inspection. The planning for this age group is very good and well structured for teaching literacy and numeracy, as appropriate to the children's age and abilities. There are very good procedures for assessing the individual needs of the children and for recording and tracking progress in all areas of learning. The needs of the youngest children, the bilingual learners and higher and lower attaining children are met through matching work to their particular needs and by

closer attention from the adults. This includes the learning support assistants, parents and trained voluntary helpers. A close working relationship exists between the adults and this helps enormously in the children's learning and the smooth running of the day-to-day routines.

21. Teaching and learning are good in Years 1 to 6 in English and mathematics and in the key skills of literacy and numeracy. These have a high priority and the successful teaching of basic skills enables pupils to do well in other subjects too. Occasionally, too much time is spent in the introductions to literacy and numeracy lessons, putting pressure on the time available for group work or for the final summary session. Teaching is at least good in other subjects and is very good in history where the teachers' attention to developing historical skills and understanding is very effective. There have been good improvements in teaching ICT with the continuing development of the teachers' subject knowledge and the investment in good resources. ICT is taught well as a subject in its own right and is applied well to many other subjects. The encouragement of pupils to use laptop computers as an everyday classroom tool is having a positive impact on pupils' standards.
22. Teachers' day-to-day planning is mainly good and based on clear programmes of work. The main exceptions to the effective planning happen occasionally in English, mathematics and science. At times, lessons in mathematics and to a lesser extent in science do not always cater sufficiently for the lower attaining pupils and the work set is too hard for them; as a result, they become frustrated and do not make enough progress. Younger pupils are sometimes capable of reading more challenging texts than those that are provided for them. With these exceptions, the planned activities enable pupils to build systematically on their learning. Teachers use cross-curricular links in their planning well to increase the relevance of subjects for pupils. Homework tasks are planned well, especially in Years 3 to 6, and support pupils' learning in school.
23. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils will do and how they will behave. Positive relationships are fostered in all classes and enable the pupils to learn in a pleasant environment. Pupils' behaviour is managed very well in most lessons but it occasionally becomes over-exuberant and is not controlled as well as it should be. Lessons are varied and interesting. They are organised very well. Teachers explain tasks clearly so that the pupils understand what to do. The practical and investigative aspects of subjects are covered well, especially in science and mathematics, although at times in Years 1 and 2 pupils need to be encouraged to be more independent in science. Mental and oral work is used well in mathematics and contributes to pupils' speedy recall. Teachers question pupils well, tailoring the level of questioning to individual needs, checking understanding and extending pupils' thinking. Time and resources are used well. The increased teaching time since the last inspection means that pupils work quite a long day and they produce considerable amounts of work; this has a positive impact on their overall progress.
24. Educational inclusion is promoted well in most lessons. The exceptions are for the lower attainers in mathematics and science at times, as outlined above. The teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs have improved since the previous inspection and are now good. This is because pupils' needs are identified early through the school's assessment systems and because suitable programmes of work are set for them that include learning targets. Class teachers advise their assistants, many of whom are very experienced and well qualified, in ways to support these pupils effectively. Some teachers use computer programs for spelling and mathematics effectively to help pupils meet their targets. Very good records are kept of the progress made by these pupils.
25. Teachers ensure that there is equal access to the curriculum for pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and for those who speak English as an additional language. Teachers know their pupils well and are aware of their individual needs. The pupils' needs are generally met within the classroom through teachers providing a closer attention during the work and by asking suitable questions. At times, however, during discussions, there are limited opportunities for them to show what they know understand and can do and to express their views. Bilingual pupils are well supported through the additional help available from classroom assistants, and at times trained parents, often working in small groups. This helps to increase their confidence in talking to adults

and to their peers. Teachers are aware of the languages that are spoken at home by their bilingual pupils and there are good links with their parents.

26. Day-to-day assessment is used well and contributes to the effective preparation of activities. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and give frequent oral feedback. However, the quality of marking varies considerably. In some classes, it is clear and informative, giving pupils information about how well they have done and how they can approach the next stage of their learning. In other cases, the marking is over critical and not effective in improving pupils' knowledge of their own learning.

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

27. The school provides a rich, broad and balanced curriculum, which is extended through a good range of extra-curricular activities, visits, visitors to school and good contacts with the community. The curriculum reflects the school's aims and promotes particularly well the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Since the previous inspection, the school has maintained its curricular strengths and there are good improvements. The time spent on teaching has been reviewed and the school day has been lengthened. Timetables are organised efficiently and there is now sufficient time to teach all subjects of the curriculum, with a greater emphasis on English and mathematics. The curriculum meets fully the statutory requirements. A strong feature is the cross-curricular links with other subjects, which help to extend pupils' learning and make it more relevant.
28. Literacy and numeracy strategies are well integrated into the school's curriculum and successful in helping pupils to attain well above average standards. Both literacy and numeracy are very well supported through other subjects. Cross-curricular links between English, history, art and design and technology remain strong, as in the previous inspection. ICT is an integral part of the curriculum and is promoted well through other subjects. There is good use of ICT by pupils in carrying out their own research in history; and there is a developing use of ICT in geography and science. The study of the local area is good in science, history and in geography. There is much improvement in ICT and in investigational work in science since the previous inspection. These have been the subjects of whole-school focus and support and training from the local advisory service. More practical activities are now planned and pupils are encouraged to take an active role in their own investigations. As a result, reading, writing and numeracy have improved in Reception and Years 1 and 2, and boys' achievement is better.
29. There is good provision for pupils in the Reception class. There is very good improvement in the application of the literacy and numeracy strategies. All the recommended areas of learning are promoted very well, except physical development which is restricted at times due to a shortage of outdoor equipment. This relative weakness is recognised by the school and a current project is working to improve provision.
30. Links with parents are strong at entry to school and there are well-established links with pre-school organisations and with Great Kimble School, which help a smooth transition to the Reception class and in the additional intake in Year 3. There are useful links with a cluster of primary and secondary schools who share common projects and expertise. Links are maintained well with a number of secondary and grammar schools, and are particularly strong in sports. All this helps to prepare the pupils well for each stage of their education.
31. There is a structured programme of work for personal, social and health education (PSHE) for all age groups, and for citizenship. PSHE is taught well as a separate subject and through linking it with other subjects. In Years 1 and 2, PSHE is often taught through 'circle time'<sup>4</sup>, which usefully promotes values such as the importance of making informed choices. There are good

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<sup>4</sup>During circle time pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. Teachers stress respect for all pupils' views and that pupils should feel confident that they can talk with ease and free from any form of interference or interruption from others.

opportunities for providing health education through science. Sex and relationships education are taught well to pupils in Year 6 through health education linked to science. Good resources and strategies are applied to make pupils aware of the dangers of drug abuse. There is a good tradition of teaching PSHE and citizenship through subjects and standards are high.

32. All the curriculum policies are in place and have been reviewed to bring them in line with changing national requirements. The school has adapted the recent national guidance for the foundation subjects and is in the process of reviewing its practice - geography and music are identified priorities and part of the school improvement plan. The school has a current, appropriate initiative to improve its music curriculum further and enable all teachers to take a fuller part in teaching this subject. Planning for the curriculum is very good, both long-term and medium-term, and there is a shared approach to learning throughout the school. The separate needs of all minority groups of pupils are considered well. This includes those with special learning or behavioural needs, the bilingual pupils, travellers, pupils of each gender and those identified as very able or gifted. Provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. Teachers plan detailed individual programmes of work for these pupils after their needs have been identified, to ensure they have full access to the curriculum. Their learning is broken down into a series of small targets that are appropriate for them.
33. There is a good level of activities outside school hours and during lunchtimes, which helps to enhance the curriculum. This includes a range of sporting activities, such as football and gymnastics, which are very popular, and netball. There is a country-dancing club in operation during the lunchtimes and a painting club after school; both are well attended and pupils benefit from taking part in these activities. A number of sessions are organised for teaching conversation in French. There are educational visits for all classes to places of interest within and outside the school locality, which successfully enrich the curriculum. Visits are made to museums, local theatres and to outdoor educational centres. The visits have been particularly useful in supporting pupils' work in science, ICT, history and geography. Visiting theatre groups also play an important part in making learning more stimulating and in enhancing the English curriculum.
34. The school has a strong religious tradition and effective links with the church community - this benefits the pupils' learning and adds to their personal development. The strong links with the Friends' Association are useful in strengthening the curriculum. For example, trained parents support the organisation of the swimming within the school. There are good links with the wider community that benefit pupils, such as the sponsorship from local pharmaceutical and furniture companies.
35. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is mainly very good and maintains the standard noted in the previous inspection report. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is very effective. Class assemblies, whole-school assemblies and religious education lessons help pupils to gain personal insights and to understand the feelings of others. Very good relationships are established with local churches and a synagogue, and religious leaders are welcome visitors. In lessons, teachers often lead pupils to reflect on observations of the natural world and to consider the important meanings in texts. During the inspection, in a good religious education lesson, pupils in Year 6 listened carefully to their teacher reading aloud the temptations of Jesus in the wilderness. In workbooks, they noted briefly the nature of the temptations and, later, in discussion, related them to their own experiences.
36. Provision for moral development is very good. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions and to make reasoned choices. The development of self-discipline is guided by the school rules and by specific rules agreed in classrooms. During lessons, pupils discuss moral values within themes of friendship, choice and kindness to others. Teachers are skilled in explaining to pupils why some actions by individuals have wider effects within the community. Pupils have great pride in their school and show respect and affection for teachers and the other adults who help them every day. Staff are very good role models and the consistently good relationships between staff and pupils promote strong moral values in all year groups.

