

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MARY'S CE VC INFANT SCHOOL

Witney, Oxfordshire

LEA area: Oxford

Unique reference number: 123137

Headteacher: Mrs V Taylor

Reporting inspector: Ms A Coyle
20603

Dates of inspection: 26 - 28 February 2001

Inspection number: 197381

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 - 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Church Green Witney Oxon
Postcode:	OX8 6AZ
Telephone number:	01993 702387
Fax number:	N/A
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs H Bridge
Date of previous inspection:	September 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20603	Ms A Coyle	Registered inspector	English Art and design Information and communication technology Music Physical education Foundation Stage	How high are the standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
11096	Ms M Davie	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
30705	Mr G Stephens	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Design and technology Geography History Religious education Special educational needs Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular, and other opportunities, offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Mary's CE VC Infant School is situated in the market town of Witney, Oxfordshire. It serves the surrounding catchment area, which mainly consists of families from privately owned properties. The number of pupils on roll is slightly higher than it was when it was last inspected, in 1997; there are currently 85 girls and boys in the school. Children under five are admitted to the early years' unit on a part-time basis, at the beginning of the year in which they are five. There are currently 31 children in the school who are five years old, and under. Attainment on entry varies, but is average overall. There are very few pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds and only eight are known to be eligible for free school meals which is much lower than the national average. The school has 18 pupils on the register of special educational needs, which is similar to the national figure, but no pupils have statements for their needs.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school in which pupils achieve above the nationally expected standards by the time they leave at the end of Year 2. It provides a warm, welcoming and caring learning environment for its pupils where they are taught by a hard-working team of dedicated staff. The school is managed effectively by the headteacher and governing body who promote a Christian, family ethos, and ensure that sound value for money is provided.

What the school does well

- Good standards are achieved by pupils in speaking and listening, reading, writing, mathematics, science, art and design, design and technology, information and communication technology, geography, history, music, physical education and religious education.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to school. They behave very well and their personal development is very good.
- The quality of teaching is very good at Key Stage 1 and basic skills are taught very well. The teaching of music is very good overall, and sometimes excellent.
- A good curriculum is provided for pupils at Key Stage 1, including provision for personal, health and social education, and there are strong links with the local community.
- The school provides very well for pupils' moral and social development. Spiritual development is good.
- The school cares well for the pupils in its care. The procedures for promoting good behaviour are very good.

What could be improved

- The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is not focused enough on the Early Learning Goals.
- Management does not include sufficient monitoring of teaching and the governing body does not act as a critical friend to the school or make sure that the statutory requirements are met fully in the governors' report to parents.
- The school development plan is not sufficiently linked to the financial planning to provide a strategic vision for the future.
- The policy and practice for ensuring equality of opportunity have not been updated recently.

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 satisfactory improvement since it was last inspected in September 1997. The role of the subject co-ordinators has been improved to a satisfactory level and staff now have sufficient knowledge of the areas they manage. They contribute effectively to the school development plan, but their monitoring roles are not fully developed. Some improvements have been made to the assessment and recording of pupils' work, but these are still being developed for the foundation subjects. The school development plan has been extended sufficiently, but the financial planning is not yet well linked to provide a strategic view of future improvements.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
Reading	A	A	A	B
Writing	A	C	C	D
Mathematics	D	C	C	D

Key

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

Pupils have consistently attained well above average standards in the National Curriculum tests for reading at the end of Year 2 over the last three years when compared to the national results and those of similar schools, except in 2000 where they were slightly lower compared to similar schools. In writing and mathematics, trends show that standards have been fairly consistent, with slightly lower than average standards achieved last year compared to similar schools. Currently, pupils make good progress and achieve good standards in English, mathematics, science, art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music, physical education and religious education.¹ The school has set sufficiently challenging targets for the future, which it is on line to achieve, and is maintaining the good standards reported at the last inspection. In particular, clear targets have been devised to help the pupils achieve high standards in writing. Children under five in the early years' unit achieve appropriate standards in all areas of learning.²

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

¹ ON LEVELS

By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are expected to attain Level 2 in all National Curriculum subjects. Those who achieve Level 3 are therefore attaining above nationally expected levels.

² ON EARLY LEARNING GOALS

From September 2000, QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority), have introduced a set of 'Early Learning Goals for children's learning'. These goals are a set of skills, knowledge and understanding that children might be expected to achieve by the age of six in the areas of learning: language, literacy and communication; mathematics; knowledge and understanding of the world; creative development; physical development and personal, social and emotional development.

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are keen to do well and show great interest in their work. They have sensible attitudes to learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are very well behaved in lessons and at playtimes.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils relate very well to each other and are willing to take on responsibilities.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Pupils are keen to attend school and arrive punctually, but the level of unauthorised absence has increased due to families taking holidays during term time.

Pupils' very good attitudes, behaviour and personal development are strengths.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 6 years	aged 6-7 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Very good

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

The quality of teaching is very good at Key Stage 1 and sound in the Foundation Stage, with good features. It is sometimes excellent in music. In the lessons observed 96 per cent of teaching was satisfactory, or better; four per cent was excellent, 38 per cent was very good and 42 per cent was good. The quality of teaching in English, mathematics, art and music is notably strong, and literacy and numeracy skills are taught well; this enables all pupils to make good gains in their learning of all subjects.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is suitably broad and balanced, and includes all of the subjects of the National Curriculum. However, the curricular provision for children in the Foundation Stage is not sufficiently linked to the Early Learning Goals.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory with good features. Pupils are identified early and given specific targets relating to their needs. Individual education plans are written carefully.
Provision for pupils who learn English as an additional language	Satisfactory. Pupils are integrated well and supported effectively by staff.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes good provision overall for pupils' personal development. Moral and social development are especially well promoted.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school provides a warm, welcoming and caring Christian environment in which there are very good procedures for promoting good behaviour.

A well-balanced curriculum is offered at Key Stage 1 that fully meets the requirements of the National Curriculum, and the agreed syllabus for religious education. There are a few opportunities for pupils to become involved in extra-curricular musical activities, but the curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is not developed fully. The school has good partnerships with parents and carers. The school's policy for ensuring equality of opportunity has not been updated since 1997 and this occasionally leads to instances of exclusive practice.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides effective leadership to her colleagues and is appropriately supported by the governing body and subject co-ordinators. However, monitoring procedures are not fully developed for checking the quality of teaching and learning.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors mainly fulfil their roles effectively. Some individual governors are actively involved in the life of the school and offer good support. However, the governing body does not act as a critical friend and the statutory requirements are not met fully to provide the required information to parents in its annual report.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school evaluates much of its work satisfactorily and uses the information effectively to identify further developments on a day-to-day basis, but the school development plan is not detailed enough or linked effectively to spending decisions.
The strategic use of resources	The teaching and support staff are deployed effectively and the school makes good use of its resources.

