

INSPECTION REPORT

BICTON C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bicton, Shrewsbury

LEA area: Shropshire

Unique reference number: 123461

Headteacher: Mrs H F Richardson

Lead inspector: Mr E Jackson

Dates of inspection: 1 – 3 December 2003

Inspection number: 255503

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Type of school: | Primary |
| School category: | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils: | 4 to 11 years |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| Number on roll: | 93 |
| School address: | Holyhead Road Bicton Shrewsbury |
| Postcode: | SY3 8EQ |
| Telephone number: | 01743 850 212 |
| Fax number: | 01743 851 408 |
| Appropriate authority: | The governing body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mr R Ratcliffe |
| Date of previous inspection: | 7 September 1998 |

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Bicton is a small, popular school to the west of Shrewsbury, with 93 pupils on roll currently, almost equally girls and boys; this will rise to 105 by Easter 2004. The school's annual admission number is 15, but two year groups are larger than this. Almost all the pupils are white British (some parents prefer not to provide the information), drawn from a wide area, and none of them learn English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below average, although this varies by year group. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average, but socio-economic circumstances locally are broadly average. Attainment at entry is generally above average, but varies widely year-on-year. The school received an Achievement Award in 2000, and is part of the National Leadership Strategy.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team | | | Subject responsibilities |
|--------------------------------|-----------|----------------|--|
| 3108 | E Jackson | Lead inspector | English Science Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education |
| 9334 | J Mynett | Lay inspector | |
| 18346 | R Bristow | Team inspector | Mathematics Information and communication technology Geography History Religious education Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage Special educational needs |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Bicton is a good school with some very good features, giving good value for money. There is a peaceful but active learning atmosphere valued by parents, who support the school strongly. The key strengths reported in the last inspection have been maintained.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Leadership and management are very good, and the headteacher sets high expectations for the staff and pupils
- Achievement is good overall, and was very good for the 2003 Year 6 group compared to their attainment in Year 2 national tests, as shown in the table below
- Teaching is good overall in the school, leading to good progress in learning for the pupils, and teaching is very good for children in the reception year and for Years 5 and 6
- Pupils have very good attitudes to their work, and behave very well, which aids their achievement
- Parents support the school strongly, and partnership between the school and parents, the local community, and other schools is very good

The school has dealt effectively with weaknesses identified in the last inspection, and has improved well. Learning and achievement are better in science at Key Stage 1. Although attainment in English is lower currently, this relates to the cohort of pupils whose achievement is good. Standards in Years 4 and 5 are much higher. Good improvements have been made in the quality of education for the reception children although, despite improvements, there are still difficulties in provision for outdoor play. There has also been good improvement in school development planning, the involvement of governors, support for pupils with special educational needs, and provision and pupils' achievements in information and communication technology (ICT).

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

| Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with: | all schools | | | similar schools |
|---|-------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2003 |
| English | C | B | B | A |
| mathematics | A | B | D | B |
| science | A | B | C | A |

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Cohorts are small. In 2003 there were only 12 pupils in Year 6. This means that statistical and comparative data must be used very cautiously, as there can be wide variations in attainment between different year groups.

Achievement is good overall. It is good in the reception class, leading to above average standards of attainment by age five in almost all the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception. In Years 1 and 2 pupils also make good progress and achieve well. Year 2 pupils are on track to attain at least above average levels in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of the year. They also do well in art and design, history and music. Year 1 pupils also work at good levels for their age, and do particularly well in ICT. Pupils in Year 3 achieve well, particularly in English, mathematics and religious education (RE). Pupils in Year 4 make steady progress and achieve satisfactorily, but achieve well in science. Pupils in Year 5 achieve well in English, mathematics and science, as do Year 6 pupils. Year 6 also achieve well in ICT, RE and art and design. The current Year 6 group attained very low standards in the Year 2 national tests, and have achieved well since then. They are on track to attain below average standards in English, particularly in writing, by the end of the year. They are accelerating strongly and making good progress in mathematics and science, and are on track to attain broadly average levels by the end of the year. They attain above average standards in ICT, but below average in physical education, where their achievement has been affected by inadequate facilities. **Pupils' personal development is very good, including**

their spiritual, moral, and social development. Cultural development is good. Pupils' attitudes to their work are very good, as is their behaviour, which adds to the very good learning atmosphere. Attendance is good, and punctuality is very good, and contributes well to pupils' good achievement.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. This is mainly because **the teaching is good**, leading to good progress and achievement for the pupils. One in three lessons is very good or outstanding, and there is no unsatisfactory teaching. Reception children and Year 1 pupils receive a high quality education, and make good progress because the teaching is very well planned and organised. Teaching for Years 2, 3 and 4 is good, and these pupils achieve well overall. In Years 5 and 6, the staff cooperate successfully to provide very good teaching, that accelerates pupils' learning and personal development very well. Improvements in the marking of pupils' work are also making clearer what pupils need to do to improve further, but could clarify the level already achieved. **The curriculum is good**, and has very good opportunities for enrichment, giving the pupils exciting and interesting learning opportunities. The whole staff provide a strongly caring school, and the partnership with parents, the parish, the local community and other educational institutions is very good, reinforcing the good quality of education and pupils' achievements.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher provides clear and determined leadership, both in her teaching and the direction she gives to school development. She is well supported by other key staff, and very well by governors, who are closely involved in the school's work. The school is well managed and organised so that it works successfully day-to-day. Financial management is very good, and resources are deployed successfully to promote learning.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Both parents and pupils hold the school in very high regard. The pupils are enthusiastic, and enjoy the many activities provided. There is no school council but one is to be started in January 2004, a move welcomed by the pupils. Parents unanimously praise the quality of teaching, the progress made by their children, and the quality of leadership and management.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- ensure that reports to parents give clear information about children's attainment compared to what is expected for their age, and what they need to do to improve further;
- develop further opportunities for pupils to learn about Britain as a multicultural society;
- encourage pupils to be more independent, and involve them more in evaluating and assessing their own work, and in setting targets for their further progress;
- develop simple but informative assessment procedures for foundation subjects better to inform planning the next steps in children's learning;
- as finances allow, improve the accommodation to meet the pupils' needs more fully.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is good overall. It is good in the reception class, leading to above average standards of attainment in almost all the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception. In Years 1 and 2 pupils also make good progress and achieve well. Standards in all the core subjects are above average towards the end of Year 2. Pupils in Years 3, 5 and 6 achieve well and pupils in Year 4 make steady progress and achieve satisfactorily, but achieve well in science. The current Year 6 group attain below average standards in English, particularly in writing, but are accelerating strongly, and making good progress in mathematics and science. They are on track to attain broadly average levels in these subjects by the end of the year.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good across the school, and it is often very good for the reception children and pupils in Years 5 and 6.
- Standards are below average in Year 6 in English currently, but this represents good progress on the well below average results achieved in the Year 2 national tests in 2000.
- Standards in Year 2 are above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science, and are improving well because the teaching is good.
- The team of teachers and support staff work successfully together, and this promotes pupils' personal and academic progress well.

