

INSPECTION REPORT

**AMPNEY CRUCIS CHURCH OF ENGLAND
VOLUNTARY AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Ampney Crucis, Cirencester

LEA area: Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 115673

Acting Headteacher: Miss Chris Hammant

Reporting inspector: Mrs Stephanie Lacey
3764

Dates of inspection: 17 – 19 March 2003

Inspection number: 247580

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: School Lane
Ampney Crucis
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Gloucestershire
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Telephone number: 01285 851440

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Revd Annette Woolcock

Date of previous inspection: 2 February 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3764	Stephanie Lacey	Registered inspector	Foundation Stage, English, art and design, design and technology geography, history, English as an additional language and special educational needs.	The school's results and pupils' achievements, How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9528	Derek Bowers	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
23235	Fred Riches	Team inspector	Mathematics, science, information communication technology, music physical education, and equal opportunities.	How good are the other curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Ampney Crucis Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School is a small village school with 72 pupils on roll aged between four and eleven. There are fourteen more boys than girls. There are three classes. One is for the eight children in the reception year and pupils in Year 1, one is for pupils in Years 2 and 3 and one is for pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6. In this class, boys outnumber girls by three to one. Pupils come from Ampney Crucis, surrounding villages and towns nearby. Most pupils live in owner-occupied housing, and some in houses rented from the local authority. Last year almost a fifth of pupils either joined or left the school other than at the normal times of entry and transfer to secondary school. This is higher than in many schools. Fourteen per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is below the national average. All families have their cultural roots in the British Isles. Four per cent of pupils are from traveller families. Children's attainment on entry to the reception year is wide ranging. This year it is below average overall. Seventeen per cent of pupils are on the school's register of special educational need, which is a little below average. One pupil has a statement of special educational need.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a sound education for its pupils. Very clear leadership by the acting headteacher has ensured a calm and stable period before the appointment of the new headteacher. The new staff team have worked very well together and pupils have made steady progress this year as a result of sound teaching. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- In recent years standards have been high in national tests at the end of Year 6.
- Most pupils enjoy school and are positive about their work.
- The acting headteacher leads the school very well.
- The new staff team works very well together.
- Governors provide good support for the school.
- Parents are involved effectively in helping their children with homework.

What could be improved

- Standards in writing at the end of Year 2, and in information communication technology (ICT) across the school, are not as high as they should be.
- Pupils' behaviour, although improved this year, is still not good enough.
- Procedures for checking pupils' progress and setting targets for further improvement are not yet as effective as they could be.
- Provision for pupils' cultural development, especially the multi-cultural aspect is unsatisfactory.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Overall the school has made sound progress since its last inspection in February 1998. Staff have worked successfully to raise standards, which have been well above average in Year 6 national tests for the last four years. The school has also tackled effectively the areas highlighted for improvement by the last inspection. These were related to planning for work in all subjects, planning for future improvement in the school's work and the provision of an enclosed outside area for children in the Foundation Stage. Recent staff upheaval meant that, for a time, the school did not move forward as fast as it should. For a while pupils' behaviour deteriorated, although academic standards did not fall. Since the appointment of an acting headteacher last September, a new staff team have worked well together, supported effectively by the governors, parents, the local authority and diocese to maintain a sound education for the pupils. This year behaviour has improved and the school is on a more stable footing. With the appointment of a permanent headteacher from April, the school is in a sound position to move forward further.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	A*	C	A	A
mathematics	A	B	A	A
science	A	A	A	A

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

Similar schools are those with 0 – 8% of pupils entitled to free school meals.

The table shows that standards have been well above average in Year 6 national tests for some years. This marks good improvement since the last inspection, when standards were broadly average. Last year standards were well above average in English, mathematics and science, both nationally and when compared with standards in similar schools. Pupils in this year group had made very good progress since they took their tests in Year 2. This year the school has set challenging targets for pupils' performance, although this has not been the case in the past. Standards in Year 2 tests have not been so high. Last year they were average in writing and mathematics and below average in reading. As the teachers are all new to the school and there is little information about the progress of groups of pupils over recent years, it is difficult to tease out the reasons for this difference. One factor is the impact that one pupil's performance can have on statistical data in small schools. This year most pupils, including those with special educational needs, higher attainers and those from traveller families, are doing as well as can be expected. Children in the Foundation Stage make steady progress and most are on line to reach the early learning goals by the end of the year, although their overall attainment remains below average. Standards are broadly average in English, mathematics and science at the end of both Years 2 and 6, with writing at the end of Year 2 below average. This masks wide differences in attainment levels within year groups, particularly Year 6, where there are a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs than last year. Standards in most other subjects are broadly average, but below average in ICT throughout the school. This is largely because pupils do not spend enough time working on computers. Standards are also below average at the end of Year 6 in music and well below average in physical education. These low standards are directly related to pupils' inappropriate behaviour in these sessions.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Most pupils enjoy school and are positive about learning. They undertake their homework conscientiously.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour has improved this year, but is still not good enough. Many pupils behave well, but a significant minority, especially older pupils, behave inappropriately in lessons. This has a negative impact on learning. Behaviour in assemblies is good. At playtimes and lunchtimes it is satisfactory. There have been no exclusions for inappropriate behaviour in the last year.
Personal development and relationships	Most pupils have formed good relationships with their teachers and other pupils. Some, especially those with behavioural and emotional difficulties, are not consistently positive in their dealings with others. Pupils take on more responsibility as they get older, helping in assembly, for example.
Attendance	Good. Levels of attendance are above the national average and

	most pupils are punctual at the start of the day.
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TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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 overall quality of teaching is sound and ensures that pupils throughout the school make steady progress. Nearly half of the teaching is either good or better. The remainder is satisfactory except for a small proportion that is ineffective. Strengths in the teaching include good planning, good preparation and use of resources, interesting activities, good contribution from learning support workers, well-organised classrooms and an effective use of homework to build on work in class. In the very good lessons, very good questioning and high expectations were particular features. The most significant area for development is behaviour management. Teachers have worked hard and successfully to improve pupils' behaviour, but there is still some way to go. Consequently, in some lessons, pupils work noisily and do not listen attentively either to their teachers or to each other. Sound teaching of literacy helps pupils make satisfactory progress in developing basic skills of reading and writing. Teaching of numeracy is stronger and pupils move forward well. Pupils with special educational needs receive extra support in these two areas and as a result make the same steady progress as their peers. The special needs teacher gives very good support to individuals and small groups, and when they are withdrawn for this extra help, they make very good progress. Pupils from traveller families are supported effectively and make steady progress. Higher attaining pupils are challenged effectively.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. There is a broad and balanced curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage, with a good emphasis on purposeful play activities. The broad curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6 meets statutory requirements, but English and mathematics lessons are too long and sometimes lack pace. There is currently very little extra-curricular provision.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Sound overall. Pupils' needs are carefully identified and their learning targets are clear. The quality of the individual and small group teaching is very good. Some older pupils need more adult support in class.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory. The school makes sound provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. For cultural development provision is unsatisfactory overall because insufficient attention is paid to multi-cultural education. The school has already identified this as an area for improvement.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There are good procedures for child protection and for ensuring that pupils are healthy and safe. Systems for monitoring and improving behaviour are sound, but need consistent application across the school to improve the unacceptable behaviour of a small minority. The use of procedures to check how well pupils' are progressing needs improvement.

The school has a sound partnership with parents. This is developing well as new staff form good working relationships with parents. Several parents help in school and the Friends' Association is well supported and raises considerable sums for the school. Many parents support their children very effectively in homework tasks.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The acting headteacher has provided a very clear lead for staff and governors for the last two terms. She has been especially effective in supporting and encouraging new teachers through focused classroom visits. She has enabled the new staff team to work well together.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are very supportive of the school and committed to school improvement. They make a good contribution to the school's work through their meetings and visits to the school. All statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is satisfactory overall. There are very good procedures for monitoring and supporting teaching and learning. There are less robust systems for governors and staff to evaluate how well the school is making headway on areas highlighted for improvement in the school development plan.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are used well to maintain and improve the provision for pupils. Financial planning is good and the principles of best value are used well in spending decisions.

The school is adequately staffed by committed, hard working teachers and learning support workers. Almost all have been appointed within the last year. All staff, including the secretary, lunchtime supervisors and cleaner contribute effectively to the smooth running of the school. The accommodation and grounds provide a satisfactory environment for pupils' learning. Classrooms are bright and attractive and there is a small library. The grounds are well maintained, and include an adventure playground, wild life area and quiet courtyard. The boiler does not function effectively and so parts of the building are sometimes cold. This is being addressed. The school has plans to create a designated ICT room, which will improve provision further. Resources are generally adequate, with more needed to support multi-cultural education.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children enjoy school. • Their children are expected to work hard. • They feel comfortable about approaching the school. • The school is led and managed well. • The teaching is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside lessons. • Information about their children's progress. • Standards of behaviour.

Fifty-two per cent of the questionnaires seeking parents' views about the school were returned and seventeen parents attended the meeting held for them before the inspection. The views of these parents are noted in the table above. The inspectors endorse parents' positive views, but find the quality of teaching sound rather than good. There are very few activities outside lessons, but this is understandable in a small school with new staff, who are working hard after school to plan for the next day. The inspectors agree that behaviour, although improved this year, is still not good enough. Staff generally manage pupils satisfactorily, but the frequent need to challenge inappropriate behaviour puts additional strain

on the teachers. Information about children's current progress this year is satisfactory. The school will clearly need to investigate the reasons for the dissatisfaction of a few parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

Starting school

1 When children start school, in the September after their fourth birthday, their skills, knowledge and understanding are wide ranging. In past years the overall profile of the group has been average or above, but is falling year by year and this year is below average.

Standards in national tests

2 Over the last four years pupils have done much better in Year 6 national tests than they have in tests in Year 2. In Year 6 standards have been well above average in English in three out of the last four years. They have been above average in mathematics for two of these years and well above average for the other two. Standards in science have been well above average for the last four years. Higher attaining pupils have done particularly well. Last year pupils did very much better than their peers in similar schools and made very good progress from their Year 2 national tests. Overall, standards have risen in Year 6 tests in line with the national improvement trend. In recent years the school has far exceeded its percentage targets for standards in national tests, suggesting that they were not challenging enough. This year the targets are appropriately challenging.

3 In Year 2 tests standards were well below average in two of the last four years in reading, writing and mathematics. They were above average in 2000. Last year standards were broadly average in writing and mathematics and below average in reading. Higher attaining pupils did not do well and overall, in 2002, pupils at Ampney Crucis were well behind their peers in similar schools.

4 There are several factors that account for the difference in standards in the Year 2 and Year 6 tests. One, that is common to the analysis of statistical data in all small schools, is the impact that the performance of one or two pupils can have on overall standards. In 2002, for example only twelve pupils took the tests in Year 2. In groups of this size the performance of one pupil can move the overall standards from below to above average. The other is the overall downward trend in attainment on entry to the school. In spite of these factors it is clearly a matter of concern that pupils do not do better. Currently, with completely new staff and a lack of clear tracking of pupils' progress from entry it is difficult to analyse why pupils did not do better in previous years.

Inspection findings

The foundation stage

5 Children have made sound progress this year in all areas of learning¹. Most are on line to reach the early learning goals² by the end of the year and one child is already working at level 1 of the National Curriculum. A few of the children are not so far forward and their skills, knowledge and understanding are behind other children of their age, especially in their personal, social and emotional development.

¹ The areas of learning are: personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development.

² Early learning goals establish expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage.

Years 1 to 6

6 Pupils make sound progress and this year most are doing as well can be expected. In some year groups, most particularly Year 6 there is a wide spread of attainment with some pupils achieving high standards and some working below the levels expected for their age. In this year group there is a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and so standards in this year's national tests are unlikely to be as high as they have been in the past.

English

7 Standards are broadly average in speaking and listening throughout the school. Pupils speak confidently, with some using complex sentence structure. Their listening skills are not so well developed and many pupils find it hard to listen to their teachers and other pupils without interrupting. Standards are broadly average in reading with some pupils doing particularly well. Pupils' skills in tackling increasingly difficult texts are developing hand in hand with their enjoyment of a range of genres. Standards in writing are below average at the end of Year 2, because although most pupils reach the expected levels, few do better than this. Standards in writing are broadly average by the time pupils reach Year 6. This is a similar picture to that at the time of the last inspection, with a fall back in writing standards.

