

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INSPECTION REPORT ON

The Manor Preparatory School

Full Name of the School	The Manor Preparatory School		
DfES Number	931 6090		
Address	Faringdon Road, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX13 6LN		
Telephone Number	01235 523789		
Fax Number	01235 559593		
E-mail Address	registrar@manorprep.org		
Name of Headmistress	Mrs D A Robinson		
Chairman of Governors	Mr M Harrison		
Age Range	3-11	Gender	Boys 3 – 7 Girls 3 - 11
Number of Pupils	331	Number of Boarders	Nil
Inspection Dates	March 7th – 11th 2005		

This inspection report follows the framework laid down by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). The inspection was carried out under the arrangements of the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership. It was also carried out under Section 163(1)(b) of the Education Act 2002, under the provisions of which the Secretary of State for Education and Skills has accredited ISI as the body approved for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to ISC Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003.

The inspection does not examine the financial viability of the school or investigate its accounting procedures. The inspectors check the school's health and safety procedures and comment on any significant hazards they encounter: they do not carry out an exhaustive health and safety examination. Their inspection of the premises is from an educational perspective and does not include in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features

1. MAIN FINDINGS

Overall Summary

- 1.1 The Manor Preparatory School is a vibrant community in which pupils receive a broad education which prepares them well for the next stage of their education. Pupils achieve high academic standards. The commitment and professionalism of the teaching staff ensure very good pastoral care, promote pupils' learning and enable them to grow in self-confidence. Pupils enjoy all aspects of their school life.

What the School Does Well

- 1.2 The school has many strengths. The following are the particularly good features:

- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to work are very good
- Very good provision is made for pupils' personal development and for their pastoral care
- Teaching and learning are of a high standard at all stages of the school
- The school premises are very good
- The provision for ICT and the use made of it across the curriculum are outstanding
- The music department makes a significant contribution to the life of the school.

What the School Should Do Better

- 1.3 There are no major weaknesses but the following are areas in which further improvements should be made:
- The governors' strategic plan is not up to date
 - Systematic monitoring and evaluation of subject departments is not fully effective
 - The time allocated for the teaching of PE and games limits pupils' progress.

Standards of Attainment and Progress in Subjects

- 1.4 Pupils achieve high standards in relation to their abilities. The progress which pupils make throughout the school is good and often rapid.

The Quality of Pupils' Learning, Attitudes and their Behaviour

- 1.5 The quality of pupils' learning is very good. They are well motivated and concentrate well on their tasks. Behaviour throughout the school is exemplary.

The Quality of Teaching

- 1.6 The overall quality of teaching is very good. In almost all the lessons seen it was judged good, very good or excellent and 3/5 of lessons were very good or excellent. None of the teaching was less than satisfactory. It contributes effectively to pupils' attainment and progress. Teachers have good knowledge of their subjects, answer questions authoritatively and, through skilful discussion, extend pupils' learning. Teachers manage and know their pupils very well and respond appropriately to their needs. Those who need it receive very good learning support.

Other Aspects of the School

Attendance

- 1.7 Pupils' attendance is good and enables full advantage to be taken of the opportunities available in the school.

Assessment and Recording

- 1.8 Systems for assessing and recording pupils' attainments are good. Good use is made of assessment information for the guidance and support of pupils, but its use in long term curriculum planning is not yet fully established. Assessment and recording in the Foundation Stage are very good.

Curriculum

- 1.9 The quality of the curriculum is good although provision for PE is limited by the number and length of the periods allocated to it. The school provides opportunities for pupils of all abilities to receive a broad and balanced education, enriched by a programme of activities and educational visits. The

organisation of the curriculum contributes effectively to pupils' education and development. It is enhanced by very good access to ICT.

Teaching and Non-teaching Staff

- 1.10 The deployment of both teaching and non-teaching staff is effective and contributes appropriately to the good standards attained by pupils by the time they leave the school. Teaching staff are well-qualified and experienced and subject leaders have been appointed for almost all subjects. The commitment of time and energy which staff make to the school is a major contribution to its success.

Resources for Learning

- 1.11 The quality of resources is high and provision is generous. Resources are used effectively to promote teaching and learning.

Libraries

- 1.12 Library provision at The Manor provides very good support for the curriculum. The range and quality of the books and the high standards of cataloguing and management contribute towards its effectiveness.

Premises and Accommodation

- 1.13 The buildings, accommodation and other facilities are very good and appropriate for the numbers, ages and abilities of the pupils. They support teaching and learning, and contribute positively to the personal development, behaviour and welfare of the pupils.

Links with Parents and the Community

- 1.14 The school has developed a very good partnership with parents and good links with the community. A very positive response to the pre-inspection questionnaire expressed considerable satisfaction with the encouragement given to parents to be involved in the life of the school. A recent school questionnaire invited parents to suggest more ways to be involved, with helpful and appreciative responses being given.

Pupils' Personal Development

- 1.15 The school's provision for pupils' personal development is very good. There is a very good range of suitable opportunities through which pupils can develop a system of spiritual beliefs and a moral code as well as developing appropriate personal, social and cultural skills and understanding. The school places great emphasis on the part all staff play in helping the children to develop spiritual and moral awareness.

Pastoral Care

- 1.16 The quality of pastoral care, including pupils' welfare, is very good and makes a significant contribution to pupils' experience at school. The provision for ensuring a healthy and safe environment is very good.

Governance and Management

- 1.17 The governance and management of the school are good. They ensure that its aims are met and that a suitable quality of education is provided. Efficient planning has enabled the school to develop very good facilities and to provide resources which support the teaching and learning. Governors have not provided a clear educational direction for the school in recent years but now appreciate the need for updating the strategic plan and are undertaking a whole school review.

Achievement and Quality in Activities

- 1.18 The quality of achievement in activities is high. The wide range of activities enriches the life of the school and encourages the aesthetic, expressive and academic development of the pupils.

Progress Made by the School since its Last Inspection

- 1.19 The school has made very good progress in meeting the recommendations of the ISI report on the inspection carried out in 1998. Extensive new buildings have rectified deficiencies in accommodation and arrangements in the new dining hall have satisfied recommendations concerning the provision of lunch. All documentation has been completed and assessment procedures are now rigorous. Subject leaders have been appointed to operate across the full age range but are not yet routinely observing teaching. Budgets are at least satisfactory in all areas.

Compliance with the Regulations for Registration

DfES Standard		Does the school meet the regulatory requirements?
1. Quality of education:	1.(2) Curriculum	Yes
	1.(3)-(5) Teaching	Yes
2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils		Yes
3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils		Yes
4. Suitability of proprietors and staff		Yes
5. Premises and accommodation		Yes
6. Provision of information		Yes
7. Manner in which complaints are to be handled		Yes

Actions Required for Compliance with the Regulatory Requirements

- 1.20 No action is required.
- 1.21 In addition to the actions set out above, the school is asked to address any issues highlighted in *What the School Should Do Better*. These are set out as recommendations for the school in Section 2 of the report.

2. MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 There are no main recommendations but the school should give attention to the following:

- R1 Governors should update the development plan
- R2 Systematic monitoring and evaluation of departments should be developed
- R3 The school should make more timetabled provision for PE and games

3. INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the School

- 3.1 The Manor Preparatory School is an independent preparatory school for boys aged 3-7 years and girls aged 3-11 years. The school moved to its present site on the outskirts of Abingdon in 1947. It is a registered charity with the governors responsible to the Charities Commission and is designated as a school which has a religious character.
- 3.2 The aim of The Manor is to create a happy, stimulating and ordered environment in which every child can develop to the full. The school aims to challenge and to cherish and seeks an affectionate trust with parents.