Commentary

- 1 **Children in reception** make good progress, and **achieve well**. They are on track to exceed the levels expected by the time they enter Year 1 in most of the nationally agreed Early Learning Goals. In communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, and knowledge and understanding of the world they make very good progress.
- 2 **Year 2 pupils achieve well**, and are on track to reach above average standards by the end of the year. They are the only cohort that works as a distinct year group, and their good relationship with the teacher supports their learning well. This group of pupils is set to achieve higher results than were achieved at the end of Year 2 last year. The table shows that results in national tests in 2003 in reading, writing and mathematics were broadly in line with the national average. These results were below those achieved in similar schools, based on the proportion of pupils having free school meals. However, caution is required in making this comparison, as small numbers and a reported lack of take-up of free school meals may skew the figures. Taken over three years, standards at the end of Year 2 were above the national average, and the improving trend was above the national trend.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| Reading | 15.6 (16.8) | 15.7 (15.8) |
| Writing | 15.0 (15.0) | 14.6 (14.4) |
| Mathematics | 16.5 (16.8) | 16.3 (16.5) |

There were 16 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year. Caution is required in comparing statistical data from such small groups of pupils, as there can be wide variations year-on-year.

- 3 **Year 6 pupils achieve well**, and make rapid progress as a result of the very good teaching they receive. Standards of attainment in comparison to the national average, however, have

been lower than usual for the school by age 11 for the last two years because the cohorts of pupils have been much lower attaining at entry than has been the case in the past. This means that the trend in the school's results is below the national rate of improvement for 11 year olds. The target for 2003 was missed in mathematics, but exceeded in English, and this year's targets are challenging. However, given the very low standards achieved in reading, writing, mathematics and science by these groups of pupils when they were in Year 2, their progress in Years 3 to 6 has been very good. The table shows that results in English at the end of Year 6 in 2003 were above average, in mathematics they were below average, and were average in science, representing very good achievement compared with schools with a similar attainment profile for Year 2 in 1999. These results were well below those in schools with a similar percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals. The school was disappointed with results in mathematics last year and has focused on this aspect successfully so far this year.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| English | 27.5 (28.1) | 26.8 (27.0) |
| mathematics | 26.0 (27.8) | 26.8 (26.7) |
| science | 28.5 (29.6) | 28.6 (28.3) |

There were 12 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- 4 Due to the good use of teaching assistants, **pupils with special educational needs achieve good standards for their age and capabilities.** They develop good communication skills that help them take a full part in lessons. The staff write good individual learning plans for these pupils, clearly focused on progress term by term. Girls generally achieve slightly higher levels than boys, but there was no significant difference last year at ages seven and 11.
- 5 **Pupils in Years 1, 3 and 5 make good progress and achieve well**, particularly in reading, mathematics, ICT and RE. They achieve above average standards for their age in these subjects, particularly in Years 1 and 5. Singing is also a strength, although music is not as strong overall as at the last inspection. Standards achieved in physical education are average in Year 2, but below average in Year 6.
- 6 Across the school, the pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are sufficient to allow them to complete their work in other subjects effectively. There is a good concentration in teachers' planning on speaking, listening, reading and writing across the curriculum, and pupils' developing ICT skills are increasingly making a strong contribution to their learning in science, art and design and history, as well as in the core subjects of English and mathematics.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development continue to be **very good**. The provision for their **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also very good**. Pupils' **attendance is good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils behave very well and show positive attitudes both to lessons and other activities.
- Relationships are very good between staff and pupils and among the pupils themselves.
- The school provides valuable opportunities to help pupils develop their confidence, their ability to reflect and their willingness to take responsibility.
- More opportunities are needed for pupils to develop independence in their learning.

- The very good provision for pupils' moral development results in them valuing and respecting others and knowing right from wrong.
- Attendance is higher than other schools and punctuality is very good.

Commentary

- 7 Both pupils and parents have very positive views about the school. Parents are particularly pleased that their children are happy, enjoy school and behave well. They feel that teachers expect their children to work hard and achieve their best and as a result they are developing confidence and progressing well. Pupils are enthusiastic and spoke of the opportunities to learn new things, their interest in lessons and *'everything about the school'*. Their behaviour is very good both in lessons and around the school. Pupils respond very well to the reward programme and feel it motivates them to work hard and behave well. Harmony is a strong feature of the school and there is no evidence of bullying or oppressive behaviour. The older pupils are very caring of the younger ones. However, they feel that they could have greater responsibility and independence, confirmed by inspection findings.
- 8 Pupils are happy to come to school and are eager to learn. Attendance is good and above the national average. Most parents bring their children to school punctually in the mornings and lessons start on time. This has a good effect on pupils' progress and achievement.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

| Authorised absence | |
|--------------------|-----|
| School data | 4.8 |
| National data | 5.4 |

| Unauthorised absence | |
|----------------------|-----|
| School data | 0.0 |
| National data | 0.4 |

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

- 9 Pupils' spiritual moral, social and cultural development, although not formally planned into schemes of work, is well provided for and contributes effectively to pupils' personal development. Provision for spiritual development is good, reflecting well the school's Christian status. The school uses opportunities to develop pupils' self knowledge and spiritual awareness well and pupils show great respect for the values and beliefs of others.
- 10 Provision for moral development is very good. Pupils know right from wrong and are fully aware of how their actions affect others. Pupils gain an awareness of others less fortunate than themselves through support of charities. The good behaviour of pupils in and around the school is a result of their developing self-discipline and is reflected in the absence of exclusions in the school.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

| Categories used in the Annual School Census |
|---|
| White – British |
| White – Irish |
| White – any other White background |
| Any other ethnic group |

Exclusions in the last school year

| No of pupils on roll | Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 87 | 0 | 0 |
| 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 3 | 0 | 0 |
| 2 | 0 | 0 |

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

- 11 Social development is particularly well developed and results in constructive relationships being forged between both staff and pupils and among the pupils themselves. This promotes a good working environment and has a positive impact on achievement. Pupils accept responsibility readily and complete any tasks they have been given conscientiously, such as looking after the library.
- 12 The school effectively promotes an awareness of the pupils' own and other cultures. This is celebrated through displays around the school, through visits and visitors, and participation in local music festivals or the art summer school. Youth exchange visits and German pen-pals have widened pupils' views of European cultures. The school is aware that more needs to be done to raise pupils' awareness of life in Britain as a culturally diverse society, and the wider world.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Teaching and learning are good overall. The curriculum provides a **good** range of worthwhile learning opportunities and is enriched by a **very good** range of activities outside the normal school day.