Mathematics

8 In mathematics standards are broadly average at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils are developing their numeracy skills well and their work in class is enhanced by focused homework tasks. Standards are similar to those at the time of the last inspection.

Science

9 Standards are broadly average at the end of both Years 2 and 6. Pupils enjoy investigative and experimental work and this enhances the development of their scientific skills. Standards are similar to those at the time of the last inspection.

Information communication technology

10 Standards are below average in Year 2 and Year 6 because pupils do not use computers regularly enough. The school has plans to address this by creating a computer suite. Expectations have risen considerably at a national level in ICT and standards at Ampney Crucis have not improved sufficiently.

Other subjects

11 In art and design, design and technology, geography and history standards are broadly average throughout the school. In music standards in singing in assembly are broadly average, but standards in music overall at the end of Year 6 are below average. In physical education (PE), standards in the session seen in Year 1 were broadly average, but were well below average at the end of Year 6. In both music and PE pupils' inappropriate behaviour limited their capacity to do well in lessons.

Attainment and progress of different groups

12 Results from national tests show some differences between the attainment of boys and girls, but the numbers in each year group are so small that these statistics are not significant. Boys far outnumber girls in several year groups, but there is no discernible difference between boys' and girls' progress through the school as a whole. Pupils from traveller families make similar progress to their peers in all subjects. Higher attainers and pupils with special needs achieve satisfactorily overall and occasionally achieve well in Year 6 tests in English, mathematics and science, as a result of well-targeted homework, consolidation and extension tasks. All pupils make similar progress in other subjects.

Progress of pupils with special educational needs

13 Almost a fifth of pupils are identified with special educational needs. Most of these pupils are only a little behind their peers, but some have more significant difficulties and one pupil has a statement of special educational need. Most of the pupils with special educational needs are in the oldest pupils' class. They make sound progress overall. In class most make steady progress because learning tasks are matched well to their learning needs. They do better when they have extra adult support. Sometimes the behavioural and emotional difficulties of these pupils means that they do not concentrate as well as they should and their progress slows as a result. Some pupils are withdrawn from class each week for extra help from a specialist teacher. At these times they move forward well and make especially good progress towards the targets on their individual education plans.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

Starting school

14 Children settle well into school and are confident and secure in their new surroundings. They are familiar with school routines, like 'lining up' and putting their hands up to ask a question. Most manage these well, but a few find it hard to respond consistently to their teacher's requests in a sensible way. They grow in independence. They manage well at lunchtimes, for example, collecting their cooked lunch from the hatch, or eating their packed lunch. Children make new friends. Most play and work happily with others. One or two find it hard to share or take turns and occasionally disrupt the work of others.

Attitudes

15 Pupils' enthusiasm for school has been maintained well since the last inspection. Most have good attitudes to their work. They are positive about learning both in lessons and in their conscientious approach to homework. They generally show interest in discussions and are eager to offer information or answer questions. For example, in a Year 6 lesson all of the pupils were keen to analyse a poem and to present their own ideas on new verses in the same style as the original. This resulted in some very good learning with the pupils improving their analytical skills well. In some lessons, especially when pupils in Years 4 to 6 are working together, a few boys lose concentration and interest for much of the time. The system of rewards, which has been introduced this year, has been well received by the pupils and has made positive contributions to their motivation and interest.

Behaviour

16 Behaviour has improved this year, but is still unsatisfactory overall and not as good as it was at the time of the last inspection. Most pupils behave well, but a significant minority behave inappropriately in lessons, especially in the oldest pupils' class. This is more evident in whole class lessons when there is often chair rocking, low level muttering and occasionally rude interruptions. This sometimes has a negative impact on the pupils' learning. This was evident in a reading session during which a small number of pupils took little interest in their silent reading tasks, chatted and sometimes disturbed others in the class. During a PE lesson the oldest pupils' behaviour was poor on occasions with pupils calling out inappropriately and ignoring instructions. Staff generally manage these situations satisfactorily, but the frequent need to challenge inappropriate behaviour puts additional strain on the teachers. Behaviour in assemblies is good and at playtimes and lunchtimes it is satisfactory. The pupils play well together and there is some mixing of children from different year groups. Occasionally older boys dominate the quiet play area with boisterous ball games. During the inspection there was no evidence of bullying and parents are confident that the staff deal promptly with any problems between children. There have been no exclusions during the past year.

The behaviour of pupils with special educational needs.

17 Five per cent of pupils have behavioural and emotional difficulties. They find it hard to listen sensibly to their teachers for sustained periods and often interrupt sessions by calling out or responding inappropriately. This disrupts their own learning and sometimes the learning of other pupils. These pupils have clear targets for improvement, which they are moving towards slowly.

Relationships and Personal Development

18 Throughout the school most of the pupils have good relationships with their teachers and with other pupils. However, some pupils, especially those with behavioural and emotional difficulties, are not always positive in their dealings with others. Pupils take increasing responsibility as they get older. They conscientiously help with the arrangements for assemblies and classroom duties. All pupils look forward to the paired reading each Friday when older pupils pair with younger ones, reading and listening to them. The headteacher, who runs the football club, appreciates the valuable contribution of the pupils who manage the arrangements for the team training and fixtures. Pupils willingly volunteer to clear up after lunch. The pupils care for each other and this was illustrated well by the way a group of older girls left the lunch table immediately to attend to a young child who had fallen over.

Attendance

19 Attendance is not as high as it was at the time of the last inspection. However, it is good and above the national average for primary schools. The level of unauthorised absence is low and no pupils have significant patterns of absences. This helps to ensure that pupils have every opportunity to benefit from the education offered by the school. Punctuality at the beginning of the day is good.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

20 Sound teaching has been maintained since the last inspection and ensures that most pupils make steady progress. The comparison is somewhat tenuous because none of the current staff were in post at the time of the last inspection, having all been appointed within the last twelve months.

21 In the twenty-one lessons seen the quality of teaching ranged from very good to unsatisfactory. Almost a half of the lessons seen were good or better, the remaining lessons were satisfactory except for three unsatisfactory lessons. Two very good lessons were taught by the acting headteacher and special needs teacher and reflected their experience and skill in challenging pupils very effectively. The unsatisfactory lessons were directly related to difficulties in behaviour management.

Strengths in the teaching

22 Strengths that are features of the good lessons include:

- good planning. Teachers plan carefully in order to meet the needs of pupils in mixed age classes. This is a particular challenge in the oldest pupils' class, where there are three year groups.
- good preparation and use of resources. Teachers prepare and organise resources well.
- interesting activities. Staff take care to plan tasks that involve and interest the pupils and this helps pupils to learn effectively. In one session for example, the youngest pupils planted sunflower seeds in relation to their work on growing. In another lesson, older pupils mixed bicarbonate of soda with different liquids as part of their investigation on irreversible change.
- good contribution from learning support workers. There is a learning support worker attached to each of the three classes. They provide good levels of support for the

pupils. Often they work with pupils who have special educational needs and this extra help enables these pupils to make sound progress.

- well-organised classrooms. Teachers have worked hard to make the classrooms attractive and stimulating. Pupils' work is displayed well and this helps them to realise that staff value their efforts. Space is used effectively. In the youngest pupils' class, for example, the teacher has created different working areas for activities such as role-play, writing and reading. This enables children in the Foundation Stage particularly to work independently on selected tasks.
- the use of homework. Teachers make good use of homework tasks to extend pupils' understanding.

In the very good sessions the following were particularly successful in helping pupils to move forward quickly in their learning:

- very good questioning. In one session the teacher posed challenging questions to the two pupils working on 'The Handsome Hare', by Ted Hughes and these helped the pupils to develop their understanding of the piece.
- high expectations. In a Year 6 booster class, the teacher had high expectations of pupils' ability to identify subtle inference in poetic language and as a result pupils tried their best and achieved very well.

Areas for development:

23 The most significant area for development, and the key unsatisfactory element in the three unsatisfactory lessons seen, is behaviour management. Teachers have worked hard to successfully improve pupils' behaviour, but there is still some way to go. The problem is a whole school issue and although behaviour is generally satisfactory in younger pupils' classes, there are some aspects of teaching needing development in this area in all classes. The areas that need improving are:

- consistent expectations in relation to pupils putting their hands up to contribute to class discussions, rather than shouting out.
- insisting that pupils listen to the teacher and their peers during whole class sessions, rather than muttering to their friends.
- the changeover times from class work to learning activities. Sometimes these are very noisy, with unnecessary fussing by some pupils.
- the level of noise when pupils are engaged in learning tasks is sometimes too high to enable pupils to concentrate effectively.

Teaching in the Foundation Stage

24 Teaching in the Foundation Stage is sound, with some good features and ensures that children make steady progress. Work is carefully planned for all areas of learning. Children often work alongside pupils in Year 1, joining them for the introduction to sessions and then moving on to learning activities matched to their particular needs. They have good opportunities to learn through purposeful play activities. In one session, for example, children discussed what it was like to live in a village and then played with farm animals on a large scale play mat depicting a farm lay out. The small group of Foundation Stage children often have the undivided support of the teacher or learning support worker and at these times move ahead well because of the focused support. Sometimes they work and play independently. They do not always do so well at these times, because several of the children find it difficult to co-operate with their peers.

Teaching in Years 1 and 2

25 Pupils in Year 1 work with children in the Foundation Stage and those in Year 2 share a class with Year 3 pupils. In both classes sound teaching underpins pupils' steady progress. All the lessons seen during the inspection were satisfactory or good.

Teaching in Years 3 to 6

26 Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 are in the same class, with those in Year 3 working with Year 2 pupils. The teaching ranged from very good to unsatisfactory and is satisfactory overall. Year 6 pupils are withdrawn for work in English, mathematics and science for three sessions a week. The quality of teaching in these sessions is very good and helps pupils to make rapid gains in learning.

Teaching of literacy and numeracy

27 Satisfactory teaching in literacy underpins pupils' sound development in the acquisition of basic skills. Teaching is stronger in numeracy and pupils move forward well as a result. In both subjects teachers' planning is good. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies form a firm foundation for the work, with teachers drawing from published schemes and guidance to help them to plan lessons. The school has recognised the need to improve pupils' spelling strategies and spelling is now taught more systematically. There is more scope for providing more opportunities for pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 to write at length on purposeful writing tasks. In numeracy the use of the mental and oral starter and the summary plenary sessions need more attention because they are not used sufficiently to challenge pupils. Homework contributes well to pupils' learning in both areas.

Teaching of boys and girls

28 Staff are aware of the imbalance in numbers of boys and girls in particular year groups. They take pains to ensure that the small number of girls have equal opportunity to be involved in making comment, answering questions and participating actively in lessons. They also use strategies to encourage boys to focus, encouraging a positive competitive approach to completing work for example. Teachers' expectations are not consistently high, however, and this occasionally has a detrimental effect on boys' behaviour, particularly older boys.

Teaching of pupils with special educational needs

29 Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is sound when pupils are working within the classroom. Work is planned to match their particular learning needs, especially in English and mathematics. Sometimes they have extra support from an adult and at these times move forward more quickly. Some pupils are withdrawn for support from a specialist teacher. They move forward very well in these sessions because of the clear, positive and focused support that they are given.

Teaching of higher attaining pupils

30 Teachers plan work to challenge higher attaining pupils effectively. They make special provision for them when it is appropriate. One pupil is working with an older group, for example.

Teaching of pupils from traveller families

31 Teachers and assistants give positive support to pupils from traveller families, ensuring that tasks are well matched to their abilities. A weekly supervisory visit from a teacher attached to the traveller education service helps monitor pupils' learning.

