

INSPECTION REPORT

WESTCOTT CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL

Westcott, Aylesbury

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 110442

Headteacher: Mrs Georgina Elliott

Reporting inspector: Mrs Stephanie Lacey
3764

Dates of inspection: 4 – 5 November 2002

Inspection number: 247008

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 - 8
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	High Street Westcott Aylesbury Buckinghamshire
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Joe Pumphrey
Date of previous inspection:	19 and 26 – 28 January 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3764	Stephanie Lacey	Registered inspector	English, science, information and communication technology, design and technology, geography, history, music, religious education, equal opportunities, special educational needs and English as an additional language	The school's results and pupils' achievements, How well are pupils taught? How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? How well is the school led and managed?
9528	Derek Bowers	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
	Julia Lawson	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, mathematics, art and physical education	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Westcott Church of England School is a very small village school with 27 pupils on roll aged between four and seven. There is an even balance of boys and girls. Currently there are no children in the nursery year and two children in the reception year. All the pupils work in one class and this is divided for half of the sessions, when the part-time teacher is in school. Since the last inspection, Buckinghamshire has reorganised the age of transfer from First to Middle schools and there are no longer any Year 3 pupils, although the school is able to admit them. Pupils come from Westcott, Ashendon, Waddesdon and Aylesbury. Most pupils live in owner-occupied housing, with a few in local authority homes. No pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is clearly well below the national average. Almost all families have their cultural roots in the British Isles. One pupil speaks English as an additional language and is fluent in English. The school's assessment of children's attainment on entry to the reception year for the past few years is wide-ranging, but below average for Buckinghamshire. Two pupils are on the school's register of special educational need, which is below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Westcott is a good school with some very good features. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average and all pupils achieve well because of the consistently good teaching. The headteacher, supported effectively by a hard working staff and governor team, is committed to fostering the development of individual pupils within a caring Christian environment. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards have been high in national tests for several years.
- Teaching is good and ensures that pupils achieve well.
- Pupils are very positive about school and get on very well with each other.
- There is a strong Christian ethos fostering very good care for individual pupils.
- The staff and governor team work very well together in the best interests of the pupils.
- There is a very good partnership with parents.

What could be improved

- The amount of time devoted to creative, practical and physical activities.
- Strategic planning for the future work of the school.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good improvement overall since its last inspection in January 1998. Standards have risen considerably in national tests and for the last two years standards have been very high in reading and well above average in writing and mathematics. This improvement is partly due to consistently good teaching, which has been maintained well since the last inspection. The school has done well to win an achievement award from the Department of Education and Skills for this improvement and an 'Investors in People' Award for its work. Improvements in planning and assessing pupils' work, an area highlighted for development at the time of the last inspection, have also contributed to the rise in standards. The building, which was also identified for development by the last inspection, has been significantly improved by the addition of a new classroom. The school has made satisfactory progress on the third issue for improvement from four years ago, which was related to monitoring how well the school is doing. Currently informal procedures now provide a satisfactory way of checking on provision and outcomes. There is a strong and united staff and governor team who are committed to providing the best for the pupils and the school is in a good position to move forward further.

STANDARDS

Children make good progress in the reception year and by the time they enter Year 1 most pupils have reached the levels expected for their age. Pupils continue to make good progress as they move through Years 1 and 2. Consequently standards have been well above average in Year 2 national tests in writing and mathematics for the last two years. In reading, standards have been in the top five per cent of all schools. This represents very good improvement since the last inspection, when standards were broadly average. Some caution needs to be taken when comparing standards with the national average because when there are only a few pupils in a year group, as there are at Westcott, the performance of one or two pupils can have a huge impact on the percentage reaching expected or higher levels. This year, for example, standards are unlikely to be as high because of the special learning needs of a few pupils. The inspection found that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well within their capabilities because of good teaching and that standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils do particularly well in English and mathematics because of the strong emphasis on the development of pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy. Standards are not so high in science and other subjects. They are broadly average, as they were at the time of the last inspection.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are very positive about all aspects of school life.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils are sensible in lessons and respond well to the staff. They play happily with their friends at playtimes. All clearly know the difference between right and wrong.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils get on very well with each other and the staff. Older pupils particularly take on extra responsibilities, such as organising the music for assembly.
Attendance	Very good. Pupils' attendance is well above average and most arrive at school punctually.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2
Quality of teaching	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 is consistently good and ensures that pupils achieve well, particularly in English and mathematics. Strengths in the teaching include very good relationships between staff and pupils, very good management strategies, good support for individuals and small groups, good teamwork and a good concentration on teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Within the context of this strong teaching, areas for development include improving the relevance of some of the tasks planned and ensuring that pupils understand what they are learning and why.

The very good adult to pupil ratio enhances the quality of the teaching. This means that pupils often work in small groups with a teaching assistant or teacher. This has a particularly positive impact on the progress of children in the Foundation Stage and the pupils with special educational needs.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. Planning has improved since the last inspection and there is a broad curriculum in place. This is enhanced by a satisfactory range of visits and visitors. However, the timetable is not sufficiently balanced, with a high proportion of the time spent on work related to literacy and numeracy.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good overall. Pupils are well supported in class and consequently make good progress. The policy and some of the school's written procedures need updating in light of the new Code of Practice.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Only one pupil speaks English as an additional language. He is fluent and needs no extra support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. The school makes very good provision for pupils' moral and social development and this has had a very positive impact on pupils' attitudes and behaviour. It makes satisfactory provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development, with more work needed on planning regular opportunities for pupils to reflect on what they are doing and to learn about both Western and non-Western cultural traditions.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well overall. The school is a safe place for young children. Staff know the pupils well and monitor their progress carefully. Written records of the assessment of pupils' progress are improving and are now good.

The school has a very good partnership with parents, who are very supportive of all that the school does for their children. Considering the size of the school the parents raise a great deal of money for school funds.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher successfully leads a very committed and experienced staff team. There is a clear, shared and successful focus on raising standards. Management procedures are informal and generally work well. Some documentation needs updating.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are very supportive of the school and use their expertise to good effect. They visit the school regularly and have a clear view of the school's strengths. All significant statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory overall. The school's plan for improvement and development for the current year is quite complex and there are no clear and simple procedures for monitoring how well the school is moving forward, except in the area of pupil progress.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are used well. Good financial planning has ensured that the school is well staffed and equipped. The school makes very good use of the principles of best value in its spending decisions.

The school is very well staffed. All staff, including teachers, support assistants, secretary, lunchtime supervisors and cleaners make a very good contribution to the life of the school. The accommodation is very good and enhanced by a new classroom and very attractive grounds. Resources are satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>All parents feel that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school; • The teaching is good; • They are comfortable about approaching the school; • Their children are expected to work hard; • The school is well led and managed. <p>Most feel that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children make good progress; • Children have the right amount of homework; • The school works closely with parents; • The school is helping their child to become more mature. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of interesting activities outside lessons.

Half of the parents returned the questionnaire seeking their views and six attended a meeting held for them before the inspection.

The inspection endorses all parents' positive views about the school. It found that there was a satisfactory range of interesting activities outside lessons, such as visits connected with areas of study and visitors to the school. At the moment there are no clubs at lunchtime or after school. This is not unusual in an infant school, where many pupils are too tired by the end of the day to benefit from another activity.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 Standards have risen since the last inspection and for the last two years pupils' attainment in national tests has been very high in reading and well above average in writing and mathematics.

Starting school

2 Pupils achieve well from a low base of attainment on entry in to the reception class. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage towards achieving the early learning goals¹ in the six areas of learning². By the end of the reception year standards are average overall, with children above average in their personal and social development.

Standards in Year 2 national tests

3 Some caution needs to be taken in comparing the performance of pupils at Westcott with national standards. This is because the small numbers taking the tests makes statistical comparison tenuous. This year, for example, there is a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs, who are unlikely to reach the expected level 2.