Teaching and learning

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are strong for reception and Years 5 and 6.
- Relationships are good at all levels, and the enthusiasm of pupils' response.
- High standards of behaviour and class management lead to very good behaviour, supporting pupils' good achievement well.
- Good use of and collaboration with teaching assistants so that pupils are supported well.
- Very good inclusion for pupils with special needs, and equality of opportunity.
- Insufficient involvement for older pupils in self assessment and target setting.

Commentary

- 13 The table shows that almost all teaching is good or better, with one in three lessons very good or excellent, and no unsatisfactory teaching seen during the inspection. This is why pupils' achievement is good overall and very good for some pupils. Almost all pupils asked said that they enjoy their work, and that lessons are interesting, and sometimes exciting. Parents also unanimously felt that the teaching is a real strength of the school. The quality of working relationships is the key factor that ensures that lessons run smoothly and at good pace.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 33 lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 2 (6%) | 9 (27%) | 19 (58%) | 3 (9%) | 0 | 0 | 0 |

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

- 14 Teaching is very good for the reception children leading to good and sometimes very good achievement. Information about attainment on entry is used effectively to identify the next steps in teaching and learning for them. This is then supplemented by an exhaustive examination of children's work which is analysed so that the teacher identifies gains in skills and understanding to plan for the next stages of learning. This is recorded meticulously in the recently introduced Foundation Stage Profile which both states children's achievements and identifies how they might improve. Outstanding teaching for reception pupils was seen in a lesson to develop early mathematical skills.

- 15 For Years 1 and 2, teaching is good, leading to good achievement. Because Year 2 pupils have such good attitudes to their work, and behave very well, lessons proceed smoothly, and the teacher is able to concentrate effectively on prompting, encouraging and extending their learning. They are progressing well in most of their work, which is very carefully and accurately recorded. Teaching is also good overall, though less effective sometimes in the afternoons, for Years 3 and 4, leading to good achievement in Year 3 and satisfactory achievement in Year 4. For Years 5 and 6, teaching is very good, and leads to good and sometimes very good achievement. For example, pupils made very good progress in a mathematics lesson on the use of data in solving problems and making statements. This was because the teacher used his very good subject knowledge very effectively to help the pupils build on their previous understanding of probability, and the teaching assistant skilfully and successfully challenged lower attaining pupils to stretch themselves intellectually.

Example of outstanding teaching

Mathematics lesson in Reception and Year 1

In this lesson, the teacher displayed an impressive range of teaching strategies, and very good management skills to enable the support assistant to contribute significantly to the excellent quality of learning. Reception children, working with older pupils, thoroughly enjoyed the singing game introducing the lesson aimed to improve mental recall to ten. They shrieked with excitement as 'flying saucer' numbers spun, wobbled and were eventually reduced to zero. The teacher's challenging and rapid questioning skilfully checked the children's different levels of understanding before the teaching assistant consolidated their learning as a separate group. Children could not contain themselves as they eagerly anticipated the next soft toy emerging from a bag; they delighted when contributing 'one more' and 'one less' accurately. Realising the level of success, the teaching assistant made the task more challenging by introducing larger numbers. One boy proudly shared that 'for numbers larger than ten, he kept the greater number in his head and then counted on'. Children then chose activities from 'planning pockets' designed to promote independence, including symmetrical patterning, and sequences on peg board and computer. When singing a 'calculator song', the children bounced with joy as they demonstrated skills well above those expected for their age.

- 16 The staff have good subject knowledge between them in all areas of learning and subjects, and work together very successfully as a team, including the support staff. For example, the ICT coordinator has helped all the staff become more competent in the subject, supported well by a teaching assistant working in Years 5 and 6 who herself has good skills. This has had a good impact on pupils' confidence and competence in the subject. Similarly, a recently appointed part-time member of staff has good expertise in teaching physical education, and the headteacher is a leading mathematics teacher.
- 17 Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good and activities are well matched to their needs. Since the last inspection, teachers have developed a deeper understanding of the pupils' needs and plan work well to match the targets in pupils' individual education plans, which are now more focused. Relationships are a strength, and the pupils' self esteem is high due to the value the staff place on their contributions. Teaching assistants are well informed and used effectively to help plan for pupils' further progress.
- 18 There are good opportunities for pupils to work independently in many lessons. For example, during English, science and art and design lessons, pupils often work singly or in pairs on the class computers. Similarly, during a guided reading session for Years 5 and 6, while the teacher worked closely with a specific group, other groups chose their activities from an agreed list and worked independently very successfully. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to decide for themselves how they will tackle a problem, to choose the resources they will need, and work out how to record their findings.
- 19 There has been increased concentration on how the staff use information gained from assessment and observation to record and track pupils' progress and achievements, to set targets, and to plan further work for them. This has improved considerably in the core subjects of English and mathematics, and for children in reception using the Foundation Profile, and supports pupils' learning and progress better. However, although staff assess

pupils' achievements in other subjects, they do not use the information gained efficiently because there are few agreed systems to organise and tailor the information to the pupils' needs. This then affects how precisely lessons are planned to promote further learning. Teachers' marking has improved, so that pupils often have detailed comments about their work, particularly in English. However, this marking does not let pupils and their parents know clearly enough how their achievement matches what they are capable of nor do pupils evaluate their own work sufficiently.

The curriculum

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils effectively, including those with special educational needs.
- The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is very good.
- The curriculum is enriched by a very good range of activities outside the normal school day.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of learning.
- The accommodation is unsatisfactory, especially for physical development in reception, and physical education in Years 1 to 6.

Commentary

- 20 The curriculum provision is **very good for reception pupils**, having improved significantly since the last inspection. The curriculum provision for **infant and junior pupils is good**. There is determined vision from the headteacher, staff and governors to be an inclusive school that prides itself on its success in providing experiences which are shared by all, regardless of ability, gender or background. The provision for pupils with special educational needs **is good**. Since the recent review of individual educational plans, targets are more thorough and the views of pupils are valued in evaluating progress.
- 21 Statutory requirements are met fully and national guidelines are followed to plan for all subjects including religious education. The national strategies for numeracy and literacy have added consistency to the teaching of skills for all pupils and for setting targets for improvement. Effective provision is made for sex and relationships education together with planned opportunities to understand the differences between medicines and harmful drugs.
- 22 The curriculum has been enriched considerably by activities in addition to those experienced during the normal school day. These provide invaluable opportunities for the development of personal and social skills. Club activities for pupils in Years 2 to 6 provide a varied range of sporting opportunities organised by teaching, non-teaching and voluntary staff. All clubs, including computer, choir and homework, are very well attended. There have been wide-ranging visits and visitors to support learning. For example, the innovative use of funding to provide an artist in residence for an Art Summer School provided a wide range of stimulating experiences for the 22 pupils who attended. The week was planned to include extensive community involvement at the week-end.
- 23 Although vastly improved since the last inspection, the accommodation does not meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. Although the village hall is used for dance, and a local secondary school for gymnastics, the lack of a school hall inhibits physical development and alternatives are time consuming. Parents have contributed significantly to transport costs and to the installation, by the Parish Council, of an impressive enclosed games area in the local park. Although at an advanced stage of planning, provision for physical development of the youngest pupils remains unsatisfactory. Lack of suitable storage space, and for working on large projects, also impedes development, particularly independent working, in design technology, art and design and science. Resources are satisfactory overall, with effective use of investment in information and communication technology equipment.