- 3.3 The Georgian manor house from which the school takes its name is at the centre of the school but now houses the offices and only one teaching area. Over the past few years an extensive building programme has been undertaken and separate facilities provided for different age groups and departments.
- 3.4 Pupils come from Abingdon and the surrounding villages, with a number travelling from Oxford, Newbury and Witney. The vast majority of pupils are white with UK heritage but a few speak English as an additional language. Standardised data indicate that there is a wide ability range although pupils' average ability is above that of the national average. Therefore if pupils are performing in line with their abilities their results will be above the average for all maintained primary schools.
- 3.5 The school has its own nursery but also admits pupils throughout the age range depending on availability of places and suitability for the education provided. At the time of the inspection there were 331 pupils on roll, of whom 62 were in the Foundation Stage, 82 in years 1 and 2 and 187 in Years 3-6. 11 pupils were on the learning support register.
- 3.6 The Reception classes and Years 1 and 2 are housed in the Lower School building, Years 3 and 4 in the Middle School and Years 5 and 6 in the Upper School.
- 3.7 Boys transfer mainly to other independent schools at the age of 7; most girls move to independent senior schools at the age of 11. Results in entrance examinations to other schools at this age are very good and a number of pupils gain academic scholarships each year. Music and art scholarships have also been awarded.
- 3.8 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

Key Indicators

- 3.9 Externally marked National Curriculum Assessments at age 11 (Key Stage 2)

Subject	Most recent year		Average for the last three years	
	Level 4 or higher (%)	Level 5 or higher (%)	Level 4 or higher (%)	Level 5 or higher (%)
English	100	37	99	52
Mathematics	98	59	99	61
Science	100	67	100	69

- 3.10 Attendance for 2003-2004

	Authorised	Unauthorised
Percentage absence	3.4%	0

- 3.11 Exclusions Over the Previous 12 Months

Temporary exclusions	Permanent exclusions
0	0

4. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and Progress

- 4.1 Pupils achieve high standards in relation to their abilities. The progress which pupils make throughout the school is good and often rapid.
- 4.2 Results in national tests at 11 over the last three years have been well above the national average for all maintained primary schools. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 was also above the national average in English, mathematics and science although results in English in 2004 were lower than those in the previous two years. This reflects the ability range of the pupils but has also led to some alteration of focus in English.
- 4.3 Pupils' attainment in the Nursery and in the Reception classes is very good in all areas of learning. They are on course to meet or exceed the Early Learning Goals by the end of Reception. In their personal and social development they demonstrate the capacity for taking turns and they share toys and books amicably.
- 4.4 Attainment observed in exercise and project books and in displays around the school is very good and that in ICT is particularly high, both in discrete lessons and in other subjects in the curriculum where computers are used for research or for the acquisition or practice of skills. Pupils are confident in their use of information technology and turn naturally to computers as tools in their learning.
- 4.5 Levels of literacy and numeracy are very good in relation to pupils' abilities and pupils are articulate and confident when they speak to each other and to adults. They listen very well to their teachers and to the views of their classmates. In mathematics the standards are consistently high.
- 4.6 Pupils who are in receipt of learning support attain well. Standards of reading are very good for their abilities. The only pupil who has a statement of special educational need attains very high standards and is making rapid progress.
- 4.7 Pupils make very good progress overall in their acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills. Progress was satisfactory or better in all lessons, and good or better in almost all lessons. High, average and low attaining pupils, including those requiring special provision, progress as well as, or better than, expected. The attainment and progress of pupils of different ethnicity and background, including those for whom English is an additional language, are comparable with others in the school.
- 4.8 The school is successful in placing pupils at senior schools appropriate for their attainment and abilities. A number of pupils are awarded scholarships each year.
- 4.9 In the pre-inspection questionnaire a large majority of parents expressed satisfaction with their child's attainment and progress.

Quality of Pupils' Learning, Attitudes and Behaviour

- 4.10 The quality of pupils' learning is very good. They are well motivated and concentrate well on their tasks. Behaviour throughout the school is exemplary.
- 4.11 Pupils contribute well to the learning process. They respond positively to their teachers, develop useful learning skills and listen carefully. Pupils collaborate well together and help each other sensibly. The working atmosphere in lessons is conducive to good learning; for instance pupils worked harmoniously in their groups to produce a list of advantages and disadvantages of ecotourism for a village in the rain forest. Throughout the school pupils are courteous and considerate. They show a steadily increasing capacity for private study.
- 4.12 Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good. The pupils respect the values and feelings of others, respond readily and with clarity to their teachers and are attentive when other pupils

answer. Behaviour in class is very good, pupils work hard and they aim for high standards of presentation in their books.

- 4.13 Pupils are friendly and clearly happy at school. Behaviour generally is very good and pupils are proud of their school. When given opportunities to take responsibility they do so sensibly. These positive attitudes contribute to their attainment and progress. Almost all parents expressed satisfaction with standards of behaviour in the school.

Attendance

- 4.14 Pupils' attendance is good and enables full advantage to be taken of the opportunities available in the school.
- 4.15 The admission and attendance registers are up to date and comply with statutory requirements. Pupils' levels of attendance, including those under five, are good and the school has no unauthorised absences. Levels of authorised absence for medical or other justified reasons are low. Registration is carried out efficiently morning and afternoon, and registers are kept in the school office during the day. Pupils and teachers arrive at lessons and other school events punctually.

5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

- 5.1 The overall quality of teaching is very good. In almost all the lessons seen it was judged good, very good or excellent and 3/5 of lessons were very good or excellent. None of the teaching was less than satisfactory. It contributes effectively to pupils' attainment and progress. Teachers have good knowledge of their subjects, answer questions authoritatively and, through skilful discussion, extend pupils' learning. Teachers manage and know their pupils very well and respond appropriately to their needs. Those who need it receive very good learning support.
- 5.2 Lessons are well planned. They have an appropriate balance between input by the teacher and work on the part of the pupils. Standards of discipline and the quality of relationships are consistently very good. The aims of the lessons are made clear to pupils in most classes and good use is made of both resources and time.
- 5.3 In the majority of lessons the teachers' expectations are high and pupils are effectively challenged. The more able pupils are given suitable extension tasks, while extra support is provided for those who require it. The detailed knowledge which teachers have of their pupils, and the comprehensive Individual Education Plans (IEPs) written for those who have difficulties, mean that staff can match work to the needs of all.
- 5.4 Pupils are very well managed. Most lessons are briskly paced and contain a variety of tasks and teaching approaches. Pupils are expected to settle quickly and move readily from one task to another. Teachers plan with classroom assistants so that support and help can be given as needed.
- 5.5 The competence which the pupils display for using ICT is matched by that of the staff, who use laptops provided by the school for their planning and assessments.
- 5.6 Pupils readily identified that the friendliness and helpfulness of their teachers was the most important feature of their school. They felt confident that they could ask for help and that their views would be valued.
- 5.7 In the pre-inspection questionnaire the substantial majority of parents expressed satisfaction with the quality of teaching.

Does the school meet the regulatory requirements for teaching?

5.8 Yes.

Assessment and Recording

- 5.9 Systems for assessing and recording pupils' attainments are good. Good use is made of assessment information for the guidance and support of pupils, but its use in long term curriculum planning is not yet fully established. Assessment and recording in the Foundation Stage are very good.
- 5.10 Monitoring of pupils' work is regular, detailed and supportive. In the Foundation Stage assessment is used well to inform and modify the teaching programme. Regular observations are made and recorded for each pupil and assessments are used as evidence for the completion of the Foundation Stage Profile.
- 5.11 A range of tests is used in subsequent years and pupils' individual learning is monitored carefully, both formally and informally by the teachers. Frequent discussions about pupils' progress take place at staff meetings and teachers liaise closely with each other; learning support staff are involved in all relevant meetings. Screening arrangements to identify pupils who may have specific learning difficulties are good. Detailed IEPs for those pupils requiring extra support enable all teaching staff to adopt suitable strategies.
- 5.12 Teachers' marking is good although it is not consistent throughout the school and marking is not always in line with school policy. However, teachers mark and discuss much of the pupils' work with them and have various methods of ensuring that they have helpful feedback on their work.
- 5.13 The use of assessment as a contribution to development and planning is not yet fully effective although annual subject reviews and some analysis of test results take place.

Curriculum

- 5.14 The quality of the curriculum is good although provision for PE is limited by the number and length of the periods allocated to it. The school provides opportunities for pupils of all abilities to receive a broad and balanced education, enriched by a programme of activities and educational visits. The organisation of the curriculum contributes effectively to pupils' education and development. It is enhanced by very good access to ICT.
- 5.15 The curriculum is well balanced although the time allocated to PE during the school day limits the progress which pupils make in lessons. Small teaching groups for practical work, particularly up to Year 2, enable pupils to benefit from a wide range of subjects, such as food technology.
- 5.16 Curricular planning has been recently reviewed and subject documentation has been updated. Planning in the Early Years is effective; it is based on the Early Learning Goals and the Oxfordshire Foundation Profile has been adopted. For Years 1 to 6 adoption of the National Curriculum, with the inclusion of French from Year 1, means that all the necessary subjects are covered and progression is systematic. Collaborative planning is seen particularly up to Year 4, where most subjects are taught by the form teachers, and specialist teachers ensure that work is covered equally by parallel classes. Group work and discussion are built into the planning and are used effectively to enrich the pupils' learning. Schemes of work are detailed and give clear guidance.
- 5.17 Monitoring to ensure continuity and progression in the curriculum as pupils move through the school is good. Subject leaders meet regularly to co-ordinate work in the Lower, Middle and Upper Schools and separate meetings in each of these departments ensure that liaison between subjects is strong.
- 5.18 Provision to ensure equality of access to pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is good. The SEN room is well equipped for access to ICT and pupils have individual or group lessons. Setting at the top of the school and the use of teaching assistants from Nursery to Year 4 ensure that the needs of the most able pupils are also met. The use of an extra room between the classes in the Middle and Lower Schools allows small groups to be taught away from the main class by an additional teacher.