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

Balance, breadth and relevance of the curriculum

32 The Foundation Stage curriculum has been fully implemented for reception children. The school offers a satisfactory range of personal, social, emotional, physical and creative experiences, developing children's knowledge of the world, alongside its focused provision for communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. The curriculum for these youngest children is broad and well balanced. The school provides pupils with a broad curriculum that meets statutory requirements. However, the curriculum for pupils in Years 1

to 6 is unbalanced by the exclusive focus on numeracy and literacy in the morning sessions. Overall, however, the school has made satisfactory improvement in its curriculum provision since the last inspection.

The Foundation Stage Curriculum

33 The school has worked hard to develop its curriculum for the children in the Foundation Stage. It has made good improvement in addressing the key issues highlighted in the previous report. It has created a designated outdoor area for children in the Foundation Stage and extended the range of outdoor equipment available for children to further their physical development. Children made satisfactory use of outdoor facilities during the inspection. The teacher makes good links between the six areas of learning for this age group, helping children reinforce their understanding through a range of activities. For example, in one session seen children worked with the teacher to plant sunflowers seeds. There was good emphasis in this activity on helping children to develop their speaking and listening skills and to co-operate, as well as helping them to discover more about the world around them.

Subject imbalance in Years 1 to 6

34 Some literacy and numeracy sessions last well over an hour. Numeracy lessons in Years 2 to 6 sometimes last 75 minutes, instead of briskly paced 45-minute sessions. The school does not manage the time available in morning sessions as effectively as it should. The length of lessons makes it difficult for teachers to make the necessary demands on pupils to complete tasks within a set time and pupils in turn find it hard to sustain focus. The school improvement plan includes a very sensible strategy to use the day more effectively by creating three lessons each morning, which will entail reorganising playtime, collective worship and lunch arrangements. Current arrangements barely meet the recommended minimum of 23.5 hours a week for pupils in Years 3 to 6 and the school is considering whether it needs to alter the start of the school day to help meet requirements without rushing registration and collective worship. Overall this means less time is available for other subjects and while standards in these are broadly average, there is insufficient time to raise standards further by exploring different study units in depth.

Development of the curriculum

35 The current (mainly temporary) staff and the governing body have put considerable time and effective effort into updating curriculum documentation in line with national guidance. The adoption of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's schemes of work, and the careful selection of appropriate units of work to create two-year and three-year cycles, has given the school a necessary long-term framework for planning. The hard work of the new staff team at the start of the current academic year, following the acting headteacher's well-considered decision to make this a priority, has created a vehicle to ensure that pupils progressively develop skills and understanding at the level expected for their age.

36 The school recognises the need to develop the ICT curriculum. Current provision permits only sporadic development of pupils' ICT skills, with the use of ICT to support learning in other subjects being developed. Examples of the use of computer programs to support mathematical and scientific thinking in Years 2 and 3 and of First Logo and word processing in Years 4, 5 and 6 show what pupils can achieve, but they have insufficient access to computers at present. The school's building extension is set to include a computer suite, which will address this inadequate resourcing. The other subjects where planning needs attention, together with assessment, in order to promote more effective learning, are music and physical education. Standards in these subjects and in ICT are lower than they should be.

Strategies for teaching numeracy and literacy

37 Teachers use the guidance of the national strategies for numeracy and literacy well as the basis of the school's English and mathematics teaching. Both strategies are well embedded in practice and the school has chosen appropriate published schemes to provide teachers with good support for planning work for different ability groups in mixed-age classes. The school has recognised the need to raise pupils' understanding and skills in English, particularly writing, in Years 1 and 2, and placed strong emphasis on the early teaching of phonics and on improving spelling. Pupils use their writing skills well in their science recording in Year 2 for example, but work seen showed insufficient focus on story writing, in order to use the basic spelling skills in relevant and interesting situations. Pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 also make good use of their literacy skills in recording their predictions, observations and findings in scientific experiments. Handwriting remains an area for development throughout the school. Teachers consolidate pupils' numeracy skills as pupils employ them in their recording of science investigations, particularly in Years 4, 5 and 6. They use homework particularly effectively to consolidate pupils' understanding of the work covered in class literacy and numeracy lessons. The school does not yet make sufficient use of ICT to support learning in literacy and numeracy, although samples seen show what could be achieved with better facilities.

Equal opportunities

38 The school is committed to equality of opportunity in the curriculum provided for its pupils. Aware of the current gender imbalance, staff are alert to the need to ensure equality of access for boys and girls. Staff ensure that pupils from traveller families are fully involved and participate in all activities. The local Pleydell Trust offers financial support to ensure all pupils have the opportunity to attend annual residential visits. Provision for ensuring that all pupils are fully included in the life of the school is satisfactory.

Special educational needs

39 Most of the time pupils with special educational needs work alongside their peers within the classroom. In English and mathematics particularly, work is modified to take account of their particular learning needs. In many sessions the teacher or assistant gives these pupils extra support. In their planning for sessions teachers are mindful of the targets on pupils individual action plans, but these are not always noted in the written plans. Some pupils are withdrawn for extra help for one or two short sessions a week. At these times the work is tailored to meet their own particular learning needs. Pupils tend to miss the same session each week and care is taken to ensure that they do not miss important aspects of work.

Extra-curricular and other activities including educational visits

40 The school currently offers few additional activities outside school hours. This situation is unsatisfactory, but given the current unsettled staffing situation, it is understandable. If the community looks to school staff alone to organise and run clubs, given the pressing demands on staff new to the school and mainly on temporary contracts, extra activities are bound to suffer. All teachers run booster classes after school hours to help the oldest pupils achieve as well as they can in national tests and the acting headteacher organises occasional soccer matches. The school ensures that pupils participate in local athletics, swimming and hockey tournaments and all older pupils have the opportunity to participate in a field trip, this year on the Isle of Wight. The acting headteacher has also acquired the support of local cricket and soccer coaches for short spells. In small schools, some responsibility for running and organising opportunities rests with the community and groups of local schools working together. Governors hope that current arrangements with local secondary schools can be developed further.

Links with the community and partner institutions

41 The school has several positive links with the local community, which help support and promote pupils' learning. The local vicar, who is chair of governors, takes an active interest and regularly visits, leading collective worship. The Pleydell Trust is a local charity, which supports the school financially in many ways. A local farmer will be visiting, alongside a police officer and nurse, during the health education and citizenship week organised for later in the term. The school has satisfactory arrangements in place to ensure pupils' smooth transition to local secondary schools.

Personal, social and health education

42 The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. The use of circle time sessions offers pupils the chance to listen and voice their opinions and views. The school nurse visits annually to support sex and relationships education, for which formal arrangements are satisfactory. In the light of staff turnover, the area is shortly in need of review. Arrangements for health education, including drugs awareness education, are satisfactory.

Personal development

43 The provision for pupils' personal development is satisfactory overall. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is satisfactory, but arrangements for cultural development are unsatisfactory. In particular, the school gives very little attention to promoting positive attitudes towards life in a multicultural society or raising pupils' awareness of race issues. This finding represents a weakening of the school's provision in this area since the last inspection, when it provided good personal development overall. The new staff have worked hard to win the confidence of the pupils, whose behaviour had clearly deteriorated since the last inspection. Strategies introduced to encourage pupils' moral and social development have been partially effective, but expectations are still not sufficiently high.

Spiritual development

44 Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Daily assemblies provide moments for prayer and quiet reflection. Pupils enter and leave the hall quietly. They recite the school prayer and the Lord's Prayer. Behaviour at these times is good. The staff all attend and promote good singing by their example. New Years' resolutions and the use of a 'Lenten Tree' with leaves for each pupil to set further resolutions show pupils' aspirations. In classrooms, teachers use circle times to help pupils explore their own and each other's feelings. The school has introduced reading partners, mainly as a stimulus to improve reading, but also to develop a sense of care. This has had a positive impact and both young and old pupils enjoy this arrangement. The overall impact of the school's provision on pupils' spiritual awareness, however, is not as effective as it should be. Too often, pupils show a lack of care or awareness of the feelings of others, behaving immaturely and speaking carelessly to each other. There is no apparent planning for the development of a sense of awe and wonder in subjects across the curriculum and insufficient stress on a sense of care and respect for each other as individuals in the classroom. One positive example of spiritual development was seen in the science books of pupils in Years 2 and 3, where the introduction of a baby and a toddler had clearly promoted a sense of wonder during pupils' comparisons of their visitors with themselves.

Moral development

45 The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils' moral development. Governors and parents are clear that the current staff's focus on discipline has improved the school ethos during the current academic year. Nevertheless, the strategies currently in place are not sufficiently rigorous to ensure consistent appropriate behaviour. The school has introduced agreed rewards and sanctions and shared these with pupils and parents. The introduction of house points has also had some positive effects. In the Reception/Year 1 class in particular, the teacher's consistent expectations, backed by regularly drawing attention to examples of

particularly good behaviour, are paying dividends. Each class has rules displayed. Pupils understand and accept the reward system for recognising achievement, effort and helpfulness and the sanctions for inappropriate behaviour. The impact of current staff expectations of pupils is not sufficiently effective throughout the school, however. Many pupils show immature responses too often within lessons and show insufficient care for each other. During the staffing upheaval experienced by pupils over recent years, the school has allowed a culture to develop among some pupils that it is funny to make inappropriate remarks and acceptable to chatter loudly until absolutely required not to. The school has not fully addressed this problem, which clearly has a detrimental effect on learning.

Social development

46 Provision for pupils' social development is satisfactory. In many lessons teachers organise opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively in pairs or as members of a group. Teachers also enable pupils to socialise with each other across the school during school events, such as plays, concerts, fashion shows and fund-raising activities, and through the successful introduction of reading partners. However, the limited range of extra-curricular activities restricts opportunities for pupils to develop their interests together with others. Class 3 have the opportunity of a residential visit presenting them with new challenges away from home. Staff encourage pupils to develop initiative and a sense of responsibility by undertaking routine duties in the class or school. Older pupils operate the CD-player for collective worship, for example. The acting headteacher set Year 6 pupils a research task for completion at home and several showed considerable initiative in their quests for information about the famous people they had chosen, such as Napoleon or Queen Elizabeth II.

47 The opportunities cited have not, however, been fully successful in encouraging pupils to behave routinely in a caring way towards each other and the school community and environment. Changes in support and supervisory staff as well as teachers have led to some pupils on occasion deciding what is acceptable in disregard of staff. The quiet play area, for example, has become an acceptable place for throwing balls and rushing around playing 'tag', with no adult intervention. The careless way in which some older pupils get out PE equipment shows a lack of care for both the equipment and for other pupils. The proposed re-introduction of a school council is one opportunity to put the necessary stress on social development, in order to improve pupils' awareness of community and develop their sense of responsibility.

Cultural development

48 Provision for pupils' cultural development is unsatisfactory. A few examples of focus on pupils' cultural development show positive steps taken, as in the Roman Day in Years 2 and 3 and the visit to an African Drumming Day in Gloucester. Otherwise the school's provision in this area is a major weakness. Pupils know little about the culture of the locality, with no evidence of local history or geography studies. Similarly, in art and music, there is little evidence of pupils developing a knowledge of artists and musicians past or present from any part of the world, with the exception of some work after the manner of Mondrian in Years 4 to 6.

49 Because the school is a mono-cultural community, contacts with other cultures and other faiths to promote pupils' understanding about cultural diversity become very significant. However, at present there are few opportunities to visit places of worship other than the local church, and few visitors from other cultures. The school has artefacts from different faiths, but none were being used. During the inspection, no displays in the school drew attention to any aspect of life in a multi-faith and multicultural society. None of the written or art work seen showed any reference to people of other races or cultures. The school is currently making poor provision towards promoting positive attitudes towards people of other faiths and cultures and towards promoting pupils' awareness of other cultures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

Pupils' health and safety

50 The school has maintained its good provision for pupils' health and safety. There are good procedures in place for child protection and for ensuring the pupils' welfare. Health and safety have a high profile in the school and this owes much to the governor representative who is very energetic and vigilant in monitoring the buildings and grounds very frequently. He works closely with the local authority specialists and attends to any potential hazards as they arise. The findings during the health and safety checks are recorded and reported to the full governing body. All equipment is checked and tested regularly under commercial contracts. All teaching staff and most learning support staff are trained in First Aid. They are all aware of current health and safety procedures. This very good level of vigilance is apparent in all aspects of the school. For example, the temperature of the food containers for school lunches is monitored closely.