4 Pupils achieve particularly well in reading. For the last two years standards have been in the top five per cent of all schools, with higher attaining pupils reaching high standards. Standards have been well above average in writing for many years and have risen to well above average for the last two years in mathematics. Higher attainers do not do so well in mathematics as they do in reading and writing. Generally girls have done better than boys, but again small numbers make gender comparisons spurious. In comparison with pupils from similar socio-economic backgrounds, pupils at Westcott do very much better in reading, better in writing and about the same in mathematics.

Reasons for improvement

5 Reasons for the rise in standards in national tests include:

- improved planning as a consequence of the adoption of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies;
- good levels of adult support;
- a focus on the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.

Inspection findings

The Foundation Stage

6 In lessons seen it was evident that children make very good progress in their social and emotional development, they respond well to the range of activities available and collaborate when sharing resources. Children enjoy writing and are beginning to read simple words. They explore the properties of shape and can identify numbers to ten. Children have good opportunity for role-play and for painting, designing and making and as a result they make good progress in their creative development. They make good progress in learning about the natural world through work in the school grounds. They use computers confidently. There

¹ Early learning goals establish expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage.

² The areas of learning are: personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development.

are fewer opportunities for children to develop their physical skills in outdoor play, but they work well with small tools, such as pencils and scissors.

Years 1 and 2

7 All pupils achieve consistently well because of good teaching and standards are above average overall. This represents good progress from starting school.

English

8 Standards are well above average in speaking and listening and above average in reading and writing. Pupils speak confidently in lessons and at playtimes. They express themselves clearly and use extended sentences. Pupils use their knowledge of sounds and word building well to help them to read. Most older pupils write very neatly in a joined and fluent style. Their use of punctuation and their spelling is better than many pupils of their age.

Mathematics

9 Standards are above average in mathematics, with pupils doing particularly well in their use and understanding of number. By the end of Year 2, for example, children solve addition and subtraction problems including money to 100. There was less evidence in their work of problem solving activities.

Science

10 Standards are average with most pupils reaching the levels expected for their age in their knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts. Pupils do not reach higher levels because they do not cover the work needed to reach a higher level of understanding. This is because all pupils are taught in one group, rather than being split by age as they are in English and mathematics. Pupils achieve well in investigational work and the school grounds are used effectively as a basis for work on life processes and living things.

Other subjects

11 In the session seen in history, pupils achieved the levels expected for their age. Their work suggests that they also reached standards expected for their age in design and technology, geography, information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education (RE). In art, some pupils achieved high standards in some aspects of the subject. There were no music or physical education lessons timetabled during the inspection, although conversations with pupils indicate that they have covered the work expected for their age. Pupils do not do as well in science and other subjects as they do in English and mathematics. This is because teaching time is focused on literacy and numeracy.

Higher attaining pupils' achievements

12 Higher attaining pupils achieve well, particularly in reading. They respond well to high levels of challenge, particularly in English and, to a lesser extent, in mathematics.

Achievements of pupils with special educational needs

13 The pupils with special educational needs are a little way behind their peers. However, they achieve well within their capabilities because of good focused support. They are making good progress towards the targets on their individual education plans.

Achievements of pupils learning English as an additional language

14 Only one pupil speaks English as an additional language. He is fluent and achieves as well as his peers in all subjects.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

15 This whole area has been maintained well since the last inspection. Pupils' attitudes to school, their personal development and the relationships they have with each other and with their teachers are very good. They respond well to the values promoted by the school and as a result all children have a positive learning experience. Standards have improved since the previous inspection because the school has worked hard to monitor pupil progress constantly in this area through discussions with children and parents and through on-going assessment.

Starting school

16 Children in reception establish good working habits and quickly settle into school routines, becoming happy and confident learners. They enjoy the activities and co-operate well.

Attitudes and behaviour

17 All pupils enjoy coming to school and are keen to learn. They have very good attitudes to their work and respond well to the high standards of teaching. Pupils are enthusiastic, well motivated and interested in their lessons showing sustained interest when working independently. They concentrate well, listen to their teachers and follow instructions carefully. This is because staff have established good routines in which all children know what is expected and how to respond. Pupils eagerly ask and answer questions, for example, they talk about the differences between living and non-living plants and demonstrate their mathematical calculations on the board. During 'circle time'³ children talk confidently about the things they like about themselves and are well supported by sensitive staff who skilfully encourage even the most timid of children to contribute. Pupils behave well in classrooms and at playtimes. They all clearly know the difference between right and wrong. There is no evidence of any bullying. There have been no exclusions for inappropriate behaviour in the last year.

Relationships

18 Relationships across the school are very good. Pupils relate well to adults in school. They are polite and courteous and there are warm and friendly relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils get on well with each other, they play co-operatively in the flower shop and listen carefully to the contributions of others during circle time.

Personal development

19 Pupils' personal development is very good. They develop confidence and maturity through a range of responsibilities throughout the school. Children talk enthusiastically about their classroom duties and all can describe some responsibility they have undertaken during their time at school. As a result children are gaining an increasing sense of personal responsibility. From reception, pupils take responsibility for collecting their own equipment and returning it after use and have opportunities to talk in front of the whole school during 'show and share' time.

Attendance

20 Pupils' attendance is very good. Pupils and their parents know the importance of regular attendance and consequently there are no unauthorised absences. Punctuality for almost all pupils is also very good.

³ 'Circle time' is when pupils sit in a circle to talk about their feelings and emotions.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

21 The quality of teaching is consistently good and this ensures that all pupils achieve well within their own capabilities and make good progress. In the lessons seen during the inspection, teaching was all of good quality. This positive picture has been maintained since the last inspection.

Strengths in the teaching

22 There are several strengths that underpin the teaching. These include:

- Very good relationships between staff and pupils. Staff obviously enjoy pupils' company and consequently pupils respond well to both teachers and learning support assistants.
- Very good management strategies. Staff have high expectations of pupils' good behaviour and as a result pupils are sensible and work hard. Staff enable pupils to develop good working habits and most pupils show good levels of independence in the way that they organise their equipment and move from one learning task to another.
- Good support for individuals and small groups. A very favourable staff pupil ratio means that there are good levels of support for individuals and small groups. The quality of the teaching at these times is good and helps pupils to move forward quickly.
- Good team work. Teachers and support staff work very closely together to plan sessions and in their work in classrooms and this ensures a consistent approach.
- Good concentration on teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Teachers plan work to extend pupils' literacy and numeracy skills very carefully.

Areas for development

23 Within the context of strong teaching there are some minor areas for development. These include:

- The relevance of some of the activities planned. In some instances the tasks planned to develop pupils' skills are not as purposeful as they might be. This is particularly the case in literacy sessions, where more opportunities could be taken to base work on good quality texts and to write for a real purpose, rather than to write disconnected sentences.
- Sharing the purpose of the session with the pupils. In some sessions teachers do not explain to the pupils what they are learning and why. This means that pupils are not able to evaluate how well they have done.

Teaching in the Foundation Stage

24 At the time of the inspection there were only two children in the reception year. They sometimes work with Years 1 and 2, sometimes with the part-time teacher and Year 1 pupils and sometimes in a very small group with a learning support assistant. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good. Children are well supported in small group teaching and staff make good use of their on-going assessments of what children can do to help them plan for their future learning. Staff have high expectations of what children can achieve. Children are confident when using simple tools for cutting and joining, for example, because adults encourage children to be independent.

Teaching in Years 1 and 2

25 There is a good balance between whole class teaching, group work and individual support, which is made possible by the good level of staffing. Teachers work with small groups for literacy and numeracy sessions for three mornings a week, for example. Consequently, pupils work on tasks well matched to their learning needs and move forward well. Teachers mark work regularly, but not always in relation to the particular objective for

the session. However reference is sometimes made in the marking to individual pupil's progress towards the objectives written on their literacy and numeracy books. This helps pupils to know how well they are doing.