The school is staffed by a good team of teachers and support assistants who are dedicated to the education of the pupils.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents particularly like the welcoming atmosphere of the school and the friendly approachable staff. They expressed the view that their 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A few parents would like their children to have more homework and more extra-curricular activities.

children make good progress.	
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Inspectors support most of the above views held by parents, but find that the amount of homework and the number of extra-curricular activities provided are satisfactory for the age and ability of the pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Overall, the school has maintained the standards achieved by pupils since the previous inspection in 1997. The oldest pupils in the school currently achieve good standards in all subjects of the curriculum.
2. Children enter the early years' unit on a part-time basis at the beginning of the year in which they five. The entry assessments conducted within the first few weeks of the autumn term indicate that children's competence with language and mathematics matches that expected for their age. They make sound progress overall and achieve many of the goals expected, by the time they complete the Foundation Stage.
3. The results of the standardised tests in reading for 2000 show that a well above average percentage of pupils attained the expected Level 2, at 94 per cent, whilst an average 31 per cent achieved the higher Level 3. In writing, standards were above average, with 91 per cent achieving Level 2 and an above average 16 per cent achieving the higher Level 3. Speaking and listening skills were high in the standardised tests; 97 per cent achieved Level 2 which is well above the national average, and an average 25 per cent achieved the higher Level 3. Trends show that over the last four years the performance of pupils in Year 2 was generally well above the national average in reading and average in writing, with no significant differences in the achievement of boys and girls. However, the school recognised the need to promote pupils' writing skills and has set appropriate targets to improve the standards of the most able pupils in writing, especially. The current inspection findings show that overall standards are now above those expected for the oldest pupils in Year 2 in reading, writing and speaking and listening. Progress is good, and literacy skills are well promoted throughout the school.
4. The results of the mathematics tests in 2000 show that the percentage of pupils attaining the expected Level 2 was in line with the national average for all schools, similar to the last inspection, but below when compared to similar schools. The percentage of pupils attaining higher levels was below the national average. Taking the last four years into account, the pupils' performance has improved in successive years against the national average. There is little difference between the performance of boys and girls. The current inspection findings show that by the age of seven, the majority of pupils attain standards that are good overall. Throughout the school, numeracy skills are developed well and pupils make good progress.
5. In science, the results of the 2000 teachers' assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 were in line with the national average, with 91 per cent of pupils achieving Level 2 and 19 per cent achieving the higher Level 3. The current inspection findings show that standards have improved since the school was last inspected. Standards are now generally good and pupils make good progress. There is no significant difference in the attainment of girls and boys and pupils.
6. Standards in information technology are above those expected by the time pupils reach Year 2. Pupils have good knowledge and understanding of computers. They are able to enter, amend, save and retrieve information without help, and know how to change the style, colour and size of text and print. They are developing good technical skills when using the equipment.

7. Standards in all other subjects of the curriculum are good. The school works hard to promote pupils' learning through good cross-curricular links with other subjects, such as English and history, and basic skills in literacy and numeracy are taught well. The good standards achieved by pupils in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music, physical education and religious education are a credit to the school.
8. Progress is good overall. From the time children enter the early years' unit, they are taught to build effectively on their skills. Pupils' academic progress is maintained as they move through Key Stage 1. It is notably good in art and music. Pupils with special educational needs generally make satisfactory progress. Individual education plans are used well to help pupils to progress in relation to their individual targets. The few pupils who learn English as an additional language also make satisfactory progress and are integrated effectively into school life.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are very good. Pupils of all ages are keen to come to school and are enthusiastic about learning. They listen to their teachers carefully, follow instructions very well and work hard to improve their skills. This is a strength of the school. The good pace of many lessons ensures that their interest is maintained. This was evident in a Year 2 literacy lesson focusing on poetry when, the excellent pace of the lesson combined with the teacher's very high expectations meant that children were keen to participate. During the plenary or summing up session at the end of the lesson they also showed how much they value each other's hard work by clapping their approval as they listened to one another read out their poems.
10. Behaviour in classrooms and around the school is very good and makes a significant contribution to how well pupils achieve. All parents who replied to the pre-inspection questionnaire agree that behaviour is good and rightly feel that discipline is given a high priority. The very small number of children in the early years unit who are still learning to come to terms with the required expectations of behaviour are getting extra adult support as they occasionally have difficulty focusing on required tasks. This is particularly evident when there are periods of inactivity such as waiting their turn to use the apparatus in physical education lessons and means that they are not always learning as much as they should. Lunchtimes are orderly and civilised. Pupils are aware of the routines and know what they are supposed to do. They are lively and happy when playing outside and there is no evidence of bullying. There have been no exclusions.
11. Relationships are very good between adults and pupils and pupils themselves. They are courteous to adults and to one another and interact very well in social situations. While eating their lunch they carry on sensible conversations, and during the inspection a group of girls and boys who had finished eating delighted the rest with an impromptu rendition of some well known songs. Teachers take every opportunity to encourage pupils and are quick to praise achievement. This has a significant impact on their self esteem and the amount of effort they put into their work. This was shown clearly in a Year 1 art and design lesson when the teacher's very positive use of praise helped children to achieve good standards making drawings of teddy bears brought in from home. Children were especially happy when they heard that the plain green display area in their classroom would be transformed overnight to display the teddies they had worked so hard on. Encouraged by how highly their teacher valued their work, they

justifiably took great pride in their own achievements.

12. Pupils are taking an increasingly greater role in school life. They fulfill their roles as monitors responsibly, helping with the smooth running of the day. Every class has a rota for registers and tidying up and the oldest pupils take their additional responsibilities as school messengers and helpers in the canteen and assemblies seriously. They share resources well and are able to organise themselves and carry out required tasks in lessons in a very mature manner. This means that little time is wasted settling to work, and that time is spent productively.
13. Attendance is satisfactory and there is little lateness as was the case at the time of the last inspection. While unauthorised absence remains slightly below the national average it is on the increase, and mostly attributable to children being taken out of school for family holidays during term time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. Since the previous inspection, the school has improved the quality of teaching. It is now very good at Key Stage 1 and sound in the Foundation Stage. Pupils are taught by a hard working team of dedicated staff. In the lessons observed 96 per cent of teaching was satisfactory, or better; four per cent was excellent, 38 per cent was very good and 42 per cent was good. Only a very small percentage was less than satisfactory because the pupils were not provided with appropriate activities. The quality of teaching in English, mathematics, art and design and music is notably very strong, and literacy and numeracy skills are taught well. Teaching is occasionally excellent in music; this enables all pupils to make effective progress in their learning, and in response, they are keen to do well and show very good attitudes to their work.
15. The school makes satisfactory provision for children in the Foundation Stage. The quality of teaching is satisfactory with good features, although the curriculum is not planned closely enough to the Early Learning Goals and, as a result, children are not always given suitably relevant activities to their needs. Since the last inspection, an early years' unit has been set up which accommodates the youngest children of nursery and reception ages. They are provided with a sound start to their learning. Staff have good knowledge of the age group and are good role models, offering calm, gentle encouragement and positive praise, whilst setting clear expectations of behaviour. Not all teachers of children in the Foundation Stage have had the recommended training, but this is planned for the current academic year.
16. All teachers plan in very good detail and identify clearly what they expect pupils to learn at Key Stage 1. In the best lessons, teachers use the opportunities well to teach and emphasise new ideas. They have particularly high expectations and pupils are sufficiently challenged to extend their knowledge. Basic literacy and numeracy skills are taught well and good use is made of questioning to check that pupils understand what they have learnt. They are encouraged to use their knowledge to solve problems and staff use specific subject vocabulary very well to help pupils increase their understanding in subjects such as, information and communication technology. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the curriculum. Their knowledge of English is particularly strong. Planning takes into account a variety of methods including whole-class, group and individual teaching. Lessons are structured well. They start with clear introductions, based on what pupils already know, and then set clear targets for learning, with regular checks on pupils' understanding and progress. Pupils usually respond very well and are keen to use their skills during activities. Lessons are generally completed at a brisk pace and pupils' work is often used well to demonstrate and clarify points for others during lessons.