- 5.19 The extensive range of lunchtime and before and after school activities enriches an already broad curriculum.

Does the school meet the regulatory requirements for the curriculum?

- 5.20 Yes.

Teaching and Non-teaching Staff

- 5.21 The deployment of both teaching and non-teaching staff is effective and contributes appropriately to the good standards attained by pupils by the time they leave the school. Teaching staff are well-qualified and experienced and subject leaders have been appointed for all subjects. The commitment of time and energy which staff make to the school is a major contribution to its success.
- 5.22 The ratio of about one teacher to eleven pupils from Years 1 to 6 is generous and enables the school to cover all the subjects of the curriculum with well-qualified and suitably experienced teachers, with many classes being taught in groups or sets. The staffing provision for the under fives meets the recommended ratios.
- 5.23 Classroom assistants in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 to 4, an ICT technician, librarian and laboratory assistant, all offer valuable support for teaching and learning.
- 5.24 Secretarial, administrative and bursarial staff play a vital role in enabling the school to run smoothly and efficiently and in ensuring pupils' welfare. The contribution made by maintenance and grounds staff is shown in the high standards of care evident in the grounds and the cleanliness and good order of the school as a whole. The friendly, professional catering team produce plentiful and varied meals on a daily basis.
- 5.25 Conditions for the employment of staff are clear and new members of staff undertake an induction process overseen by the deputy head. Arrangements for the induction of new teachers are in line with requirements and ensure continued professional development. Teachers appreciate the support they receive.
- 5.26 The provision for professional development and appraisal of teaching staff is good and all necessary policies are in place. The budget for professional development is generous and training is available to all staff and departments. Staff in the Foundation Stage make good use of training provided by the local education authority. In recent years a varied programme of school-based training courses has covered a range of pastoral and academic topics. Teachers attending courses outside the school share their experience and knowledge with colleagues. Appraisal of teaching staff takes place over a three year cycle and that of non-teaching staff every two years. All staff value the process. The training needs of individual teachers are usefully linked to subject reviews and school development planning.
- 5.27 Appropriate background checks are carried out on all teaching and non-teaching staff in line with legal requirements.

Does the school meet the regulatory requirements for the suitability of proprietors and staff?

- 5.28 Yes.

Resources for Learning

- 5.29 The quality of resources is high and provision is generous. Resources are used effectively to promote teaching and learning.

- 5.30 The range of resources and their availability and accessibility are appropriate for the ages and abilities of the pupils. Books, equipment and materials are plentiful, of a high quality and are used effectively to support and enhance teaching and learning in all subjects.
- 5.31 The provision for ICT, including both hardware and software, is very good. The main ICT suite is very well equipped with new flat screen computers and two further suites in the Lower and Middle School areas provide ready access for all pupils. A large number of laptops for use in the classrooms and by staff augments the provision for ICT. All departments are networked, promoting the very good use made of ICT in many subjects. Girls in Year 6 were seen in geography using Ordnance Survey interactive software in their research. Most members of staff have lap-tops for planning, assessment and for recording children's work.
- 5.32 Other resources for learning support the curriculum well. Very good use is made of the range of good quality books, equipment and educational material in all departments and of resources outside the school, such as museums and art galleries. Teachers have access to a number of interactive white boards, overhead projectors, televisions and video equipment. The use of digital cameras enables them to produce a large selection of photographs of the children, for example when working on mathematical investigations or researching their history projects.
- 5.33 Resources are well organised and stored efficiently, either in classrooms or in central resource areas and they are readily accessible to all staff. Hazardous materials for use in science are securely stored and art and design areas incorporate good storage facilities. All curriculum areas are allocated annual budgets which are sufficient to ensure that resources are regularly updated.

Libraries

- 5.34 Library provision at The Manor provides very good support for the curriculum. The range and quality of the books and the high standards of cataloguing and management contribute towards its effectiveness.
- 5.35 The main library offers a comfortable environment for reading and personal study. It is bright and centrally located, with doors on both sides providing easy access for all pupils. It is very well stocked, with books covering all the important areas of the curriculum, most of which are in good condition. A good number of attractive floor cushions make it an appealing place for comfortable browsing, as was evident both during library lessons and in free time. Some tables provide space for more formal personal study, and one girl was seen busily editing her school newspaper during break. The size of the tables does, however, slightly inhibit access to some of the lower non-fiction shelves.
- 5.36 The balance between fiction and non-fiction books is good, with the cataloguing recorded on the two desktop computers. All the pupils, who have ready access to the library during the week, make good use of the library. A listening centre with five headphones and cassettes is readily available.
- 5.37 Other library facilities in the school include a useful provision in the Lower School, with topic-based non-fiction and reading sets, the Middle School has large double-bookcases for Years 3 and 4, while topic boxes in many classrooms provide free-time reading material. Many areas of the school have appropriate and well-stocked departmental libraries, and Nursery and Reception have recently acquired a library of 'story sacks'. The budget for the library enables the stock to be updated annually and teachers are involved in the choice of new books.
- 5.38 The library is well managed by a qualified librarian. Pupils are introduced very clearly to the library system and to study skills programmes, and stories are read, with vivid animation, to rapt pupils. Weekly library lessons enable pupils to be shown how to borrow, and allowed to browse. They understand the Dewey system of classification and the alphabetical arrangement of fiction. Older pupils are keen to volunteer to become librarians, helping to maintain the stock and to guide younger pupils.

- 5.39 Libraries at The Manor are successful in encouraging pupils to read. The profile is enhanced by participation in Readathons, which raise significant sums for charity, and by regular book fairs, which raise extra funds for the library stock. Book clubs for Years 4 and 5, a biennial book week and visits by authors, most recently including a poet and the storyteller and children's author, Bob Hartman, further encourage the pupils' love of books.

Premises and Accommodation

- 5.40 The buildings, accommodation and other facilities are very good and appropriate for the numbers, ages and abilities of the pupils. They support teaching and learning, and contribute positively to the personal development, behaviour and welfare of the pupils.
- 5.41 The accommodation for children in the Foundation Stage is very good. The Nursery is housed separately in an attractive, purpose built, open-plan building, which is very well suited to the delivery of the curriculum. The classrooms used for the Reception classes, and for Years 1 to 4, are attractive and spacious, with the central area between classes being used for ICT. The Lower School and Middle School have bright, attractive spaces for larger group activities such as assemblies and physical education. Classroom accommodation in the Upper School is enhanced by outstanding specialist facilities. Separate areas for music, science, ICT and design and technology are bright and spacious, offering very good opportunities for practical work and enhancing pupils' learning. The recently completed music block provides high quality accommodation for class lessons, individual music tuition and practice rooms. In addition, the large main hall is an attractive building for physical education, assemblies, concerts and dramatic productions. Considerable building work, of high quality, has been carried out during the last five years, including the kitchen and dining hall, the new nursery and refurbishment of the ground floor of the manor house.
- 5.42 The school occupies an attractive site with a wide range of play areas which are well equipped to suit the different age groups. The children throughout the school are developing areas for wild life, with a pond and bird boxes. Flowers and vegetables are also grown in separate plots on the site. The school is working towards achieving an Eco-school award.
- 5.43 Provision for outdoor sports and games is good; four tennis and netball courts and a large playing field offer space for all requirements. Swimming takes place at a local senior school.
- 5.44 Rooms are well furnished and the standard of decoration throughout the school is high. All areas of the school benefit from a rolling programme of maintenance, redecoration and refurbishment.
- 5.45 The school is enlivened by the high quality of displays of pupils' work, and many corridors and public areas have large photographs of current and past pupils engaged in a range of activities.
- 5.46 Traffic management systems allow safe movement for parents when dropping off or collecting their children.

Does the school meet the regulatory requirements for premises and accommodation?