Measures to promote good behaviour

51 The staff have put a great deal of effort into improving pupils' behaviour. A whole school approach to behaviour management was put in place in September 2002. Additional strategies for rewards and sanctions were introduced and these have proved popular with the pupils and most parents. 'Blue cards' are an incentive for most pupils to improve their attitudes to work and their behaviour in lessons and at break times. 'Yellow card' sanctions are followed up by detentions and then daily monitoring with reporting to parents. For most pupils this is a sufficient sanction to improve their attitudes and behaviour. For example, one parent reported that the sanctions had helped to stop excessive chattering during lessons. The card system runs alongside other strategies used by individual teachers, which include awarding housepoints and rewarding good behaviour by putting marbles into a jar. Classroom attitudes and behaviour are monitored and recorded in lesson observations. A behaviour consultant has observed lessons and fed back to the staff with useful suggestions and alternative strategies to improve behaviour. There is also observation of playground behaviour, with rewards for helpful and good behaviour.

52 The headteacher meets the lunchtime staff regularly to keep them informed of any issues of pupil monitoring and management. Serious incidents are recorded and any reports of bullying are taken seriously and acted upon quickly. There is some inconsistency in supervision at lunchtimes and sometimes unruly behaviour and the dominance of the play areas by older pupils playing ball games goes unchallenged. There is regular use of circle time to encourage pupils to talk about ideas and feelings and to become more aware of the needs of others. The behaviour of a few of the older pupils observed in some lessons leads to the conclusion that the strategies to improve behaviour have not been entirely successful in eliminating disruption and its consequent negative effect on learning.

Child Protection

53 There is a good policy and clear guidelines to staff on child protection issues. The headteacher is the responsible person and all other members of staff have been briefed on these procedures. They sign a form to acknowledge their awareness of these.

Measures to promote good attendance

54 Registers are marked promptly at the beginning of each day and after lunch. Attendance information is entered onto the computer each week and any absences monitored closely. Most parents follow the school's guidance on reporting any absences early on the first day.

The staff follow up any unexplained absences promptly. The education welfare officer does not make routine visits to the school, probably because of the good attendance, but assists the school with any problems when requested by the staff.

Monitoring academic and personal progress

55 Class teachers monitor the personal progress of pupils in their classes and, where appropriate, the school enlists the help of support agencies. The formal monitoring of pupils' academic progress through the school is currently unsatisfactory, however. This is not as good a picture as at the time of the last inspection. The change is clearly due to a considerable extent to the recent staffing upheavals, which have made continuity in this field difficult to sustain.

56 Procedures for sharing information year on year between teachers are insecure. Class teachers monitor pupils' progress through their own record keeping and the school has clear systems for checking the progress of pupils with special educational needs. Pupils' individual record profiles are passed on from year to year, but the school does not have a clear picture to show how it tracks each pupil's or each year group's progress year on year through the school. It is therefore unable to demonstrate the rate of progress in English and mathematics, for example, of individuals or groups of pupils, such as pupils from traveller families, to ensure that all are achieving as well as they should. Informal monitoring is in place through staff conversation and individual teachers know their pupils' abilities well, but formal procedures are not sufficiently rigorous. Attainment and progress of pupils by gender is partially monitored through use of documents showing how the school's data compares with national statistics in Years 2 and 6.

Assessment procedures and their use

57 Statutory assessment procedures are in place and the school uses a number of additional tests and assessments to record pupils' attainment on entry to school and during ensuing years. The administration and use of these procedures is unsatisfactory, however. The data from assessments in the reception year are not clearly understood by the school in comparison with local education authority overall levels. Previous assessments are not passed on to the class teacher in order to focus targets for learning in Year 1. Assessments of samples of pupils' writing in Year 2 show inappropriate levels allocated in some instances. The verbal reasoning tests, optional national tests and practice paper test results are not fully shared and used to create agreed targets for individual pupils year on year. That said, each individual teacher does aim to get the best out of each pupil. All teachers, for example, use an analysis of Year 6 pupils' mistakes in previous English, mathematics and science test papers, to focus their teaching during booster class sessions to improve the chances of these pupils reaching the age-related standards in national tests.

The use of assessment procedures to support pupils with special educational needs

58 Regular reviews of the progress of pupils with special educational needs form a firm basis for the targets for improvement on their individual education plans. Currently pupils are not sufficiently involved in reviewing their own progress.

The use of assessment procedures to support pupils from traveller families

59 The school has sound strategies to support pupils from traveller families, liaising satisfactorily with their parents. The school has effective links with local authority support agencies and receives appropriate support, where required, to help meet pupils' needs.

Assessment of foundation subjects

60 Following the adoption of new schemes of work, teachers have recently introduced assessments at the end of units of work in different subjects. The lack of previous assessment in subjects other than English, mathematics and science means that the school

does not yet formally track pupils' progress in the wider range of subjects from year to year. Teachers know how each pupil achieves within each series of lessons in each subject, through observation, discussion and marking. Pupils' books give a picture of the development of their knowledge, understanding and skills in geography and history, for example, but in subjects where there is less written recording, the lack of recorded assessment evidence makes it difficult for the school to judge pupils' progress. Co-ordinators have started to collect examples of work to agree levels of standardisation. At present, however, the school's assessment of pupils' progress in foundation subjects is at an early stage of development. Low standards in ICT, music and physical education stem partly from the lack of close assessment, which has limited the school's expectations in these subjects. Assessment policy and procedures clearly require review in order to underline the importance of formal and informal assessments as an integral element of teaching and learning. The school has rightly included the development of assessment and target-setting procedures as a key area for development in its current improvement plan.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

61 Overall parents are involved well in their children's education, as they were at the time of the last inspection.

Parents' views of the school

62 Parents like many key aspects of school provision. Most feel that their children like school, the school is well managed, teaching is good, the school expects their children to work hard and they would feel comfortable about approaching the school with suggestions or concerns. They are also positive about the school helping their children to make good progress and providing them with the right amount of homework and about the close working relationship with staff. The inspectors agree with all of these positive views of the partnership between the school and parents, although finding the teaching sound rather than good.

63 Almost all parents are dissatisfied with the range of activities outside of lessons. There is very little extra-curricular provision at the moment apart from the football club, partly because of the complete turnover of staff this year. Some staff time is also taken up with the provision of booster classes. The headteacher has written to parents requesting suggestions and offers of help in setting up new clubs.

64 Some parents are concerned about the behaviour of a few boys in the oldest class. The inspectors agree with these parents that the behaviour of these pupils has a negative effect on their learning and sometimes on others in the class. There have been significant improvements in behaviour since September but there is still some way to go in establishing a good climate for learning in all lessons. Last year one or two families took their children away from the school because of their dissatisfaction with the provision.

The information provided by the school

65 The quality of general information provided by the school is good. This includes good prospectus and annual reports to parents, which cover the key expectations, practices and routines and areas of school development. Information on the curriculum for each class is given to parents at the beginning of each term. There have also been several meetings to explain aspects of the curriculum to parents this year. Parents like the informative and friendly weekly newsletters, which are sent home each Friday. These are well presented and cover a good range of topics. Parents find the consultation evenings useful and they know that the school is very open for them to come in to discuss any issues with the staff at other times.

66 Some parents feel that there is not enough information on progress. Inspectors feel this is not an issue but the school would benefit from an investigation into the reasons for the dissatisfaction of these parents with the information given. The annual pupil reports give good coverage in the core subjects. The text refers to individual strengths and weaknesses and areas for improvement. The reports include a detailed section on personal development and targets are set for the next year. There is satisfactory detail on coverage of the curriculum in all other subjects with some indication of skill development in some cases. Standard tests results are given in the Year 2 reports and attendance information for all year groups.

Parents' support

67 Most parents give their children good support at home to enhance their learning. They help their children with homework, particularly reading. Parents are given a good deal of feedback on the homework in Class 2. A number of parents help regularly in lessons in the youngest class and a parent also helps to organise the library. The home-school agreement is given to new parents in September and the vast majority willingly sign and return them. The Friends' Association raises considerable money for the school. The fund-raising is usually targeted to support specific projects such as the development of the adventure playground. The Association organises many events including an 'auction of promises', discos, fairs and a fashion show in the village hall. Parents make good use of the opportunity to observe their children's achievements in the regular class assemblies. The new staff have established a good rapport with parents and there is good potential to continue to increase the role of parents in the life of the school.

Partnership with the parents of pupils who have special educational needs

68 The school has a good partnership with most of the parents of pupils who have special educational needs. Parents are kept informed about the progress of their children and invited to the regular reviews of the progress pupils make towards the targets on their individual education plans.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

A time of change

69 At the end of the last academic year there were significant staff changes. A long serving headteacher resigned last summer and the school is currently lead and managed by an acting headteacher. A new headteacher takes up his appointment after Easter. There have also been substantial teaching staff changes. Two of the three class teachers are on temporary contracts, replacing teachers on secondment and maternity leave. The third teacher has only been in post for a year. The special needs teacher and music teacher both started at the school in November. The new secretary joined the staff in September. The acting headteacher has been very successful in enabling new staff to work together in a united team. There is a very positive commitment to working together in order to improve provision for the pupils. During this difficult time the school has been supported well by the local authority and the diocese.

Improvement since the last inspection

70 Overall the school has made sound improvement since its last inspection five years ago. Standards have risen in national tests at the end of Year 6 and the school's sound provision for pupils has been maintained and developed. All the areas for improvement identified by the last inspection have been addressed. Consequently, planning for work in all subjects has improved. An enclosed outdoor area for children in the Foundation Stage to use during the day has been provided and a more detailed strategic plan for school improvement has been compiled. Last year, as a consequence of staff turnover and absence, the focus on school

improvement was not as sharp as it might have been. Pupils' behaviour deteriorated and some pupils did not move forward as fast as they should have done. Since September, with a more stable staffing situation, staff are again working effectively to raise standards. With the appointment of a new headteacher after Easter the school is well set to improve further.

The leadership and management of the headteacher

71 The acting teacher has provided a very good lead for the work of the school this year. She is a very experienced headteacher, with particular strengths in supporting teachers through classroom observation and discussion. She has the full confidence of staff, parents and governors. In a calm and sensitive way she has enabled staff and governors to direct their energies to raising standards, with a particular focus on improving pupils' behaviour. She has ensured that the school functions effectively and is liaising very effectively with the new headteacher so that his induction is as smooth as possible.

The teaching team

72 There are sufficient teachers and learning support workers for the size of the school. However in the oldest pupils' class there is not always sufficient support for pupils with special educational needs. The new team works well together and offers mutual support. In addition to the headteacher, two teachers have responsibility for the management of subject areas. Currently these roles are under-developed because the staff have been concentrating sensibly on their teaching responsibilities. Staff have undertaken training this year and all are committed to improving their practice.

Monitoring and supporting teaching

73 The headteacher provides very good support for new staff by her focused and helpful monitoring of their teaching. This forms a basis for subsequent staff and individual discussions about aspects of teaching that are successful as well as those needing development. The clarity of lesson objectives was highlighted for improvement early on the year, for example, and teachers have worked hard to make these clearer. The procedures for monitoring are excellent. There is a clear timetable for very regular classroom visits, records are carefully organised and all staff have both written and verbal feedback. Local authority advisers have also been invited to look at particular areas. One has worked closely with the newly qualified teacher in the Foundation Stage, for example, and worked with her to organise the classroom more effectively.

Providing equal opportunities

74 The school's aims show clear commitment to educational inclusion. All curricular and additional activities are open to all pupils. The school's positive links with the Pleydell Trust ensures that no pupils miss any visits or residential activities on financial grounds. The headteacher has ensured that all staff are aware of the need to apply a variety of teaching strategies to ensure that the small number of girls in some year groups benefit from teaching as much as the large number of boys. She has also ensured that staff look at strategies to encourage positive attitudes in situations where boys far outnumber girls. The school has satisfactory liaison with the traveller education service to monitor the learning of pupils from traveller families.