17. Lessons are well organised and managed very skilfully at Key Stage 1. In the Foundation Stage, children are effectively supported by caring adults. Good classroom control techniques are used consistently and pupils are given good praise to acknowledge success with their work. This has a very positive effect on learning, as pupils try hard to gain their teachers' approval. In all classes, teachers make the work interesting to the pupils and relationships are friendly, positive and focused on learning. Teachers use humour effectively to engage and interest their pupils. Learning support assistants are well briefed and deployed carefully to make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Homework, in the form of reading and an occasional piece of topic work, is set for pupils to enable them to extend their learning, but work is not always marked consistently to help them improve. The accommodation is used well; classrooms are tidy, well-organised environments with good resources clearly accessible. Teachers' day-to-day assessment procedures are good. Pupils are assessed on how well they have achieved the objectives for lessons and this helps teachers plan future work.
18. The teaching for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory with good features. Adults have a secure knowledge and understanding about how pupils learn and what help they need to achieve success. There is an appropriate mixture of individual and small group teaching and support within the class. Staff make effective use of existing individual education plans to inform their planning and to ensure that tasks and resources are well matched to pupils' abilities. Good attention is paid to assessing the work of pupils with special educational needs in order to measure the progress made towards their individual targets.

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

19. The school meets the statutory requirements to teach the National Curriculum subjects and religious education and it offers a broad and balanced curriculum for pupils at Key Stage 1. However, the curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is not yet planned effectively to the nationally recommended Early Learning Goals. Although these youngest children spend a considerable amount of time focusing on recognising numbers, patterns and shapes and they also work appropriately on all aspects of their language development, the curriculum is not as wide-ranging and stimulating as it could be. At Key Stage 1, both the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are fully and effectively implemented and government guidelines are combined with existing schemes to ensure that all subjects are given appropriate coverage. The religious education scheme of work is based closely on the agreed syllabus and this is an improvement since the last inspection.
20. The school's policy for equality of opportunities was written in 1997, but this has not been reviewed recently. This is unsatisfactory, because there is no reference to the recent guidance on inclusivity in education to make teachers more aware and avoid instances where individuals and groups are either marginalized or excluded from activities enjoyed by the majority. Several examples of exclusive practice were observed during the inspection: for example, a child in the reception class was left behind when unable to finish a snack in time to join the class for the beginning of a creative development lesson; a group of Year 1 pupils working with a learning support assistant did not join the rest of the class for the end of a mathematics lesson; and a pupil in Year 2 was excluded by his peers temporarily in an English lesson.
21. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. The co-ordinator maintains a well-organised special educational needs' file and liaises well with

support agencies and partner schools. For two afternoons a week, in the autumn term, she is able to work with and assess pupils in the various classes. During the rest of the year she teaches in the Foundation Stage and acts as a link between class teachers and the headteacher concerning individual pupil's progress, having no further contact with the pupils in their class setting. Satisfactory individual education plans have been drawn up and parents are involved in this process from the outset. Reviews take place, normally arranged to coincide with open evenings held each term. However, teachers' short-term planning, which although often well differentiated, does not regularly identify specific activities that relate to individual education plans and therefore pupils are not always helped to achieve their specific targets.

22. Since the last inspection the school has continued to review policy documents and refine and develop schemes of work. Planning both medium and short term is good overall and the short-term planning is most effective where work is differentiated, extension activities detailed and where the plenary is clearly linked to the learning objectives to both reinforce and assess learning.
23. Provision for personal and health education is good. Pupils are constantly reminded about routine health issues. For example washing their hands before lunch, after visiting the cloakroom and before cooking 'fairy cakes' and through science they are taught about healthy eating. Health and safety issues are addressed satisfactorily in that pupils are shown how to use equipment safely. However one lesson was observed when furniture in the narrow hall had not been pushed out of the way and therefore presented a hazard for the pupils. The school has a very relevant drugs policy emphasising that drugs can be harmful and this is applied mainly through science and English. Throughout the school pupils work very well together in all lessons seen and *all* adults provide very good role models.
24. In addition to the statutory curriculum, the school offers other opportunities for learning. Circle time (when pupils sit in a circle and discuss issues of immediate concern to either themselves or others) is held in classes as the need arises. Strong links with the community enables pupils to visit and display art work in the local church and supermarket; take part in May dancing on the Church Green; join in carol singing in torch lit processions at Christmas, and be part of the walking procession in the Witney Carnival. In addition visitors to the school are encouraged for example the RSPCA and the Science Theatre. These activities provide a wide variety of extra-curricular experience, but after-school clubs are not a feature of school life.
25. The school has developed good links with partner institutions. Pre-school settings are visited before pupils transfer into the reception class and both pupils and parents visit St Mary's before they start in September. Good links exist with the Batt Primary School to which most pupils transfer and the special educational needs co-ordinator visits the school in the summer term to meet and become familiar with the needs of pupils. Finally Year 2 pupils join in with other Year 2 pupils from all over the town in a Music Partnership Festival.
26. The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development, an improvement since the last inspection, and satisfactory provision for cultural development. Spiritual provision is good. Assemblies incorporate an act of worship and time for reflection and in hymn practice, pupils remember that 'shalom' means 'peace be with you' in Hebrew, a fact taught during religious education lessons. Teachers have an excellent relationship with the pupils and really value their comments and efforts thereby encouraging a very positive self-image. Teachers often create a sense of awe when, for example, a teacher in Year 2 lowered her voice to a whisper

creating absolute silence and then after a pause she reminded pupils how important it is to say sorry when your actions hurt others.