- 24 Teaching and non-teaching staffs are well matched to the needs of the curriculum and the smooth running of the school. Governors have managed funding efficiently and are committed to improving learning by providing quality staffing and resources.

Care, guidance and support

This is a very caring school. Systems to ensure pupils' health, safety and welfare are very effective and pupils are very well supported during their time at school. Procedures to monitor and promote pupils' personal and academic development are well developed. Pupils feel that this is a very safe and happy school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a safe, caring and supportive environment where pupils can grow into confident and happy individuals.
- Good induction arrangements ensure pupils settle quickly.
- Pupils feel that they are consulted and there is always somebody they can talk to.
- Formal procedures to monitor and promote pupils' personal development are not fully in place.

Commentary

- 25 This is a very caring school where teachers and support staff provide a safe environment for pupils. The overall provision for pupils' health, welfare and protection is very good and parents are very pleased that their children are so well cared for and supported. Arrangements for child protection and procedures relating to health and safety are now securely in place with the governors taking their responsibility for health and safety issues conscientiously. The induction process into the school is well thought out and effectively implemented with good links established with the local playgroup. Children in reception settle happily because of the small numbers and the kind and caring way they are introduced to their teacher and classmates. The transition process to secondary school is also well managed to ensure pupils progress to the next stage of education as smoothly as possible.
- 26 Procedures to monitor and support pupils' academic development and progress are good. Staff know their pupils very well but there are no formal procedures in place to monitor pupils' personal development. Pupils are not involved in target setting and therefore not always aware of how they are doing. Parents spoke very positively about the school and feel it treats pupils fairly. However, there were some concerns that the reward system sometimes favoured those who can be naughty over those who are consistently good. The school carefully monitors the reward system to ensure this does not happen.
- 27 The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and all statutory requirements are met. Individual needs are identified early and teaching and non-teaching support is managed and organised effectively. Outside agencies are used well for further support and guidance. Older pupils are present at their reviews and their views on how they are progressing are encouraged.
- 28 Pupils are very happy and feel it is a very safe and secure school. The small number of pupils in the school means that they are well known and have formed a trusting relationship with an adult. Pupils are confident that they can turn to a member of staff if they have a problem or are unhappy and that issues will be dealt with swiftly. Opportunities to consult with pupils and to take their views into consideration are satisfactorily developed. Staff have undertaken appropriate training and plan to set up a school council early next year. They feel this will encourage pupils to be more responsible, to give them a greater voice and involve them in decision-making processes in the school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership with parents, the local community, the church and other schools is very good and continues to be one of the major strengths of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has developed a very strong and supportive parent body and actively consults with them.
- Parents hold the school in high regard.
- There are very good links with the church and local community.
- Parents offer valuable assistance to the school through the Friends Association.
- The reports to parents on their children's progress are not consistent in providing a clear picture of how pupils are progressing.

Commentary

- 29 The school's very close liaison with parents keeps them fully informed and provides them with many opportunities to become involved in their children's education. This is having a very positive effect on pupils' learning and their levels of achievement. Parents expressed a high level of satisfaction about the work of the school. They particularly like the small family atmosphere. They think the school is well managed and find the headteacher and staff very approachable. Their only real concerns relate to the building and delayed extension of the playground – issues the school has been seeking to resolve for some time. The inspection team agreed with their concerns.
- 30 The school actively consults with parents about different issues through questionnaires or informal meetings in the playground. Curriculum information is shared with parents so they can see what is going on and help their children at home. Information evenings keep parents updated on new developments and important events, and the Friday afternoon 'walk around' enables parents to view their child's work. Parents are kept fully informed about their child's progress through regular consultation meetings. The annual reports to parents clearly state what their child has covered but do not evaluate clearly enough how well they are doing or specify directly enough the targets for improvement.
- 31 Parents of pupils with special educational needs are very well informed at annual reviews about their children's progress, and kept up-to-date informally. There is good liaison between the local cluster of primary schools, and there are very good procedures for the sharing of information at transfer to secondary school.
- 32 Links with the local community are very good. The school is central to village life with many local people involved in school activities and attending functions run by the school. The very strong links with the church are fostered through church services and the regular assemblies taken by the vicar. Parents offer a great deal of support by listening to reading and helping out in the classroom and around school, undertaking various tasks. The Friends of Bicton School is run by an enthusiastic group of parents who organise a large number of social and fund raising activities each year, which generate substantial funds; over £3,500 was recently raised for outdoor play equipment. Links with other schools are very good. These include sporting events run with neighbouring primary schools. Links with Corbet secondary school are well developed and this is impacting on pupils' achievement; pupils' gymnastics performance has improved through the use of their gymnasium each week.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good** overall. The headteacher provides **very good** leadership. Leadership of other key staff is **good**. Governance is **very good**. The overall management provided by key staff is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The headteacher has very good vision for the school's development and high aspirations for the pupils' achievements.
- Staff operate as an effective team and skilful management enables them to develop professionally.
- Leadership of the Foundation Stage is very good.
- The leadership of some subjects needs further development.
- Management is good, but some systems, including the use of assessment in some subjects, need further development.
- The governing body supports the school very well and acts very effectively as its critical friend.