Leadership and management of work with pupils who have special educational needs

75 The current provision for pupils with special educational needs is well managed. The new policy to support work in this area is clear and in line with the new Code of Practice. Records are carefully maintained. Pupils' individual education plans are regularly reviewed and all the statutory requirements related to the work with the pupil who has a statement are met. At the moment there is not a summary sheet with each record to show at a glance

details about the dates of reviews, contacts with parents and other agencies and levels of support. This is not a requirement, but would help new staff to assimilate information more easily. Currently there is a learning support worker in each classroom and these staff frequently support the pupils with special educational needs. In Class 3, where a third of the pupils need extra help, the level of staffing is not currently adequate to meet the needs of these pupils, especially those with emotional and behavioural problems. A very well qualified special educational needs teacher works in school for two mornings a week. She provides very good support to pupils and small groups, who are withdrawn from lessons to work towards the targets on their individual education plans.

The role of governors

76 Overall, governors currently make a sound contribution to the work of the school. They are very supportive and fulfil their responsibilities effectively through full governor meetings, committee meetings and by regular visits. In recent months they have been particularly involved in managing a high staff turn over and have responded to this well. Their increased attention to maintaining a stable staff has meant that they have had less time for monitoring and evaluating how well the school is doing.

77 This year has also seen changes on the governing body. A new chair is developing her role and in her position as vicar ensures that there are close links between the church and the school. Other new governors are already making a significant contribution to the work of the school. Some governors are long serving. One of these is very involved in health and safety issues and makes regular checks of the building. In this interim period between the resignation of the previous headteacher at the end of the summer term and the appointment of the new headteacher from Easter, governors have provided support and encouragement rather than challenge. This has been very sensible in the circumstances. All statutory requirements in relation to the work of governors are met.

Planning for the future

78 Plans for the current year provide an effective timetable for school improvement. The headteacher modified the existing school improvement plan at the beginning of the year in order to focus more on the particular issues arising from the appointment of new staff. The main areas for development are:

- To raise standards of behaviour.
- To improve planning and teaching across mixed age classes.
- To provide SEN and music support
- To raise standards in reading, spelling, science, DT, ICT and mathematics
- To raise awareness of health & citizenship issues.

Overall the plan is well structured with clear action points within an ambitious time frame. There are specified success criteria, but these are not always sufficiently linked to the impact of action on standards. The plan is clearly linked to the budget.

79 Currently the governors and the staff are not sufficiently involved in contributing to future planning. The long-term plan was drawn up by the previous headteacher and agreed by governors, but because of the particular difficulties that the school faced a year ago, the governors made very little contribution at that time. Progress on areas for development is included in the headteacher's report to governors, but school improvement planning is not a standing item on governor meeting agendas. This makes it more difficult for governors to evaluate formally how well the school is progressing. Governors have made a sensible decision to postpone detailed planning for next year until the new headteacher takes up post after Easter.

Financial planning

80 Good financial planning has been maintained well since the last inspection. The annual budget takes full account of the priorities in the school improvement plan. Analysis of 2002 test results resulted directly in amendments to the improvement plan. The plan includes clear estimates of costs and resource implications for the proposed developments. The current prediction is that the pupil roll is likely to remain at the present level next year so that it will be possible to maintain staffing, and consequently the class arrangements over the next few years. There is some flexibility in the teaching commitment of the headteacher and the school's healthy reserve will provide a cushion for any fluctuations in pupil numbers. Some of the reserve is earmarked for a proposed building extension and by the end of this development it will be closer to the recommended level of five per cent of expenditure. This carefully planned programme for the extension to the school involves the enlargement and redesign of the kitchen area to provide an ICT suite and special educational needs area to enhance learning.

Best value

81 The governors use their expertise and experience very well for the benefit of the school. For example, one very active, long-serving governor serves as a voluntary site manager. He helps with the planning and monitoring of building developments and maintenance, liaises with architects and surveyors and opens and closes the school when it is difficult for other staff, in addition to making a substantial contribution in his role as the health and safety representative. The chair of the finance committee is using her substantial background in commercial finance very effectively in the short time that she has held the post. She is keen to contribute actively in the development of longer term planning. There is a good degree of productive consultation between staff and governors. The local Pleydell Trust gives generous financial support to the school, including the development of the outside area, paying for the coaches to take pupils to swimming lessons and helping with the costs of residential trips and day visits. A local parish fund and the Friends' Association also make generous donations to supplement the school's income. The school receives very good support from the local authority officers and from the Diocese. Service contracts are reviewed regularly to ensure good value for money. The cheapest option is not necessarily chosen but rather the one that is judged to give the best value. An example of very cost-effective expenditure is the employment of a handyman who works for seven schools in the local cluster. There is currently very limited use of comparative information on similar schools. Currently in the light of the school's income, the provision for pupils and their achievements the school is providing sound value for money.

Financial control

82 The administration is efficient with good routines in place to help to ensure the smooth running of the school. The administrator has only been in post since September and has made rapid progress in getting to grips very effectively with all aspects of administration. She uses her previous experience of commercial accounts management very well to manage school finance. There is very good support from the local authority finance officer. Both are active in helping to prepare the new budget. The financial systems and records are in good order. This was confirmed by the most recent audit in 1999, which recommended only a few minor enhancements to procedures. These have been implemented. The income from specific grants is used properly for the purposes intended.

Accommodation

83 The accommodation is adequate for the number of pupils and provides a suitable environment for teaching all areas of the curriculum. There are three classrooms, a hall and small library, in addition to the offices and kitchen area. Teachers take care to display pupils' work attractively and classrooms are attractive learning environments. In some areas of the

school, such as the hall, equipment and resources impinge on the teaching space. Currently the boiler is not functioning efficiently, but this is soon to be replaced. The outside area is attractive and well maintained, with quiet areas, an adventure playground and a tarmac area. There have been some improvements to the accommodation since the last inspection. An extension to the hall has provided more space for physical education, as well as an additional teaching area. The outside area has been developed and there is now an enclosed space for children in the Foundation Stage. The school plans to develop an ICT suite in the near future and this will greatly enhance current provision.

Learning resources

84 Overall the quality and quantity of learning resources are satisfactory. More money has been spent on books recently and there is now good provision in this area. The school has highlighted the need to improve the quantity of resources for multi-cultural education. Some use is made of the local area to support learning, but there is scope for further development of this rich resource.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

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

- Raise standards in writing at the end of Year 2 by:
 - providing more opportunities for extended, purposeful writing;
 - improving pupils' spelling strategies;
 - improving pupils' handwriting;
 - expecting more of higher attaining pupils;
 - raising expectations of the presentation of pupils' work.

(Reference paragraphs: 7, 27, 37, 95 and 98)

- Raise standards in ICT through the school by:
 - improving pupils' access to computers;
 - consistently using ICT to support skills development and learning in other subjects;
 - improving assessment procedures to record pupils' progress and experience in the subject.

(Reference paragraphs: 10, 36, 37 and 138 – 144)

- Improve standards of behaviour through the school, particularly among older pupils by:
 - review the reward strategies used to improve behaviour;
 - providing consistently clear expectations for behaviour and working habits across the school;

(Reference paragraphs: 16, 17, 23, 45, 99, 148 and 153)

- Improve the tracking of pupils' progress and the use of assessment information to raise standards further by:
 - establishing a system to track individual and year group progress year on year;
 - improving teachers' skills in assessing pupils' work against National Curriculum levels;
 - using assessment information to set targets for pupils;
 - using assessment information from national tests to plan subsequent work;
 - improving the assessment of pupils' progress in foundation subjects.

(Reference paragraphs: 55 – 60, 118, 128, 133, 137, 144 and 154)

- Improve the provision for pupils' cultural development, especially the multicultural aspect by:
 - improving the planning for the development of pupils' multicultural awareness across all subjects;
 - seeking ways to enrich pupils' multicultural experiences through visits and visitors.

(Reference paragraphs: 48 and 49)

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

- Raising standards in music and PE. *(Reference paragraphs: 11, 145- 149 and 150 – 155)*
- Adjusting the imbalance of time spent on English and mathematics in relation to other subjects. *(Reference paragraphs: 32, 34, 100 and 108)*
- Developing the role of subject co-ordinators. *(Reference paragraphs: 72, 123, 128, 133 and 137)*
- Involving governors and staff more effectively in planning for future improvement. *(Reference paragraphs: 79)*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	21
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	24

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	2	8	8	3	0	0
Percentage	0	10%	38%	38%	14%	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	72
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	10
Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	12
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.5
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	7	5	12

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	7	7
	Girls	4	4	5
	Total	10	11	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (82)	92 (94)	100 (82)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	7	7
	Girls	4	4	4
	Total	11	11	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (82)	92 (82)	92 (82)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	8	3	11

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	8	8
	Girls	2	1	3
	Total	10	9	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	91 (90)	82 (80)	100 (100)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	8	8
	Girls	3	1	3
	Total	11	9	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100 (80)	82 (80)	100 (100)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	65	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	5	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	14
Average class size	24

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	57

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001 - 2002
	£
Total income	211,090
Total expenditure	207,306
Expenditure per pupil	2,468
Balance brought forward from previous year	28,949
Balance carried forward to next year	32,733

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4.7
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	86
Number of questionnaires returned	45

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	47	51	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	27	53	9	0	11
Behaviour in the school is good.	18	56	13	7	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	62	9	2	4
The teaching is good.	33	58	2	0	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	29	47	16	7	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	62	33	0	0	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	40	58	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	29	58	9	0	4
The school is well led and managed.	40	53	2	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	20	58	13	0	9
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	7	7	60	16	11

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

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

86 The eight children in the Foundation Stage work with pupils in Year 1. Children begin school in the September after their fourth birthday. For most sessions they join the class for the introduction to sessions and then work as a small group, with support from the teacher or learning support worker. Children achieve soundly in all areas of learning. One child is already working within level 1 of the National Curriculum and is appropriately grouped with Year 1 pupils. Most of the other children are on line to reach the early learning goals in all areas of learning by the end of their reception year, but a few are unlikely to do so. This is because they have special educational needs, including emotional and behavioural difficulties and are a little behind their peers. The quality of teaching is at least sound in all areas of learning, and some of it is good.

Personal, social and emotional development

87 Pupils are making sound progress overall in developing their personal and social skills. This is because staff are calm and supportive. They give children clear guidance about what is expected of them and how they are to behave. Consequently children are confident in their new surroundings. Most have settled well into school routines. They put up their hands to ask and answer questions and line up sensibly for assemblies and lessons in the hall. A few find it hard to conform to these expectations consistently. They tend to call out in whole class discussions, for example. Children work independently on some chosen activities and most maintain interest and concentration for extended periods. A few play alongside rather than with other children and sometimes this leads to conflict when there is a dispute over equipment. In one session, for example, four children chose to play with the sand and did not co-operate well in the use of tools.

Communication, language and literacy

88 Children are achieving well in this area of learning because of the good overall teaching and provision. There is a good emphasis on encouraging children to extend their understanding and vocabulary through speaking and listening. Children are included in the discussions with Year 1 pupils at the beginning of lessons and most listen carefully at these times. Good adult child ratios mean that the small group of Foundation Stage children often work on learning tasks with support. At these times staff take care to encourage children to contribute fully. Enjoyment of books and stories are promoted well and this lays a firm foundation for the development of children's reading skills. The role-play area is currently '*Percy the Park Keeper's*' hut (the title of a book by Mick Inkpen) in connection with their work on growing, for example. Children also have opportunities to browse and clearly have preferences about the books that they enjoy. At these times children 'tell' the story by looking at the pictures, picking out the odd word. They understand that stories are usually sequential and that text is read from left to right. They are taught letter sounds and some are beginning to use these to sound out words. Children take books home to share with parents and carers and again this helps them to be positive about reading and to make good progress. Children are learning to be writers. A writing corner in the room, well equipped with papers and writing materials is available for them to use as a 'choice' activity. All children write their names, with some managing to form very even letters. Some children write simple sentences.