27. Provision for both moral and social development is very good. All pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong and this, coupled with high expectations for behaviour from all staff, means that pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and to always consider the effects of their actions on others. The provision for social development is very good and reflects accurately the ethos of the school. Pupils co-operate well in all group activities. They play well together on the playground and are very responsive to supervising adults at lunchtime and playtime. They are given responsibilities, for example collecting the dinner register and daily reading the outdoor thermometer and throughout the inspection displayed very good manners opening doors for visitors and incorporating them into their school life.
28. Provision for cultural education is satisfactory. Pupils are given plenty of opportunities throughout the curriculum to develop an understanding of their own cultural heritage, for example through music, dance and art however because the school has few pupils from different ethnic backgrounds, opportunities to develop pupils' awareness of the ethnic and cultural diversity of British society do not occur naturally. The school has received visitors from Norway and Zimbabwe and African dancers are to visit in the near future. However, the school is not sufficiently pro-active in its planning to ensure that opportunities do occur for pupils to gain a greater understanding of the diverse cultures present in the society in which they live.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

29. The school cares well for the pupils in its care. Pupils are known very well and there is a high degree of concern for their welfare. Parents are happy with the attitudes and values promoted and many say the Christian, friendly, family atmosphere was a deciding factor in choosing this school for their children. They rightly feel that this is a happy, safe and secure environment.
30. The school's good induction programme ensures that both parents and children feel comfortable with their new surroundings and play group visits ensure that teachers have some idea of children's individual needs before they start. Special educational needs are assessed and addressed early ensuring that any extra help is given.
31. The procedures for promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good. Behaviour management is a strength of the school. There are just a few simple rules, which successfully encourage good relationships and respect for all members of the school community. Positive attitudes are well developed through the use of praise and encouragement and this, results in a mature level of self-discipline. Unacceptable behaviour is dealt with immediately by a member of staff or supervising adult and this is usually sufficient. Strategies such as holding hands in the air or crossing arms are familiar and used successfully to gain children's attention and silence. The good relationships between adults and pupils ensure that children feel confident to approach staff with any problems.
32. Pupils are supervised well at work and play and adults provide very good role models for the children to follow. Good systems are in place to ensure that medical emergencies, illness and health and safety are dealt with properly and teachers and adult helpers are familiar with child protection procedures.
33. A satisfactory level of improvement has taken place in the overall monitoring of pupils'

academic performance and development. Assessment procedures and their use to inform planning in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are good. Formal assessments have also been carried out in art and design and information and communication technology to supplement individual class teacher's own records. Baseline assessment is carried out when children first enter the early years' unit, but the outcomes are not used rigorously enough to adapt the curriculum to individual needs. Individual targets for improvement are starting to have a positive impact on pupils' achievements, but are not yet wide ranging enough as they are only set for some aspects of literacy.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

34. The school works well in partnership with parents. Parents are happy with the school, and their views are more positive than at the time of the last inspection. All parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire feel overwhelmingly that their child likes school and the vast majority feels they are making good progress. They rightly feel that their children are being encouraged to be independent and mature and are happy with the Christian values that are promoted. They feel that teachers are very approachable and appreciate the ready access they have to staff when they accompany their children to classrooms in the morning. The school is, however, not using these opportunities to their best advantage to include parents more fully in their children's learning and the life of the school.
35. A sensible amount of homework is set for children, and parents report that it is willingly completed. Pupils who undertake extra practice at home are rewarded with praise and stickers, and parents are aware that teachers listen to their children read regularly. This is particularly helpful for children who do not get support at home.
36. Parents appreciate the annual reports on their children's progress and say that teachers obviously know the pupils well; they particularly like the comments on pupils' personal development and the targets for improvement. However, there is little evidence to show that these are used rigorously by the school to improve achievement. The prospectus and governors annual report are helpful and give parents a comprehensive overview of the school. The governors' annual report however, is missing some required information, such as the rate of authorised absence in the last school year and a clear statement concerning the arrangements for admission and the facilities available for the inclusion of disabled pupils.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

37. The headteacher provides effective leadership to her colleagues. She is supported effectively by the governors and all key members of her staff in managing the school. There is a shared sense of commitment, and issues identified within the previous inspection report have been addressed satisfactorily.
38. The senior managers are actively involved in analysing the school's test results and evaluating the pupils' performance. They are keen to succeed and are taking appropriate actions, in order to improve the standardised test results in areas such as writing. There is much less emphasis, however, on monitoring the quality of teaching, in order to evaluate its effectiveness on learning and in raising achievement. The role of the curriculum co-ordinators has been satisfactorily improved, but is not fully developed in monitoring teaching or in managing funds linked to their subjects.
39. Since the last inspection, the school has established a useful development plan that

reflects shared concerns. The plan is useful in guiding school practice and addressing the priorities that have been identified. The plan, however, is not well linked to the school budget; it lacks the necessary level of detail in order to be useful as a working document, and to enable the staff to evaluate the success of their actions. The governors' role in devising and monitoring the success of the school development plan is minimal.

40. The governors are supportive of the headteacher, and they have an effective committee structure in place, which helps them to support the school closely. Governors are well informed about the latest developments, such as the implementation of the literacy hour and the numeracy strategy. However, governors are not fully involved in monitoring and evaluating the effect of the new initiatives on the pupils' performance. The governors take advantage of the governor-training sessions, which are available, and are beginning to ask appropriate questions, but they do not act as a critical friend to the school. At present, they are not fully meeting their statutory responsibilities; for example, the annual report to parents does not provide the necessary level of information for the parents. The governing body is insufficiently involved in strategic planning and the clear linking of finances to long-term development to ensure that initiatives that are followed are well targeted and bring clear benefits to pupils' achievements.
41. The number, qualifications and experience of teachers and support staff to match the demands of the curriculum are good overall. All teachers have received training in the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Each class has an attached full-time learning support assistant who is well briefed and complements the work of class teacher. They work sensitively with pupils, often those with special educational needs. The special educational needs co-ordinator teaches in the Foundation Stage for three days a week and apart from two afternoons a week in the Autumn term has little first hand opportunity to monitor the progress of these pupils in class. Training needs are prioritised and linked where possible to the school development plan hence the headteacher, who teaches the youngest pupils for two days a week, will shortly be attending a course on demands of the Foundation Stage of education. Numbers in the school are rising and the pupil-teacher ratio may exceed 30:1, unless the standard number is adjusted.
42. Accommodation is satisfactory and on-going improvements are planned. It is well maintained and clean and available space is used well to display pupils' work. Key Stage 1 pupils are taught in two large classrooms that are well ventilated and light. Pupils in the Foundation Stage are taught in a large room adjacent to recently refurbished cloakrooms and have their own playground space. There is a large library near the entrance which is utilised well however there are occasions when the teacher/learning support assistant leaves pupils unsupervised briefly in order to answer the front door and routines are not established to use the library only when someone is available to answer the doorbell. The hall is narrow and although adequate for most activities, not all furniture is pushed well out of the way before the hall is used for physical education. Building work is due to take place soon on a new technology suite and this will considerably enhance the facilities the school has to offer.
43. The school is well resourced. Resources are accessible and well organised with much equipment in classes and the remainder in the school library that in itself is well equipped. Four new computers and associated hardware will be installed in the new computer suite when it is completed. Together with existing stock this will make a total of eight computers in the suite and one more in each classroom ensuring good provision.