Teaching of literacy and numeracy

26 The school has adopted both the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies as a basis for their planning for English and mathematics. Teachers plan well for the development of skills. This is evident in pupils' well-formed handwriting, for example, and in their competence with addition and subtraction. There is a strong emphasis on the teaching of phonics and this helps pupils in both reading and spelling. Teachers set individual targets for pupils, which are written on the front of their books. Good use is made of homework to help pupils to consolidate their skills. There is room for more links to be made with other subjects so that pupils can use and consolidate their skills in other areas of the curriculum.

Teaching of other subjects

27 Apart from English and mathematics, lessons were only seen in science, history and personal, social and health education during the inspection. These subjects were taught well and good use was made of the school's grounds in science, and pupils' own experiences in history, to move learning forward. Planning in other subjects shows that all pupils work on the same activity, with more expected of older pupils. Teachers plan for pupils to develop their ICT skills in other subjects, compiling graphs in mathematics, for example.

Teaching of pupils with special educational needs

28 The few pupils with special educational needs are supported well by teachers and support staff. The targets set for them are appropriate and work is planned carefully to help them to achieve these.

Teaching of higher attaining pupils

29 Higher attaining pupils are challenged effectively, both by skilful questioning and by appropriate learning tasks.

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

30 The school plans a sound, broad curriculum for pupils in the Foundation Stage, and in Years 1 and 2. It is based on a two-year rolling programme of topics and areas of study. It covers all the areas of learning for the Foundation Stage, all National Curriculum subjects and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education.

Improvements since the last inspection – the Foundation Stage

31 The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection and has worked hard to plan for a range of opportunities that are appropriately linked to the Foundation Stage curriculum. Good links are made between areas of learning which help children to reinforce their understanding through a range of activities. For example, children learn about plants through observations, collage work and through role-play in the flower shop. They make and read labels and use the computer to support their mathematical development. During the inspection limited opportunities were provided for children to use outdoor play equipment or engage in indoor physical activities.

Improvements since the last inspection – Years 1 and 2

32 The school has made satisfactory overall improvement in planning for work in different subjects since the last inspection, when this was found to be an area needing attention. Staff have adopted both the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies as a basis for work in

English and mathematics. They have used national guidance to plan successfully for all other subjects for the last two years. This has provided a broad curriculum.

33 The curriculum is not so well balanced. There is a sensible emphasis on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. However, this work usually takes the whole of the morning teaching session, with additional handwriting sessions in the afternoon. Science is taught in the morning session on one day a week. As a consequence, opportunities for pupils to develop their creative, practical and physical skills are limited. The school is concerned about this and plans to review the timetable and the variety of learning activities in order to redress the balance. There is more scope for linking work in English and mathematics with other subjects. Most physical education lessons take place outside, because the hall in the old building is not large enough for the whole class. These sessions are postponed in wet weather, which restricts the curriculum offered.

An inclusive curriculum

34 Staff take care that all pupils have the same opportunities, irrespective of ability or gender. Pupils with special educational needs follow the same curriculum as their peers, with extra support from staff when this is necessary. Staff have noted the different learning styles of boys and girls and take care not to disadvantage either in the way that work is planned.

Provision for pupils' personal development

35 The school has maintained its good provision for pupils' personal development since the last inspection. There is a good programme for personal, social and health education which incorporates sex education and attention to drug abuse. Some of this is covered effectively in science work and some in 'circle time'.

36 The very good provision for developing pupils' moral awareness and social skills is a strength of the school. Attention to this area of pupils' development underpins much of the work in classrooms and at playtimes. Staff provide very good role models for the pupils, who emulate their friendly and open manner. Staff provide clear guidance for pupils on the difference between right and wrong and have worked with the pupils to draw up some simple school rules. In lessons and at playtimes pupils are encouraged to work and play together and most do so very sensibly, taking turns and sharing equipment.

37 The school continues to make sound provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development. The school makes planned provision for pupils' spiritual development through the daily acts of collective worship. The school has good links with the church and the local minister is a regular visitor to school assemblies. Pupils' attention is drawn to spiritual matters by the outward signs and symbols in the school, such as the felt cross made by the pupils in the hall and the school creed. Planned provision for spiritual development is less systematic within lessons, although opportunities to help pupils to reflect on areas such as the wonder of creation are used well by staff when they occur. This was evident in a science session when pupils found a newt nestling by the front door.

38 In many respects provision for pupils' cultural development is good, particularly in relation to the special events organised, such as 'Book week' and the visit of an artist to school to work with the pupils on their drawing techniques. Music festivals also play a valuable part in helping pupils to understand about performance. Within the day-to-day curriculum there is less emphasis on using the work of artists and writers as a basis for work than in many schools. The school has worked on improving its teaching about non-Western cultures. An Indian lady visited the school, for example, to show the pupils how to wear a sari and poems and songs from non-British cultures are shared with the pupils. This aspect of cultural provision is satisfactory overall, with more systematic work needed on helping pupils to appreciate the wide range of cultures within the British Isles.

Activities outside lessons

39 During the year staff organise special events to enrich the curriculum or to provide a focus for classroom work. These include trips to places like Windsor Castle and the county museum. At lunch times the lunch-time supervisor has a short 'brain gym' session to help pupils to improve their physical co-ordination skills. At the moment there are no after school clubs, although at certain times of the year there are football and music clubs. A high proportion of parents felt that the range of activities out of lessons is limited. The inspection found that overall this area is satisfactory. There is a satisfactory range of interesting visits and visitors planned. There are a few clubs organised after school, but none are running at the moment.

Links with the community and local schools and colleges

40 The school has good links with the community and in particular the local church. Villagers are involved in special events and services, such as 'poetry day' and the Harvest and Christmas services. The school uses the local area for environmental work. There are satisfactory links with the local pre-school providers and children visit with their parents before they start school. Similarly the liaison between Westcott and pupils' next school ensures a smooth transfer, although, for some families who live outside the catchment area, uncertainty about a place at the receiving school makes the process more stressful. There are good links with Oxford Brookes University and students work in school as part of their school experience.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41 The school has maintained its very good provision for pupils' overall welfare since the last inspection and pupils are kept safe and secure. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress have improved and are now good.

Pupils' welfare

42 The procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are very good. They are based on the very warm, caring environment, which has been created by the staff who all know the children and their families well. Throughout the year there is very good monitoring and supervision and excellent sharing of information by all staff for the benefit of the children. All staff have been fully trained recently in child protection procedures and emergency first aid.

Supporting and monitoring behaviour and attendance

43 There is very good, consistent management of the children by all staff with discreet sharing of information. The good balance of rewards and sanctions is informed by the good records of pupils' achievements and the somewhat rarer incidents of unacceptable behaviour. Sensible behaviour rules are agreed and respected by the children. These are presented prominently on attractively prepared wall notices, which act as good reminders. In spite of the very good attendance the staff nevertheless monitor absences actively in close collaboration with the Education Welfare Officer.

Health and safety

44 Health and safety are given a high priority by governors who use their talents for the benefit of the school. Good use of the local authority expertise and guidance, including a recent full, professional inspection help to guide the school's own procedures and regular, rigorous inspections. All fire appliances and alarms, electrical and PE equipment are inspected regularly. The arrangements for supervision at playtimes and lunchtimes and the routines to manage illness and accidents are all very good. The procedures for collecting

pupils from the school bus in the morning and putting them on it again at the end of the day are satisfactory.

45 A range of effective assessment procedures have been introduced to record pupil attainment and to monitor their progress. In the Foundation Stage initial assessments help staff to plan appropriate work and are used effectively to monitor children's progress at the end of their reception year. Staff make very good use of their on-going observations to plan small group activities that meet the needs and interests of the reception child. As a result children make good progress in their early stages of school.