Commentary:

- 33 The headteacher provides **clear and determined leadership**. She has very good vision for the development of the school that has resulted in many improvements since her appointment almost two years ago. The most important of these is the creation of a strong, shared commitment to raise standards and bring about continuous improvement; and greater importance is given to empowering staff and allowing new ideas to flourish. The strong team spirit and the very effective way in which she inspires, motivates and influences staff and pupils give the school very good capacity for further improvement. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very good, providing a stimulating environment for the pupils who are eager to learn.
- 34 The headteacher, as coordinator for pupils with special educational needs, has good subject knowledge and plays an effective part in raising whole school awareness in responding to pupils' needs. She has managed the skills of the teaching assistants well and this has added to the quality of support. A well informed governor monitors special educational needs' provision carefully and the governing body fulfils its statutory duties effectively.
- 35 Management is **very good**. Staff performance is managed effectively and each has targets for improvement. A well-structured schedule for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning has been put into place which initially involved the headteacher. Subject co-ordinators are now becoming more confident to monitor alone. The school monitors performance data but acknowledges the need to improve the use of this information to set targets for improvement in subjects other than English. The school development plan is an extremely effective tool to steer improvement and the raising of standards. The administrative and financial assistant has improved the structures and routines for the day-to-day management of the school.
- 36 Governors support the school very well and ensure that they fulfil their statutory duties effectively. The headteacher has built a strong relationship with the governing body that allows governors to hold the school to account and to question proposals constructively. Individual governors visit the school to develop a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of provision. The application of best value principles is integral to the management of the school. Finance is managed and targeted effectively with all minor recommendations of the recent audit report responded to efficiently.
- 37 Consultation with parents is good and self evaluation is an effective tool to identify areas for improvement. The headteacher is seeking to develop strategies to seek the views of pupils through a school council planned for next term.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

| Income and expenditure (£) | |
|----------------------------|---------|
| Total income | 239,683 |
| Total expenditure | 233,392 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2,565 |

| Balances (£) | |
|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Balance from previous year | 4,445 |
| Balance carried forward to the next | 10,736 |

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS

Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The Foundation Stage is very well led and managed very effectively;
- The youngest children make good progress and are given a very good start to their education;
- They are well on course to have exceeded the early learning goals in all the areas of learning before joining Year 1 because the teaching is very good.

Commentary

- 38 A very good induction programme has benefited from the strong partnership between home and school. The learning environment is very well organised for the seven children admitted in the autumn term. Pupils join the class at the beginning of the term in which they will be five years old.
- 39 Teaching is very good, and one mathematics lesson was outstanding. The high quality of teaching is characterised by high expectations; very good subject knowledge; excellent relationships; detailed planning which matched activities to children's learning needs; a rigorous pace to learning and a commitment to value children's own contributions. There is a shared determination for excellence in the provision for learning; teaching assistants and other support are used effectively. During the inspection a teacher in training enhanced the children's learning appreciably.
- 40 Children enjoy their learning experiences, have very good attitudes to learning and are highly motivated by an enthusiastic teacher who uses questioning skilfully to include everyone. The teacher has linked the nationally agreed early learning goals to the subjects of the National Curriculum so that there is a natural transition for those needing the additional challenge. Pupils are trained to organise themselves when looking after equipment and to choose the order in which they approach the well planned activities. Most children progress well through the measured stages of development, the stepping stones, and achieve well, with many exceeding the standards necessary to access the National Curriculum in Year 1.
- 41 The accommodation remains unsatisfactory, although improvements to the provision for outside play are at an early stage of preparation. Other areas are well resourced.

Personal, social and emotional development.

Provision for personal, social and emotional development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a very supportive environment to encourage learning.
- Relationships are exceptionally good so that children are confident and feel secure.
- Independence and decision making are promoted effectively.

Commentary

- 42 Children thrive in a safe and secure environment, and achieve well. Their contributions are encouraged and valued; they enjoy each other's company and are calm and settled. Adults skilfully prompt and encourage children rather than doing things for them and pupils are enthusiastic when making vital choices in the order in which they experience the planned

activities. They choose from the prepared 'planning pockets' and are expected to explain what they are going to do, and with whom they are going to work.

Communication, language and literacy.

Provision in communication, language and literacy **is good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have very good speaking and listening skills.
- They know a wide range of letters and sounds, and recognise common words.

Commentary

43 Children have good speaking and listening skills at entry, and the teacher provides many opportunities for them to practise and develop these skills so that they achieve very well. For example, children enjoy role play in the 'doctor's surgery' or sharing their successes with each other. When presenting a puppet play, one child displayed performing skills well above the early expectations of the National Curriculum, imitating the teacher with inflection and gesture. The teacher ensures that basic skills in literacy are purposefully taught from the start. Writing skills are at an early stage but all the children recognise that they can communicate through written words. A scrutiny of children's previous work indicates that pupils will have exceeded the early learning goals prior to joining Year 1.

Mathematical development.

Provision in mathematical development **is very good**, and children **achieve very well**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have made very good progress: they are interested in numbers and confident when counting on one more.

Commentary

44 Children have a good understanding of number on entry to school and are learning to use these skills well. They thoroughly enjoy working alongside others in the mixed age class and were delighted and highly motivated when joining in singing games which challenged them to add one more. All understand numbers to ten and are secure when adding one more. One child used two single digits to make 85; and another proudly explained how to add on one to numbers larger than ten by 'keeping the larger number in his head'. They know simple two dimensional shapes such as circle, square and triangle; and have a good understanding of symmetry. Most will have achieved the early learning goals before progressing to Year 1, with the higher attainers already working in the National Curriculum programmes of study.

Knowledge and understanding of the world,

Provision in this area of learning is **very good** and children **achieve very well**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children enter school with a wide range of experiences and a natural curiosity of the world around them that the teacher builds on and extends well.

Commentary

45 Children entered school this year with a good understanding of the world around them. The teacher has taken advantage of their natural curiosity and has provided a wide range of further learning experiences. They develop good enquiry skills when questioning visitors from the Police and Fire Service, and simple recording skills when investigating the locality. They also have confident control skills with mouse and keyboard and know how to access programs and move objects. Children are on track to exceed the early learning goals by the end of the reception year.

Physical and creative development

Provision in these areas of learning is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children experience range of media for picture making.
- Opportunities for outdoor play and the practice of physical skills have not improved since the last inspection.

46 Although an outdoor play area is still only at the planning stage, children have a limited range of outdoor equipment to use when the weather is fine. They play sensibly and use space safely when having free time in the playground, or during supervised play activities in the enclosed grassed area. They have a good awareness of a healthy diet, and handle equipment carefully and skilfully. When illustrating the Great Fire of London they learned to smudge pastels and used materials sensitively to produce collage and seed pictures. They are most discerning when choosing colour. They join in enthusiastically when singing action songs and enjoyed composing rhythms using a computer program to choose their preferences for instrument, backing, tempo and pitch.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Speaking and listening skills for most pupils are well above average.
- High standards in reading are promoted throughout the school.
- The National Literacy Strategy is used effectively, but could be further adapted to school circumstances.
- Teaching and learning are good, with some very good features.
- Good cross-curricular links.
- Some teachers' marking is thorough and helpful, but in general needs to include how well the pupils have achieved, and in some cases clearer targets for improvement.
- Coordination of the subject is good.

Commentary

47 The staff are confident and skilled in teaching the subject, and this leads to good progress and achievement across the school. They use the National Literacy Strategy comfortably, and are now ready to adapt it even more to the goals they have set for themselves and their pupils. The pupils have very good attitudes to their work, and concentrate well in lessons. This aids their achievement well. Pupils in Year 2 attain above average standards, but pupils in Year 6 attain below average standards. These standards vary year-on-year, but have

improved well from a low point in 1999, the groups covered in the last inspection. The current trend at age seven is above the national improving trend, but it is below the national picture at age 11 as lower attaining groups are reaching the end of their time at the school. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well, and generally make good progress, and achieve well.