37. Provision for social development is very good. Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and staff, are very good. Older pupils are aware of the needs of newcomers to the school, and often accept responsibilities as 'buddies' for individuals. In lessons, pupils are encouraged to work together, exchanging ideas and sharing equipment. Class discussions are structured to allow pupils of all attainments to contribute fully by speaking thoughtfully and listening carefully. Pupils' comments are valued and teachers often respond by inviting further discussion of issues and clarification of individual viewpoints. Social skills develop during a variety of residential trips offered to pupils in Years 4 to 6. Each class elects two school council members and the council meets half-termly to discuss topics proposed by pupils or staff. The wide range of visitors extends pupils' knowledge of social conditions at home and abroad. Themes are developed in circle time to build self-esteem, explore feelings and share ideas. In all classes, pupils have responsibilities for tidiness and taking care of resources. They enthusiastically raise money for local and national charities.
38. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. The school participates in many public events, including the annual Risborough Festival. Pupils visit museums to study local and regional culture and they know how their town has developed over the years. Western culture is explored in performance, art and music. The study of music in other cultures is a current development focus in the curriculum. Pupils satisfactorily learn the values and beliefs of a variety of faiths and cultures. Assemblies include stories from many religions, and similarities and differences are sometimes highlighted. In religious education lessons, pupils learn the teachings of Jesus, Moses and Mohammed. However, the aspects of multi-cultural education that are linked to exploring the diversity of modern British society are not as strong as the rest of the school's provision and would benefit from further consideration.

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

39. The school's safe and caring environment has a positive effect on the standards pupils achieve. Good procedures are established for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare. The teacher nominated as the responsible officer for child protection is conscientious and well informed and has received recent training. All staff, including teaching assistants and midday assistants, have good understanding of child protection issues but have not received recent updated training.
40. The school has implemented the local authority's health and safety policy, including procedures for ensuring the safety of pupils on site and during out of school visits. Good health and safety practice is supplemented by regular risk assessments. Good supervision ensures pupils' safety in the playgrounds at break times and lunchtimes. Two members of staff are qualified in first aid. Periodic fire alarm practices ensure that the single-storey buildings can quickly be evacuated. The school site and buildings present no apparent risks to health and safety.
41. Procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development are very good and include achievement folders. Teachers and other adults know the pupils well and are skilled in responding to their needs. Pupils receive good individual care and support from class teachers and from the headteacher, who is friendly, accessible and reassuring. Teaching assistants develop good relationships with pupils and are skilled in curriculum and personal support. Pupils of all attainments are included fully in all activities. A good induction system helps children settle quickly into the Reception class. Pupils joining other year groups settle quickly and happily into the school's routines. Good procedures in Year 6 prepare pupils for transfer to secondary education.
42. Specific rules are displayed in most classrooms and pupils conform to the school's high expectations of behaviour. The anti-bullying policy is not displayed but the provisions of the policy are implemented consistently and thoroughly. Pupils and parents have no concerns about bullying. They know that discussions and a reconciliation process effectively counter the few reported incidents. The school policy for behaviour is very good and most teachers are skilled in behaviour management. However, although no unsatisfactory lessons were seen during the inspection, teachers' behaviour management was a relative weakness in a small number of

otherwise satisfactory lessons. An uncomplicated merit system acknowledges pupils' good behaviour, good work and effort. Teachers award house points for achievement and effort. Sustained good work and personal qualities are rewarded with headteacher's stickers and merit certificates. Midday supervisors award stickers for particularly good or helpful behaviour at lunchtime. The school's policy for racial equality is at a final draft stage and is appropriate.

43. Systems for monitoring and promoting attendance are good. Administrative staff have good oversight of attendance patterns and respond quickly to unexplained absences. The educational welfare officer scrutinises class registers and provides support to families where attendance is below expectations.
44. Good progress has been made in improving assessment procedures and record-keeping since the previous report and these are now good. The teacher with responsibility for assessment records all results on computer systems so that they are instantly accessible for analysis. Assessment procedures are very good for the children in the Foundation Stage and in English, mathematics and science. Each area of learning is assessed in the Foundation Stage and the adults are well informed about individual progress. In Years 1 to 6, apart from many formal tests using published material, there are regular checks on pupils' reading and spelling ages. Each term throughout the school, samples of work are assessed for each pupil and assigned a National Curriculum level. End-of-year National Curriculum grades are assigned in history, geography and design and technology. The formal assessment of attainment of skills and knowledge in subjects other than English, mathematics and science is in various stages of development and implementation in different subjects. It has been linked to the recent national guidance on the units of work that have been adopted by the school. Assessment procedures for art and design, music, physical education and religious education have not yet been introduced but are planned. However, all teachers keep informal notes on pupils' progress to inform the writing of the annual pupil reports in the summer term.
45. Results from assessments in English and mathematics are used well for the early identification of pupils with special educational needs and to review their progress towards the targets on their individual educational plans. They are also used well to identify which pupils will benefit from the teaching in small groups on the national accelerated learning programmes.
46. The use of assessment data shows good improvement since the previous inspection.
47. Assessment information is now used very effectively:-
  - to monitor pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science in great detail;
  - for early identification of pupils with special educational needs and to review the progress towards they make towards the targets on their individual educational plans;
  - to identify pupils who are particularly able so the school can offer them suitable provision;
  - to identify which pupils will benefit from the teaching in small groups for mathematics and English;
  - to set individual learning targets to identify what pupils need to learn next, to set class and group targets and to project how well the school will perform in national tests at ages 7 and 11;
  - to inform pupils and their parents of the targets so parents can help their children at home and so that targets can be reviewed at consultation evenings;
  - to track pupils' progress from term to term ensuring all pupils are achieving as well as they can.
48. The results of formal tests are reviewed by subject leaders to see where the curriculum needs strengthening in order to raise standards. The current school focus on developing scientific enquiry methods is an example of the results of such analysis. The use of assessment in other subjects is not consistently used to raise standards, although there are areas of very good practice; for example in design and technology the very detailed assessments of pupils' skills in Year 4 enables the teacher to plan subsequent lessons very effectively.

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

49. Parents make a very good contribution to their children's learning, and they have very favourable views of the school. The school maintains the confidence of parents from all sections of the community. At the pre-inspection meeting, parents' views were very positive and were confirmed by most responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire. However, 22 per cent of parents indicated disagreement with a positive questionnaire statement about the quality of information provided and 19 per cent disagreed with a positive statement about the provision of homework. The inspectors looked closely at these areas and concluded that the school provides a very good level of information and that the provision of homework is good overall.
50. The school has very good links with parents and the inspection confirms very good relationships and very good two-way communication. Some parents and friends provide consistent, valuable help in lessons to groups of pupils and to individuals. The school encourages parents to offer their special skills or interests to broaden the curriculum. For example, some parents are school librarians; others are trained in swimming pool safety procedures to enable them to manage the after-school swimming club. An association of parents and friends (FMRS) organises regular social and fund-raising events, making significant contributions to the school budget as a result. Recent purchases have included computer hardware and software, television/videotape players, a sophisticated staging system for the hall, curtains, blinds and numerous small items for classrooms. Currently, FMRS activity is directed to financing improvements to the swimming pool. Good co-operation is established between FMRS and the governing body and some families are active on both committees.
51. The quality of information for parents is very good. At the start of the school year, each class teacher provides a term-by-term curriculum outline, a reading list, reading and spelling objectives, numeracy targets, and guidance on classroom organisation, homework and use of the home-school liaison book. Additionally, parents receive regular, informative newsletters from the school, the governors and FMRS. Significant numbers of parents have attended meetings to learn about the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and to improve their understanding of how information and communication technology is used in school. At three consultation evenings each year, parents are clearly informed of their children's progress. Annual written reports to parents are of good quality, showing in some detail what children know and can do in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and suggesting how attainment may be improved. The current report format provides inadequate space for teachers to write fully about other subjects. The prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents conform fully with legal requirements.
52. Parents of pupils with special educational needs work closely with teachers to develop individual learning programmes, which enable them to help their children at home. They appreciate the provision of the school. Meticulous records are maintained by the special needs co-ordinator who is always available to discuss pupils' progress.

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

53. The school is led and managed well. This aspect of the school was judged to require substantial improvement at the time of the last inspection and this has been achieved. The headteacher has led the staff very well through a difficult period. Together they have secured considerable improvements, maintained their morale and retained the confidence of parents and pupils. The headteacher is well respected by staff, governors, parents and pupils. He has a strong team of committed and hard-working staff who have the wellbeing of the pupils at heart and who are determined to continue to raise standards in the school. The staff are supported very well by an able governing body in the management and development of the school. Relationships at all levels are very good.
54. The headteacher, senior staff and governors have a clear vision for the school and its continuing improvement. While this is based on a Christian ethos as befits a Church of England school, it is inclusive and welcoming of all pupils and values the diversity they bring. The school has clear aims and high expectations of its pupils that are reflected well in its policies and practices. Since the last inspection, the roles of senior staff have been reviewed and are now appropriate to a

school of this size. There was no evidence of any weaknesses in the management of the Reception class or Years 1 and 2 during this inspection, indicating good improvement on the findings of the last report.