46 Throughout the school a series of tests are used to gain information about pupils' progress in English and mathematics. This information is used effectively by the school to identify weaknesses and to improve the standards achieved by pupils in literacy and numeracy. Assessment now forms an integral part of teachers' planning in English and mathematics and enables teachers to understand pupils prior attainment and to set work which is appropriately matched to their needs. Individual targets are set for all children in English and mathematics. They are clearly displayed and are known and understood by both children and their parents.

47 The school is in the process of updating its procedures for recording individual progress and uses diagnostic statements, which provide more detailed information about how pupils are achieving. There are good assessment procedures in place for English and mathematics. Good use is made of 'profile books', which relate work to national target levels in English and mathematics. Teachers assess pupils' progress in other subjects informally but have not yet completed written records for individual pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

Parents' views of the school

48 The partnership with parents is very good and has been maintained well since the last inspection. This was reflected in the very positive opinions expressed in the parents' meeting and questionnaires prior to the inspection. All parents feel that their children like school, that teaching is good, the school is well managed, the school expects the children to work hard and they would feel comfortable about approaching the school. High proportions of parents also feel that their children are making good progress, the school is helping their children to become more mature, there is good information on how their children are getting on, behaviour is good, the school works closely with parents and staff provide the right amount of homework. The inspectors support fully these positive views on these key aspects of school provision.

49 A minority of parents (thirty-eight percent) feel that the school does not provide an interesting range of activities out of lessons. The inspectors feel that there is an adequate range of activities outside lessons, such as visits out of school, and that these are enhanced by parental involvement. Clubs at lunchtime and after school are limited and there are none running at the moment. Further provision with only two teachers would be difficult and probably undesirable at the end of the school day for children of infant school ages.

The information provided by the school

50 The information for parents is of good quality. The prospectus and guidance booklets are presented well and contain information on key aspects of school life. These are supplemented by regular letters and newsletters and important information is reproduced on notice boards. The parents feel that the staff are always very willing to give them any additional information if requested. The school carries out assessments in English and

mathematics for all pupils each term and this information is shared with the parents at the next consultation evening.

51 The annual pupil reports are detailed and in previous years have included subject grades. The latest reports cover all subjects in good detail and include information on attendance and personal development. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved in discussions about their children's progress, but records are not always kept of these interviews. Parents are not sufficiently involved in the discussions about pupils' individual education plans.

Parents' support

52 Most parents give active support to their children at home. They listen to them reading and participate actively in the other homework assignments. They make good use of the reading records to track progress and communicate with teachers. Some parents give valuable support during the school day by participating in guided reading, information technology, games and organising the library. There are always volunteers to help supervise the children on trips. Parent governors were consulted during the preparation of the home-school agreement. This is included in the induction pack and almost all parents willingly sign and return them. The termly consultation evenings are very well attended and prove useful to parents. The very active Friends and Parents' Association works closely with staff to raise considerable funds. Given the small size of the school the parents are clearly very generous in their support for the activities organised by the Association.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

53 The headteacher has successfully developed a very strong team of staff and governors, who work hard to improve the provision for the pupils. All are committed to the school's mission statement which aims 'to provide a sound preparation for life in a stimulating learning environment' with 'Christian values central to the ethos of the school and its teaching'. The mission statement also emphasises that 'high standards are expected from everyone associated with the school' and again this is evident in pupils' achievement and behaviour and in the staff and governors' commitment. The good quality of this aspect of leadership has been recognised by the 'Investors in People' award, which the school received two years ago.

Improvement since the last inspection

54 As a consequence of this good leadership the school has moved forward well since the last inspection over four years ago. Standards have risen and there have been tremendous improvements made to the accommodation with the opening of a new classroom. Other areas identified for improvement have been tackled. These included planning for different subjects, which has improved and procedures for assessing how well pupils are progressing. These are now good. Procedures for monitoring how well the school is doing also needed attention. The school has worked on this and informal procedures are in place, although they are now satisfactory overall, they are not as focused as they could be.

The staff team

55 The headteacher gives a clear lead to the staff, while at the same time enabling both the teaching and non-teaching team to contribute fully to work in classrooms. All staff spend time planning together and discussing pupils' progress. Teaching staff effectively share responsibility for the management of work in different subjects. However too much responsibility is given to the nursery assistant to plan the work for young children and to assess their progress, this now requires further involvement from the teaching staff.

56 The headteacher takes responsibility for managing the provision for pupils with special educational needs. Very good use is made of support staff to provide individual and small group support for these pupils and there are good links with outside support agencies. Record keeping is satisfactory overall, but the policy has not been updated in light of the new Code of Practice and the Governor's Annual Report does not meet statutory requirements in relation to reporting about special educational needs work in the school.

57 The school has maintained a favourable staffing ratio since the previous inspection and their qualifications and experience meet the requirements of the curriculum. Support staff make a valuable contribution, especially to the work with children in the Foundation Stage and to pupils who have special educational needs. Staff regularly undertake training in areas appropriate to the needs of the school and the Nursery Assistant attends meetings to discuss and share ideas for the Foundation Stage. The school welcomes students from a local college and University and they make a valuable contribution to the school.

The work of the governors

58 The governors are committed to the school and are very supportive of the headteacher and staff. They use their varied expertise well to help the school, both in committees and full governor meetings. Most governors visit the school regularly and have a clear understanding of how it runs. They are clear about the strengths of the school, but are not so certain about the areas that need improvement. This is partly because the school is running well and areas for development are not immediately apparent and partly because the procedures for monitoring how well the school is doing are not sufficiently focused on the areas that the school is trying to improve. Most of the statutory responsibilities of the governors are met, with some omissions in relation to the school's prospectus and Annual Report to Parents. These include the terms of office of governors, information about next parent governor election, details of progress on action plan, national information about national statutory test results, pupil absence rates and where school leavers go after they leave.

Planning for the future

59 The school has quite a complex school development plan, which combines maintenance issues with priorities for improvement. It provides a satisfactory agenda for the school's work. However, it is not easy to tease out the main improvement priorities for the current year. Some school priorities, which are understood by staff and governors, are not itemised. These include the priority given to maintaining small teaching groups and the drive to raise numbers on roll.

Monitoring and evaluating how well the school is doing

60 At the moment informal procedures for monitoring the work of the school are providing a satisfactory basis for evaluating how well the school is moving forward. Staff and governors keep an overview of pupils' progress through discussing standards at regular governors' meetings. The quality of teaching is monitored jointly by the headteacher and part-time staff and the evaluation of this feeds well into performance management procedures. Different governors, such as the governor responsible for special educational needs, also visit the school to discuss their particular responsibilities with staff. There is not yet a clear enough focus on monitoring and evaluating the impact of new developments or initiatives on pupils' progress. There is no clear time frame for monitoring the different aspects of the school to provide a structure for discussions about school improvement.

Financial planning

61 Financial planning is good and matches the school's priorities for development. The headteacher and governors have planned skilfully in recent years to provide and maintain

good levels of staffing to maintain and improve standards. This has been achieved during a period of re-organisation of the primary school provision in the county. The current arrangements for transfer, with no guarantee of places in the linked school, affect Westcott's admission numbers. Governors feel that some parents are reluctant to send their children to Westcott if there is no guaranteed place at the next school. Uncertainty about the anticipated numbers joining the school makes it difficult to budget for the future. A high contingency fund is maintained to cushion the school against a possible fall in pupil numbers. However, the school has a high profile in local libraries, surgeries, nurseries and playgroups. There is also good coverage of school events and activities in the local newspaper.

62 The headteacher and governors have put considerable effort into the planning and financing of a new classroom. This has resulted in the construction of a very attractive, large, multi-purpose room, which is capable of housing all of the children for shared activities. This development has benefited significantly from the very good support of the Diocese and parents.