44. Good improvement has been made in the day-to-day administration of financial matters. Systems are now in place to ensure that the finance committee gets a monthly budget printout and reviews and responds to spending in relation to planned income and expenditure. Administration of the budget is carried out efficiently by the headteacher, assisted by the school bursar. The high surplus has been built up in order to maintain a good level of pupil-teacher ratio and maintain standards despite vastly fluctuating numbers on roll. Because there is now a degree of stability in pupil numbers some of it is sensibly being used to support ongoing building works, which are greatly enhancing the accommodation. This includes new facilities for children in the early years and Year 1 which means they no longer have to go outside to use the toilets, as well as a new path to the canteen. Care is taken to obtain value for money when purchasing resources, and estimates for building work and maintenance are carefully considered. Overall, resources are used well and the school gives sound value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

45. The headteacher, staff and governors should:
- (1) improve the curriculum for the children in the Foundation Stage to match the recommended Early Learning Goals more closely.
 - (2) improve the management of the school by:
 - monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning more rigorously;
 - updating the current policy and practice for ensuring the equality of opportunity for pupils and staff;
 - linking the financial planning to the school development plan to provide a more useful strategic management tool;
 - strengthening and developing the role of the governing body as a critical friend;
 - making sure that the statutory requirements are met fully to provide the required information in the governors' annual report to parents. (paragraphs 36, 38, 39 and 40)

A few minor areas for development are indicated in paragraphs 17, 36 and 58 regarding the development of the consistency of teachers' marking and the use of comments in pupils' reports to help raise standards.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	24
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	15

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	38	42	12	4	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	85
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	18

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.0
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	19	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	17	19
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	33	32	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (92)	91 (92)	97 (80)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	19	19
	Girls	15	15	13
	Total	33	34	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (92)	97 (96)	91 (88)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

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

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	28

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	79

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	159,536
Total expenditure	170,412
Expenditure per pupil	2,131
Balance brought forward from previous year	34,382
Balance carried forward to next year	23,506

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	85
Number of questionnaires returned	52

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	71	29	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	54	37	8	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	62	38	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	44	15	2	4
The teaching is good.	69	29	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	50	8	2	8
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	58	38	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	37	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	27	56	10	0	8
The school is well led and managed.	69	25	0	0	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	37	2	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	17	35	21	6	21

NB: not all parents responded to all questions, so totals may not add up to 100.

Other issues raised by parents

Six parents wrote to the registered inspector and eight attended a meeting held at the school. The majority of comments were positive, and parents expressed their satisfaction with the quality of education provided by the school; they particularly like the friendly, family ethos. A few parents would like the school to provide more extra-curricular activities and more homework for their children.

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

46. The provision for the youngest children in the school is satisfactory and has improved since the last inspection because there is now specific provision for them within the early years' unit. There are currently 31 children who are five years old, and under, in the school. Children's attainment on entry to the school is, on balance, average. They make satisfactory progress in all areas. Most of the children are on line to attain the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning by the time they reach the end of the Foundation Stage.
47. The quality of teaching is sound overall, based on appropriate knowledge of the areas of learning and good knowledge of the children and their families. The teaching plans are detailed and show clearly the specific learning outcomes of the intended activities. However, not all adults who teach this youngest group of children have had training in the new requirements of the Foundation Stage and the curriculum is not planned closely enough to the Early Learning Goals. A colourful learning environment is created through attractive displays, which show children's experiences in all areas. Good use is made of the resources to support children's learning, including good levels of support from the learning assistants. Relationships between the children and staff are good, and there is a caring and supportive ethos throughout the early years.

Personal, social and emotional development

48. The development of children's personal and social skills is given a high priority and is promoted at every opportunity. Children enjoy practical activities and concentrate well on their own tasks, in an independent way. They happily share their equipment and work well together on their computer. Children are well aware of right and wrong; they are generally sensitive to the needs of other children, including any children from a different background. However, on occasions, some children need reminding to respect the feelings of other children, for example, during the registration time, not to imitate other children. The quality of teaching is sound and there are good opportunities for children to learn about their own culture and about Christian values. Multi-cultural resources for use in early years, including items for role play, are not sufficient to ensure the younger children have better opportunities to become aware of people from other cultures, values and beliefs.

Communication, language and literacy

49. The children make satisfactory progress in communication, language and literacy. There are good opportunities for them to listen with enjoyment and respond to stories, poems and songs. Majority of the children can speak reasonably clearly and enjoy listening to stories. There is good progress in story telling, and sequencing activities. Most children are able to write their names and can read and write different labels and captions. Younger children are good at mark-making using their pencils and crayons, and the older children can copy their teacher's writing accurately. A majority of the children know the letters of the alphabet, and can link sounds to the initial letter in a word. Most children can use their pencil correctly and form recognisable letters and words. Children have good access to a range of books from the book area, where they can read and write for a variety of purposes. The good quality teaching is supported well by the learning assistants who help and guide the children well. During the

inspection, children were seen to be selecting books from the book area, and using them to find pictures of animals with different shaped ears. Children also used their computer well to find suitable pictures of animals in order to classify them according to set criteria.

Mathematics

50. Children's mathematical development is satisfactory and the teaching is sound. There are good opportunities for them to take part in a variety of counting activities, and in whole-class mental and oral work. Most children can recognise and record numerals from one to nine, and can recreate simple patterns. Children are encouraged to apply their knowledge and understanding in practical tasks, which involve simple addition and subtraction. They have good opportunities to play with two and three-dimensional shapes, and they use them to construct their models. Some of the older pupils are able to sort and match accurately their shapes, and can use comparative language. Staff make good use of mathematical vocabulary and this has a good effect on the children's use of the vocabulary, including positional words.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

51. A wide range of experiences is offered to the children to stimulate their interests and to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. They make sound progress and have good opportunities to explore the world through using their senses in a focused way. Children can manipulate building blocks confidently and with good skills. Some of the work displayed on classroom walls showed good skills in using different materials. Children make recognisable flower shapes they have observed in the garden, using their play dough. They are confident in using their computer, and are fairly skilled at using the keyboard and the mouse. The quality of teaching is sound. Children have good opportunities to talk about their homes and families. They observe changes in the weather and discuss types of clothes that are most suitable to wear in a given weather condition. There are good opportunities for them to develop an awareness of the local environment through visits to local places of interest.

Physical development

52. Children make satisfactory progress in physical development and the quality of teaching is usually sound. They are able to move with increasing confidence, imagination and control. They have good opportunities to handle small tools, objects and malleable materials safely. There is sound provision for both indoor and outdoor play, although some of the indoor activities are unsuitable. For example, the apparatus in the hall is too high for the children who are not yet confident when using climbing and balancing equipment. Children have access to an outdoor area and the school is planning to extend its provision in the near future.