55. The delegation of responsibilities is good and all staff, including ancillary staff, play a relevant part in the overall success of the school. Classroom support staff, administrative officers and a dedicated caretaking team are valued and able members of the organisation. This good staffing situation is underpinned by effective arrangements for staff training and development. Performance management arrangements are fully in place for all teachers and are contributing to improvements. There are good arrangements for the training and induction of new teachers. The school has experienced a period of higher than normal staff illness. It has maintained its good provision by the commitment of several temporary teachers and the effectiveness of how it ensures that they feel welcome in the school and are able to carry out their duties.
56. The school has acted effectively to improve the ways it analyses pupils' performance, assesses success and identifies areas for further development. All teachers track pupils' progress well, particularly in the core subjects and act swiftly to remedy any area of weakness. Senior staff, most subject leaders and some governors monitor the quality of teaching and learning at first hand in the classroom. This is an area that the school rightly wishes to extend to the newer subject leaders.
57. An area for improvement from the previous inspection was for the governing body to be more involved in establishing the direction of the school. This is now the case. The governors bring a wide range of expertise to the school. They are active and supportive. They have a good committee structure in place under the experienced leadership of the Chair of Governors. This includes a valuable strategic planning group that discusses the overall vision for future development and the main aspects of long-term planning. Governors visit the school frequently and the Chair of Governors meets the headteacher very regularly. Since the previous inspection, the governors have received more information than previously about standards in the school and have used this information to establish appropriately challenging targets and initiatives. They ensure that statutory requirements are met well. The governors question critically what the school does and hold it to account. They consult widely on the school's development, taking into account the views of staff, pupils and parents. The school's written development plans are sufficiently detailed and relevant, covering a period up to 2005. There are clear priorities and costs for the current year and staff use the plan as a key tool in development.
58. Financial planning supports the school's work well. The budget, including the additional grants the school receives, is closely monitored by the headteacher and the governors and is directed to areas of priority, such as the recent improvement in the computer resources. Governors ensure that the school receives good value for money. There are clear financial procedures and terms of reference. The budget is administered efficiently and the most recent audit report was positive. The school's budget is put under some pressure at times by the arrangements for an additional intake into Year 3 from Great Kimble School. This means that the school must keep some places available for these pupils and cannot fill the classes at the lower end of the school. The headteacher and governors continue to work with the local education authority to find a solution to this situation. The general administration of the school is efficient and supports its smooth running. The school makes good use of new technology in its administration and this contributes to efficiency, for example, in pupil records and the analyses of standards.
59. The school manages educational inclusion well. The teacher responsible for managing special educational needs provision recently gained national recognition for her good practice and the improvements in provision for special needs pupils since the previous inspection have been due to her expertise. The governor responsible for this area works closely with her to monitor the effectiveness of the special needs policy and to ensure the best possible provision. The provision for pupils with English as an additional language speak is good. There is equal access for these pupils to the school's curriculum. There are suitable arrangements for identifying and assessing needs of the bilingual pupils. Attainment and progress are tracked on a regular basis for pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, travellers and bilingual learners. This is an improvement since the last inspection, although there are no written guidelines for teachers for supporting pupils with

English as an additional language. The school promotes racial harmony soundly through its policies and practice. The governing body is fully involved in evaluating the schools' curriculum and noting its strengths and weaknesses. There is an attached governor for a number of subjects and this helps the governing body as a whole to have an overview of how successfully the curriculum is being managed.

60. The headteacher has made good use of local and national initiatives in school improvement since the last inspection. Practice in literacy and numeracy has made good use of national developments, such as those to accelerate the learning of particular groups of pupils. At times, however, the school feels that concentration on the core subjects has detracted from the attention it would wish to give to other subjects. The school has valued the close support of representatives from the local education authority's advisory teams who have worked with it over the past two years.
61. Accommodation is good and has improved since the previous inspection. The single-storey building provides a pleasant environment for pupils and staff. Good displays of pupils' work enliven classrooms and open areas. Although most classrooms are adequate in size for the numbers of pupils, space limitations in the junior classrooms, and most particularly in Year 6, restrict practical activities such as art work and the use of laptop computers. The hall is not large enough to support the full physical education curriculum for pupils in Years 5 and 6. The school has worked hard to improve its main computer area and this is having a good effect on standards but its position means that pupils are subject to regular interruptions from people moving around the school. Externally, the playgrounds are of satisfactory size and the field is in good condition. The outdoor area for the Reception class is being developed to enable it to be used more effectively. The school site and building are free of vandalism and graffiti and are commendably cleaned and well maintained by a very small and committed workforce.
62. The school's practical learning resources are good overall and are very good in history. The number of computers available to pupils is above the national average for primary schools. Books in classrooms and the library are in good condition and generally adequate in number but fiction stocks are limited for the avid older readers.

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

63. To build on the school's strengths, raise standards and improve the quality of provision further, the headteacher, staff and the governing body should:
- (1) Improve aspects of teaching in those lessons that are not of the high quality usually seen in the school, by:
- ensuring that all lessons in mathematics and science are planned to cater for the learning needs of the lower attaining pupils and that work is not too difficult for them to achieve success;
  - ensuring that all teachers mark pupils' work to the high standard seen in several classes;
  - planning a balanced use of time in literacy and numeracy lessons by ensuring that the whole-class and group work activities are neither too long nor too short to be effective;
  - providing able readers with books that contain sufficient challenge;
  - enabling all teachers to control pupils' over-lively behaviour effectively at all times.  
(paragraphs 21-24, 26, 85-86, 88, 91-92, 99)
- (2) Ensure that all subject leaders contribute equally well to the school's continuing development, as planned, by enabling the new subject leaders in science, design and technology and geography to monitor at first hand the quality of teaching and learning and the standards attained by pupils.  
(paragraphs 56, 102, 113, 119)

**Other issues that should be considered by the school:**

- improving the outdoor play provision for the children in the Reception class;  
(paragraphs 29, 61, 78)
- implementing assessment procedures in the remaining foundation subjects and religious education;  
(paragraphs 44, 106, 108, 113, 119, 125, 136, 141, 146)
- developing the quality of the music curriculum;  
(paragraphs 32, 136)
- ensuring that provision for pupils' social and cultural development gives sufficient opportunities for educating pupils about the diversity of society and culture in modern Britain.  
(paragraph 38)

*(It is acknowledged by the inspection team that several of these issues are already planned for development by the school.)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	46
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	35

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	19	19	8	0	0	0
Percentage	0	41	41	18	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	YR- Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	211
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	2

#### Special educational needs

	YR - Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	31

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence (2001/2)

	%
School data	4.6
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	13	14	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	13	13
	Girls	13	12	13
	Total	26	25	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (96)	93 (100)	96 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	13	13
	Girls	12	13	12
	Total	25	26	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (100)	96 (100)	93 (100)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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
	2002	22	18	40

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	16	18
	Girls	18	17	18
	Total	34	33	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85 (93)	83 (83)	90 (93)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	16	19
	Girls	18	18	18
	Total	35	34	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (83)	85 (90)	93 (97)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

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

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

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>	<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
White – British	133	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	58	0	0

*The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Average class size	31

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

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	117

*FTE means full-time equivalent*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2001/2
	£
Total income	465,963
Total expenditure	464,858
Expenditure per pupil	2,085
Balance brought forward from previous year	12,210
Balance carried forward to next year	13,315

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

**Questionnaire return rate: 35 per cent**

Number of questionnaires sent out	211
Number of questionnaires returned	73

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	40	55	4	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	34	56	7	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	40	60	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	56	19	3	0
The teaching is good.	44	49	4	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	26	49	22	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	58	33	10	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	45	0	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	30	55	14	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	47	47	3	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	47	51	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	45	14	3	11

*Figures may not total 100 per cent owing to rounding*

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

64. The previous inspection focused on the subjects of English, mathematics and science and did not include separate reports for most other subjects. It is not possible, therefore, to compare the findings of this inspection with the previous report in several subjects. Where comparisons can be made, they have been included in the following pages.

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

65. The school's initial assessments confirm that children enter the Reception class with above average attainment. Progress is good and by the time they are in Year 1, children reach at least the expected standards for this age in all six areas of learning, with the majority exceeding the expected standards, and a small minority working at the earlier levels of the National Curriculum in some elements of the communication, language and literacy areas.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

66. Children's personal, social and emotional development is very well promoted throughout the day and through all areas of learning. This contributes well to their very good behaviour and their attitudes to learning. Children are motivated to learn and remain absorbed in activities. They respond well to the structured literacy sessions and remain focused throughout. They are active learners. During their writing sessions, more able children work independently with increasing confidence and others participate well in group-activities. They organise their own learning in small groups and play games co-operatively, for example, while listening to a recorded tape for learning letter sounds. They help to clear up well after activities and wait sensibly for adult help when required. They treat adults and others with respect. Through their established classroom rules, they are developing a good awareness of what is right and what is wrong. Children are learning about self-care, health and hygiene through role-play situations such as the 'Doctor's Surgery'. They mix and play well with others from different ethnic backgrounds and they have a developing awareness of different needs, cultures and beliefs.
67. Teaching and learning are very good. The teacher, support assistant, parents and voluntary helpers plan and share activities that the children find interesting, and they encourage independence and collaboration. There is a good balance between children making their own decisions about their work and adult suggestion and support. They encourage children to share their ideas and use questioning well to express themselves at greater length.