- 5.47 Yes.

Links with Parents and the Community

- 5.48 The school has developed a very good partnership with parents and good links with the community. A very positive response to the pre-inspection questionnaire expressed considerable satisfaction with the encouragement given to parents to be involved in the life of the school. A recent school questionnaire invited parents to suggest more ways to be involved, with helpful and appreciative responses being given.
- 5.49 Parents are provided with good information about the school and about their children's work and progress. Welcome booklets provide a comprehensive package of information for parents about

pastoral care, school procedures, events and activities and are sent to them before their children join the school and as they move up the school. Information on pupils' progress is sent to parents in reports, which are written twice a year for each child in the school, but at different stages according to their year-group. Pupils' progress can be discussed at the well-organized parents' evenings that take place each term. The headmistress sends parents an annual report, summarising the aspirations and achievements of the year. An informative newsletter, 'Manor Matters', is sent to parents every two weeks, and the vibrant annual school magazine 'Manorisms' provides an excellent picture of school life. The prospectus is informative, and the school website communicates information about the school very clearly. An evening meeting and a checklist help parents to prepare for senior school application and entry.

- 5.50 Parents have many opportunities to be involved in the activities of the school and with their children's work, and this makes a good contribution to pupils' learning and progress. Parents are involved in the life of the school in many ways, including assisting with costumes and changing in drama, organising concerts and speaking to the pupils about experiences, faith and careers. Parents are invited to attend plays, concerts, carols, galas, sports days, fetes and lunches in Year 2. They are also invited to attend form assemblies, open music and ballet lessons. 'Friends of The Manor' is an active parents' association, providing social contact for parents as well as funds for the school and for children's charities. This has recently included the provision of popular story sacks for the Nursery and Reception classes. Parents are welcome to look round their child's classroom, while others were seen during the inspection helping with the flowers and attending the Minnows sessions for pre-school children. Parents of pupils on the eco-committee assist in this area, while others help on school trips. A parents' notice-board aids communication.
- 5.51 The school handles parental concerns with due care and attention and parents are sent details of the complaints procedure. Views of parents confirmed that they feel any complaints have been handled well.
- 5.52 Good links with the community have been established, particularly with Shippon Village Residents' Association, and charitable giving at The Manor (which has recently included charities associated with childhood illness, child welfare, and educational, environmental and social issues) has a high priority. The school holds three open days a year, an annual culture week and pupils take a variety of trips and excursions linked to their studies. Pupils from two local schools give voluntary assistance in school clubs and activities, while the school allows members of the community to hire the hall or barn for yoga and judo; Shippon residents have free use of the tennis courts and are charged a reduced charity rate for hire of the barn and other rooms outside school hours.

Does the school meet the regulatory requirements for the provision of information?

- 5.53 Yes.

Does the school meet the regulatory requirements for the manner in which complaints are to be handled?

- 5.54 Yes.

6. PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND PASTORAL CARE

Pupils' Personal Development

- 6.1 The school's provision for pupils' personal development is very good. There is a very good range of suitable opportunities through which pupils can develop a system of spiritual beliefs and a moral code as well as developing appropriate personal, social and cultural skills and understanding. The school places great emphasis on the part all staff play in helping the children to develop spiritual and moral awareness.

- 6.2 Several areas of the curriculum promote the development of the pupils' spiritual awareness. For example, assemblies and lessons in religious education (RE) and personal, social and health education (PSHE) enable pupils to explore ways in which values and beliefs, including religious beliefs, affect people's lives. Prayers are said thoughtfully in assemblies and grace is said at lunch. Many prayers written by children can be found in Manorisms and on display in classrooms. The school chaplain visits the school regularly and a Bible Explorers Club runs after school.
- 6.3 Further opportunities for pupils' experience to transcend the mundane occur often in music. Teachers contribute by valuing the pupils' questions and respecting their views and opinions.
- 6.4 The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The school successfully engenders a strong moral code through its ethos, its curriculum and through the staff acting as very good role models.
- 6.5 All classes have one PSHE lesson per week in which topics such as anti-social behaviour, distinguishing right from wrong and respect for the law are discussed. In the Upper School a broad general knowledge of public institutions and services in England has recently been introduced to the syllabus. The girls in Year 6 visited the Houses of Parliament in the autumn term and they also enjoyed a visit from a member of the House of Lords. The school has a code of conduct of which all are aware and Golden Rules are displayed in the form rooms.
- 6.6 Issues surrounding the environment are an important focus for the school. An environmental club, known as GRUBS (Green Understanding for a Better School), meets regularly and has recently discussed making a bog area and a bee refuge out of tin cans. In addition, they organised a speaker from a pond conservation group to talk to the school during an assembly. A Year 6 girl has written an eco-code which is displayed in most classrooms.
- 6.7 Very good provision is made for pupils' social development and a strong ethos of care and mutual respect permeates the school. Excellent relationships exist between the staff and pupils.
- 6.8 Older pupils are given many opportunities to exercise responsibility. The girls in Year 6 act as house captains, at lunch times they help in the Nursery and Lower School and they act as librarians; two girls help on Thursdays in the school office. In the summer term Year 5 girls help to look after the children in Reception.
- 6.9 The School Council consists of two girls from each form in the Middle and Upper School. Fortnightly meetings are chaired by a pupil from Year 6. Recently the Council has been discussing the possibility of having a climbing wall, creating a sensory garden and running a healthy tuck shop for the Upper School.
- 6.10 Out of the classroom many pupils compete in sports teams and perform in plays, orchestra and choirs. Both the chamber choir and the jazz band have performed at the Royal Festival Hall. The school undertakes many charitable fund raising events, often organised by the older girls, which give them an insight into the lives of those less fortunate than themselves. The Middle School has supported UNICEF for the past five years, girls in Year 5 sent gifts to children in Northern Uganda last year and girls in Year 6 hope to raise more money this year when they organise their annual fete.
- 6.11 Good opportunities are provided for cultural development. Pupils are encouraged to appreciate their own cultural traditions and the diversity and richness of others. Visits are paid to places nearby and further afield, for example, Sulgrave Manor and Fishbourne Roman Palace. Residential trips occur in the summer term when Year 4 walk The Ridgeway and spend a night in a youth hostel, Year 5 spend three days on an activity holiday on the Isle of Wight and Year 6 visit Normandy for a week. A cultural week takes place annually. Last year all the children experienced many African arts and this year they learnt about Indian arts including music, literature, drama and art and craft.

Does the school meet the regulatory requirements for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils?

6.12 Yes.

Pastoral Care, including Welfare and Health & Safety

6.13 The quality of pastoral care, including pupils' welfare, is very good and makes a significant contribution to pupils' experience at school. The provision for ensuring a healthy and safe environment is very good.

6.14 Staff and pupils respect each other and communicate well. Responses to the parental questionnaire indicate that the parents are very happy with the help and guidance their children receive and believe that the school promotes worthwhile attitudes and values.

6.15 The school provides effective support and guidance for its pupils through careful monitoring of their academic progress and personal development. Pupils are encouraged by praise and other rewards for academic work, for effort and when they are helpful. Children with special educational needs are identified by the co-ordinator, IEPs are carefully prepared and copies given to all staff who teach the pupils.

6.16 A high standard of pastoral care is maintained as pupils move through the school and measures are taken to safeguard and promote their good health, well-being and good behaviour. Pupils are confident that they will be listened to should they have a problem and they feel able to approach their form teacher or another member of staff. The heads of the Lower, Middle and Upper Schools promote good discipline and behaviour, including measures to guard against bullying. The behaviour, discipline and anti-bullying policies give clear guidelines and the pupils' booklet 'Together in Friendship' helps to ensure all children feel safe.

6.17 The written health and safety policies and procedures are good, well established and cover all that is required. The whole school health and safety committee meets regularly and the bursar is the designated representative. Medical arrangements are appropriate with a nurse on site four and a half days a week and a number of qualified first aiders on the staff. First aid kits are usefully sited in the school, including in the science and DT rooms.

6.18 Accidents are recorded in an accident book and all requirements are met in respect of the storage of medicine and drugs. All necessary measures to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards have been taken. Annual servicing takes place of all electrical equipment.

6.19 School meals are of a high standard, offer a good range of healthy eating options and are enjoyed by the pupils. The school takes an active role in ensuring the children understand the need for a healthy diet and the valuable contribution towards good health of regular exercise. A successful PE and Healthy Eating Day in the autumn reinforced this. Clear guidelines are given to the pupils on drugs and sex education.