Creative development

53. The children make sound progress in their creative development. They are given a wide range of opportunities to explore their ideas through painting, music, sand and water, and through their imaginative play. Children are particularly good at using the elements of colour and shape in their pictures and models. There are many examples of their work, which have been collected and used for general displays or for appreciation. The sound teaching encourages children to take pride in their finished work. Teachers have set up appropriate role-play areas, which children are keen to use. For instance,

children play the roles of parents when caring for their toys and they enjoy using the wheeled vehicles, such as prams and pushchairs.

ENGLISH

54. The results of the 2000 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1 show that a well above average percentage of pupils attained the expected Level 2, at 94 per cent, whilst an average 31 per cent achieved the higher Level 3. In writing, standards were above average, with 91 per cent achieving Level 2 and an above average 16 per cent achieving the higher Level 3. Speaking and listening skills were high in the standardised tests; 97 per cent achieved Level 2 which is well above the national average, and an average 25 per cent achieved the higher Level 3. Trends show that over the last four years the performance of pupils in Year 2 was generally well above the national average in reading and average in writing, with no significant differences in the achievement of boys and girls. However, the school has recognised the need to promote pupils' writing skills and has set appropriate targets to improve the standards of the more able pupils in writing, especially. The current inspection findings show that overall standards are now above those expected for the oldest pupils in Year 2 in reading, writing and speaking and listening. Progress is good, and literacy skills are well promoted throughout the school.
55. Pupils' skills in speaking and listening are good by the time they reach Year 2; most pupils are articulate, speaking clearly and confidently. They are eager to talk to staff and make relevant contributions during the oral parts of lessons. The introductory and plenary sessions of the literacy hour provide good opportunities for pupils to discuss learning objectives, the shared text and independent tasks. Lesson plans show specific vocabulary which pupils are expected and encouraged to use. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, pupils used, and clearly understood, the patterns in spoken verse. They achieve good standards, listen carefully to what teachers and others are saying, and wait sensibly for their turn to speak.
56. Standards in reading are good by the time pupils reach Year 2. The most confident pupils can express an opinion about a book they have read and say what sort of texts they enjoy reading. They progress well and particularly enjoy fiction and are able to identify chronological events, confidently. At the end of Key Stage 1, the majority of pupils attain above the expected level and can read simple texts with fluency. The most able pupils read very well, with expression. Most pupils learn to read by building effectively on previous knowledge to increase word recognition. A few pupils have a limited knowledge of phonics, but they make good use of picture clues and the meaning of the text to assist them in tackling new words. All pupils have the opportunity to take books home each day to read to parents and reading diaries are sufficiently checked by teachers to ensure suitably challenging texts are chosen. Good use is made of the school library where pupils learn how to locate and use non-fiction books by referring to the contents page and index. They particularly like stories about, 'Little Red Riding Hood' and the 'Bear's Curiosity Book'.
57. Pupils make good progress in writing overall, so that by Year 2, they achieve good standards. They write for a range of purposes, such as poetry, instructions, information, lists, stories and character profiles. Examples of stories show that pupils' creative writing is imaginative, clear and well sequenced, with correct punctuation and grammar. Spelling is accurate with harder words mainly correctly spelt. For example, completed work on themes such as similes, shows very competent standards of literacy skills amongst the highest attaining pupils. Pupils in Year 1 achieve the standards expected because they are taught well how to use dictionaries to check spellings and to look for the meanings of words. Writing skills are taught systematically. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well; they know the alphabet and can locate words in a dictionary, but they are not always encouraged to join in when

they lose concentration. The presentation of work has improved since the last inspection. From the time they start school, all pupils are taught to form letters correctly, and by Year 2, they write neatly in pencil, often using a joined script. Pupils make good use of their literacy skills across the curriculum in subjects, such as history and science.

58. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and lessons are planned well, with clear learning objectives. These learning objectives are shared with pupils, often being displayed and referred to in lessons, and assessment is used well to identify future learning. Teachers have very high expectations of their pupils and basic literacy skills are well taught. Work is marked fairly carefully, although marking sometimes lacks clear guidance for pupils to help them improve their work. In the introduction to lessons and plenary sessions, teachers expect and encourage pupils to answer thoughtfully to questions. In response, pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. They concentrate well and are able to work independently. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, pupils were studying poetry; they responded enthusiastically and were keen to share their knowledge with others in the class. Teachers demonstrate very good management skills and there is a good rapport between all staff and pupils. Independent tasks are carefully explained to groups who are expected to work at them without interrupting teachers, allowing them to concentrate on a particular group. Effective use is made of learning support assistants who take groups of pupils within lessons, such as those with special educational needs, to help them make good progress overall. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented well and the co-ordinator manages the subject confidently, having considerable knowledge and expertise. She keeps very careful records of pupils' attainments, tracking them and identifying any emerging strengths and weaknesses. However, monitoring procedures are not developed fully for checking the quality of teaching throughout the school. Resources are good and are well organised in an attractive and exciting way. Computers are used very well to help pupils reinforce learning and extend their literacy skills, and there are good links with other subjects, such as history and geography.

MATHEMATICS

59. National test results in 2000 indicate that the percentage of pupils attaining the expected Level 2 at the end of Key Stage 1 was in line with the national average for all schools, similar to the last inspection, and below when compared to similar schools. The percentage of pupils attaining higher levels was below the national average. Prior to 2000, the school's results had improved in successive years against the national average. There is little difference between the performance of boys and girls. The inspection found that standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are good overall. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 are challenged appropriately, although this is not always consistent throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs are appropriately supported and make satisfactory progress in all classes.
60. By the age of seven pupils have a good grasp of number concepts. They use apparatus well to reinforce the concept of place value and add and subtract single digit numbers from two digit numbers confidently. Most know facts for the two and ten multiplication tables and are beginning to apply this knowledge. They work with sequences of numbers, explore number patterns and are familiar with odd and even numbers. They apply their knowledge in different ways for example buying and selling toys and working out costs and by estimating and then measuring length in different units. They draw block graphs and interpret the data, weigh different objects in grams and use computers to calculate the answers to simple multiplication problems. They

can identify two and some three-dimensional shapes and describe some of their features.