Principles of best value

63 Overall the principles of best value are applied well. The headteacher and governors actively seek additional income from local and national government grants. Valuable refurbishment of the older part of the school has been achieved through community service volunteers. Royal Ordnance personnel provided labour and resources to build the wildlife and pond area, with financial contributions from a large national chain store. A local RAF base helped with path maintenance. The Diocese is very supportive and the school has also received income from a national charitable foundation. For the size of school the Parents and Friends' Association raises considerable extra income in excess of £2000 a year.

64 Very good use is made of the cost-effective local authority contracts to provide essential services. The support for financial systems has been particularly useful. Efficient use has been made of the training budget by allocating a proportion to shared initiatives with other local schools. The school has also made effective use of small sums earmarked for supply cover for training and from the small schools fund for books for accelerated learning and raising boys' achievement. The headteacher closely analyses comparative data available from the county. There is a good degree of consultation between staff and governors in expenditure decisions.

Financial management and control

65 There are good procedures and practices in place for financial control and management. The accounts are in good order and managed well by the experienced administrator and headteacher. Governors and staff are kept well informed of expenditure details through the clear monthly summaries. The school makes very good use of its resources including specific grants. The good routines in place help the smooth running of the school and the administration provides very good support for staff, governors, pupils and parents. The staff are making good use of information technology to increase the efficiency of the management of the school.

Value for money

66 In spite of the high unit costs for a small school, the inspectors have concluded that the school is giving good value for money because of the good standards and progress, the good teaching and spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision.

Improvements in accommodation

67 The accommodation has improved since the last inspection. There is a new classroom, which is also used as a community room. The school has developed a library area and there are a sufficiently high number of fiction and information books. Classrooms and play areas

for children in the Foundation Stage are spacious and there is sufficient space for the curriculum to be taught effectively. There are good outdoor areas for this age group including grassed and paved areas. The hall is well used for nursery and reception children in the mornings, for whole school assemblies and eating at lunchtime. However, there is no use made of this space for indoor physical education and as a result all physical activity is taught outdoors. The lavatories have been redecorated but still need further refurbishment. The accommodation is kept very clean, warm and well cared for by the staff.

68 Levels of learning resources are adequate for most subjects of the curriculum with the exception of physical education. There are limited resources for the teaching of gymnastics and there is no fixed gymnastic equipment available in the school. Resources are good for children in the Foundation Stage and for the teaching of literacy and numeracy.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

69 In order to build on the many strengths of the school the headteacher, staff and governors need to:

Improve the balance of the curriculum by:

- reviewing the current timetable in order to provide more time for practical and creative activities;
- developing further links between English and mathematics and other subjects,
- ensuring that provision is made for regular physical education sessions.

(Reference paragraphs: 26, 33 and 124)

Improve the strategic planning for the school's future by:

- focusing on an appropriate number of improvement objectives each year and linking these closely to raising standards across the curriculum;
- developing a management plan that identifies a rolling programme of review and development for all areas of the school's work;
- developing a calendar for monitoring and evaluation.

(Reference paragraphs: 59 and 60)

The headteacher, staff and governors might like to consider the further minor issues for inclusion in their action plan:

- The annual governors' report to parents and the school's prospectus do not meet statutory requirements. *(Reference paragraphs: 56 and 58)*
- There is no teacher designated to lead the work in the Foundation Stage. *(Reference paragraph: 55)*
- The policy for work with pupils who have special educational needs updating in the light of the new Code of Practice. *(Reference paragraph: 56)*
- The partnership with the parents of pupils with special educational needs. *(Reference paragraph: 51)*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	10
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	12

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	0	10	0	0	0	0
Percentage	0	0	100	0	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. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents ten percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR- Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) <i>FTE means full-time equivalent.</i>	27
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0
Special educational needs	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	0
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Ethnic background of pupils**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	26	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	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	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	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 – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17
Average class size	27

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	34.5

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Financial information

Financial year	2001 - 2002
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	£
Total income	184,739
Total expenditure	149,470
Expenditure per pupil	6100.80
Balance brought forward from previous year	-262
Balance carried forward to next year	35,007

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0.1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0.1

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	26
Number of questionnaires returned	13

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	69	31	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	62	31	8	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	46	8	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	54	8	0	0
The teaching is good.	85	15	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	31	62	8	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	31	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	31	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	62	31	8	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	62	38	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	46	8	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	31	38	0	0

Percentages are rounded up or down to the nearest whole number and may therefore not total exactly 100.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

70 At the time of the inspection only two children had been admitted into the reception year and there were no children in the nursery. The school's assessments show that children start school with skills below those expected for children of this age. All children make good progress towards achieving the Early Learning Goals and by the end of their reception year their attainment is average overall. Children's personal, social and emotional development is above average. Children make good progress because staff support individuals through small group teaching, and use their on-going assessments of what children can do to help them to plan for their further learning. The school has made sound progress in this area since the last inspection and has worked hard to plan for a range of opportunities that are appropriately linked to the Foundation Stage curriculum. However, when working with older children the current reception children do not always have an appropriately planned curriculum and as a result they are unable to sustain interest in their work.

Personal, social and emotional development

71 Children make very good progress in this area and by the end of their reception year most children exceed the expectations for children of this age. Staff have worked hard to develop children's independence and to familiarise them with the daily routines. As a result children confidently make decisions about their learning and readily tidy away at the end of an activity. In the home corner children prepare for a flower shop, they label plants and agree prices, '201 is that pounds or pence?', 'It's pence, I'll change it'. During 'Free Choice Activities' children organise themselves into groups and collaborate very well by sharing equipment. They take responsibility for their activities by finding and selecting their own resources. During this time children respond well to the range of activities available and most sustain good levels of concentration.

72 Staff are caring and sensitive to the needs of young children. The teaching assistants use their time well to join in with children's activities and improve the learning that takes place. For example, children playing imaginatively were encouraged to develop their play by taking on different roles and when observing plants children were eager to contribute and offer explanations.

Communication, language and literacy

73 Children's speaking and listening are well developed and staff plan for a range of opportunities for extending their vocabulary. For example, when observing plants children are encouraged to describe the leaves and to make comparisons....'shiny and wet'. Children are making good progress in their reading. They link sounds to letters and are beginning to use this to read simple words. They make and read labels in creative play. Scrutiny of children's writing indicates good progress. By the end of their reception year children make good attempts at writing for themselves and use their knowledge of letters and their sounds to write simple words. They make good progress because the LSA plans for a range of activities to practise letter formation, such as textured material, chalk and boards and felt pens and paper. Children also benefit from working in small groups, which allows for individual attention and support.

Mathematical development

74 During 'Free Choice Activities' children have appropriate opportunities to explore the properties of shape by threading, making patterns and by drawing and cutting their own shapes. Children make good progress because the LSA uses her time well to discuss the features of their work and to introduce the relevant shape vocabulary.

75 When working with older children, reception children sometimes find it hard to concentrate during whole class sessions. This is because the work does not always relate to the Foundation Stage curriculum and does not therefore match the needs of the reception children. However, when engaged in small group activities with the LSA, reception children are able to identify numerals to ten and could match them to corresponding sets.

Knowledge and Understanding of the world

76 Children are making good progress towards reaching the Early Learning Goals in this area. Staff plan for a range of first hand experiences that help children to understand about living things. As a result children know that plants need water and sunshine to grow and make good use of their senses to compare living and non-living plants. Children show an interest in information, communication and technology. They enjoy using the computer and are developing their control over the mouse to operate simple counting games. There was limited evidence to support learning about the past or about cultures different from their own.