6.20 The Manor provides a safe, healthy and happy environment in which the pupils can thrive.

Does the school meet the regulatory requirements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils?

6.21 Yes.

7. THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Governance and Management

7.1 The governance and management of the school are good. They ensure that its aims are met and that a suitable quality of education is provided. Efficient planning has enabled the school to develop very good facilities and to provide resources which support the teaching and learning. Governors have

not provided a clear educational direction for the school in recent years but now appreciate the need for updating the strategic plan and are undertaking a whole school review.

- 7.2 The management framework is sound. The governing body has a broad range of expertise that benefits the school and committees meet regularly to consider in detail the necessary issues. Regular presentations by staff at governors' meetings and governors' attendance at school functions have increased their involvement and depth of understanding. Value is placed on a wide range of academic, creative and sporting achievement, and the school's aims and values are reflected in its work. Individual governors are invited into school by pairs of Middle School pupils who conduct them on a tour of the school and join them for lunch.
- 7.3 The head provides very good leadership. Parents appreciate her responsiveness and help and staff value the support which she gives them. Her leadership contributes much to the 'affectionate trust' which the school seeks to have with parents. She is well supported by her deputy, who is also head of the Middle School and by the heads of the Lower and Upper Schools, who together form the senior leadership team. With the addition of the director of studies this team forms the curriculum committee. The bursar attends management meetings as required.
- 7.4 The roles of the subject leaders are clearly defined in their job descriptions. Detailed records are kept and regular assessments made but as yet not all subject leaders are implementing regular monitoring of lessons or developing the culture of sharing best practice. The overview of the delivery of each subject as a whole is not yet fully in place but features in the strategic plans of the recently appointed director of studies. Very good annual subject reviews form the basis of the curriculum strand of the school management framework.
- 7.5 A wide range of policies supports all aspects of its organisation. Curriculum policies and schemes are in place and provide good support for non-specialist teachers. The caring ethos of the school permeates all these policies.
- 7.6 Routine administration and organisation in the school are efficient and the quality of communication is good. The headmistress and the heads of the three sections of the main school, and of the Nursery, work hard to ensure co-operation and smooth running in day to day matters. They are assisted by a team of dedicated support staff. Secretarial, grounds, cleaning and catering staff all feel part of the team and make a significant contribution to the life of the school. Communication with parents and the wider community is good, and the website and fortnightly newsletter 'Manor Matters' give much detailed information. The annual magazine is a delightful record of the life and work of the school and the head's annual report provides a detailed account of the year.
- 7.7 The headmistress and bursar monitor resources, and human resources are efficiently monitored through the review system.

8. ACHIEVEMENT AND QUALITY IN SUBJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

Achievement and Quality in Subjects

The Foundation Stage

- 8.1 The children in the Foundation Stage achieve very good standards in relation to their ability and make rapid progress. By the end of the Reception year, most pupils have attained all the early learning goals and have begun work on the national curriculum programmes of study.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- 8.2 Personal, social and emotional development is very good. By the end of the Foundation Stage, children have achieved the early learning goals in this area. In the Nursery, they learn to co-operate, take turns and help each other. This is strongly reinforced by the care and encouragement shown to

them by the staff. Expectations of good behaviour, kindness and thoughtfulness are high. The children are supported in their activities and are given good opportunities to become independent; for example, children clear up after cooking and put toys and equipment away in the allotted storage spaces. Resources are clearly labelled and easily accessible and this promotes further independence. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes are well behaved and concentrate on their activities. They listen attentively and follow instructions. They are keen to participate, take turns and co-operate. All children are taught to value each other and their teachers ensure that all have the opportunity to join in group activities. Awareness of ideas, cultures and traditions different from their own are introduced at appropriate festivals throughout the year; for example they have made some lucky money envelopes for Chinese New Year.

Communication, Language and Literacy

- 8.3 Children's attainment in communication, language and literacy is very good in relation to their abilities and they make rapid progress. Most children attain the early learning goals by the end of Reception. Throughout, most children talk confidently and listen attentively. Reception class children read well and good opportunities are given across the Foundation Stage for children to extend and develop their language skills. A story sack library further enriches this experience. In the Nursery, all activities including role-play are used well. A pet shop displayed a wide range of animals to buy, children were also eager to introduce the house of 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears' and to discuss the different sized bowls for the different sized bears. Pupils show sustained interest and co-operative play as well as good use of language skills in role play situations. In Reception opportunities for role-play such as 'Manor Hospital' and 'the sensory cave' again enhance the development of language and communication. Pupils re-enacted the story of Goldilocks in assembly for their parents and all the other pupils. They spoke and sang clearly and showed remarkable confidence in front of a large audience.

Mathematical Development

- 8.4 Mathematical development across the Foundation Stage is very good and, by the end of it, most children have attained all aspects of the early learning goals. Progress made is very good. In the Nursery, many opportunities for practical activities and play are provided to reinforce the children's knowledge and understanding of number and other mathematical concepts. For example, painting ducks provides counting experiences, and discussions on comparisons of the sizes of bowls the three bears might use gives appreciation of capacity. The provision for mathematical development is very good in both the Nursery and Reception. A great variety of appropriate resources and displays enhances the acquisition of mathematical skills. Careful planning ensures that the needs of children of different abilities are met. In one very good lesson, children were sorting and reasoning using geometrical shapes. All activities assist the children's knowledge of mathematical language and their understanding. Clear explanations by the teacher enable the children to make very good progress.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

- 8.5 Children across the Foundation Stage make very good progress in knowledge and understanding of the world so that, by the age of five, they attain the early learning goal and some exceed it. Well-organised activities provide opportunities for children to investigate objects and materials, explore how things work and build and construct in a variety of ways and pupils are actively encouraged to find out, explore and question. After listening to a story about footprints in the snow, Reception children were encouraged to predict the source of the prints from the shape and size of them. Very good questioning, extension of answers and reinforcement of explanations enabled all children to make good progress in their learning. Frequent use is made of outdoor areas, with many children choosing to complete allotted tasks outdoors. Visits within the local environment make a positive contribution to this area of learning.

Physical Development

- 8.6 Physical development across the Foundation Stage is very good and most pupils attain the early learning goals in this area. Many opportunities are provided for physical development and children's attainment is very good. Frequent use of the safe and secure outdoor area ensures that pupils have the opportunity to develop their gross motor skills and a good range of outdoor equipment provides varied and exciting challenges. Children are encouraged to climb, balance and roll independently and with a partner. They are aware of each other's needs and co-operate well. Enthusiastic staff, both in the Nursery and in Reception ensure that children are actively engaged throughout, thus making very good progress.

Creative Development

- 8.7 Most pupils attain the early learning goal in creative development by the end of Reception, and many exceed it. Pupils make very good progress in a range of activities throughout the Foundation Stage, including painting, printing, cutting and pasting. However opportunities for free choice are limited. Pupils' work is linked to all areas of the curriculum and is well displayed and celebrated. Reception pupils had made good textural collages and weaving samples to develop their understanding of the sense of touch. Creative development through music, movement and singing is very good. In the Nursery children are given the opportunity to sing a 'Hello' song every day and they have learned several songs related to topics they have covered. They are able to clap, stamp and hear a rhythm with the teacher when singing, listening to music and counting patterns. A very good range of percussion instruments and other musical resources supports musical learning and pupils benefit from specialist teaching.

Other Aspects of the Foundation Stage

- 8.8 The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is good and in many lessons it is very good. Teachers have very good knowledge of the 'stepping stones' of the early learning goals. Teaching is enthusiastic and the approach is gentle and pleasant. Support staff are well trained and deployed and make a valuable contribution to children's learning. A comprehensive screening system ensures that pupils who may have special educational needs are identified early and teachers can plan appropriately for their needs. Teachers' planning is very good and clearly indicates what children need to learn. Collaborative planning between teachers in Nursery and Reception ensures good long term coverage. Monitoring and assessment systems are thorough and photographic evidence of attainment is displayed in classrooms. The Oxfordshire Foundation Stage Profiles are used to assess attainment and inform future planning. Management of the Foundation Stage is very good. The head of the Lower School and the Foundation Stage co-ordinator monitor the curriculum and a portfolio of each pupil's work is kept as a record of achievement and progress. Written reports are comprehensive and cover all six areas of learning. Links between parents and the school have been well established.