- 48 Pupils use the many opportunities provided for discussion to build on their good speaking and listening skills. In speaking to inspectors, pupils were relaxed and articulate, able to state their opinions and explain their work lucidly. They build up a good spoken vocabulary through specific English lessons, where they learn how to discuss language and grammar. The staff also promote the appropriate language and style of speech for different circumstances and subjects, such as when Year 1 pupils had to discuss how to program a floor robot using directional and positional vocabulary.
- 49 Reading is taught and promoted well throughout the school using a good selection of texts. Parents are very supportive here, and support the school by hearing their children read regularly. However, while the school library is a welcome improvement, it does not have a wide enough range of either fiction or non-fiction texts, as commented on by some pupils. Effective guided reading sessions have been planned specifically by teachers to improve pupils' skills in interpreting text and evaluating different literary devices. Year 3 and 4 pupils became skilled in isolating and commenting on rhyming couplets in a good poetry lesson because the teacher gave a good, expressive model of how to read the text to accentuate the focus. Research skills are developed well from Year 1, so that by Year 6 pupils use books and other text sources effectively to find what they need. For example, in finding information about hearing from internet sources in a science lesson, Year 5 pupils chose a web page aimed at Year 8 pupils because it was clearer, and gave further information than those for their age.
- 50 Writing has been a major focus for development across the school, and many of the current Year 6 pupils struggle to achieve the levels expected for their age. Their spelling is also below expectations, but almost all achieve well, and are working close to their capacity. However, standards of writing in the rest of the school are much higher, and the current Year 5 pupils look set to achieve high standards in the 2005 national tests. Year 2 pupils are progressing well in most of their work, which is very carefully and accurately recorded. For example, the teacher asked two higher attaining boys to write out map directions using the class computers independently during a good English lesson, which they did confidently and competently. Handwriting is generally neat and tidy, although pupils in Years 3 and 4 are often careless and not reminded sufficiently in the marking. Teachers' marking is generally thorough and helpful. However, it does not indicate clearly enough the levels being achieved, nor are pupils aware enough of what they need to do to improve towards their attainment targets.
- 51 The subject leader sets high standards in her own work, and drives herself hard. She has very high expectations of herself the pupils and other staff, and has developed her leadership skills well recently, under the headteacher's guidance. She leads well, and has good overview of the subject and what is needed for continued improvement.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

- 52 There is **good** use and development of the subject across the curriculum. All the literary and speaking and listening skills are used effectively in other subjects. This is particularly the case in ICT, history and geography, and religious education.

MATHEMATICS

The provision for mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards currently are above average in Year 2 and average in Year 6. Standards at other ages show good improvement and achievement.
- In national tests in 2003 standards were broadly average in Year 2 and below average in Year 6.
- Teaching and learning are good overall, and achievement is good.
- The use of teaching assistants is a strength.
- Annual reports do not guide improvement sufficiently nor do they indicate achievement levels clearly.

Commentary

- 53 Standards in mathematics for pupils in Year 2 are above average, but were average in national tests in 2003. This is similar to the standards achieved in test results in 2002. Evidence indicates that almost half the pupils at the age of eleven have been identified as needing additional support, and that their achievement is good when compared with predictions at the age of seven. An analysis of pupils' previous work indicates that standards are higher at other age groups, especially Year 5.
- 54 Overall in the six lessons seen in mathematics, teaching was good with very good teaching at the end of each key stage. This is an improvement in Years 1 and 2. Teachers match activities closely to the needs of their mixed age classes and teaching is matched well to ability groups, so that they make effective progress in their learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge, the headteacher being a leading mathematics teacher, and use a wide range of strategies to motivate pupils. They have high expectations and promote good achievement over time, especially for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils with particular needs in mathematics are provided for very well. Teachers concentrate on the development of pupils' mental skills and insist that they explain how they solve problems. An important improvement has been the use of computer technology to support learning, especially in the understanding, gathering and interpretation of data.
- 55 Teaching assistants contribute significantly to the learning of lower achieving pupils enabling them to become fully involved in investigations. For example, pupils with special educational needs in Years 3 and 4 were supported well as they investigated perimeters and area. It was inspiring to observe the high self esteem of lower attaining pupils in Year 6 as they sought an affirmative glance to contribute to the discussion on the relationship between pupils' height and shoe size. In discussion, pupils share their teachers' enthusiasm and enjoy the subject, have good mental skills and choose from a growing range of strategies to arrive at solutions. Lesson planning is very good, enabling pupils to move forward in measured steps.
- 56 Subject leadership is good. Assessment data is analysed effectively and there are good assessment procedures to track pupils' progress. The coordinator has monitored the quality of teaching and learning and shared strategies for improvement with other staff. The strategy to promote an evaluation of the quality of learning by seeking the views of pupils is at an early stage of development. The best marking informs pupils of the skills they have acquired. However, there are too few attempts to let them know what they need to do next to improve. Annual reports are informative but do not contain National Curriculum levels nor consistently set targets for improvement.

Mathematics across the curriculum

- 57 The planned use of mathematical skills to support learning in other areas of the curriculum is **good**. Charts and tables are used to record investigations in science; co-ordinates, scales and graphs in geography and timelines in history. A range of graphs is used to record and display findings from investigations, as when using column graphs to explore eye colours in Year 2 or recording, as a line graph, the number of books read in Years 5 and 6. Year 1 pupils interpret their pictograms recording hair colour successfully.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in Years 2 to 5; they are average in Year 6.
- The subject leader provides thorough and effective evaluation, and manages well.
- Good emphasis on practical, investigative work, but pupils do not develop sufficient independence in designing and completing experiments.
- Good use ICT for independent research.
- Teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 are good.
- Marking needs to acknowledge achievement more.