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

68. All children reach the expected standards for this age, with many exceeding these standards and a minority working at the earlier levels of the National Curriculum in some elements. Children have very good listening skills, most speak with confidence and self-assurance and show an awareness of the listener. They interact well with others, negotiate plans and activities and take turns in conversations. The younger children and bilingual learners tend to be quieter, and at times shy, but, with encouragement, participate more freely in small group situations. Through role-play activities they use talk well to explore real and imagined experiences.
69. Children sing 'The Alphabet Song' and learn the sequence of letters of the alphabet. They are well aware of the links between letters and sounds. They recognise initial letter sounds in all the names on the list displayed in the classroom; some are also aware of the final sounds and short vowel sounds. They know both capital and lower case letters and discriminate between them while making their search of words. Through using familiar stories and rhymes, children are becoming well aware of the different sound and spelling patterns within words. Children enjoy reading and listen attentively to stories and books that are read by adults. Some are able to retell sequences and predict what might happen next. They show an understanding of elements of stories, such as the main character and sequence of events. They understand the difference between story and

non-fiction books and learn that some books are used to answer questions about where, who, why and how. Children use a range of strategies while reading to guess new words, such as picture and context cues and their knowledge of phonics. Parents are also involved well in supporting their children's reading at home. Children begin to realise that writing can be used for many purposes. They write their own name using a capital letter to start. Most five-year-olds use their phonic knowledge to write simple regular words and some write labels and captions. Some of the more able attempt to write lists and more complex words independently, spelling words phonetically and showing a good knowledge of the letter/sound relationships. They practise the correct formation of letters. Most children use their pencils skilfully to form recognisable letters and words and can copy words. More able children form their letters and words more accurately and a few begin to join their letters.

70. Teaching and learning are mostly good, and at times very good. Literacy sessions are well structured and there is a good programme of work. The classroom provides an interesting range of language displays and activities to support learning. Learning objectives are clearly displayed and shared with the children and this helps them to take an active part in their learning and to evaluate their own progress. The very good organisation leads to individual needs being met at different levels of ability and to an increasing level of independence and confidence. On-going assessment is used well to plan the next stage of work. There are detailed individual and class records on children's progress. A minor weakness is during the whole-class activities, when the pace becomes slow at times; this particularly affects the more able children who begin to lose interest.

### **Mathematical development**

71. All children reach the expected standards for this age, with a high proportion exceeding these standards, and working at the earlier levels of the National Curriculum. Children count everyday objects reliably to ten and many count beyond 20, in a variety of contexts. There are many opportunities for them to count, use and order numbers on an independent basis and as a class. They take an active part in solving simple problems involving addition and subtraction to 10. Nearly half of the class can describe the language of position such as 'over' and 'under', and a third can describe three-dimensional shapes.
72. Teaching and learning are very good. Stories and practical activities are used and linked well to develop mathematical ideas, for example, to establish the idea of 'pairs'. Mathematical vocabulary is taught very well. Through practical activities, children are developing very good understanding of the idea of length and the related vocabulary. Very good questioning techniques are used, leading to a good understanding of the language of comparison of different lengths. Children are encouraged to estimate. There are good opportunities for practical shopping in the classroom, using 1p to 5p coins.

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

73. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is good at least, and often very good in science. There are good opportunities to learn from science experiments. Children learn to test if materials will float or sink and make informed guesses before testing. They design a boat that will float. They are able to sort materials and describe them, and they look for similarities and differences. They observe carefully different types of seeds on display and use these to grow in their pots. They use some of these seeds and beans to make shakers and explore different sounds. They have had good sensory experiences while designing and planting a garden. Their visits to the garden centre and to the local supermarket have resulted in having useful outside experiences and an awareness of the environment. Children know that they need to look after plants and animals. Visitors, particularly people who help the community, extend their knowledge and understanding of the world.
74. There are planned opportunities to make three-dimensional toys and models, using a variety of materials. Children are beginning to choose their own tools and to cut, stick, assemble and join materials for their pictures and models, using re-cycled materials. They use scissors with

increasing control. Children have access to the computer in class and in the computer suite. They use programs that are set for them and are able to control the mouse, although the use of the computer is not fully developed to support activities linked to literacy and numeracy. Children use the tape recorder confidently for their learning. They have access to other programmable toys such as the 'Pixie'.

75. Through religious activities, children are developing a good awareness of their own culture. However, there are limited opportunities for them to learn about people from other cultures and beliefs. Classroom resources, such as dressing up clothes and displays, do not reflect the diversity of cultures in the wider society.
76. Teaching and learning are very good, particularly in science, and helping to promote very well the children's knowledge and understanding of the world. Lessons are well organised and resourced and there are high levels of adult support. Teaching builds systematically on children's previous learning, for example, in an activity linked to making a moving toy – 'Jack on the Beanstalk who climbs up and down'. Cross-curricular links with literacy are strong. The lessons also promote very good personal and social development. Practical activities lead to a high level of motivation, good understanding and the development of skills.

### **Physical development**

77. Children's physical development is good. There are regular opportunities to take part in structured physical activities and use the apparatus in the hall. These activities help children to develop well their body control and co-ordination. Children make good use of the space and remain aware of others while using the hall. Children develop a good awareness of the effect of their movements on their bodies. They understand the importance of staying healthy. They respond enthusiastically to music and dance lessons, showing good development of skills. Within their classroom, children are developing their hand skills well by using tools and equipment, such as scissors, pencils, paintbrushes and glue sticks.
78. Teaching and learning are very good. The sequence of gymnastic activities on the floor and apparatus is very well planned. The teacher gives careful instructions before children use the apparatus. Children learn to wait patiently and listen. They follow instructions carefully, including the safety rules, and show some variation through using imagination. Spatial awareness in the children is very good. A minor weakness in teaching is that at times the available space is not fully used in the planned lessons. This means restricted movements and experiences at times for the children. There are limited experiences in the outside play area due to the limited range available of toys and equipment – this is a current focus for development.

### **Creative development**

79. Children take part in musical activities with enthusiasm and enjoy singing songs and joining in games. They sing songs and rhymes co-operatively, with a good rhythm, and move, clap or stamp in a sequence. They participate very well in ring games and respond well to the music in their dance lessons.
80. Teaching and learning are very good. Children experience a good range of creative activities that includes art, music and imaginative play. They use a good range of resources, tools and materials to help express their ideas and feelings. There are good opportunities for imaginative play. There are role-play areas, which currently include a doctor's surgery, a post office and the classroom shop, through which they are able to rehearse outside experiences; for example, they explore the journey of a letter through their post office. There are reasonable opportunities for spontaneous play through which they may explore their own ideas, using a free choice of activities. Children are taught a good range of art techniques and the use of materials. Some of their observational drawings and paintings are very interesting, well mounted and displayed, creating a very pleasant environment for children's learning and celebrating the children's achievements.

## ENGLISH

81. Standards are above average by Year 2 and well above average by Year 6. Pupils make good progress across the school in all aspects of English. Standards of speaking and listening are well above average in all age groups. Reading and writing abilities are above average in Years 1 and 2 and pupils build well on their achievements in Years 3 to 6 to attain the high standards seen at the top of the school. Pupils' successes are reflected in the sustained very good performance in the National Curriculum tests for 11-year-olds. The school has maintained the high standards of the previous inspection with its older pupils. It has made good improvements to provision for pupils in Years 1 and 2 that have been reflected in much better test results in the past two years. The school supports pupils with special educational needs well and enables them to make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. The particular language needs of the small number who are bilingual are considered and these pupils take a full part in lessons, making progress that is similar to their classmates.
82. Pupils of all ages are effective listeners and confident speakers. From Year 1, they are attentive to their teachers and classmates. They show a wide and interesting vocabulary for their age. This was demonstrated in Year 2 where pupils, unprompted, were keen to offer alternative and more imaginative words in a text read by their teacher. By the age of 11, pupils engage in complex and articulate conversations and debates. They adapt their speech to the context, using standard English as appropriate. They are mature and sensitive to the contributions of others.
83. By Year 2, pupils read well for their age. They tackle unfamiliar vocabulary independently because of their knowledge of letter sounds and patterns. They enjoy reading and are beginning to form preferences for authors and types of books. Many read widely at home and this supplements their learning in school. They use information texts well, referring to the index or contents page to aid their retrieval of information. By Year 6, pupils are very competent readers. Many use their skills well both in school and when reading at home. They unravel layers of meaning in fiction and poetry, and compare styles critically. Most have read a wide range of fiction, often choosing books on the recommendations of classmates or teachers. Their reading is well able to support their work in all subjects. They use dictionaries, non-fiction texts and the Internet efficiently and independently. Many read so avidly that they have completed many of the books available in school and prefer to bring their own choices from home.
84. Pupils' writing is developed well by Year 2. Pupils write independently in full sentences. The higher attainers are beginning to construct extended sentences. Punctuation and spelling are good. A particular strength of the school is its expectation that pupils will join their handwriting from the earliest stages and present their work in a tidy and legible form. This encourages pupils' pride in their work and aids their progress. Pupils apply their writing skills well to many subjects. They consider the setting and characters in their descriptive work, such as when writing about an underwater palace, and use an appropriate layout for factual accounts, such as table and diagrams in science. Their ICT skills are practised and applied well. By Year 6, almost all pupils are fluent writers. Their imaginative writing is lively and interesting. Their work is structured well, they use complex sentences and punctuate and spell at a high level. They organise their work appropriately, for example, in paragraphs or as a newspaper layout. The use of ICT in writing is strong. Pupils use computers readily and efficiently as a regular tool in their work for drafting and enhancing text and layout. A good example of this was seen when pupils wrote biographies of a chosen person, collecting research from the Internet and reference books, redrafting their work on the laptop computers and devising a multi-media presentation for the final versions.
85. Teaching and learning are good and there were many very good features in the lessons seen. Teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 show no evidence of the serious weaknesses identified by the previous inspection. The main strengths seen throughout the school were:
- teachers' good subject knowledge and enthusiasm for language;
  - interesting, well-organised and well-resourced lessons that motivate pupils and sustain their attention;