Mathematical development

89 Most children make steady gains in their mathematical understanding, with some moving ahead more quickly because of the good teaching. Planning is good, with a suitable emphasis on learning through practical activities. In the session seen, for example, children

worked with ribbons of various lengths. They estimated which was the longest and then measured the ribbons with crayons. Most children are confident with numbers to five and some count and add numbers to ten. They are beginning to record their work. The school uses a published scheme to support the teaching of mathematics and children work through a series of attractively produced workbooks. Resources are well organised and accessible to the children.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

90 Sound teaching in this area is ensuring that children learn more about the world around them. Activities planned are interesting and based on children's own experiences. In one session, for example, children looked at photographs of Ampney Crucis and described where the places were in the village and what they were used for. They worked with the learning support worker to annotate the photographs, successfully picking out key features. In another session children planted sunflower seeds as part of their work on growing. They understood that seeds need water to grow. Children clearly understand the passing of time and the birthday balloon display reinforces this idea by setting out the months in order. Children are making a good start in developing their ICT skills and use the computer confidently, with good control of the mouse.

Physical development

91 Provision for children's development in this area has improved considerably since the last inspection. There is now a well-equipped enclosed outside area for children to use for physical activities in addition to the school hall. Generally children use the space inside and outside well, although a few children tend to run inside the classroom in their enthusiasm to change to their next activity. In the games session seen during the inspection, children achieved appropriately because of sound teaching. They used a range of small equipment to play games and were fully involved in the activity. Children are also developing their skills in handling small tools, like pencils and crayons and show increasing control.

Creative development

92 Children make sound progress in this area because of the wide range of activities available for them to extend their skills, knowledge and understanding. They have opportunities for imaginative play, for example. 'Percy's Hut', as the role-play area is called at the moment, is used by the children to act as park keepers. They particularly enjoy playing with the animals. In one session seen they were also very involved in using small farm animals to act out their own stories about farmyard life. There are often opportunities for children to work with paint or crayons. During the inspection children used the easel in the outside area to work imaginatively. Alongside these self-selected tasks children also join in group activities. In a hall music session, for example children learnt about dynamics by singing a song using 'deep daddy' voices and 'baby bear' voices. All showed clear enjoyment of the session.

93 The newly qualified teacher is responsible for work with children in the Foundation Stage. With the help of a local authority consultant she has re-organised her room to provide for work in all areas of learning. The room is stimulating and attractive, with interesting displays to catch the eye of young children. Resources are well organised, with more puzzles and games needed to support work in language and mathematics. The outside area has been improved since the last inspection and is now secure, with a range of equipment available.

Strengths:

- *attractive and stimulating classroom;*
- *good planning for all areas of learning;*
- *good encouragement and support from staff.*

Areas for development:

- *personal, social and emotional development of some children;*
- *developing resources for language and mathematics, particularly games and puzzles.*

ENGLISH

94 There has been good improvement since the last inspection in standards in Year 6 national tests. These have been well above average or very high in three of the last four years. Last year they were well above average, with higher attainers doing well. Standards have fluctuated in Year 2 tests over the same period. In reading they have ranged from well below average to above average and in writing from well below average to average. Last year they were below average in reading and average in writing. This fluctuation is related to some extent to the impact that one pupils' performance can have on statistical data. Clear tracking of pupils' progress since they started at school is not in place and so it is not easy to tell whether in the past pupils have done as well as they should.

95 Most current pupils, including those with special educational needs and pupils from traveller families, are making steady progress as a result of sound teaching. Standards in speaking and listening are broadly average through the school. They are also broadly average in reading, with some pupils doing very well. Standards in writing are below average overall at the end of Year 2. This is largely because in this particular year group there are few pupils who are doing better than expected. In Years 6 standards in writing are broadly average, with a wide span of ability within the year group. This is a similar picture to that at the time of the last inspection, with standards slightly lower in writing.

96 Throughout the school pupils speak confidently to their teachers and their peers. Pupils' ability to use Standard English and to speak in extended sentences is wide ranging, especially in the younger year groups. On the whole pupils' listening skills are not so well developed. Most opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills are provided within the class discussion, which forms the introduction to many lessons. Sometimes pupils have the opportunity to read out their work or speak to a larger audience, but this was not observed during the inspection. Most listen well to their teachers for a short time, but find it hard to sustain concentration for extended periods. This is particularly apparent in whole class sessions. Some pupils need more support to enable them to listen more carefully. Sometimes the teacher makes it clear to the pupils what they will be expected to achieve during their listening time, but this is not always the case. At the moment drama is not timetabled during the year, but teachers develop pupils work in this area through other subjects. There is currently no planning framework to outline work in speaking and listening or drama and no guidance for teachers about the skills that pupils should be achieving in these areas year by year.

97 The school pays good attention to the teaching of reading. It ensures that pupils develop sound reading strategies by paying good attention to the teaching of phonics. In one session, for example, pupils in Years 2 and 3 worked on the 'wh', 'ph' and 'ch' sounds. Pupils are also taught other strategies to help them to tackle new or unfamiliar words. They are clear that 'breaking up' a word is helpful and some read the whole sentence to see if that gives them clues to the word that they are struggling with. Time is spent on helping pupils to develop these skills in 'guided reading' sessions, as well as in the literacy hour. The school also successfully fosters pupils' enjoyment of reading. Teachers draw pupils' attention to good quality literature across a range of genres both within the literacy hour and in class story time. Consequently, most pupils are enthusiastic about reading and have firm favourites. Pupils in Year 3, for example, mentioned Dick King Smith, Roald Dahl and Jacqueline Wilson as good authors, while those in Year 6 talked about their enjoyment of Anthony Horowitz and Kenneth Grahame. Not all pupils are so enthusiastic, a small group of boys in the oldest pupils' class, for example, waste time during reading sessions and make very little progress at these

times. The library is very small and not suitable for whole class work, but it is clear that all pupils are confident in finding information from non-fiction texts. One of the most significant factors in pupils' achievements in reading is the good support that they receive from home. All are expected to read at home on a regular basis and most undertake this conscientiously. It is clear from pupils' reading diaries that most parents support their children very well. There is more scope for using the reading diaries to record pupils' progress at school, as well as at home.

98 Most pupils make sound progress in developing their writing skills, although insufficient opportunities for younger pupils to write at length for a clear purpose earlier in the year has meant that standards are not as high as they should be at the end of Year 2. Staff are developing their teaching of purposeful writing and in Year 1, for example, pupils were making their own books about animals during a session seen. They wrote several sentences, in their books, with two pupils working very sensibly on the computer in order to write and illustrate a piece about a giraffe. Pupils in Year 2 and 3 have undertaken some interesting tasks, including a 'photo story', in which pupils took a series of photographs to illustrate a story. The work of the oldest pupils shows that they have covered a good amount of work during the year and learnt to write for a wide range of purposes. Some amusing newspaper accounts based on nursery rhymes are displayed in the classroom. 'The suicidal egghead' an article about Humpty Dumpty is a good example of this. Staff are working hard this year to improve pupils' spelling and this is certainly an area where pupils do not do as well as they should, especially in younger year groups. A more systematic approach is helping pupils to develop spelling strategies and standards are rising slowly. Handwriting is another area that needs improvement. Pupils are not transferring what they learn in handwriting sessions to their everyday writing. Sometimes blunt pencils make it more difficult for younger pupils to write neatly. There is no clear expectation for when older pupils should use pen or pencil.

99 The quality of teaching and learning is sound overall, ranging from very good to unsatisfactory. Planning is very detailed, with clear objectives for each session. One of the strengths in the teaching is the use made of good quality texts to help pupils to develop their reading and writing skills. In Years 4, 5 and 6 for example, pupils have looked at Shakespeare's '*Macbeth*', Ian Serralier's '*The Silver Sword*' and Betsy Byers' '*The Eighteenth Emergency*'. This helps pupils to extend their understanding of literature as well as providing good models for their own writing. Another strength is the use of homework, particularly in Classes 2 and 3 to extend pupils' work in lessons. There is more scope for collating the work of the older pupils, so that they can look back on what they have achieved to help them evaluate their own progress. Teachers mark pupils' work positively, and often provide useful pointers for further improvement, although this is not consistent. Teachers are beginning to set individual targets for pupils. Booster classes for pupils in Year 6 are helping them to move forward well. In the session seen, pupils worked on a poem in order to help them to understand inference in poetry. They concentrated very well and worked hard because of the high expectations of the teacher. Similarly, pupils working with the special needs teacher also achieved very well and made good progress towards the targets on their individual education plans because of the sensitive support from the teacher. The most significant area for development in the lessons seen is the management of pupils. In the unsatisfactory lesson pupils did not move forward as fast as they should because of the disruption caused by a small minority. These pupils called out, fidgeted and generally disrupted the lesson. In another class, the level of noise while pupils were engaged on learning activities was too high for easy concentration.

100 The headteacher is co-ordinating work in English and is managing this well. She has rigorously monitored teaching and learning in classrooms and provided good support for colleagues. She has assessed pupils' spelling and reading and purchased learning materials

and books to enhance the teaching and learning. In Class 3 there are sometimes some very long sessions, which means that pupils sometimes lose concentration.

Strengths:

- *interesting tasks planned;*
- *use of homework;*
- *small group teaching of pupils with special educational needs;*
- *Year 6 booster classes.*

Areas for development:

- *standards in writing at end of Year 2;*
- *planning for speaking and listening and drama;*
- *management of pupils' behaviour.*

MATHEMATICS

101 Results of national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2002 were well above average and well above those of similar schools. Results over the previous three years had varied between above, and well above average. This shows good improvement since the previous inspection, when standards were average. The test results of Year 2 pupils were average in 2002, though well below those of similar schools. There has been no pattern to results over the previous three years. As in all schools with very small year groups, one pupil makes a big difference in percentage terms. Comparative statistics alone can be misleading. More important in small schools is the tracking of each pupil's progress year on year. Largely because of the staffing upheaval, this process is not yet fully in place.

102 Standards in the current Year 6 are average overall. Around a third of the pupils are working towards Level 5 (above average), but another third will struggle to reach the average Level 4. The school is providing booster classes to help those who need it, but a mark either way in test papers could make the difference between the school's performance being above or below average in percentage terms. The teaching, rigorous marking and regular homework, linked to classroom learning, ensures that pupils of all abilities, including higher attainers and those with special educational needs, do as well as can be expected.

103 Standards in the current Year 2 are also broadly average and include a range of achievement. Pupils throughout the school benefit from a pattern of lessons using a mathematics scheme which encourages higher attainers to tackle 'extension' tasks and which has suitable homework tasks for each age range linked to the classroom work. The way teachers mark both class work and homework shows all pupils where they need to focus. Pupils throughout the school, including pupils from traveller families, make at least satisfactory progress and most achieve well, especially in Years 4 to 6. There is no significant difference between boys' and girls' attainment.

104 Pupils in Year 1 show satisfactory understanding of adding two numbers to make ten and taking away 1, 2 or 3 from a small number. They count to 20 and are beginning to recognise odd and even numbers. They use number stories to add and subtract to 20. For example, one child has eight sunflowers and grows five more to make 13 altogether. They recognise and name simple two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. In Year 2, most pupils understand place value up to 100 and are confident in ordering numbers, naming a number more than 20 but less than 40 for instance. They achieve satisfactorily in their learning about ordering, addition and subtraction by using number lines. They recognise sequences, counting in threes and fours forward and back. They total pairs to a hundred. They understand how to calculate the time if a journey starts at 10.30am and lasts six hours. They use nets to form cubes.

105 Pupils in Year 3 achieve satisfactorily in numeracy lessons. Most understand how arrays can be expressed as multiplication and division sums. They have a good grasp of the 2, 5 and 10 x tables. Pupils of lower ability understand how to use a number line to find the difference between 102 and 98, for example, as they develop their understanding of rounding up and down. They struggle with fractions of numbers, however. Finding a third of 12 is too difficult a concept for them. The majority of pupils, of average and above average ability, tackle such tasks confidently. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 make particularly good use of homework, which is set and marked regularly and effectively. The well-kept homework books show evidence of good motivation.