Physical Development

77 Overall children make satisfactory progress in this area. Reception children's outdoor play is limited to school play times and they share the playground with infant children. There is no outdoor play equipment available for their use during this time. Reception children would benefit from access to the good range of outdoor play equipment used by nursery children, (when there are any in school). There are limited opportunities for reception children to develop physically and this restricts the progress they make. Children make good progress in developing skills in handling small equipment. They are confident when using simple tools and show good levels of control. This is because children are provided with opportunities to explore equipment such as a hole puncher and scissors. Reception children manipulate tapes and adhesives to join materials together using a range of techniques.

Creative development

78 Children make good progress in this area because they have a range of well-planned activities that allows them to develop a variety of skills. Children design and make their own flowers from different types of materials. They attach stems and use a paste stick appropriately. Children use painting, printing and collage to respond to teacher directed stimulus. There was no opportunity for reception children to explore sand and water during the inspection.

79 A range of music is used during 'Free Choice Activity' for listening to and for indicating tidy up time. Children join in the specialist music sessions that were not seen during the inspection. Children's imagination is developed well through role-play where good links are made with other areas of learning. They re-pot plants in science, design and make flowers in art and sell these in the flower shop.

80 The present very small cohort of reception children and lack of nursery children this term makes it difficult for staff to provide a broad curriculum that meets the requirements of the Foundation Stage. The responsibility for planning an appropriate programme of work is left to the nursery assistant and this now requires further involvement from teaching staff to ensure that curriculum planning is more adequately matched to the needs of the reception child in all areas of the curriculum. Staff discuss current practice informally but there are no long-term plans for the further development of the Foundation Stage, to ensure that the good practice already introduced by the nursery assistant continues.

Strengths:

- *Work of the nursery assistant;*

- *improved use made of on-going assessment*
- *small group work*

Areas for development:

- *improve the opportunities for reception children to develop physically*
- *improve the support from teaching staff in the planning and further development of this area.*

ENGLISH

81 Standards have improved consistently since the last inspection with pupils doing particularly well in reading and higher attaining pupils reaching high standards. Standards in national tests have been very high in reading and well above average in writing for the last two years. This year standards in Year 2 are above average in speaking and listening, reading and writing. This slight fall does not mean that standards have slipped. In this particular year group, a few pupils with special learning needs mean that the overall profile is not so high. All pupils throughout the school, including those with special educational need and higher attaining pupils, achieve well because of the consistently good teaching. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls.

Reasons for improvement

82 There are several reasons for the good improvement since the last inspection. These include:

- improved planning as a consequence of the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy;
- an emphasis on the development of literacy skills, particularly spelling and handwriting;
- consistently good teaching by a stable teaching team;
- good levels of adult support;
- good support from home, particularly in reading.

Speaking and listening

83 Pupils throughout the school speak confidently, using more complex sentences as they become older. Pupils are encouraged to participate in class discussions, particularly in the introductory part of lessons. They do so with enthusiasm and listen carefully to what their friends have to say. Similarly in assembly pupils contribute by answering questions and speak clearly, so that all can hear. In some sessions pupils are asked to work in pairs and share ideas. Again, they manage this well. 'Circle time' provides another opportunity for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills. In these sessions all pupils contribute at some point and all listen sensibly to what other pupils have to say. There were examples seen during the inspection of pupils speaking at more length to a large audience, reading out their work. At the moment there is no long term planning framework for the development of speaking and listening skills. Consequently, opportunities to develop skills are not identified systematically. Drama is not planned regularly into the weekly timetable.

Reading

84 There are a number of factors that underlie pupils' good progress in reading. These include:

- a structured approach to teaching pupils about phonemes and letter sounds;
- regular work on other reading strategies, such as contextual understanding and segmenting words;
- regular opportunities for pupils to share books with adults.

Consequently, by the time that they leave the school most pupils are reading fluently. Pupils' fluency is not matched by their knowledge of good quality texts or their familiarity with the wide range of authors and illustrators who write and draw for pupils of this age. This is partly because books are not routinely used as a basis for work in the literacy hour and partly because at the time of the inspection there were no displays or book collections to draw pupils' attention to particular authors or genres. A book area is being developed in the new classroom and there is a comfortable fiction library in the hall. The non-fiction collection has been improved since the last inspection. It is housed in the small classroom to the side of the hall. Books are tidily arranged, but there is no chart to help pupils with their selection. Pupils in Year 2 are clear about the difference between fiction and non-fiction and know how to use a contents page and index to look for information. They enjoy reading, but few are very enthusiastic.

Writing

85 Pupils achieve good standards in writing because of the good attention paid to the development of pupils' handwriting, spelling and grammatical skills. Consequently by the time pupils leave the school most write in a neat, joined fluent style and handwriting standards are particularly high. They are taught spelling patterns in a systematic way. In a lesson seen, for example, pupils learnt and used the 'all', 'oi' and 'oy' sounds to build up words. Pupils learn a list of spellings each week to extend their list of known words and also use 'word' books well to help them to spell new words. Pupils practice their handwriting and spelling skills by making up short sentences to incorporate new words or sounds that they have learnt. Most use simple punctuation effectively. Pupils work hard at these tasks because of the high expectations of the staff. Sometimes pupils make class books, but overall pupils' work shows that there is not so much emphasis on writing for a purpose or for wider audience than the class teacher. Some opportunities are taken and this term pupils have written invitations for the harvest assembly, poetry for poetry day and thank you letters.

Teaching

86 Overall the teaching in this area is good and pupils achieve well as a result. The strengths lie in the good attention paid to the development of the skills associated with reading and writing. Teachers and staff have high expectations of pupils in these areas. Very good levels of adult support mean that pupils have the help that they need. Resources are used well and there is a very good range of materials to help pupils to develop their phonic knowledge. Teachers mark work carefully and give pupils pointers for improvement. This includes writing targets for pupils on the front of their exercise books. Areas for development within the teaching include more use of good quality texts as a basis for the work and more emphasis on writing that is lively and interesting.

87 Good management of this area of the curriculum has ensured that standards have risen since the last inspection. Staff work very closely together and use their informal discussions of what works well and what needs improving to feed into improvements in practice.

Strengths:

- *good teaching of skills associated with reading and writing;*
- *goods levels of support for individuals;*
- *consistent approach by all staff.*

Areas for development:

- *the use of good quality texts as a basis for the work;*
- *providing opportunities for pupils to write for a purpose and wider audience;*
- *improving the class book areas.*

MATHEMATICS

88 The current standards for pupils in Year 2 are above average. This reflects the positive trend in standards since the last inspection. This improvement is due to good teaching, with teachers assessing pupils' skills and understanding effectively to plan the next step. The favourable teacher-pupil ratio means that all children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and are provided with the necessary individual support. Boys and girls do equally well. Higher attainers are challenged effectively. The school uses its analysis of previous test results to identify future areas for development and this has had a positive impact on the standards achieved by pupils in Year 2.

89 Pupils develop their numeracy skills well. By the end of their infant years children solve addition and subtraction problems including money to 100. They show a good understanding of numbers to 100 because there are well-planned opportunities for children to practise and consolidate their learning during class work. Children recognise number patterns when adding 2 and identify odd and even numbers. However, scrutiny of work shows little evidence of children using this knowledge to solve simple problems or puzzles.

90 In Year 1 children add confidently to 20 by making their own number sentences using dice and dominoes. All children use and understand appropriate vocabulary such as 'add, plus, equals, makes' and use their knowledge of terms 'shared, more, less' when calculating. This good level of understanding is a result of all teachers introducing and consistently using the correct terminology throughout lessons. Children name and identify some properties of 2 and 3 dimensional shapes but are less secure in their understanding of measures and space. Children would benefit from more planned opportunities to estimate, measure and compare different lengths, masses and capacities.

91 All children appear to enjoy mathematics, they are attentive and eager to contribute during whole class sessions. When working individually, children are quiet and well focused, they sustain good levels of concentration and are willing to share and talk about their work.