- good planning for the full range of attainments in each class that enables all pupils to make effective progress;
- high expectations of behaviour and the promotion of very good relationships;
- the efficient use of time that leads to pupils completing a considerable quantity of work over time;
- good use of skilled support staff in lessons and to lead activities for particular groups;
- good marking in some classes that gives clear feedback to pupils and helps them to know how to improve;
- effective links between literacy and other subjects that make work relevant to pupils and contribute to time being used efficiently.

The relative weaknesses in a few lessons were:

- an imbalance of time in literacy hours, with overlong introductions and not enough time for group work or a final summary session to be effective;
- insufficient control of pupils' over-exuberant behaviour that led to a loss of concentration in the pupils and less progress than in more settled lessons;
- too little attention to the needs of some left-handed pupils who are developing a poor writing grip and working posture.
- some marking that is cursory, more critical than supportive and does not tell pupils about how they can improve.

86. The curriculum is good. The school has implemented the National Literacy Strategy well and is adapting its methods sensibly to the needs of its pupils, for example, by ensuring that the older pupils have sufficient time to complete pieces of extended writing and present them to a high standard. However, pupils in Year 2 are capable of reading more challenging texts than they are given at times. Effective use has been made of the various national 'booster' initiatives. Staff, including the learning support assistants, are trained well in these. The curriculum is supplemented well by drama and performance, such as visits by professional theatre companies. Resources are good, although the school cannot fully cater for the voracious reading appetites of its oldest pupils. The large library is well organised and benefits from the help of skilled parents, including a former librarian. The previous inspection was critical of the information given to parents to help their children with reading. The school has responded very well to this criticism and produces a wide range of booklets and newsletters for parents. There are recommended reading lists for all age groups and effective use is made of home-school reading diaries and homework books.
87. The on-going refinement of detailed assessment procedures is supporting the school in maintaining high standards. Teachers check and record pupils' progress regularly and set challenging targets for individuals, groups and classes. Such targets are increasingly shared with the pupils, enabling them to play a full part in their continuing improvement. The subject is led and managed well. The subject leader has been absent for some time but the headteacher and deputy head have maintained the monitoring programme and ensured training for new members of staff. Governors are well informed about standards and current priorities for development.

## **MATHEMATICS**

88. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards are well above average. Most pupils meet the required National Curriculum levels for their age and a high percentage exceed them. The school has succeeded in maintaining the high standards identified in Year 6 by the last inspection report and shows good improvement in Year 2 on the findings of that inspection. Pupils have very good attitudes to mathematics and behave very well in lessons. The majority of pupils, including those with high attainment and the few bilingual pupils, achieve well. The underachievement in Year 1 noted in the previous report has been eradicated and these pupils now achieve very well. Pupils with special educational needs and those with lower than average prior attainment achieve well in the long term because of the additional help they receive outside lessons. However, occasionally

in lessons, there is some underachievement by this group because the work is too difficult for them in some classes.

89. Pupils in Year 6 are 'thinking mathematicians' who employ a wide range of strategies, including the use of ICT and calculators to arrive at answers. They have a very good knowledge of the number system and able pupils confidently work out square roots. Pupils with lower prior attainment understand that division is inverse multiplication and which of the four number rules to apply to solve problems. Pupils construct geometric shapes accurately with a compass and work out areas and perimeters. They use their knowledge of mathematical probability to answer questions such as 'How likely is it that most pupils will get between 30-35 in the maths test?' They systematically collect data and make bar charts to explain their answers. Pupils are very conscientious in their homework and, as with their class books, the presentation of their work is of a very high standard showing they approach their learning in a very orderly manner.
90. Pupils in Year 2 have a good knowledge of the patterns within the number system. They count in fives, halve and double numbers mentally and sometimes use a computer program to demonstrate their skills. Higher attaining pupils understand that even numbers can be halved but odd ones cannot. Lower attaining pupils often reverse their written figures and have limited understanding, for example, of using a range of coins to make amounts past 20 pence. All pupils solve problems well because they have been taught how to approach questions systematically. They weigh and measure classroom objects and some are starting to work accurately with grammes and centimetres. Pupils use correct mathematical vocabulary, for example, to name the properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes.
91. Teaching and learning are good. This maintains the high standards in Years 3 to 6 highlighted in the last report and shows a good improvement in Years 1 and 2. The weaknesses identified in the teaching and learning of the younger pupils no longer exist. During the inspection, half the teaching in lessons was very good. Pupils in these classes achieve very well. All teachers now meet the needs of higher attaining pupils very well and teachers have a clear understanding of how the National Numeracy Strategy should be taught.

The main strengths in teaching and learning are:

- very clear instructions and demonstrations, using a variety of methods and a wide range of resources, which ensure all pupils understand what is being taught and are interested and keen to learn;
- a good balance between mental and practical investigative work in fast-paced lessons where skills and understanding build swiftly;
- very good use of day-to-day assessment to plan teaching which results in a high, but appropriate, level of challenge for the different groups of pupils; this inspires pupils to make a great effort in their thinking, experience success and make the best possible progress;
- using questions very well to establish what pupils know, where they have difficulties and to challenge them to think more carefully or deeply about problem solving;
- teaching pupils the strategies needed to solve problems;
- the good quality of the homework.

The main areas of weakness in teaching are:

- insufficient use of day-to-day assessment to plan activities that suit pupils with the lowest prior attainment or with special educational needs;
- the inconsistency in marking pupils' books to identify what they need to do to improve; too often books for the lowest groups have unsupportive comments and many crosses identifying wrong answers, which indicates the teaching has not been effective and lowers pupils' self-esteem.

92. The curriculum is good. The national guidance on units of work to support the National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully introduced and there is a very good focus on practical activities. Links with other subjects are strong, particularly science and ICT, which gives pupils good opportunities to apply and practise their skills. Gifted pupils have opportunities to work alongside

older pupils on higher-level mathematics if appropriate. Pupils with special educational needs are identified but, in some classes, the curriculum is not sufficiently adapted to their needs. However, there is good extra-curricular provision for them outside lessons using specialised computer programs and the national initiatives for accelerated learning.

93. Assessment procedures are very good and have been considerably improved since the previous inspection to enable pupils' progress to be tracked and to make and review individual, group, and class targets. Pupils' answers to questions on national test papers are analysed to find out which curriculum areas need extra emphasis. The current focus on teaching pupils how to apply their mathematical knowledge to problem solving is because of this analysis.
94. The leadership and management of mathematics are very good. The teacher responsible for the subject monitors teaching and learning in a variety of ways, such as observing lessons, sampling pupils' work, looking at teachers' planning documents and analysing the results of tests. Her own teaching is of a high standard, so she is able to support colleagues knowledgeably. She has provided very good opportunities for teachers' professional development and secured very helpful advice from the local education authority. Both she and the governors have a very good understanding of the strengths and of areas to develop and have worked hard to secure the good improvement since the previous report.

## **SCIENCE**

95. Standards of pupils' work by Year 6 are well above average, with many pupils attaining at the higher than expected Level 5. This is similar to the situation for pupils in Year 6 at the time of the previous inspection. Standards in Year 2 are above average and a significant number of pupils attain higher than expected levels. The situation is much improved for pupils in Year 2 since the previous inspection, when standards were said to be average, and there was insufficient attainment at higher levels. There is now an increased emphasis on enquiry-based learning across the school. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs have good support in accessing the curriculum and achieve results that match their ability, showing good progress overall. Pupils with English as an additional language, who are bilingual, achieve as well as their peers.
96. By Year 2, pupils learn about healthy eating and, for example, choose healthy ingredients to design a breakfast cereal. By the age of seven, pupils know that humans change as they grow older and that all living things need food to grow. They study animals in the local habitat and classify them according to their characteristics. They compare animals from the woodland and from the town. They observe carefully the change in shape of materials through squashing, stretching, twisting and bending, and through baking. They understand the processes involved in baking and talk about reversible and irreversible changes in materials. They investigate materials and learn to carry out a fair test by controlling variables. During the inspection, they investigated which elastic band would stretch the most. They were able to predict and compare different elastic bands, using thickness or length as a variable but, at present, they need some support from their teacher. The more able pupils could measure and record their results and had a better understanding of the idea of fair testing.
97. By Year 6, pupils have a clear understanding that, to carry out a fair test, only one variable can be changed at a time. They carry out tests, such as when discovering how temperature affects the rate at which sugar dissolves. They make their own conclusions and record their results in a bar or a line graph, using a computer. More able pupils also understand that there are other factors apart from temperature that might help sugar to dissolve more easily. In their work on living things, they experiment to see if plants grow better with fertilisers or without, and test the effect of different types of fertilisers on the growth of the plants. Their recorded work is of high quality, showing a good application of the scientific method. They explain well, through their diagrams, labels and recordings, what they have learned about the process of photosynthesis in plants. By the age of eleven, pupils have a very good understanding of plants, their growth and the cycle of reproduction, about animals in their habitats and about interdependence and adaptation.