106 Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 also use homework tasks well to consolidate their understanding, although they do not keep their work so well, in order to refer back to it. Nevertheless, the work is marked rigorously and supports learning well. Pupils of all abilities in each year group in the class achieve well. The mixed age range is beneficial, as pupils of different ages and abilities share their different ways of calculating. For example, one pupil offered $35 + 30 + 1 - 1$ as a way of tackling $36 + 29$, while another suggested $65 - 29$ as a way to check whether the total was correct. Pupils of lower ability used 100 squares effectively to find the difference between two numbers, while pupils of high ability in the same lesson, worked enthusiastically with decimals, understanding how to line up the point, to ensure figures were in the correct columns. Although the noise level in the room was a little high, pupils worked in a focused way for 40 minutes on the tasks set, which were well matched to their different levels of knowledge and understanding. Pupils use magic squares to investigate which numbers will complete the square. They work well with fractions and decimals and show good understanding in their work on shapes, nets, angles and degrees. They use precise mathematical vocabulary and record work carefully, using charts and co-ordinates, translating shapes on a grid for example.

107 Teaching and learning are mainly good, with a little that is satisfactory. The strengths are the way teachers plan for different age groups and abilities and the way they match homework and extension tasks to pupils' abilities. In the oldest class, the questioning during the lesson was particularly effective and the opportunity for pupils to review their achievements and explain what they had learnt at the end of the lesson also ensured good learning. In all lessons, teachers organise groupings and resources well. Their plans show work matched to pupils' different abilities. Pupils with special educational needs receive adequate support from assistants. Relationships between teacher and pupils are mainly good, but expectations in terms of noise level while working and close attention during the teacher's introduction are not high enough in both the Year 2/3 and the Year 4/5/6 classes. The mental and oral session at the start of numeracy lessons is not consistently well used to challenge pupils. Teachers do not always demand enough eye contact or create the pace required. Similarly the use of the plenary session to review achievement at the close of the lesson is not consistently successful. In one lesson observed it was very good, but in another it was rushed and ineffective.

108 Recent changes in timetable have resulted in some very long numeracy lessons. One of the successes of the national strategy has been to promote a brisk pace to lessons. In the current situation, teachers are not making sufficient use of time limits to encourage pupils to complete tasks within a limited time. Teachers are not consistently managing time well, sometimes not allowing enough time for review, but too much for pupils to complete work. This leads to some drifting on occasion. The longest session observed lasted 75 minutes, when 45 minutes is often advocated.

Targets for groups and individuals are not routinely shared. This is an area for development, to help pupils and their parents know what is required in order to move on. Each teacher has

a variety of records to show how pupils have been assessed, but procedures are not robust enough to show each pupil's progress year on year. The school does not have a common system for teachers to track progress against National Curriculum levels and set targets. Each teacher knows the pupils and therefore challenges and supports them well, but with changes of staff, the lack of common systems and procedures makes it extremely difficult for the subject co-ordinator to gain an overview of standards across the school. Staff have made good use of previous test papers to analyse areas of weakness in order to focus teaching. The use of extension tasks and booster sessions has been effective for older pupils.

109 The subject co-ordinator is the only permanent member of the teaching staff, but has been in post less than a year. The school improvement plan includes sensible steps for the subject, with improved assessment and target setting at the forefront. Resources are satisfactory, except for the access to ICT. The limitations of ICT access mean that it is not well used to support numeracy.

Strengths

- *standards, especially as shown in last years' Year 6 test results;*
- *teaching;*
- *the use of homework and extension tasks;*
- *the analysis of test papers to spot strengths and weaknesses for year groups and individuals.*

Areas for development

- *shorten the length of lessons;*
- *consistent use of the mental and oral starter and the summary plenary sessions;*
- *setting up clear procedures for tracking pupils' progress year on year;*
- *developing the use of targets and sharing this information with parents;*
- *improving access to ICT to support work in numeracy.*

SCIENCE

110 Results in the 2002 national tests show Year 6 pupils continuing to attain the well above average standards shown over the previous three years, both in comparison with the national picture and similar schools. Year 2 pupils were assessed as a little below average by their teachers compared to other pupils nationally. Results at the end of Year 6 represent good improvement in the school's performance since the last inspection. Results at the end of Year 2 show the school not doing quite as well as at the time of the last inspection. Overall, with standards in the current Year 2 and Year 6 broadly average, the school has made satisfactory improvement in this subject since the last inspection.

111 The current Year 6 has a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Their attainment in science at the end of Year 2 was well below average. They have made good progress during their time in Years 3 to 6. This is despite staffing upheaval and is currently the result of a strong focus on helping pupils conduct simple investigations and record these with understanding in their exercise books. The difference between boys' and girls' attainment is not significant. Pupils with special educational needs and more able pupils all learn equally well during their investigations and recording. Most pupils achieve as well as they should in lessons. They enjoy the experimental work, but are occasionally noisy and require firm control to show their best thinking and recording.

112 Year 1 pupils work at a satisfactory level for their age, planting cress seeds in different conditions, using their five senses to observe, drawing a flower after observing it closely,

comparing shiny and dull materials and looking at healthy meals, for example. Pupils in Year 2 show sound understanding of a simple electric circuit and make good use of charts in their recording, creating both tally and bar charts to record different types of food in their diets. Pupils have also responded well to a homework challenge to produce some of the data for their investigations into healthy eating. During the inspection, pupils linked their science studies with the learning of ICT skills, as they investigated the properties of different rocks, using a binary tree prepared by their teacher.

113 Pupils in Year 3 follow the same units of work as those in Year 2, due to pupil numbers and school organisation. This is not detrimental to these pupils' learning, as the two-year rolling programme ensures no unnecessary repeat of work units. Their skills in recording are in the main more advanced than those of Year 2 pupils, but both use their literacy skills well, particularly in their labelled diagrams comparing themselves with a baby and a toddler. The support of their visitors for these studies clearly brought their learning alive and resulted in particularly well-recorded work.

114 Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 use scientific terminology well when discussing their work and in their written recording. Pupils record each experiment systematically and know that their teacher will assess their recording on the basis of 2*, 3* or 4* explanations, which broadly correspond to National Curriculum levels. This arrangement motivates pupils well. Most use words such as 'saturated', 'solution', 'insulation', 'conductor', 'reversible' and 'irreversible' in context and with understanding. This is because they have been actively involved in the scientific investigations they are describing. They cover the full breadth of the science curriculum, using a three-year rolling programme of work units to avoid repetition in the three-year age range.

115 In the lesson observed, the teacher extended pupils' understanding well through good use of questioning during the conducting and observation of experiments. Higher ability pupils in each of these three year groups record particularly successfully what they predict, what they observe and what they find out. The practical activities improve all pupils' enquiry skills and the consistent recording of each experiment improves pupils' knowledge and understanding. The class as a whole does not show the maturity to design and carry out investigations independently, but in the lesson observed, the teacher ensured that despite noisy excitement, pupils watched, listened and recorded successfully. Pupils used resources well under close supervision. Pupils with special needs received additional support from an assistant while completing the task. Year 6 pupils' performance in practice test papers shows standards lower than those in the lesson and in exercise books. This is likely to be due to some pupils' immaturity and insecurity when left to think for themselves without consistent teacher prompting. Teachers are using booster classes to build pupils' confidence and consolidate their learning.

116 Pupils throughout the school make good use of literacy skills in the context of science lessons. Less frequently they use numeracy and data-handling knowledge and skills to good effect. There are a few examples of pupils using ICT to access information or record data, but these are limited.

117 Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers plan and prepare lessons well and pupils recognise that their teachers have good understanding of the experiments and activities organised. Teachers choose activities that are interesting and organise groups and equipment well. They encourage pupils to make close observations and to record what they see accurately. Displays in each classroom highlight successful work completed recently in the subject, celebrating pupils' achievements. Teachers mark work consistently and this promotes a positive attitude towards the subject and ensures that work is presented neatly. Pupils clearly enjoy their science lessons and practical activities. They respond well, though

too noisily on occasion, to teachers' questions. Most are eager to offer answers. Pupils work well with each other under supervision, but few throughout the school show an independent approach to work without the teacher's prompting.

118 Staff have introduced the use of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority scheme of work this year and a subject action plan has recently been drawn up outlining areas requiring action. The subject is well resourced. With the schemes of work only recently introduced, the development of assessment is at an early stage.

Strengths:

- *emphasis on investigative science;*
- *good teaching and learning.*

Areas for development:

- *assessment.*

ART AND DESIGN

119 Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and remain broadly average throughout the school. Planning has improved and staff now base their work on guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. This provides a sound framework, although there is no further guidance available for staff to outline the development of skills in the use of different media.

120 Work on display and seen in lessons shows a reasonable coverage of work related to drawing, painting, printing, collage, fabric and three-dimensional constructions. In painting, for example, pupils in Years 2 and 3 have undertaken self-portraits, paying special attention to the portrayal of features. Older pupils have used colour washes and paper collage to create attractive landscapes. In one lesson, they painted bold geometric forms in the style of Mondrian. Pupils in Year 2 and 3 were engaged in a printing activity in another lesson. They successfully used potato blocks and stencils to create a two-tone pattern. Some managed to keep the prints evenly spaced, but many found this difficult.

121 There are some good links made with work in other subjects. In Years 4, 5 and 6, for example, pupils have made three-dimensional canopic jars out of plaster of Paris bandage in relation to their work on the Egyptians and in one lesson seen pupils used the computer to generate a geometric pattern. Insufficient use has been made this year of the work of famous or local artists as a basis for pupils' work.

122 Teaching and learning are satisfactory and ensure that pupils make steady progress. In both lessons interesting activities were planned and this meant that pupils were fully involved in and enjoying what they were doing. Resources and equipment were well organised and, in one lesson particularly good use was made of the Internet to prepare slides about the work of Mondrian. In the other lesson the teacher made good use of the plenary to enable pupils to evaluate what had been achieved. In both lessons areas for development included the further development of pupils' skills in printing and painting. In both lessons pupils worked quite noisily and this made it more difficult for them to concentrate effectively.

123 This year the teacher with responsibility for art has been concentrating on her other subject areas. This has been a sensible decision, but means that the leadership of art and design is currently unsatisfactory. There is no whole school overview of standards and provision and assessment procedures are embryonic. Resources are generally satisfactory, with most accessible in classrooms.

Strengths:

- *pupils' enjoyment of the subject;*
- *careful planning and preparation.*

Areas for development:

- *planning for and assessment of the development of skills;*
- *subject co-ordination;*
- *the work of artists as a basis for pupils' own work.*

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

124 Work in design and technology was not timetabled during the inspection and judgements are based on pupils' work, discussions with them about their progress and teachers' planning. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and remain average at the end of both Years 2 and 6. There have been improvements in planning and the school now uses guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority as a basis for their planning.

125 Pupils enjoy work in design and technology because the tasks interest them. In Years 4, 5 and 6, for example, pupils were involved recently in a 'K'nex' challenge. Pupils worked in pairs for an hour and a half to make a bridge to a given specification from a construction kit. The winners will move on to the next round in an inter-schools competition. Often there are good links with other subjects. In Years 2 and 3, for example pupils designed and made coats of many colours for Joseph, in connection with their work in religious education. Displays of their work include the original design, paper patterns for the coats and an instruction booklet, which also includes a list of materials needed. The finished products are well put together. Pieces of felt are joined by running stitch and some are decorated with other pieces of material and beads. Pupils have also undertaken an evaluation and included things that they like, things that they do not like and things that they would do differently another time.

126 Pupils make steady progression in their skills' development as they move through the school. In Year 1 pupils join pieces of card with butterfly clips, for example, to make jointed teddies. In Years 2 and 3 they use needle and thread to join pieces of material and refine their sewing skills in Year 4, 5 and 6 when they make slippers from furry materials. From Year 2 onwards, recorded evaluation is a part of the making task and this helps pupils to reflect on and refine their work.

127 It is evident from the planning and pupils' work that teaching and learning are at least sound, with some good features. Tasks are interesting and suitably challenging and high expectations are set for the finished product. There are few links between this subject and ICT.

128 The co-ordinator has responsibility for a range of subjects and has not concentrated her attentions on design and technology this year. Assessment is an area that needs development, so that it is clear what individual pupils have accomplished year on year.