Commentary

- 58 The subject leader is enthusiastic and competent, and has a clear view of how the subject should be improved. She has a good overview of the subject across the school, and has promoted investigatory work successfully. She is well supported by the rest of the staff, and though no teaching was seen in Years 1 and 2, evidence from pupils' saved work combined with lesson observations in Years 3 and 4 and Years 5 and 6 shows that teaching and learning are good across the school. Numeracy and literacy skills are used and developed well in the subject, particularly data-handling and written records of investigations.
- 59 Standards have improved by the end of Year 2, as required in the previous inspection, so that a much higher proportion of pupils are assessed by the teacher as achieving the higher than expected Level 3. Standards here were above average in 2003, and will possibly be higher by the end of this year, as Year 2 pupils are progressing well. For example, they conducted very good tests to see whether the tallest child could jump the furthest, and used a good variety of methods of recording for their age.
- 60 Standards are lower at the end of Year 6 than in the previous inspection, as they were in national tests in 2003. However, pupils achieve well because they do well for their capabilities. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well as they are usually supported effectively either by the teacher or support assistants. For example, in investigating hearing and sound, lower attaining pupils, including some with special educational needs, worked in the staff room with a support assistant to record with an Eco-log on the computer the effects of muffling an alarm clock with different materials.
- 61 Pupils learn well in the juniors because the teaching is good; it is very good for Year 5 and 6 pupils. There is a good concentration on practical work, which is the more praiseworthy as the cramped accommodation inhibits group work as there is little room to spread out materials. In both lessons seen, the teachers' very good subject knowledge enabled them to prompt and focus the pupils' work skilfully. In both lessons, pupils were expected to use their initiative well in carrying out their experiments. Information and communication technology was central to the work as groups researched different websites to gather information about hearing or the human skeleton. In both lessons, good summaries drew the pupils' learning together effectively.

- 62 While much of this work is good, and some very good, there are limitations partly as a result of cramped accommodation and storage, and partly because the teachers direct how the pupils will conduct their investigations too closely. The storage limits pupils' opportunities to choose, retrieve and return their own equipment. The teachers' detailed planning limits pupils' opportunities to pose their own scientific questions, decide how to find the answers, and review and evaluate their own and other pupils' work.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The provision for information and communication technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards and achievement are good.
- Computers are used well to promote learning in other subjects.
- Procedures for measuring successes and providing challenges for the future are insufficiently developed.

Commentary

- 63 Standards are good, a judgement based upon two directly taught lessons, and parts of other lessons where computer technology was used very well to support teaching and learning in other subjects. Throughout, pupils demonstrate confidence when using the keyboard or mouse and know that their actions control movement; co-operate very well when working in pairs; and have very good attitudes to learning. The enthusiasm and expertise of teachers and teaching assistants contribute appreciably to the good quality of learning.
- 64 In a very good lesson in Year 1, a group of pupils were challenged to make group decisions as they predicted the course of a programmable toy around their 'treasure island'. The teacher questioned them rigorously to guide them to build on their previous skills and understanding to predict and record distance and direction. Teaching in a lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4 was good as the teacher demonstrated the use of a drawing program successfully to the whole class. The teacher used her good subject knowledge to question them skilfully to check previous gains in knowledge and understanding. She then built on this to advance their skills from drawing images to repeating them, resizing and then learning to flip and rotate them on screen. By the age of 11, pupils have experienced all the required elements of the subject. At present, there are no formal systems in place to record teachers' assessments of what pupils have learned or how they should be challenged to improve.
- 65 The use of teaching assistants is particularly well targeted to ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities to develop their computer skills. For example, pupils with special educational needs in Year 6 had support to record, and then display graphically, the data they had gathered for homework .

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

- 66 The use of ICT to support learning in other subjects continues to be very good. Pupils in Year 1 have used a music program to compose a piece of their choice which involved choosing rhythm, tempo and dynamics, the instrument playing and a choice of backing. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 used the internet well to explore details of the ear in their science investigation. Similarly, pupils in Year 2 furthered their knowledge of Florence Nightingale, showing good use of search engines and menus.

HUMANITIES

Provision is **good** in religious education.

- 67 In humanities, work was sampled in **history** and **geography**. Judgements have been made after a scrutiny of planning; talking to subject co-ordinators; an analysis of previous work and discussions with pupils. Standards are at least in line with what is expected nationally by the ages of seven and eleven. Lesson planning covers the National Curriculum requirements and skills and knowledge are built upon progressively year-on-year. The monitoring of teaching and learning by the co-ordinators is planned for 2004, as is the promotion of systems to record the gains in skills, knowledge and understanding. In both subjects, pupils develop good research skills and are eager to further their skills and knowledge. A wide range of visits and visitors play an important part in making learning interesting and relevant. For example, pupils track the journeys of Barnaby Bear, and actively support community events such as the Shrawardine Pageant Project.
- 68 In the one lesson seen in **history** in Year 2, the provision was good and teaching showed good subject knowledge and understanding. A study of Victorian times by the oldest pupils was enhanced by a visit to Blists Hill Museum, where they too identified similarities and differences. Pupils in Class 3, have a good awareness of life during Tudor times, and compare the life styles researched with those within their living memory.
- 69 Although no lesson was observed in **geography**, there is evidence from planning that national guidelines are used to ensure that progress is made year-on-year and that subject requirements are met. Pupils' cultural development is broadened by studying other regions and countries such as the Caribbean and India. When visiting the seaside pupils make comparisons between the human characteristics of their village community to those of a seaside town. Geography is included in 2003-2004 school improvement plan as a priority area. In general, marking is sound, but there are no formal systems to record teachers' assessments of pupils' achievements.

Religious Education

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for the subject is good.
- It contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Commentary

- 70 **Religious education** is under review by the subject co-ordinator. At present, she is promoting the trialing of units such as 'friendship' which are contained within the delayed Locally Agreed Syllabus. Standards of attainment seen during the inspection have been maintained since the last inspection and are above those expected. In the one lesson observed in which pupils in Years 5 and 6 researched the life of Nelson Mandela, teaching, learning and achievement were good.
- 71 Pupils have a very good knowledge of their own faith but only satisfactory awareness of other faiths. They have a limited knowledge of how different religions inter-relate. After being moved by the Sikh story of the 'Water carrier' who was chastised for caring for the enemy as well as his own sick and dying, pupils in Years 3 and 4 reflected on whether they had behaved like a good Christian or a good Sikh. When writing their own message one pleaded 'just help somebody please, especially if they are hurt'.
- 72 The subject co-ordinator is linking themes for collective worship to the planning for the subject. There are no formal assessment procedures to record what pupils know, understand and can do.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Two art and design lessons were observed, and Year 1 painting characters from a story they had just heard. No lessons were seen in design and technology, so no detailed comment is possible, save that it appears to be low profile in the school, confirmed by the recently appointed coordinator. Two music lessons were observed, and choir practice and hymn practice. Two PE lessons were observed: gymnastics with all pupils in Years 3 to 6, and games with Year 2 pupils. Wall displays, sketchbooks, and art folders were analysed, and extra-curricular activities for football and netball were observed.

Art and design

Provision is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Recent developments in Years 5 and 6 have been good.
- There is a good variety of work in Year 1.
- Good use of parental support.
- Need to develop further use of sketchbooks.
- Accommodation is restrictive.