98. Pupils have very good attitudes to their work and apply themselves well to the set tasks. They enjoy the challenges provided by teachers, through the investigative work assigned or in problem solving work. Pupils' behaviour is very good and they work very well in pairs and in small groups. Pupils are good learners and often involved in the evaluation of their own progress.

99. Teaching and learning are good. The following strengths and areas for development were apparent from lessons observed:
- teachers' good subject knowledge was used well; for example, there are confident demonstrations, with an emphasis on developing scientific vocabulary, and questions are used well to probe and to extend pupils' thinking;
  - a good range of teaching techniques is used to introduce and consolidate pupils' learning and to conclude lessons;
  - a good range and quality of resources is provided and used well by pupils in their investigations;
  - different ways of recording are encouraged and there is good use of tables, charts and diagrams by teachers and pupils;
  - there is some variation in the quality of planning to provide suitable challenge for all ability levels, at times resulting in some lower attaining pupils not being able to cope with the given tasks;
  - there is some over-reliance on teachers; independent skills of enquiry need developing further, particularly for pupils in Years 1 and 2.
100. Literacy skills are supported well through science. Teachers ensure pupils understand and use appropriate vocabulary; for example, they ensure that they understand the difference between 'pollination' and 'fertilization' and use these terms accurately. Older pupils are encouraged to make their own notes, plan investigations and record their methods and conclusions in different ways. Pupils make good use of numeracy skills, which are reflected in graphs, charts and tables in their books and in their work on display. Activities often include weighing, measuring and comparing results, using standard and non-standard measures.
101. Pupils use ICT well to explore different methods of recording the results of investigations, for example, in different types of graphs and tables. Pupils also use it for their research using the Internet.
102. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The new subject leader is enthusiastic but needs more time and support to prepare her well for the direct monitoring of teaching and for analysing standards of work. Resources are good and generally used well. The school has a wild life area, although its use is currently limited. There is very good use of resources outside the school, which benefits pupils' learning; for example, pupils in Year 4 have benefited greatly from their residential visit to an environmental education centre, linked to their study of the animal habitats and food chains.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

103. By Year 2 and Year 6, standards are above average. Art retains a high priority in the curriculum and is taught regularly and well to all classes. The school has not maintained the well above average standards that were identified in the previous inspection but pupils of all ages produce good quality work. They achieve well and all take a full part in lessons. Pupils with quite profound learning and communication difficulties completed work of a high quality during the inspection and this boosted their self-esteem well. Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject, sustain their concentration and take a pride in their efforts.
104. From Year 1, pupils make good progress. The attractive displays in Year 1 show a creative use of colour, line and texture. In a lesson seen, pupils demonstrated a confident and imaginative use of paint, adding materials such as flour and sawdust to their colours to give texture. By Year 2, pupils have extended their drawing and painting skills and this is demonstrated by recent representations of The Great Fire of London. They have explored textiles, producing wool landscapes and fabric designs. Work is included in three dimensions and with good multi-cultural features, such as *papier mache* Mexican masks and Jewish *kippahs*.

105. Pupils' good progress continues through Years 3 to 6. In Year 3, pupils' skills in mixing warm and cool colours are applied to paintings in the recognisable styles of Monet and Van Gogh. In a lesson seen in Year 3, pupils were meticulous when mixing colours to match a section of a painting by Van Gogh. By Year 6, pupils' skills of observation, their technical knowledge and their imagination combine to good effect. They have painted attractive water colours in Japanese style and, during the inspection, completed very intricate representations of modern cereal packaging.
106. A strength of the school's provision is its use of whole-school topics. An impressive example is a recent textile project that shows a good variety of activities and good progression in pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. There is an effective balance between pupils being asked to carry out activities that are mainly directed by teachers and them being encouraged and enabled to apply their own imagination and interpretation to their work. The older pupils have sketchbooks but these are currently not used well. Work in them is not valued highly by the pupils; it is too rarely dated and the books act neither as a useful bank of ideas nor a tool in assessing pupils' attainment and progress. In all age groups, pupils practise and apply ICT skills well to their art work. Written work is embellished with graphics and borders and pupils use painting programs to design pictures. They research the work of famous artists using the Internet.
107. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers are well organised and use the available time fully. They plan an interesting range of lessons that engage the pupils and fire their imagination. In Years 3 to 6, they are skilled at setting out the overcrowded classrooms for practical activities. Teachers give clear instructions and advice on techniques that enable pupils to improve. They use the support assistants very effectively to help pupils and to organise resources. During the inspection, these assistants showed considerable skill in extending pupils' learning.
108. The subject is led and managed very well. The subject leader shows enthusiasm and commitment. She has a clear vision for the subject's continuing development. She has monitored teaching and learning directly through observations of lessons and this has led to continuing staff development. She is very experienced and has led the staff in establishing a good programme of work for all age groups. Productive links are made as appropriate with other subjects such as history and design and technology. The school identifies gifted and talented artists and gives them additional support, for example, by enabling a young artist to join the painting club with older pupils. There are occasional special projects; a notable one was about mosaics and resulted in a high quality Millennium mural in the playground and very attractive display panels in the hall. The good quality of display across the school celebrates pupils' achievements and stimulates their further efforts. The school has rightly identified the need to implement manageable and informative assessment arrangements for checking pupils' progress; these have been started and look promising but they are not yet in use across the school.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

109. Standards are above average by Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils of all attainments achieve well and take a full part in lessons. This is the result of good teaching and the regular opportunities given to pupils to complete relevant and interesting units of work.
110. Pupils in Year 1 learn how to join materials such as paper and card with glue, tape and fasteners. During the inspection, they applied these skills well to making card buildings. This was linked to their current work on buildings in the local area. Pupils were excited and interested and talked knowledgeably about the building they had chosen to make. They were keen to make sure that their products could withstand handling and looked like the original building. Pupils in Year 2 have extended their skills to making fabric puppets based on their own labelled designs and used food technology in their designs of Christmas cakes. A recent unit of work to design and make a well was completed to a high standard; the pupils' initial drawings were detailed, they made prototype models, the final winding mechanisms work and pupils have evaluated their product competently. Standards are above average because of the high proportion of pupils who complete their work at a better level for their age than is seen in most schools.

111. Pupils' good progress continues in Years 3 to 6 and competent examples of work were observed in Years 3, 4 and 5 during the inspection. In Year 3, pupils apply their knowledge of pneumatics to designing a toy that has an opening and closing feature. Many have been enthused so much by their work that they have spent time at home refining their designs and collecting components. Pupils in Year 4 have made money containers. The teacher's very detailed assessment of their work shows the wide range of skills employed in this project and pupils' products are finished to a good quality. Pupils in Year 5 have made biscuits and designed the packaging for them. They evaluated the products well and their work shows a wide and imaginative range of ideas. In a lesson during the inspection, they constructed musical instruments. Again, their ideas were very wide-ranging and they took great care to achieve a high-quality finish and performance from the instruments, adapting and refining their ideas as necessary. By Year 6, pupils have experienced the full design process in a 'mini-enterprise' project. Pupils worked in groups to design, make and market a product. As a result, a team from the class represented the school in a local competition with their completed photograph frames.
112. Teaching and learning are good. The teachers mainly use the nationally recommended units of work and plan activities based on these, ensuring that pupils' skills are planned to progress systematically as a result. The classrooms are organised well. Pupils are given a range of resources and encouraged to make their own choices. Adults encourage imaginative ideas and allow pupils to test these, and to learn from mistakes if necessary. Good use is made of the support staff, to give extra help to the younger pupils and to help to manage the large junior-age classes. Adults use questions well to check pupils' understanding and to extend their thinking. There is good attention to health and safety, for example, in the use of tools. Pupils' computer skills are used satisfactorily from time to time to record pupils' design processes and to enhance finished products.
113. The management of the subject is satisfactory. The subject leader is new to this area of responsibility and acknowledges that she needs to improve her expertise. She is committed and enthusiastic and has already identified areas for improvement. At present, she has had no opportunities to monitor teaching and learning at first hand. The school has begun to consider appropriate assessment arrangements but there is no agreed system being used at present. There are, however, examples of effective practice by teachers in assessing pupils' progress in particular units of work and the school plans to develop this aspect more systematically.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