92 The quality of teaching is good, teachers plan their work well to ensure that it is appropriately matched to children's prior attainment. During whole class input the quick pace of lesson maintains interest and helps children to develop their understanding. Teachers display good subject knowledge and use questions effectively to probe and challenge individuals and good use is made of other staff to support children with special educational needs. During the inspection the purpose of the lesson was not shared with children, as a result there were missed opportunities during plenary sessions to identify the progress made towards these objectives. Some opportunities are taken to develop pupils' mathematical skills in other subjects, but there is scope for further work here.

93 The management and leadership of mathematics is satisfactory. Further developments in the monitoring of teachers' plans will ensure a more appropriate emphasis on the more practical aspects of mathematics. The school now needs to formulate a more detailed action plan, which identifies targets for further improvement of this subject.

Strengths:

- use made of on-going assessment
- use made of teachers' time to provide support for individuals
- support provided for children with special educational needs.
-

Areas for development:

- increase the time allocated to space, shape and measures
- further develop cross-curricular links

- further develop the long term plans for this subject to ensure that standards are maintained

SCIENCE

94 Standards are broadly average, with most pupils reaching the levels expected for their age in all areas of science. Few are doing better than this. This is because pupils are not split into two groups as they are for English and mathematics and all work on the same learning task. Higher attainers are challenged by higher expectations of their recorded work and they achieve well, but currently they are not covering the work that they would need to in order to reach a higher level. Standards have risen since the last inspection, with a fall back last year in the percentage reaching the higher level 3.

95 In the lesson seen pupils were engaged in an investigative task. They worked in small groups to find and identify mini-beasts and small creatures in the school grounds. They worked very sensibly on this task, remembering what they had already learnt about caring for the environment. They successfully found and identified woodlice, beetles, earthworms, centipedes and a newt. They recorded their findings, some using a simple chart. This term pupils are learning about themselves. They have written about their own personal features and used their measuring skills to record details about the length of their hands. They have undertaken some work on the five senses and most recall what these are. Pupils record their work in a similar way, with more expected of older pupils.

96 Teaching in this area is consistently good and pupils achieve well. Good attention is paid in planning to all aspects of science and work on investigations and is skilfully woven into the work about life processes, materials and physical processes. Within the constraints of teaching three-year groups in one class, teachers provide challenge for higher attaining pupils by expecting more of them and provide more support for the younger children. Worksheets are used well to help pupils to record their findings in an organised way. Links are made with mathematics through measuring activities. All these positive features were evident in the lesson seen, although this could have been improved by sharing the learning objectives with the pupils at the start.

97 Planning has improved since the last inspection and the school has adopted national guidelines, which are supplemented by a published scheme. The local environment is used well and the school grounds provide a rich scientific resource.

Strengths:

- *Good attention paid to investigative work;*
- *Use of the school grounds.*

Areas for development:

- *Work planned for higher attaining pupils;*

ART AND DESIGN

98 There were no art lessons observed during the inspection. Judgements have been based on analysis of children's work, teachers' plans and displays. By the end of key stage 1 standards in art are generally in line with national averages. These standards have been maintained since the previous inspection and all pupils now make good progress. The school has an improved plan for the teaching of art based on national guidance, which provides children with a more balanced programme. Children's participation in competitions and exhibitions and the impact of a visit from a local artist have also helped children to make good progress in this area.

99 Children in Year 2 have mixed their own colours to paint portraits of themselves and have decorated picture frames. Their observational drawings show high standards of attainment, children have produced detailed pictures and have explored the effects of a range of different media. In Year 1, children use collage materials to design and make flowers they roll paper and attach petals and stalks using different methods. Children are starting to use sketch books to explore and share their ideas with others. They evaluate their own work and that of others by suggesting changes and improvements that could be made. The school has good systems for assessing and recording pupils' progress in art, which have yet to be implemented.

100 Previous work shows that children are introduced to a range of techniques such as printing, painting and collage to express their imaginative ideas. The school is beginning to integrate art into other areas of the curriculum. For example, children reinforce their observational work in science by drawing detailed plants, they design and make stained glass windows and make flowers for the school shop. Children's work and teachers' plans did not show how children learn about the work of famous artists, crafts people and designers or how children's work is influenced by their techniques. Staff talked about work from last year based on Andy Goldsworthy's techniques and explained that local crafts people, such as a spinner, have visited the school. There was no evidence of children exploring art from other cultures.

101 The school has worked hard to improve the teaching of art since the last inspection. There are improvements in the planning for art and, as a result, children have an improved range of opportunity to explore and develop their ideas. Opportunities are taken for pupils to express themselves by participating in competitions. The school now needs to develop a planned programme for the continued development of art to ensure standards are maintained and improved.

Strengths:

- *improved planning which allows for a more balanced programme in art*
- *participation in competitions and exhibitions and visit from local artist*

Areas for development:

- *children's awareness of the work of famous artists, craftspeople and designers*
- *long term plans for the development of this subject*

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

102 No lessons were timetabled during the inspection, but pupils' work indicates that standards are broadly in line with those expected for pupils of this age. The school has maintained these standards since the last inspection. Some work of high quality has been undertaken since the last inspection. The millennium hanging made two years ago, is a very good example of this. Planning for work in this subject has improved with the adoption of national guidelines. Much of the work is linked closely to 'topics' and this helps pupils to become fully involved in an area of study. Last term, for example, pupils visited Aylesbury to see the Queen on her jubilee tour. Subsequently they made crowns from paper, card and cotton wool, joining the materials with glue. They recorded their work by photographing each other wearing their crowns with a digital camera.

103 Pupils' work shows that they are developing making skills effectively. In the work seen pupils have good opportunities to join materials together using glue. This was evident not only in their crowns, but in paper plates used to make collage faces and in their picture

frames. There was some evidence of other joining material used, such as a book made to record work on the felt cross.

104 Pupils also have opportunities to plan and design their work. This was evident in the design for a coat, which was started on the computer, translated into a crayoned design and then made up as a fabric collage. Finally pupils made their coats, which had been designed for a favourite toy. The whole project was celebrated in an assembly that pupils presented to their parents.

105 Good emphasis is given to food technology, especially in relation to healthy eating. Staff have compiled a very good recipe book to support the work. This includes recipes and photographs of pupils making various dishes, including scrambled egg on toast, egg mayonnaise and cress sandwiches.

106 Although no teaching was seen, pupils' achievements and the work planned suggest that the quality of teaching is at least sound. At the moment staff keep records of activities that pupils have worked on, but there is no written assessment of pupils' skills. The introduction of this type of assessment is planned for the current year.

Strengths:

- *links with other subjects;*
- *work on food technology.*

Areas for development:

- *assessment of pupils' skills.*

GEOGRAPHY

107 No lessons were timetabled during the inspection, but pupils' work indicates that standards are broadly average and have been maintained since the last inspection. Planning has improved with the adoption of national guidelines. However, in alternate years pupils only spend one term on a geography-based topic and this makes it more difficult for them to develop skills systematically because of the long gap.

108 Their work shows a good concentration on the development of map work skills based on their own experiences. Pupils draw their own houses, for example, labelled with their own address. They draw pictorial maps and use picture symbols to represent different features, accompanying the maps with a key. They learn the points of the compass. Teachers reinforce and extend pupils' understanding in this area by displaying maps of the British Isles in the classroom, for example. Records of 'Barnaby Bear's' travels around the world also help pupils to develop a sense of place.

109 Pupils' work indicates that the teaching is sound. Planning is satisfactory, with more scope for extending the older, more able pupils. Currently all pupils undertake the same tasks, with younger pupils receiving more adult support to record what they have learnt. There is an expectation that older pupils complete more, but not necessarily more challenging work than the younger ones. Teachers keep records of tasks undertaken and are working towards introducing a sheet this year to record the skills that individual pupils have acquired. Resources are satisfactory overall and are well-organised.