Strengths:

- *interesting tasks;*
- *good emphasis on evaluation.*

Areas for development:

- *assessment;*
- *role of co-ordinator.*

GEOGRAPHY

129 Only one lesson was seen and some pupils also talked to inspectors about their work. Based on this and teachers' planning pupils are reaching the levels expected for their age at the end of Year 2 and 6. These average standards have been maintained since the last inspection. The school has improved planning for the subject by adopting guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. Staff have devised a rolling programme of topics so that pupils in mixed age classes cover the full curriculum. This will work effectively if the year group split remains as it is currently.

130 Pupils develop their enquiry skills effectively through work on places. In the lesson seen, for example, pupils in Year 1 considered what it was like to live in a village. They looked carefully at photographs of features in Ampney Crucis and described what they saw. They were very involved in this activity and enjoyed identifying key features of the village, such as the river, the church and the cricket field. Following this class activity, pupils worked in small groups to annotate the photographs, picking out key features. In relation to their work on rivers, Year 6 pupils are studying the effect of flooding on the communities of Lynton and Lynmouth in the 1950s. In discussion with them it was evident that they understood both the reasons for the flooding and the impact that this had on people's lives and the environment.

131 Pupils make steady progress in developing their map work skills. In Years 2 and 3 pupils take 'Carrots' a small toy on holiday and a map displayed in the classroom shows his journey around Europe. Older pupils have use two-figure co-ordinates in their work related to rivers, but lower attaining pupils found this difficult.

132 Teaching and learning are sound overall. Work is carefully planned, with older higher attaining pupils expected to accomplish more. In Years 4 to 6 there is quite an emphasis on the use of worksheets, with less opportunity for pupils to express their own ideas, or to carry out their own research. There is evidence of some practical fieldwork planned, but there is more scope for using the rich resources of the local area to support the development of pupils' skills.

133 The subject co-ordinator carries a heavy load and has been concentrating on her other subject responsibilities this year. Consequently staff do not have a clear picture of strengths and weaknesses in the subject. Assessment of pupils' progress year by year needs development.

Strengths:

- *interesting activities planned for younger pupils;*

Areas for development:

- *use of the local area to support learning;*
- *role of the co-ordinator;*
- *assessment.*

HISTORY

134 No lessons were timetabled during the inspection, but based on a scrutiny of the pupils' work and the teachers' planning, pupils are reaching the levels expected for their age in all

elements of history. This matches the picture at the time of the last inspection. Planning has improved and the school now uses guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. Staff have devised a rolling programme of study units to ensure that pupils in mixed age classes cover the full curriculum.

135 Pupils develop their knowledge and understanding effectively in the five key areas through work on a range of study units. Pupils' chronological understanding is fostered well by attractive displays. In Year 1, for example a display showing in which month pupils' birthdays fall helps them to understand the sequence of the months. In the hall another display shows the sequence of periods studied by pupils from Year 2 to 6. Pupils are encouraged to ask questions about the past and so develop their enquiry skills. Year 2 pupils, for example, used the library to find out about the Romans and then listed what they had discovered. One pupil found that 'Celts chopped off their enemies heads', while another learnt that 'Romans made sweets from dates'. In Years 4, 5 and 6, pupils began their recent work on the ancient Egyptians by listing what they knew, what they were not sure about and what they wanted to find out. Throughout the school there is a good emphasis on helping pupils to acquire a knowledge and understanding about past events, people and changes. In Years 4, 5 and 6, for example pupils have learnt a good deal about life in Ancient Egypt, especially about the burial arrangements. There is less evidence in pupils' work of helping pupils to consider how history is interpreted. There is some inconsistency through the school about the way pupils present their work. In the oldest pupils' class, work is well presented and organised into designated history books. While in Years 2 and 3 the pupils complete work on loose sheets of paper, which does not help them to look back on what they have learnt and see how well they are doing.

136 Based on the limited evidence available the quality of teaching is sound with some good features. Good use is made of trips and visitors to bring the subject alive. In Years 2 and 3, for example, pupils met a 'Roman soldier' and enjoyed dressing up as Romans themselves. There is also evidence from previous years of pupils using a Victorian classroom at Gloucester Folk Museum to take on the role of Victorian school children for a day. Good links are made with other subjects, most particularly art and design. This was evident in the older pupils' Egyptian topic, for example. There is more scope for using the local area as a basis for work in order to tap its potential for historical enquiry.

137 The co-ordinator has audited historical resources, but this year has sensibly directed her energies into her role of co-ordinator for mathematics. As a result there is no clear whole school picture of strengths and weaknesses in history. Tracking pupils' progress is at the early stages.

Strengths:

- *use of visits and visitors to bring the subject alive;*
- *links with other subjects.*

Areas for development:

- *use of the local area as a basis for work;*
- *role of the co-ordinator;*
- *assessment.*

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

138 Standards are below average in Year 2 and Year 6. This is because pupils do not have sufficient regular access to computers in order to develop the breadth of skills expected. The

school has plans to create an ICT suite as an integral part of the imminent building programme. Added to the limitations in resourcing, the disruption of staff turnover has led to pupils not enjoying the continuity and expected breadth of experience in the subject that they should. In a subject where expectations have risen considerably at a national level, standards have declined at the school since the last inspection.

139 Pupils in Year 2 are developing an understanding of binary trees. They understand how to phrase questions in order to give a 'Yes/No' answer and their teacher has created programmes to help them relate this learning to their science studies. For example, pupils identify rocks by observing characteristics before selecting 'yes' or 'no' to the questions on screen. Pupils also know how to cut, paste and label their illustrations of giants, which they have previously created with an art program.

140 Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 understand how to create procedures to form a square using Logo and have some experience in using word-processing. Examples of work show pupils centring and underlining bold headings and choosing different font sizes to create varying presentational effects. One lively display of pupils' writing includes word-processed versions of newspaper scoops based on nursery rhymes, using headlines such as 'Suicidal Egghead' to report Humpty Dumpty's demise and 'The mysterious cow who jumped over the moon'. The previous Year 6 had used PowerPoint to make a leavers' presentation. These are isolated examples, however. There is no evidence of regular use of spreadsheets to support numeracy, for example, or drafting and editing to support literacy. Pupils in Year 6 use the internet to research for projects.

141 Neither pupils nor teachers yet have clear printed or computer file records of the work they have covered over the years in school. Restricted access to two banks of three computers, one in the library and one in the headteacher's office inhibits the breadth of learning.

142 The teacher working with pupils with special educational needs makes good use of support programs to build their knowledge of phonics and basic numeracy.

143 Very little direct teaching was observed during the inspection. A few examples of pupils' work were seen on display and in a recently created portfolio, kept by the subject co-ordinator. There is insufficient evidence to make any judgement about the quality of teaching and learning.

144 Staff have adopted a scheme of work since September and organised units of work for each term to suit the organisational arrangements of the school. They have made good use of national guidance to ensure pupils are set to develop their skills progressively and cover all expected areas of study. There is already a good range of software to support pupils with special educational needs. Other resources include a digital camera and projector. Teachers keep note of which pupils have had access to which programs, but the process of assessment is in its infancy. The co-ordinator has completed a subject audit and, together with the rest of the school staff, drawn up a suitable action plan.

Strengths

- *newly developed curriculum documentation.*

Areas for development

- *improving pupils' access to computers;*
- *consistent use of ICT to support skills development and learning in other subjects;*
- *assessment procedures to record pupils' progress and experience in the subject.*

MUSIC

145 The quality of pupils' singing during collective worship is satisfactory, but pupils do not reach expected standards in music by Year 6. This represents a decline in attainment since the last inspection. It was not possible to judge standards in Year 2, as no music was observed for this age group. The subject has a low profile and the school's provision currently does not make sufficient contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are not achieving as well as they should in music, mainly because the school's arrangements do not yet promote the disciplined approach necessary for pupils to improve their musical skills, knowledge and understanding or to enjoy participation in music-making.

146 Pupils in Year 1 know the difference between high and low sounds. The whole class of youngest pupils, including reception children, participated readily in the opening part of a lesson observed. They learned how notes rise in steps and fall in steps as they sang about walking up the hill to 'Buttercup Farm' and showed by hand and arm actions the rising and falling of the notes. The end-of-afternoon lesson was too long, however, for pupils to sustain interest and effort. In the second part of the lesson, the pace slackened as their focus wandered.

147 Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 include some able to sing a call and answer song ('you're wanted on the telephone') in tune individually. However, the class as a whole was unable to perform the singing of a simple round without shouting and when asked to join in with the 'human drum kit' CD, they showed a lack of effort and discipline. Standards attained were clearly below those expected for pupils of this age.

148 The quality of teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall because the school has not developed strategies to address pupils' immature behaviour. While lessons are well prepared, the school is well resourced and the tasks are well matched to pupils' needs and abilities, the teaching of music will not be successful until elements of poor behaviour are addressed.

149 Governors, staff and parents speak of the improvement in singing and behaviour between the harvest and Christmas concerts. A scheme of work is in place. Five pupils, four girls and one boy, receive violin tuition. Pupils enjoy their singing when the whole school is together with all staff present at the start of the school day. Overall, however, music has a low profile and is currently an area for development.

Strengths

- *singing during collective worship.*

Areas for development

- *standards in class music;*
- *the pace of lessons and behaviour control;*
- *provision of additional musical activities.*

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

150 Standards attained by pupils in Year 6 are well below average. In a Year 4, 5 and 6 educational gymnastic session, pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational

needs, made unsatisfactory progress. Pupils did not exhibit the self-control necessary to follow instructions, work effectively together or develop skills appropriate to their age and ability. It is not possible to judge standards in any aspect of the subject in Year 2, as the subject was not timetabled for this age group during the inspection. Overall, however, standards have fallen since the last inspection, when they were average.

151 Pupils in Year 1 worked enthusiastically during their warm-up in an outdoor lesson. They jogged, walked and ran, avoiding contact with each other, at their teacher's command. In the main part of the lesson they made satisfactory progress in their throwing and batting skills. They show average ability for their age, though they are still working at listening carefully to instructions, which need repeating for some. They participate readily in clearing equipment away, but again need the teacher's close supervision to complete this phase of the lesson successfully.

152 In Years 4 to 6, pupils do not focus carefully enough to show what they can achieve. Nor do they work hard to improve their performance. A small number display skills appropriate for their age when asked to demonstrate a short sequence of a roll, a jump and a balance individually before the class, but the majority chatter too much and do not put sufficient effort into doing their best. Pupils do not listen carefully enough to instructions and when putting out equipment several show a careless attitude towards it and each other.

153 Teaching and learning in the subject are satisfactory for Class 1, but not for older pupils. Lessons in both classes lack pace, but pupils in Year 1 learn satisfactorily because the teacher's expectations and consistent insistence on listening to instructions ensure that pupils focus on their tasks and improve. In Years 4 to 6, most pupils respond only briefly to the requirement to listen. Teaching expectations are not consistently high enough in terms of noise level and concentration during activities. The most successful strategy observed was the use of pupils to demonstrate, but this was not as effective as it could have been because the teacher did not ensure that all listened, watched and used the demonstration to refine their own work. Pupils have not yet learned to collaborate effectively or get out equipment safely and sensibly. This is partly because the equipment is new and routines for moving it are not yet established. Older pupils are inactive for too long while awaiting their turn to use equipment and queue noisily.

154 The school has improved resources by purchasing new climbing apparatus, mats and boxes for hall use. The curriculum planned shows a good balance of time allocated to dance, gymnastics and games. There is little assessment in place however. Outdoor adventurous activity is encouraged through the annual residential week for older pupils. Pupils also make satisfactory use of outdoor climbing apparatus under adult supervision during morning and lunchtime breaks. The school's records show that almost all pupils attain the required proficiency at swimming before they transfer to secondary school.

155 The acting headteacher provides additional opportunities for football practice and occasional matches against other schools. The school also participates in annual events such as swimming galas, local cross-country meets and athletics and hockey competitions. The school has also acquired the services of local football and cricket coaches on occasion and benefited from parental support, in football training for instance.

Strengths:

- *annual participation in inter-school events;*
- *improved apparatus and scheme of work.*

Areas for further development:

- *teaching expectations;*

- *pupils' behaviour;*
- *assessment.*