English

- 8.9 Pupils achieve high standards in English in relation to their abilities and perform well in national tests. Results in national tests at the age of 11 over the last three years are well above the national average for all maintained primary schools. Less able pupils also attain well. All pupils make good progress and throughout the school pupils show the ability to work independently and sustain their concentration.
- 8.10 Pupils speak and listen well. By Year 2 their speaking and listening skills are very good. They listen attentively to their teachers and readily respond to questions, using appropriate technical vocabulary. By 11 they can speak articulately about a range of issues; for example in a discussion about smacking where they offered opposing views. Year 6 pupils discussed the rights of girls to act in Shakespearian plays and debated their human rights, before writing persuasively about it.

- 8.11 Standards of reading are very good throughout the school. Efficient systems are in place to enable the pupils to read with confidence and many opportunities are given to encourage them to read aloud with animation, as was seen in Year 2. Year 6 pupils read widely, with fluency and expression.
- 8.12 Pupils write well. An imaginative poetry tree display of firework poems showed that pupils work with maturity and sensitivity to words, with personification and alliteration being used without awkwardness. They have many opportunities to write for different audiences and non-fiction writing is emphasised. Year 6 used writing frames to rehearse their arguments for and against fox-hunting. Pupils are encouraged to work both individually and collaboratively; for example Year 1 pupils co-operated in story telling and Year 6 worked in pairs on persuasive writing about bear-baiting.
- 8.13 Pupils' progress is very good in all years. Year 4 pupils write competently and coherently, revealing the ability to recall a story and communicate enjoyment of a text. By Year 6 many pupils are writing at length and with maturity of style, adapting the tone to the subject matter. The school has been aware of some past weaknesses in punctuation and a newly introduced ICT program is aiding pupils' progress in this area.
- 8.14 The quality of pupils' learning, attitudes and behaviour is very good. Pupils work hard and willingly, maintaining their concentration and motivation over long periods. They are very eager to respond to questions in class at all levels in the school and in Year 6 they show the maturity to question their teachers over matters of vocabulary. They are competent and independent learners who take great pride in the presentation of their work.
- 8.15 The overall quality of teaching is very good and it is always at least sound. Teachers are knowledgeable and have high expectations. Careful planning and a variety of approaches characterise the best lessons, where pupils' attention is engaged throughout. In the few less successful lessons pupils had insufficient challenge and attainment was restricted. Displays in classrooms are very good, assisting and enhancing learning. Marking is usually sound and encouraging, much of it being done with the pupils.
- 8.16 Drama is timetabled for Years 5 and 6 and one lesson was seen, with pupils showing very good levels of concentration and commitment. Video recordings of three school plays, of Years 1, 4 and 6, showed the very high standards of production and performance, with confident delivery, well-directed acting, delightful costumes and imaginative scenery. The barn provides useful space for rehearsal, while the hall is an excellent theatre. A visit to The Globe theatre by Year 6 pupils had inspired much detailed writing and topical discussion.
- 8.17 Departmental resources are good and include easy access to ICT. Pupils turn naturally to word processing for presentation of their work, well illustrated by a firework poem on the poetry tree. Commercially produced programs are used, for example in grammar lessons in Years 3 and 4.
- 8.18 The department is well managed. Documentation is thorough and assessment procedures are effective, informing the setting which begins in Year 3. From Year 5 each class is divided by ability into two smaller groups which enables teaching to be pitched at the appropriate level. Younger pupils experiencing difficulties receive very good classroom support and from Year 5 pupils have assistance from the learning support department before school.
- 8.19 Departmental monitoring is not yet fully effective although the annual subject review indicates that the department is aware of the need to improve this process. Regular, well-documented departmental meetings ensure good liaison between teachers.

Mathematics

- 8.20 Pupils' attainment in mathematics throughout the school is very good in relation to their abilities and they perform well in national tests. At the age of 11 results in national tests are well above the national average for all maintained primary schools, with the majority of pupils achieving the higher level 5.

- 8.21 By the age of 7 the pupils achieve high standards. They show confidence with numbers and are able to choose appropriate operations to solve addition and subtraction problems. They have a secure knowledge of their 2, 5 and 10 times tables, many also know the 3 times table, and they are starting to apply their knowledge to division. They understand fractions involving halves and quarters, telling the time on the hour, half hour, quarter to and quarter past and can name and describe many plane and solid shapes.
- 8.22 Attainment by the age of 11 is also very good. Pupils have a good sense of place value and can use this knowledge very well when multiplying and dividing whole numbers and decimals, as seen in an investigation involving sweets. They have the ability to check their calculations, estimate well and are able to question whether they have given sensible answers.
- 8.23 Progress made in the Lower School is good and often rapid. Year 2 pupils quickly learnt how to add two digit numbers using an unmarked number line and then extended their understanding to solve number problems, including questions about shopping. In the Middle and Upper Schools progress is good and frequently very good. In Year 3 pupils show good recall of facts about fractions and then extend their knowledge of halves and quarters to include thirds, eighths and tenths, which they then used in some problems. Year 4 pupils confidently use their knowledge of the four rules to calculate complex two stage money problems.
- 8.24 The quality of pupils' learning is very good. They respond well to their teachers, are eager to learn and participate with enthusiasm in oral work. This was evident at the start of many lessons when mental calculations and different strategies for solving problems were investigated. Year 2 enjoyed counting in tens from a given number, especially when they went above 100 and Year 1 confidently played bingo by subtracting numbers.
- 8.25 Pupils are competent learners and sustain their concentration. They work well both individually and in co-operation with others. They frequently confer, which strengthens their understanding of the topics being studied and they respect the views of others. This was evident in Year 5 work on probability and area and in Year 6 when finding the average cost of a sweet, the weight of a pupil and her cost in those sweets.
- 8.26 The quality of teaching is good and frequently very good. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and their expectations are well matched to the abilities of all the pupils, including those who have particular difficulties. The pace of lessons is brisk and this results in good participation by pupils. Objectives for lessons are clear, all work is efficiently organised and use of time and resources is good. In Year 5 the use of an interactive whiteboard was effective for the teaching of perimeter. Well targeted preparation of lessons and a wide range of teaching approaches ensure pupils are challenged. All teachers make good use of questioning to check pupils' understanding.
- 8.27 Arrangement of the pupils in groups in Years 1 and 2, and in ability sets from Year 3, makes a significant impact on the teaching of mathematics and the high standards achieved.
- 8.28 The mathematics department is well managed and teachers throughout the school appreciate the support they receive. The mathematics handbook provides comprehensive information, including the aims of the department, teaching strategies and extensive schemes of work.

Science

- 8.29 Pupils achieve high standards in science in relation to their abilities, they make good progress and they perform well in national tests. Results in national tests at the age of 11 are well above the national average for all maintained primary schools and most pupils achieve the higher level 5.
- 8.30 Attainment at Year 2 is good. Pupils understand the need for a healthy diet and know the difference between natural and man-made materials. They can explain the benefits of exercise and plan different activities to promote a healthy lifestyle. One pupil could explain that when her heart beat

faster it was good for her as it sent more blood round. By Year 4 they are able to plan a fair test and by Year 6 they have acquired very good practical skills.

- 8.31 Pupils make very good progress throughout the school. The emphasis on practical work allows them to consolidate their knowledge and acquire new skills at a rate appropriate for their abilities. A Year 6 investigation into huddling penguins demonstrated the progress pupils made with recording variations of temperature. Year 4 built on previous knowledge of materials and changes of state when melting fats.
- 8.32 The quality of pupils' learning and behaviour is very good. They respond positively when questioned and listen to the contributions of others. They concentrate well during demonstrations and when completing practical tasks and show good attention to safety. Pupils work co-operatively in groups and respond to challenges with confidence. They are willing to experiment and accept that mistakes are part of the learning process. The good relationship which they have with their teachers means that they ask for help when necessary.
- 8.33 The quality of teaching is always good and it is often very good. Lesson objectives are clear and questioning is skilfully used to check what pupils have remembered from previous lessons and then to extend their thinking. The enthusiastic presentation on light and shadows in Year 3 captured pupils' imagination. Practical tasks are well organised and lessons carefully planned to build on previous knowledge. Teaching assistants work with younger pupils to ensure that advice and help are readily to hand and the laboratory assistant makes a significant contribution to the efficient running of the laboratory, optimising the time available for teaching.
- 8.34 Teachers' marking is regular but comments do not always indicate what pupils need to do to improve. Homework is used effectively to consolidate work done in class.
- 8.35 Resources for science are very good. The spacious science room and its adjoining preparation and greenhouse areas are very well equipped and the use of ICT in science is well developed. Division of some classes so that part of their work in science takes place in the ICT suite means that a variety of scientific skills can be introduced. Garden plots enable pupils to put into practice skills and knowledge they have acquired in lessons.
- 8.36 Management of the department is sound and planning is clear and organised. Liaison between specialist and non-specialist teachers ensures continuity in the teaching of science but monitoring is not yet well developed.