Commentary

- 73 Standards are above average in Year 2, and achievement is good in both Years 1 and 2. Year 1 pupils have experienced a good variety of work, and the saved portfolio shows a wide variety of media and styles being explored. Standards are average in Year 6, but improving rapidly because a recently appointed teacher is promoting the subject effectively. No judgement was made on standards in the last inspection, although progress was described as good.
- 74 Teaching and learning were good overall in lessons observed, and good support was provided by a skilled parent helper. Pupils clearly enjoy the subject, and Year 2 pupils have developed good skills in working with wet clay, and mixing subtle shades with paint and brush. Year 5 and 6 pupils have begun to catch up with the standards they should have achieved, and have developed good skills in line and form in sketching, and their good observational skills help them to visualise how to construct an image from still-life subjects.
- 75 Good use is made of drawing and painting programs in ICT, such as when Year 3 and 4 pupils manipulated shapes on screen. There was also a very good art summer school, led by two of the staff with a local artist during the first week of the summer holiday. This was funded by grant, and also involved members of the local community and parents. A variety of media and styles were explored, and an attractive permanent sculpture was mounted high on one of the outside walls.
- 76 However, there is generally too little three-dimensional work, partly inhibited by the cramped accommodation, and sketchbooks are not used effectively as repositories of pupils' own ideas, based on the focus chosen by the teacher. The headteacher as coordinator led the summer school, and intends to raise the subject profile when other priorities have been achieved.

Music

Provision is **satisfactory**, with some good features.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Singing in the choir and hymn practice is good
- Year 2 build rhyme and rhythm well
- No instruments used in either lesson seen

Commentary

- 77 Music was highly praised in the last inspection as there was a specialist teacher who organised a small orchestra as well as choir and other activities. Standards were judged to be high. The situation in the school has changed. Class teachers deliver their own music lessons, and the headteacher leads choir and hymn practices. She is the subject leader, but being class teacher for half the week limits her opportunities to lead the subject as it was previously led.
- 78 Standards in singing are above average. Both as a whole school in assembly and at hymn practice and as a choir led by the headteacher, pupils sing tunefully, with good diction and good phrasing. They clearly enjoy the variety of songs, and learn new ones quickly. Singing occurs incidentally in Years 1 and 2, often in support of number work, which helps the children remember sequences effectively.
- 79 Both the lessons seen involved singing. Year 2 pupils consolidated their learning of pulse and rhythm to recorded songs. This was effective, and the teacher's good management of the lesson ensured that they made good progress. Year 3 and 4 pupils were asked by the teacher to develop a rap style lyric to illustrate the movement of an animal from a known song. The pupils were tired, as this was late in the afternoon, and the teacher did not motivate them sufficiently. Nonetheless, they created reasonable attempts, and listened effectively while these were shared with the whole class. No instruments were used, and no instrumental work was seen during the inspection. Both lessons would have benefited from their use. The peripatetic woodwind teacher was absent so no instrumental tuition was observed.
- 80 The headteacher as coordinator has good subject skills and knowledge. She leads the subject effectively, and is keen to promote it further.

Physical education

Provision is **satisfactory**, but the accommodation restricts pupils' learning opportunities.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The whole curriculum is covered, which is a feat given the circumstances.
- Standards are average in games in Year 2, and below average in gymnastics in Year 6.
- Good access to a local field and fenced basketball area, the village hall, and a sports hall at the local high school.
- A recently appointed and experienced coordinator has good plans for development.

Commentary

- 81 The staff work hard to overcome the problems created by the lack of appropriate facilities for the subject to ensure all pupils cover the subject. There is no indoor space for physical education or any changing facilities, so the school uses the village hall, the local park, and the sports hall at the high school. Pupils also learn to swim in the town pool, and there is opportunity for outdoor and adventurous activity and athletics in the summer, and on a

residential trip. The trip to the high school sports hall involves all the pupils from Year 3 to Year 6 using the space at the same time, and takes most of an afternoon. Parents generously pay the quite high costs of the transport for this lesson.

- 82 Standards are average in games in Year 2. In a good lesson in the fairly cramped playground, the teacher led foot skills practices well so that boys and girls equally made good progress in controlling and kicking the ball with either foot. The pupils took part enthusiastically, but with good awareness of other pupils in the restricted space. Older pupils also showed average games skills in netball and football in extra-curricular sessions, led by parents, with some of them achieving higher than average skills.
- 83 Year 6 pupils have below average skills in gymnastics, largely because they have had few opportunities to develop the skills as most pupils do, using a school hall and reasonable equipment. The coordinator, supported by another teacher, leads a session in the high school sports hall for over 50 pupils. This is far from ideal as the hall is unheated, the equipment is for high school pupils, and there is only 35 minutes available so that all the pupils have to use the hall together. The pupils behave well, and try hard to achieve as expected by the staff. Some older pupils achieve high standards in vaulting over a high gymnastics table. However, in the lesson observed, the deployment of staff and equipment did not make best use of the space. The coordinator is aware of this, and has plans to reorganise the lesson to give the pupils more opportunities to build on the skills they already have. As the recently appointed coordinator, this teacher has good plans to review how the subject is delivered.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

- 84 The provision for **personal, social and health education (PHSE)** is very good in the Foundation Stage and is satisfactory in infant and junior classes. PHSE is having an important bearing on pupils' behaviour and attitudes. A policy for **PHSE** and **Citizenship** has been given a high priority for 2004. Effective provision is made for sex and relationships education together with planned opportunities to understand the differences between medicines and harmful drugs. Involvement in the Safe School Initiative has strengthened links with the community and also created a greater awareness of safety for pupils. Healthy eating is promoted at lunchtimes and fruit has been introduced for younger pupils at break times. Pupils share thoughts and concerns when strategies are developed to resolve conflict and pupils learn to respect the views and traditions of other. There are no consistent systems in place to record personal and social development.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

| <i>Inspection judgement</i> | <i>Grade</i> |
|--|--------------|
| The overall effectiveness of the school | 3 |
| How inclusive the school is | 2 |
| How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection | 3 |
| Value for money provided by the school | 3 |
| Overall standards achieved | 4 |
| Pupils' achievement | 3 |
| Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities | 2 |
| Attendance | 3 |
| Attitudes | 2 |
| Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions | 2 |
| Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |
| The quality of education provided by the school | 3 |
| The quality of teaching | 3 |
| How well pupils learn | 3 |
| The quality of assessment | 3 |
| How well the curriculum meets pupils needs | 3 |
| Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities | 3 |
| Accommodation and resources | 5 |
| Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety | 2 |
| Support, advice and guidance for pupils | 3 |
| How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views | 4 |
| The effectiveness of the school's links with parents | 2 |
| The quality of the school's links with the community | 2 |
| The school's links with other schools and colleges | 2 |
| The leadership and management of the school | 2 |
| The governance of the school | 2 |
| The leadership of the headteacher | 2 |
| The leadership of other key staff | 3 |
| The effectiveness of management | 2 |

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).