114. Standards of pupils' work are above average by Year 2 and by Year 6. There is good progress in developing key geography skills throughout the school, including for bilingual pupils. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress in relation to prior attainment, because of the effective support systems that are in the school.
115. Pupils in Year 1 are aware of where they live in relation to the school and know some of the familiar roads; they locate these on the map of the area. They go for walks to look at the main features of the locality. By Year 2, pupils understand that people live in different types of places and that the natural resources give a place its character. Using stories as a base, they learn about places on different scales. They understand that maps can be presented in various ways and begin to use a map key. They draw a map of an imaginary island, showing physical and human features, such as a river, hotel and school. They show a good awareness of places beyond their own locality and learn to make comparisons with Monks Risborough. In a lesson observed, pupils in Year 2 discussed the main features that could be seen on the coast of the island of Iona and they understood what an island is.
116. Pupils continue to achieve well in Years 3 to 6. For example, pupils in Year 5 understand how people can both improve and damage the environment. They give their own views on topical issues, such as how traffic can cause pollution and creates problems for local people. They debate issues, such as whether the decision taken about building a local by-pass is right or wrong. In pairs, they give lively presentations to an audience in a role-play situation, putting

forward their case. They write interesting letters of protest and reports, justifying their views. As an audience, they are good listeners and ask challenging questions to make their presenters think hard. By Year 6, pupils learn to use Ordnance Survey maps and understand contours. They locate and name the main mountain ranges on a map of the world and estimate their heights, using a key. They learn about environments such as mountains, deserts, forests and salt lakes. They make a trip to a local field centre to study local rivers. They have made an in-depth study of rivers in the United Kingdom and plot rivers in different continents on a map of the world.

117. Teaching and learning are good for pupils of all ages. Strength in the teaching seen included the good subject knowledge of teachers - reflected in confident teacher demonstration in a lesson observed in Year 6, which led to a good understanding of contour lines on a map. There is good emphasis on teaching key geographical skills. Levels of challenge are good for pupils in Years 5 and 6. Teaching seen in Year 2 was good and had strengths; for example, there were effective cross-curricular links made with music and English.
118. Pupils have very good attitudes towards learning and show a great deal of interest in their work. They work extremely well in small groups and share well their books and atlases. Pupils in Year 6 enjoy using maps and pupils in Year 5 show mature attitudes towards environmental issues and good qualities of citizenship.
119. The curriculum is good, based on the nationally recognised units of work. Geography is an identified priority for the school and part of the action plan; this should support a review of how successful the revised programmes of work are in raising standards. There is a new, but experienced, subject leader. More time and training are necessary to enable her to fulfil her role, particularly for monitoring teaching and evaluating standards. Procedures for assessment are not yet implemented effectively to record the development of pupils' skills. There are good links made with subjects such as history and music. Literacy and numeracy are promoted well through planned activities. There are good examples of this on display in most classes. There are effective opportunities to develop ICT skills through using the Internet and for drawing graphs and tables, linked to geography work. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 access the Internet to find information about countries and use laptops for data collection, for example, measuring rainfall in summer and winter and for drawing weather charts.

## **HISTORY**

120. Standards of pupils' work are above average by Year 2 and well above average by Year 6. The very good quality of teaching and learning and of the history curriculum, reported in the previous inspection, has been well maintained. There is good progress made by all pupils, including bilingual pupils, in their enquiry skills and in their knowledge and understanding of past events and people. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as a result of the effective support structures within the school.
121. Pupils in Year 1 make a good study of the local area through their 'heritage walk'. They use maps and old and new photographs to learn about changes in houses over time. They compare how present-day houses and buildings have changed in the local area over the past 100 years. By using evidence, such as an old photograph of a pupil's grandmother's house, their learning becomes even more authentic. They learn to use terms, such as 'very old', 'quite old', 'quite new', 'new' and 'newest' to describe their evidence. Pupils in Year 2 use a variety of sources of information and learn to compare how life had changed in hospitals for the wounded soldiers from the Crimean War after Florence Nightingale had worked hard to improve conditions. They comment on the contribution made by Louis Braille in helping blind people to read. They have studied The Great Fire of London, know the main sources of information and learn to make use of diaries in the style of Pepys in their role-play. By the age of seven, they look for their own information from a variety of sources and have a good understanding of the cause and effect of events from the past. They use dates and terms appropriately and make use of a timeline.

122. Pupils in Year 3 investigate and compare the life of rich and poor ancient Egyptians by using different books and consider the reliability of the evidence. Pupils in Year 4 study the names of places in the local area and look for their origins and meanings, linking this to their topic of the Romans and Anglo-Saxons and their settlements. They learn about the contributions made by archaeologists in history. Pupils in Year 5 study kings and queens and their lifestyles, for example, as shown by entertainment during the Tudor period, using maps, portraits and evidence gained from a visit to a museum, where they have good opportunities to empathise through drama. Pupils in Year 6 consider how successful a Factory Act was in bringing about the desired changes in the working conditions and how this has affected their lives today. They consider the reliability of the evidence and the possibility of a bias in what is seen and written. By age 11, pupils use dates and technical terms well and give their own interpretations of the cause and effect of events and actions. They use primary and secondary sources of information, learn to evaluate them and make a selective use of sources for their purpose, to produce structured work. They know the main features of the Victorian period and give their own views on Queen Victoria's place in British history. Through an in-depth study, they develop a very good understanding of the class-system in Victorian society.
123. Teaching and learning in history are very good for all pupils and stimulate their interests. Pupils enjoy learning about the past, and their writings and discussions show good levels of understanding of the key elements of history. Teachers plan thoughtfully and ensure that the lessons are made interesting, challenging and relevant for pupils of all ages and abilities. Levels of motivation are consequently high. Lessons proceed at a good pace and there is very good use of on-going assessment and its use in teaching. In two very successful lessons seen, in Year 2 and Year 6, for example, many of these features were present. Pupils were able to empathise with the people of the past and showed a good level of understanding of their feelings. Teachers make appropriate use of the Internet and of books to encourage pupils to do their own research, which leads to good results. There are planned and useful opportunities to extend literacy through discussions and debates, through reading history books and through writing for a variety of purposes and audiences. Cross-curricular links are strong with geography, art and citizenship, and these add to the pupils' level of motivation to learn history. The consistent use of a timeline by teachers throughout the school leads to pupils developing a good sense of chronology. Pupils are generally able to work out when people might have lived and when events might have taken place.
124. Pupils in this school are enthusiastic about learning history through very good opportunities for role-play (often inspired by their visits to the museums), through theatre groups and organised 'history days' such as 'The Tudor', 'The Roman' and the 'Victorian Day' with help from visitors skilled as historians. Pupils dress appropriately for these occasions and relive some of the experiences from the past of people and events which they have learned about from other sources.
125. The school has a well-developed curriculum, ably led and managed by a skilled history teacher and subject leader. Useful guidelines have been prepared for teachers, which are well used. There is a very good range of artefacts and other resources, collected over time and used well to support topics. Assessment at the end of units of work is useful in evaluating standards of work and pupil progress, but procedures need reviewing. In the recent past, there has been effective monitoring of teaching and learning. However, due to the current long-term absence of the subject leader, there are no alternative arrangements for monitoring teaching and learning; this has resulted in some inconsistency of practice between teachers. Overall, the history curriculum makes a very good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

126. Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are above average. Pupils, including those with high attainment and those with special educational needs, achieve well. Bilingual pupils also make good progress. There has been a very good improvement since the previous inspection when the computer suite was too new to have had an impact on standards, pupils were underachieving and teachers had limited knowledge and understanding of the subject. Pupils' attitudes are very good

and they behave very well in lessons, which has a very good impact on their learning. Many older pupils who have access to computers at home choose to use the Internet and their word-processing skills to complete their homework assignments.

127. Year 2 pupils have good keyboard skills, which they use effectively to practise punctuation, to cut and paste sentences into the correct order in a story and to write accounts, such as 'My Visit to St. Tiggwinkles'. This supports their literacy development very well. Pupils know how to enter information about their class on a database, save it for the next lesson and then find out information from it such as 'How many boys like dogs?' They enter information to make a pictogram which they print showing the different ways the class travels to school. Pupils confidently log on and off the network unaided and save and print their own work.
128. Year 6 pupils confidently prepare and present biographical multi-media presentations. They use search engines effectively and show great competence in downloading photographs and musical excerpts from the Internet for inclusion in their work. Their keyboard skills are very good and many have learnt to touch-type accurately. Pupils recognise the benefit of speed that computers can give them over manual methods. They draft their writing in literacy lessons onto laptop machines and have good editing skills. Pupils use spreadsheets effectively as a method of collecting and sorting data and know the formulae needed to find answers to the questions they pose, such as whether the average girl's height is more than that of the average boy in their class.
129. Teaching and learning are good and there is a high proportion of very good teaching. All teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of the subject, due a programme of personal development since the previous inspection. This enables them to have high expectations of their pupils and the skills to help them. Teachers have a very good understanding of how to link the learning of ICT skills with work being carried out in other subjects and this helps pupils to see how computers help them to learn. Teachers use computer programs effectively to help lower attaining pupils improve. For example, they set up mathematics programs, which pupils come in before school to use, make spelling programs to address specific difficulties and teach pupils with co-ordination difficulties to touch-type. In the best lessons, teachers give very clear instructions and demonstrations to establish understanding. They use classroom assistants very well to work with groups of pupils, so queries are immediately addressed. In these lessons the pace is very good and the levels of challenge are high, ensuring that pupils make very good progress. There is a good curriculum for ICT, which is enhanced by the residential trip for older pupils to the Isle of Wight when they use a range of sophisticated ICT equipment.
130. The management of ICT by the headteacher is very good. He monitors teaching and learning and has a very good overview of standards. Despite being justifiably pleased in the improvement in the subject in the last few years, he has a clear view of how the subject will develop further. While he has ensured teachers have the knowledge and skills to teach the curriculum, he has identified that they are less confident in teaching the elements of modelling and sensors and has planned training sessions to improve this. He has secured sponsorship from two local companies, which has been instrumental in the good provision and maintenance of computers and software. He has run classes for parents who are less familiar with computers so that they can support their children's learning at home and has plans to extend this scheme. The governors are very knowledgeable and supportive. They monitor lessons and operate a school web site, which they are redesigning to allow them to include pupils' work. There are satisfactory methods of assessment, which follow the local education authority recommendations.