Information and Communication Technology

- 8.37 Pupils, including those with learning difficulties, achieve high standards in ICT and its use in other subjects is outstanding.
- 8.38 Attainment in ICT is very good at all ages. The use of ICT is incorporated into the work covered in the Nursery so that by Year 2 pupils have very good keyboard skills, can log on and off and use a variety of programs. By Year 6 standards are very high and pupils use an increasing number of applications, including spreadsheets, publishing and web design. They show a high level of skill in word processing and appreciate its use for presentation of their work. Some pupils can touch type by Year 4 and therefore work quickly at the keyboard.
- 8.39 Pupils' progress is very good in relation to their abilities because activities are carefully planned at each stage to build upon previous skills. Suitable levels of challenge are built into the programme and pupils are encouraged to apply new skills to different situations. Regular access to the network, in ICT lessons and in other subjects, enables pupils to practise their skills and consolidate progress at each stage. Support in class from teaching assistants, and from the network manager for older pupils, reduces time spent resolving technical problems and has a positive effect on their progress.

- 8.40 The quality of pupils' learning and behaviour is very good. They are keen to learn and apply themselves well to their tasks, whether working alone or with others. They have the confidence to experiment when faced with a challenge and only ask for help when they have made sensible attempts to solve problems. Behaviour is excellent and pupils sustain their levels of concentration. The enthusiasm with which they respond to their teachers indicates their strong motivation.
- 8.41 The quality of teaching is always good and it is often very good. It meets the needs of all the pupils. Appropriate explanations, linked to previous experience, are given before tasks are set. This structured approach enabled a group of Year 5 pupils to learn how to record onto MP3 players, add the finished recording to the opening of a presentation, and then explain their work to others. Teachers have good subject knowledge and prepare lessons carefully. They develop good relationships with the pupils and give praise interlaced with touches of humour, while maintaining high expectations. Activities are chosen both to enthuse the pupils and to promote rapid progress; for example Year 2 were excited about being able to select their own animals for a branch database before playing a game. The objectives for each lesson are made explicit at the outset and good questioning is used to check pupils' learning after each task.
- 8.42 The resources and accommodation for ICT are outstanding and the ease of access around the school, for both staff and pupils, enables ICT to be well used. The generous provision of desktop and lap-top computers, with wireless access, allows pupils individual access in lessons in all parts of the school. Additional resources for ICT include digital cameras, data logging equipment and memory sticks. Commercially produced programs, together with the school intranet, permit a wide range of study and interactive whiteboards are used effectively in lessons.
- 8.43 The department is well managed by an ICT committee which is building on good practice already established and planning effectively for future progress. Opportunities for ICT to be used across the curriculum are very good and teachers' own skills meet this challenge. Further encouragement has been given by the school with the provision of lap-tops for teachers to assist with lesson preparation and recording of assessments.

Physical Education (PE)

- 8.44 Pupils achieve good standards in physical education and some achieve very good standards. Through the lessons and the activities programme the school offers a broad curriculum for sport. All pupils have the opportunity to acquire secure skills and develop them in games situations. Sport for all is encouraged.
- 8.45 Pupils' attainment is good. Year 3 girls show good netball passing and catching skills, and understand the need for movement off the ball, Year 1 pupils at work on the floor apparatus in gymnastics concentrated on landing and finishing their movements. Some pupils show very good individual skills and these are enhanced by selection for extra coaching, leading to team performance. The strength of these teams has led to a good record in tournaments against other schools. General levels of fitness of the pupils are good.
- 8.46 Pupils make appropriate or good progress in each lesson, and their progress is carefully monitored, with records being kept for each child. These records are used to inform the next stage of teaching and coaching. However, the time-constraints of a 35 minute lesson, to include changing, limit the progress that can be made.
- 8.47 The pupils' learning and behaviour are always good and often very good. In all activities they understand the importance of stopping quickly to listen to instructions, they are keen to make progress in their skills, and enjoy the coaching exercises. Years 1 and 2 learnt to turn their feet sideways to control the ball in football and in a Year 3 netball lesson passes to moving team-mates were achieved. Pupils are happy to volunteer answers to questions and to demonstrate their skills to others.

- 8.48 The quality of teaching is very good. The best lessons are characterised by excellent demonstrations, secure subject knowledge and skilful coaching strategies. The expertise and dedication of the staff ensure that all pupils make progress, and that very good preparation is made for school teams. There is a strong sense of teamwork between the staff, who worked together in many of the sessions, giving close attention to all the pupils. Lessons are carefully planned, to match activities to abilities, and it was evident that a gymnastics lesson was adapted slightly when it was clear that a point had not been understood and needed to be reinforced.
- 8.49 The facilities, including the four tennis/netball courts, the playing field and the hall, are all well maintained, providing good opportunities for the pupils to develop their abilities.
- 8.50 Leadership and management of the department are good, with careful monitoring taking place to raise standards. An effective scheme of work has been drawn up, with opportunities for other activities such as country dancing and judo.

Art

- 8.51 Pupils achieve high standards in art throughout the school. They draw and paint with care and use a variety of media to convey their ideas. They have good knowledge of the work of some famous artists and refer to it when selecting the appropriate style or mood for their own work.
- 8.52 Pupils' attainment in art is high. By the age of 7 they are confident when mixing paints and choose their colours with care. They can cut and stick efficiently. Drawings and paintings show good levels of observation and attention to detail and pupils work with sustained concentration. They have used clay, card and fabrics in the creation of 3D objects and appreciate some of the possibilities and limitations of different media. By Year 6 their work includes perspective drawing and digital photography and their use of colour is more sophisticated, for instance when applying colour washes for a landscape painting. They can discuss their own work and evaluate how it could be improved and are ready to offer opinions on the work of famous artists. They have developed a very good understanding of the artwork associated with some different cultures and can produce their own work in a similar style.
- 8.53 Progress in lessons is rapid and pupils are keen to do well. They listen to advice and respond to it by modifying their work. Year 4 pupils were able to describe the foreground and background of their pictures and give reasoned views for painting them in a different manner.
- 8.54 The quality of pupils' learning and behaviour is very good. Behaviour was exemplary in all the lessons seen and pupils concentrate hard on completing their tasks. They move about the room carefully so that they do not inconvenience others and are always helpful and kind in their relationships with their peers. They persevere even when encountering difficulties and accept that it takes time and patience to produce work of high quality.
- 8.55 The quality of teaching is high. Teachers show very good subject knowledge and expect high standards from the pupils. Planning is good and close liaison between the art department and class teachers up to Year 4 enables artwork to be related to studies in other subjects. Year 3 studies using the primary colours were labelled in French and papier mache models of rain forest creatures had been constructed and carefully painted by Year 4 to complement their work in geography.
- 8.56 The department benefits from a specialist subject leader who also calls on the expertise of visiting artists to extend the pupils' experiences of the art of different cultures. African masks and a range of sculptures related to the elements were produced during workshop sessions led by visitors. In this work and in their normal lessons pupils make good use of the plentiful resources, of high quality, available to them.
- 8.57 Planning in art is efficient throughout the school and samples of art work are included in portfolios so that a record of the creative development of each pupil is maintained. The department is well led and managed and contributes much to the school environment with lively and colourful displays. In

the central area of the Middle school the rain forest had been excitingly recreated, with pictures and models of animals, and exotic birds and creepers hanging above the computers.