Strengths:

- *attention to developing map work skills.*

Areas for development:

- *more regular 'blocks' of geography work through the year;*
- *assessment.*

HISTORY

110 Standards are broadly average and have been maintained since the last inspection. There have been improvements to planning with the adoption of national guidance as a basis for work on different historical topics. The school building has also been enhanced to provide an excellent resource for learning about the past. One small room has been made into a museum and contains a range of interesting materials including collections of domestic artefacts, school log books and information about the local area. Photographs of the school and its pupils since 1881 are displayed in the school entrance lobby and serve as a permanent reminder to pupils about the past.

111 Much of the work planned is based on pupils' own experiences and interests and is planned well to enable pupils to develop historical enquiry skills. In the session seen, for example, pupils worked with photographs of their own families to come to some understanding about the passage of time and the relationships between different generations. Most were clear about the relative age of their different family members and older pupils began to work on designing their family trees. Most found it hard to explain the meaning of the term 'generation', but were confident with other chronological terms, such as 'older' and 'younger'. More was expected of older pupils in terms of recording, although all pupils worked on the same task.

112 Visits are used well to enhance work in this area. The recent visit of the Queen to Aylesbury was the starting point for work on the monarchy, for example. This included work on the coronation, as well as learning about the life of the Queen Mother.

113 Teaching in the lesson seen was good and pupils achieved well because of the interesting task planned and the good levels of adult support. As in other foundation subjects, a new assessment proforma is being adapted this year and will record useful information about the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. In planning links are made with other subjects, especially art, with more scope for further links with literacy, especially in relation to the use of texts.

Strengths:

- *resources – especially the museum;*
- *use of trips.*

Areas for development:

- *links with literacy;*
- *assessment.*

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

114 Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and pupils reached levels expected for their age in the limited amount of work seen. Planning has improved since the last inspection, with teachers basing work on national guidance. Generally pupils work on computers individually or in pairs. There are whole class lessons as an introduction to new topics.

115 One of the classroom assistants works with pupils on the development of ICT skills. In the session seen, Year 2 pupils successfully formatted, printed and saved their work. They used the mouse confidently to locate the cursor at different points in the text and the full

range of editing keys to amend, add, punctuate and lay out the text. Good use was made of the preview option to check the overall layout, including portrait and landscape orientation. Work samples and staff evaluations show that even the youngest pupils have good mouse control. Recently pupils have worked on similar tasks at their own level, with older pupils including more detail. This work has involved pupils taking digital photographs of themselves, assembling a self portrait using 'My World' faces and including a descriptive word processed caption. Sometimes pupils word process their work, and in one numeracy lesson seen, Year 1 pupils used a computer game to help them to recognise numbers to 10. Their work shows that they have used computers to generate block graphs, pie charts and pictograms. There is even more scope for using ICT to enhance and develop work in other subjects.

116 In the session seen the teaching was good. There were clear objectives for the session and the pupils were supported well by the teaching assistant and made rapid gains in learning. The assistant has a regular time for supporting individuals and small groups in this way, but pupils do not necessarily work on computers on a weekly basis. Opportunities are not always taken in lessons for pupils to use computers to develop skills. Staff are developing a useful assessment profile for pupils, which gives all staff an overview of pupils' progress.

117 The school has an adequate number of computers for the pupils and the construction of the new classroom has provided more space for a small computer area. Staff have gained in confidence since the last inspection and offer pupils effective support.

Strengths:

- *contribution of teaching assistant to pupils' skills development.*

Areas for development:

- *use of ICT in other subjects.*

MUSIC

118 There were no lessons timetabled during the inspection and so it was not possible to make a judgement on teaching in this area. Pupils' singing in assembly indicates that they reach the levels expected for their age in this aspect. A specialist music teacher works with pupils for one session a week. This good provision has been maintained since the last inspection.

119 In conversation with Year 2 pupils it is clear that they are enthusiastic about music. All Year 2 pupils learn to play the recorder and are proud that they can play 'a' and 'b'. They also make up their own compositions and work displayed in the hall shows that they are beginning to use standard notation. Pupils practise their singing and performing skills in the daily assemblies. They sing tunefully to taped music and are building up a repertoire of songs and hymns. Assemblies also provide good opportunities for pupils to hear the work of famous composers. Staff take care to select from a range of music and this is now more representative of a range of cultures than it was at the time of the last inspection.

120 Productions provide good opportunities for pupils to perform and the annual Christmas production is a highlight of the school year. Assemblies for parents also act as a vehicle for pupil performance and in a video seen of one assembly, pupils sang a song about Joseph's Technicolor dream coat very tunefully.

Strengths:

- *work of specialist music teacher.*

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

121 There were no lessons in physical education during the inspection. Judgements have been based on analysis of teachers' plans, discussion with the subject manager and by talking to children. By the end of the infant years standards are broadly in line with national averages and are similar to those found in the last inspection. Teachers' long-term plans indicate satisfactory coverage of the requirements for physical education. There are assessment procedures for recording children's progress in this area, but these are still to be implemented. The school has started to implement guidance and uses 'Top Sport' to provide ideas for games. Extra-curricular activities with outside experts and the introduction of lunchtime activities have improved the opportunities offered to children since the last inspection.

122 Children are developing an awareness of fitness and health, they understand the need to warm up before exercise and can make suggestions about the changes that take place in their bodies, 'get tired, sweaty, heart beats fast'. They improve their throwing and catching skills by aiming balls at targets and improve the speed and accuracy of their throws through circle games. Children in both year groups enjoy participating in competitive games.

123 Children are taught traditional dancing which they perform to parents but there was no further evidence of children participating in dance activities that enable them to explore moods and feelings and respond imaginatively to music.

124 There are no arrangements for the teaching of physical education indoors and there is no fixed gymnastic equipment. As a result children are restricted in the range of skills and actions that they can perform in gymnastics and can only participate in physical activity when weather conditions are favourable.

125 Children are starting to evaluate their own performance and that of others by observing other children's work and by modelling their actions. However, there is no information with regard to the progress made by children in this area or for the schools plans to improve standards in physical education. The school now needs to develop a planned teaching programme that ensures children receive a broad and balanced curriculum in physical education.

Areas for development:

- *provide regular PE lessons using both the indoor and outdoor environments*
- *ensure that children receive a balanced programme for the teaching and learning of all aspects of PE*
- *improve assessment procedures*
- *long term plans for the development of this subject*
- *improve the resources for gymnastics*

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

126 No lessons were timetabled during the inspection. Based on the very limited evidence from pupils' work and conversations with pupils, standards are broadly in line with the expectations of the local agreed syllabus in relation to pupils' understanding of and knowledge about Christianity, with little evidence of work related to other religions. This is a similar picture to that at the time of the last inspection.

127 Pupils' written work shows attention paid to the major Christian festivals, such as harvest and Christmas. Harvest, particularly is used a focus for pupils to write their own prayers. Pupils also learn about the life of Christ. Their work shows, for example, that they have heard about the story of blind Bartimaeus. There is not so much evidence of learning about other religions and Year 2 pupils have little recall of work undertaken, although teachers' plans make reference to work on Judaism. In a more general sense pupils have the opportunity to reflect on people and places that are special to them and tackle this well.

128 From time to time religious education forms the basis for extended projects. Pupils made a very fine wall-hanging, for example, to celebrate the millennium and a book was put together to record the construction. This records that 'Jacobs' wool fleece has been used to represent the Lamb of God. Pieces of coloured felt have been individually designed and made for the cross. Flowers illustrate the parable of the sower.

129 Teachers' planning indicates that the quality of teaching is at least satisfactory and that an appropriate curriculum is covered. Pupils' work indicates that all work on the same task, irrespective of age or ability, but with more expected of older pupils.

Strengths:

- *'special projects';*

Areas for development:

- *attention given to religions other than Christianity.*