61. Mathematics is supported by work in other subjects. For example, in design and technology, pupils weigh ingredients accurately when they make 'fairy cakes' and also sort different materials into sets. In geography they draw a block graph to show what form of transport they use when they come to school and calculate distances when studying the location of a village in Mexico. Whole-class work in mental mathematics develops pupils' listening skills and targeted questioning encourages pupils to explain processes clearly. For example, when explaining how to subtract 20 from 50 a pupil in Year 2 said 'I simply took two from five and then put the zero back'.
62. The quality of teaching is very good. It is never less than satisfactory and in half of the lessons it is very good; an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers' knowledge of the National Numeracy Strategy is good and this has been implemented and resourced well. This knowledge also enables them to teach with confidence and this together with good management of pupils creates a very secure learning environment. They introduce humour and games appropriately to keep the pupils focused. For example pretending to *forget* numbers when working on sequences that pupils are quick to help them recall! They also introduce good routines like the 'without talking game' which produced absolute silence. Learning support assistants are well briefed by the teachers and were observed working patiently with pupils who have special educational needs asking appropriate questions. Planning overall is satisfactory and is most effective where the plenary is closely related to the learning objectives. In these circumstances teachers are able to assess progress well and decide which aspects of the work needs to be further consolidated. On-going assessment is supplemented by periodic formal assessment that presents a detailed and useful record of progress over time. Marking in books is restricted to ticks and the very occasional 'smiley face' other than for two or three pupils with special educational needs whose work did receive a written comment to encourage them to greater efforts. The co-ordinator has worked hard to implement the National Numeracy Strategy and has begun to monitor the subject teaching in the school, but this is not yet developed fully.

SCIENCE

63. Teacher assessments in 2000 showed that the percentage of pupils attaining the expected Level 2 was in line with national averages. However, the inspection evidence disagrees, because a scrutiny of pupils' work, discussions with pupils and the observation of a lesson in Year 2 show that standards of attainment at seven are above the national average, an improvement since the last inspection. The school is currently reviewing the science curriculum in the light of recent government guidance to ensure that high standards are maintained. There is no significant difference in the attainment of girls and boys and pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress supported by well-prepared learning support assistants. A few pupils are occasionally not socially included; for example, one pupil with special educational needs was not chosen 'to be a partner' and this was upsetting for the pupil.
64. Pupils learn about the needs of life and how different combinations of foods create either healthy or unhealthy diets. Younger pupils list items that are powered by electricity in their homes and later they create simple electric circuits and make a bulb light up. They work with a variety of materials and then bend, twist, stretch and squash them and then sort them according to their characteristics. They discover the effects of heating and cooling on different materials, make predictions and then carry out

experiments to find out if their prediction is accurate. Their work is well presented with clear and well-labelled diagrams showing the outcomes of their experiments and they are also given plenty of opportunities to practise their literacy skills and to write independently. Pupils discuss science with enthusiasm and clearly enjoy the subject. They could talk about many of the things they had done and one boy commented that 'we do experiments - we guess and then find out,' a clear statement indicating an understanding of the processes taught.

65. In the very good lesson observed the concept of, '*Forces*' was introduced along with the idea that pushes and pulls can make things speed up, slow down or change direction. The lesson was well planned and proceeded at a good pace. The teacher demonstrated very good teaching skills, repeating and consolidating previously taught facts as she skilfully questioned pupils about work previously completed on materials. She then introduced the idea of pushing and pulling, making her learning objective very clear, by getting the pupils to pull a shoe off and push it back on again. The pupils were exceptionally well behaved as they did this and then listened intently as the teacher gave further examples. Having all brought in wheeled vehicles the pupils then worked sensibly and independently in groups discovering and recording on a pro-forma how many types of force could be applied to make the vehicle move. At the end of the lesson the teacher, again through very skilful questioning, elicited from the pupils a variety of forces. These were recorded and repeated thereby consolidating learning.
66. Pupils' completed work is assessed and levelled correctly. However the work in pupils' books is mostly ticked and this does not give a clear indication as to how they might improve. The science curriculum is co-ordinated satisfactorily by the headteacher and an audit of resources has already been carried out and new videos purchased as a result. Teachers always plan to focus on experimental and investigative science in the spring term and the national guidance is used to guide planning through the adoption of an appropriate scheme of work thus ensuring suitable coverage.

ART AND DESIGN, AND DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

67. Overall, standards are good in art and design, and in design and technology, by the time pupils reach the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils use their observational skills well to critically analyse the work of famous artists, such as Picasso, and are able to interpret techniques in their own work. They use colour boldly when painting and they experiment successfully when making careful pencil drawings of plant life. Pupils achieve good standards in drawing self-portraits and observational studies. They tackle collage work with confidence and are able to complete pieces for class displays to compliment their work on historical displays. Pupils make good progress in their learning in both subjects, including those who have special educational needs. Throughout the school, pupils' visual perception is improved very well through an appropriate focus on recording observations. Their understanding of colour-mixing techniques is increased steadily and good links are forged between art and other curriculum areas, such as history, which help to increase their knowledge.
68. In design and technology, pupils are accustomed to working from designs, which specify the tools and materials needed for their models. They have a sound knowledge of a variety of methods to fasten materials together, which includes clips, glue and string. They measure, cut and join a variety of materials accurately and carefully assemble simple mechanical models, introducing movement by using axles for wheels. Pupils can list the different components needed, together with procedures for making and for evaluating their work. For example, their designs and finished pieces of three-dimensional construction kits show good attention to designing for a purpose.

They enjoy designing and making models. All apply finishing techniques carefully, such as painting, to enhance the quality of their models. They understand the properties of common materials and make good choices when constructing models.

69. The quality of teaching and learning is very good in both subjects. Pupils respond with enthusiasm. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and plan their lessons thoroughly to give pupils a broad range of experiences. Since the last inspection, the development of literacy has encouraged pupils to use appropriate vocabulary when naming tools and describing what they are doing. The subjects are well-organised areas of the curriculum that are linked effectively with other areas, such as science, information technology and literacy. In response, pupils' attitudes are very good; all take a pride in their work and concentrate well during lessons. Pupils with special educational needs are equally as successful in making things as other pupils and this helps to raise their self-esteem. Pupils share tools sensibly and help one another willingly. Teachers plan their lessons carefully to make sure that all pupils build steadily on their skills. However, teaching and learning are not effectively monitored to identify areas for development. The good resources are used well to ensure that pupils have a wide variety of materials from which to choose.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

70. Standards of work in both history and geography are above the national expectations, similar to the outcome of the last inspection. The curriculum is organised in a cyclical manner so that each class studies history and geography alternately thus ensuring that demands on resources are managed well. During the inspection, only one geography lesson was observed and therefore inspection evidence is based on scrutiny of work, displays and discussion with pupils.
71. Pupils in Year 1 have studied the area around the school and answered the question 'How do you come to school?' A map is displayed indicating where pupils live and their routes to school and also a bar chart showing the most popular forms of transport used - a good cross curricular link to mathematics. A world map in the hall shows the travels of 'Mr Arthur', a toy bear, taken on holiday by pupils to locations all over the world. Photographs linked to the map show very clearly where it has been. In Year 2, a collage shows the Great Fire of London. This is a good cross-curricular link to art and design and history because the colourful displays are related to historical facts from the diary of Samuel Pepys, the source of the fire and the imagined response of the citizens. All pupils have their own time-line pasted inside the front cover of their books and this helps to place events in chronological order. They have, in addition to the Fire of London, studied the life and works of Florence Nightingale and the meaning of Poppy Day.
72. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. They enjoy these subjects and talk with enthusiasm about their work. Pupils in Year 2 know that they would be focussing on geography this term and were keen to agree that the computer they had used the previous day had been very useful when researching details about a village in Mexico. They recalled the work on Florence Nightingale 'she made things nicer for soldiers,' and could talk about the Great Fire in some depth.
73. In the only lesson seen pupils in Year 2, working in pairs, used atlases and a computer program to find out information about Mexico. They were able to use indexes competently and some were able to read and understand temperature graphs, demonstrating good cross-curricular links to English and mathematics. Others use a computer program with confidence to research relevant information. At the end of the

lesson every pair could offer at least one fact that they had found out and these were listed in order to consolidate their learning.