Design and Technology

- 8.58 Pupils achieve good standards in design technology (DT) throughout the school. They benefit from opportunities to develop their cookery skills in the food technology room as well as designing and making in a range of materials.
- 8.59 Pupils' attainment in DT is good. By the age of 7 they can use papier mache techniques and understand how to make faces from clay. They can use a variety of stitches in sewing and recognise the need for cleanliness when preparing food. Year 1 pupils mixed the ingredients for scones, following a recipe as well as instructions from their teacher and were able to cut them from the flattened dough. They understood the cooking process and recognised the dangers of the hot oven. Older pupils plan carefully for their project work in design technology, can use patterns and templates and produce neat and well crafted results. They evaluate their work and that of others and record what they have done.
- 8.60 Progress is good as the pupils can follow instructions conscientiously and they are attentive. They watch demonstrations of new techniques and then practise diligently. Their progress is enhanced by their ability to persevere with a piece of work over several weeks in the desire to achieve the best possible result. The provision of good quality resources has a beneficial effect on pupils' progress.
- 8.61 The quality of learning and behaviour is very good. Pupils are attentive and sustain their concentration over long periods. They move about the classroom or technology areas responsibly, showing great care not to damage the work of others. They ask for advice readily but also respond positively to suggestions. Their learning is reinforced by the encouragement they are given to talk about their work and that of other children and of the world of design. They are most articulate and give logical accounts of the processes involved in their work. A year 3 pupil was able to explain how she made a trundling toy, what difficulties she encountered and how she overcame them and modifications she would make if she were to start again.
- 8.62 The quality of teaching is never less than good and is very good in some lessons. Teachers' planning is detailed and their effective preparation of materials and resources enables pupils to make best use of the time available. All the teachers give support and encouragement which is appropriate to the needs of their pupils and they know them well. A calm and orderly atmosphere permeates design technology classes and aids the establishment of safe and hygienic practices. At times the structured approach and the desire of the pupils for a neat result, inhibit the investigative possibilities of this subject.
- 8.63 Digital photography is imaginatively used for recording the pupils' progress and colourful displays of work throughout the school, and particularly in the DT room, mean that pupils have the opportunity of appreciating the work of others and gaining new ideas from it.
- 8.64 The department is well organised and managed and comprehensive assessment records are kept. Opportunities for food technology in the separate specialist room enhance the programme in DT.

Short Subject Reports

Short subject reports contain concise evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning and of provision in the school.

Music

- 8.65 Four lessons and a range of musical activities were observed and pupils' music folders and class assessment files were scrutinised.

- 8.66 The quality of teaching was very good and some teaching was outstanding. Lessons were extremely well planned so that they provided a rich variety of practical and listening experiences for the pupils. Teachers used appropriate musical vocabulary and a wide range of instruments, both for demonstration and for music making by the pupils. The enthusiasm and energy displayed by the teachers, together with their high level of skill, encourage pupils to participate and to aim for high standards of performance.
- 8.67 Pupils enjoyed their lessons, behaved very well and were keenly interested. They responded readily to questioning, showing very good aural and analytical skills. The level of performance was high. Most pupils have individual instrumental tuition which extends their accomplishments.
- 8.68 Opportunities abound for ensembles, orchestra and choirs to perform in front of the school and wider audiences. The new music school offers excellent accommodation and includes large rooms suitable for smaller performances although the main hall is used for major concerts. Records are kept on video and CD of musical events held in school and at other venues such as the Festival Hall and Royal Albert Hall.

Religious Education

- 8.69 Two lessons of RE were observed, the Bible Explorers activity was visited and workbooks were scrutinised.
- 8.70 In the two lessons seen the quality of teaching was very good in one lesson and good in the other. Issues of faith were discussed in a sensitive, enthusiastic and encouraging manner, for example in Year 2 where the miracle of the calming of the storm was discussed.
- 8.71 A two-year plan, with a common weekly whole-school theme, is supported by clear lesson outlines for each year group, with suggestions for questions and activities which provide continuity and progression. This integrated approach ensures that RE is at the heart of the school's life.
- 8.72 Pupils are most attentive and are keen to learn. Their written work reflects increasing depth of knowledge as they move up the school, for example from speech bubbles written about the life of Ruth by younger pupils to 'agony aunt' writing by Year 4. Pupils behave very well. Classroom displays and assemblies support pupils' learning in RE and a very good resource library of books, videos, posters and artefacts provides easily accessible support for teachers.

Humanities

- 8.73 Four geography lessons and one history lesson were observed, books and project work of some of the pupils were scrutinised and displays in classrooms and around the school were considered.
- 8.74 The teaching was always good and often very good. Lessons were carefully planned and organised and included a wide range of tasks; outstanding use was made of the school's intranet for geographical research with the older pupils. Liaison between teachers of different subjects, particularly up to Year 4, had enabled pupils' work in geography and history to be extended through their art, design technology and music.
- 8.75 Pupils were attentive, worked hard and sustained their concentration throughout the lessons. They responded well to questioning and showed appreciation of complex issues; for instance Year 2 pupils debated the merits of Fair Trade in geography and Year 3 discussed the role of thanes in their history lesson following earlier research from secondary sources. Year 5 pupils could research the causes of coral death and explain the effects of sedimentation on coral. Pupils' behaviour in lessons was exemplary.
- 8.76 Classroom displays were well used as a vibrant record of past and present projects and enhanced the learning environment. The written work in the pupils' books was of a high standard and extremely well presented.

French

- 8.77 Four lessons were observed, two in Year 1 and one each in Years 4 and 6 and pupils' books were scrutinised. The standard of written work was good.
- 8.78 The quality of teaching observed was good and in some cases very good. Lessons were well planned, suitably paced and objectives were clear, with provision made for pupils of different abilities. Relationships with pupils were good. Teachers were knowledgeable and enthusiastic and a range of stimulating visual resources was used well, particularly the use of ICT to introduce new vocabulary. In some lessons good use was made of questioning to encourage the development of oral skills. Year 1 pupils were able to use key vocabulary to identify facial features.
- 8.79 Pupils responded enthusiastically to the teaching. They were co-operative and showed good powers of concentration. All were keen to be involved in the oral work. Pupils in Year 4 were eagerly putting the finishing touches to a song they were going to perform for parents at a forthcoming French lunch.
- 8.80 French is taught by specialist teachers from Year 1 and the provision is extended through a French activity club which runs after school for pupils from Years 3 and 4. Additionally an annual French lunch is prepared and served by Year 4 pupils for their parents and during the summer term a residential trip to Normandy takes place for Year 6.

Achievement and Quality in Activities

- 8.81 The quality of achievement in activities is high. The wide range of activities enriches the life of the school and encourages the aesthetic, expressive and academic development of the pupils.
- 8.82 Activities, which take place before school, at lunchtimes and after school, are well attended and carefully planned to cater for the abilities and interests of the pupils. The programme encompasses a wide variety of clubs, including many organised by the music department. Choirs, orchestra, bands and ensembles flourish, as well as music theory classes. Sporting teams and individuals participate in competitions at local, district and national levels as well as in inter-school matches. An inter-house competition is aimed at including more pupils in competitive sport. Younger pupils are offered a selection of clubs appropriate for their ages and the activity programme has a positive effect on relationships between pupils of different ages.
- 8.83 Parents are informed of the programme in advance in order that they can book a place and the school operates an extended day facility, allowing siblings of pupils attending activities, and others, to have tea and complete their homework under supervision.
- 8.84 Pupils enjoy the activities, which enrich their experience in curricular and extra-curricular subjects. They participate enthusiastically in the drama club, judo sessions, training orchestra and recorder groups. Concerts and performances provide a showcase for some of the activities and videos and CDs demonstrate the high standards of achievement.
- 8.85 A wide variety of outings and visits extends pupils' experience; for example Year 2 visited a local pottery, Year 4 toured the living rain forest at Newbury in connection with their studies in geography and Year 6 visited the Houses of Parliament and The Globe theatre. Recent visitors to the school have included a theatre company for Nursery and Reception, two children's authors and an African artist.
- 8.86 Pupils' achievements in many activities are demonstrated in performances of high quality in teams, concerts and plays and are recorded for parents and for school use. Parents are closely involved with the activity programme and kept up to date with the progress which their children make.

9. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 9.1 The inspection was carried out from March 7th – 11th 2005. All subjects of the curriculum were inspected and all members of the teaching staff were observed teaching. However, the size of the team did not permit all subjects to be reported on in full. The following subjects do not have full reports in Section 8: history, geography, RE, French and music. The inspectors visited 87 lessons or parts of lessons, examined extensive samples of work by pupils of different abilities in each year and held formal discussions with these pupils as well as informal discussions with other pupils. They attended four assemblies and seven registration sessions. They observed eight extra-curricular and sporting activities. They held discussions with twenty-seven teaching and non-teaching staff at various levels in the school. They analysed the responses of 191 parents to a questionnaire distributed in advance of the inspection. They examined a wide range of documentation made available by the school.

List of Inspectors

Mrs E L Mimpriss	Reporting Inspector
Mrs L Bell	Head of Pre-Prep IAPS school
R Nicholl	Head of IAPS school
R O'Doherty	Head of ISA school
Mrs B Ottley	Head of IAPS school