## **MUSIC**

131. It was not possible to observe a full range of activities during the inspection in order to judge standards overall. At the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards of singing are above average and all pupils perform confidently. They use their skills to sing to large audiences in the church and in school productions. Pupils who have individual music lessons and those who form the school choir have higher attainment than their peers. Pupils, including those with high attainment and

those with special educational needs achieve well. Bilingual pupils take a full part in lessons and achieve similar standards to their peers.

132. Pupils in Year 2 have a good understanding that written symbols can represent different sounds. They know the role of a conductor and can follow a sequence of symbols as the conductor directs. They listen to recordings of their own work and make suggestions for improvement.
133. Pupils in Year 6 interpret musical scores well, as they all play the recorder as part of their weekly music lessons. They have a good general knowledge about the lives and music of great composers because they take it in turns to research a favourite composer's life and music and share their knowledge with the rest of the school in assembly. In both singing and playing instruments, they rehearse conscientiously and critically evaluate their work to improve their performance. Pupils have less knowledge and fewer skills in composition because this is not a regular part of their lessons.
134. Throughout the school, pupils sing a variety of hymns and practise songs to perform for school productions and church festivals. Pupils have a limited knowledge of music from different cultures and this is a weakness in the current programme of study. Pupils' ICT skills are increasingly linked to their work in music; for example, pupils use electronic keyboards and the older ones include sound in their multi-media computer presentations.
135. No overall judgement can be made about teaching and learning because of insufficient evidence during the inspection. In the Year 2 lesson observed, teaching and learning were good. The thorough planning enabled the lesson to build up pupils' skills at a good pace. The variety of teaching methods caught pupils' interest so that they concentrated well and were keen to participate. In a whole-school hymn practice, the subject leader used her considerable expertise to raise standards of singing through concentrating on improving the musical elements and insisting on clear diction and expression. Her wonderfully pitched voice gave inspiration and a fine example to the pupils.
136. The leadership and management of music are good. The school has identified music as a priority for development in the current year. The subject leader has drawn up an action plan that outlines how to introduce the improved programme of study and linked assessment that she is currently developing. As a result of her monitoring of teaching and learning, she has identified that some teachers are less confident in teaching rhythm and percussion and has engaged a local advisory specialist to give a series of demonstration lessons to improve teachers' skills, which is proving effective. Teachers link other subjects well with music to give depth to pupils' understanding. For example, pupils learned Tudor recorder music to link with their history and handled Greek instruments when a storyteller came to school. Music makes a good input to pupils' personal development. They develop good team spirit when working together for productions, such as joining with local schools in the 'Come and Sing' experience at High Wycombe's Swan Theatre. They experience moments of spirituality in the beauty of the words and music they perform, such as the reflective two-part prayer sung at the end of hymn practice.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

137. It was not possible to observe the full range of activities during the inspection in order to judge standards overall. Standards in swimming are above average by the end of Year 6, as are standards in gymnastics at the end of Year 2. Pupils, including those with high attainment and those with special educational needs make good progress in the aspects of the subject that were observed. Bilingual pupils also make good progress. Pupils' attitudes are very positive and many practise skills at break times, such as in skipping or football. They work hard in lessons and are keen to improve their skills and to represent the school in competitions.
138. By the end of Year 6, nearly all pupils can swim 25 metres, which is the national standard for pupils this age, and many can swim further than this. Pupils participate in adventurous outdoor activities during their residential visit to the Isle of Wight. Higher attaining pupils have very good

games and athletics skills which they use effectively to win many cups and trophies for the school. Both Year 2 and Year 6 pupils display good agility and body control when developing a gymnastic sequence combining movement and balance. Year 6 pupils are reflective about their work, which enables them to improve. Year 2 pupils have good athletics skills and won 'The Golden Wellie' for the best local team last summer. Throughout the school, there is a good standard of skipping.

139. Teaching and learning are good. Three full lessons were seen and part of a Year 6 gymnastics session. Very good teaching and learning was seen during a games lesson in Years 3 and 4 due to the teacher's personal expertise and enthusiasm. She gave a very good demonstration of the most effective methods for throwing and catching, emphasising the importance of keeping your eye on the ball. As the lesson progressed, she quickly assessed which pupils needed extra help. There was very good inclusion of the pupils with special educational needs who find co-ordination difficult. The teacher demonstrated very good class control, which resulted in a rounders game where pupils showed they understood the rules of fair play and enthusiastically demonstrated the very good progress they had made during the lesson. Where the teaching seen was less effective, although teachers' knowledge and understanding are very good, there is a lack of challenge; pupils consolidate rather than extend their skills and teachers do not ask them enough to evaluate their own and others' performance in order to improve.
140. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. There is an effective arrangement for teaching games skills to Years 3 to 6. Classes pair up and are joined by the headteacher who is a competent and enthusiastic sportsman. This results in good quality provision as three different games, each coached by an adult, can be run at the same time. Teachers' professional development is good because the school has joined initiatives such as 'Top Sport' and engaged visitors such as a specialist in skipping. This is as a result of the co-ordinator's monitoring of teaching and learning which highlighted that teachers felt less confident in their abilities to teach small-sided team games.
141. The more formal assessment of pupils' attainment is being developed; meanwhile, teachers make informal assessments that lead to end-of-year reports. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal development and this has improved recently because of the development of sports days and meetings with a group of local schools, often hosted at Monks Risborough. Community links are very good. Apart from the very strong involvement with local primary schools, pupils from the secondary school as part of their course come to organise games with older pupils. The local farmer allows his field to be used for a cross-country track, parents run a swimming club at the school's pool during the summer holidays, and local sports clubs help with coaching. The hall is small for the large junior classes and, to a certain extent, constrains what can be taught indoors. There are good opportunities for extra-curricular sports activities that enrich the overall curriculum.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

142. At the end of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils' attainment is above average. It meets the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus in good depth. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make effective progress in religious education. Bilingual pupils also make good progress.
143. Year 2 pupils understand that just as they have special places and books, so too do different religions. They know that the Bible and church building are special to Christians as are the Torah and synagogue to the Jewish religion. They know the difference between the New and Old Testaments and stories from each, such as 'The Good Samaritan' and the story of Joseph and his many-coloured coat.
144. Year 6 pupils have a good knowledge about the major world religions and an understanding of their founders, festivals and places of worship. They have visited a synagogue and are very familiar with the local Christian church and customs of other religions, brought alive by visitors during 'RE Week'. Consequently, they show a good level of respect for faiths and beliefs that differ from their

own. Their understanding and knowledge of the Christian religion is strong as befits a church school. For example, they know about the forty days of Lent, the story of Jesus fasting in the wilderness and withstanding temptations, and that Christians use Lent to withstand their own temptations, such as eating chocolate.

145. Teaching and learning are good overall. During the inspection, teaching was very good and pupils learned very well in Years 1 and 2. It was good and pupils learned well in Years 3 to 6. In the very good teaching, teachers keep a very clear focus on the teaching points they wish to put across in the lesson, which they share with pupils. They use very interesting methods that captivate pupils' interest. For example, they tell stories in a dramatic way and use role-play successfully to help pupils remember the story and empathise with characters. They use questions very well to ensure pupils have understood the story and to draw out their perceptions of religious teaching. Teachers provide very good opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral and social awareness, through developing discussions to help pupils understand their own emotions and how to deal with them. For example, one boy in Year 2 explained Joseph's brothers probably felt like 'exploding in anger' when he swaggered round in his beautiful coat which led to a discussion of whether the brothers' treatment of him was justified or whether there was a better way to deal with feelings of jealousy. In Years 3 to 6, the teaching has many of these very good features but the pace of learning is slower because more time is spent by pupils on writing and illustrating what they have learned. Teachers show they value the religious teachings they present and consequently pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons are very good throughout the school.
146. The school has successfully introduced the new locally agreed syllabus. The diocesan board is developing assessment procedures to link with this and these will be introduced as soon as they are available. Currently, assessment procedures are informal and not fully effective in raising standards. Assembly themes, visits to places of worship, visitors during 'RE Week' and to assembly all enhance the weekly timetabled provision. For example, a recent visitor talked very movingly about the Jewish religion and the holocaust. Religious education supports the development of pupils' speaking, listening and literacy skills well and pupils' work is very well presented.