74. The teaching and learning are good. High expectations, enthusiasm and skilful questioning ensure that the learning objectives are achieved. Resources are well prepared; for example, information downloaded from the Internet is made available to supplement the school's resources. Planning based appropriately on the national guidelines for schemes of work ensures appropriate coverage.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

75. The oldest pupils in the school achieve good standards by the time they reach the end of Year 2. Pupils are confident when using computers to communicate their ideas in a variety of ways. For example, they are able to use a word processor and able to enter, amend, save and retrieve information without help from the teacher. They can change the style, colour and size of text and print. They have good opportunities to use literacy, and numeracy programs to extend their skills across the curriculum. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good gains in their learning as they move through the school, particularly in communicating ideas and information and developing their understanding and knowledge of control.
76. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Strengths include teachers having a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject and planning that identifies clearly what pupils are to learn. Teachers' expectations are appropriately high and they set tasks that are suitably demanding. In response, pupils have very good attitudes to their work. They are well motivated, able to concentrate for suitable lengths of time and respond with enthusiasm. Behaviour is always very good and this contributes effectively to the standards pupils attain. The effective way that teachers manage their lessons has a positive impact on pupils' good attitudes and willingness to use computers. In their planning and teaching, lesson objectives are clearly identified to link with other subjects, such as English; the tasks provide enough challenge for all pupils, including the highest attainers, and the organisation gives pupils enough time to use computers. Since the last inspection, the school has developed its resources and there are good plans for developing them further to allow pupils greater access to more computers. However, the procedures for monitoring teaching and learning are not secure.

MUSIC

77. Overall, the good standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils in Year 2 understand the meaning of tempo and melody. They read graphic notation confidently and some know the names of traditional notes, such as quavers and crotchets. The standards attained in singing are good. Pupils are able to follow an ascending and descending tune in melodies and they appraise their performances effectively when talking about their successes. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. Throughout the school, pupils develop their musical vocabulary well and most are very keen to improve their performances through repeated practice. They recognise and name instruments of the orchestra, such as trumpets and drums and they enjoy using the untuned percussion instruments. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. They show enjoyment of the subject and produce thoughtful responses in lessons.
78. The quality of teaching and learning is very good, and occasionally excellent. Lessons are planned carefully to have a good structure and good opportunities are provided for

pupils to perform to an audience, such as in small group activities during lessons. Resources are good and are used well. The expertise of the co-ordinator and her prowess in playing the piano to accompany pupils has a significant effect on the good standards attained. The good relationships between staff and regular team-teaching helps to ensure that pupils have good role models. Teachers use humour effectively to engage and interest their pupils, and, as a result, learning is fun.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

79. Standards are above those expected for pupils at the end Key Stage 1. The lack of suitably large outdoor space or field presents difficulties for teachers in organising physical activities, but they make good use of the facilities for indoor activities, including dance and gymnastics to ensure that all pupils make good progress. Pupils at Key Stage 1 have regular physical education lessons, with a good programme of gymnastics and dance and a sound programme of games. All pupils in Year 2 have regular access to the local swimming pool and achieve above average standards. Pupils enjoy their swimming lessons and are confident in using their arms and legs effectively, in different strokes. Pupils' skills in sending, receiving, passing, striking and travelling with a ball, are developing appropriately, through a variety of games, which are taught skilfully. Following the last inspection, the curriculum has been revised to provide a balanced structure on the school's timetable.
80. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. There are high expectations of work and of good behaviour. Lessons are well planned, with clear detail in terms of progression of skills. Staff and pupils are dressed appropriately and there is due consideration for safety rules. Lessons are introduced with interesting warm-up activities, with the main part focusing on practising skills and learning new ones; lessons are concluded with appropriate cooling down activities. There is good use of assessment to plan the work and to make activities more challenging for pupils of different ages and abilities; however, assessment is not formally recorded. Time is used effectively and the planned activities proceed with a brisk pace. Pupils are expected to observe one another, evaluate their performance and concentrate on tasks in hand. As a result, they respond very well to the teachers' expectations, and they participate in activities with good enthusiasm. The co-ordinator has specialised in a number of areas within the physical education programme, and has developed good expertise over time to be able to lead her subject by providing high quality guidance for the staff. There is a useful policy document and good schemes of work to support work for all ages in school. The small hall provides limited indoor space for games, but the school has appropriate access to the facilities of a nearby school. The school provides appropriately for outdoor activities, with an adventure play area, and grassed and hard-play areas.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

81. Standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 are good and exceed the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. This is an improvement since the last inspection. All pupils make good progress in their understanding of Christianity, Buddhism and Judaism and the effect these teachings have on everyday life.
82. A scrutiny of work and displays indicates that pupils take much pride in their work. The two collages of the Madonna and Child in the hall are carefully constructed and work in books is neatly presented and well illustrated in both classes. Pupils learn about the Christian festivals. They know that Advent is a time of preparation for the birth of Jesus and consequently the importance of Christmas. They compare Christian and Jewish

harvest festivals. They learn about parables such as the story of the Prodigal Son and also the meaning of Lent and Holy Week. They learn about Buddhism and Judaism comparing marriage ceremonies in each faith. They know that meditation is important to Buddhists and the importance of Yom Kippur and the Mezuzah and that Hebrew is the language of the Jewish people.

83. In the very good lesson observed, pupils were taught the meaning of Lent and also wrote an appropriate prayer. One pupil exclaimed 'just like Advent is the countdown to Christmas so Lent is the countdown to Easter.' The teacher created a real sense of wonder as she produced from her bag a palm cross, a bar of chocolate and a pancake! Later, it was agreed that the chocolate should be left on the piano to see if all in the class could resist temptation. This effective use of resources, the intense concentration of the pupils who asked questions and were fully involved and the explicit expectations of the teacher helps to ensure that pupils are developing an appropriate understanding of the influence and significance of religion. The co-ordinator has worked well with the diocesan advisor to ensure that the agreed syllabus is the basis on which all work is based. This has been successful and coupled with the review and subsequent provision of very good resources has ensured that the provision of religious education is good and meets all requirements.