

INSPECTION REPORT

BLAKENEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Blakeney

LEA area: Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 115502

Headteacher: Sally Richardson

Lead inspector: Geoff Burgess

Dates of inspection: 2nd to 5th February 2004

Inspection number: 255535

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:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	89
School address:	High Street Blakeney Gloucestershire
Postcode:	GL15 4EB
Telephone number:	01594 510270
Fax number:	01594 510380
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Gary Coleman-Wood
Date of previous inspection:	November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a four class community school in a mix of old and new buildings situated on the main road on the edge of the Forest of Dean. The number on roll has grown from 75 to 89 in recent years with the great majority of the children coming from the village and parish. Very few pupils have ethnic backgrounds other than British and the percentage of pupils who qualify for free school meals is low. The number of pupils on the special needs register was much higher but is now average, although currently three pupils have statements of special educational need. Most children who attend the school start at the pre-school group housed in the village or attend other pre-school provision. With relatively low numbers starting each year, overall attainment on entry is much affected by the presence of any lower attaining children. At the time of the last inspection attainment on entry was below average but in recent years it has been equal to, or better than in, most schools.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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9644	Mike Whitaker	Lay inspector	
24760	Susan Barton	Team inspector	English, Science, Geography, History, Religious Education, Personal, social and health education, Special educational needs.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school with a growing reputation and a very positive ethos which has several strengths. It provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Teaching is good with teaching assistants making a very good contribution to learning.
- Achievement and standards in English and mathematics are improving through the school but are not yet good enough for older pupils.
- It provides rich and varied learning opportunities much enriched by cross-curricular themes and very good opportunities for pupils to extend their experiences during and after school.
- Pupils' personal, cultural and social development has a high priority. Boys and girls behave very well, get on well together and enjoy learning about the world in which they live.
- Staff do all they can to ensure that pupils are safe and happy and the school works very well with parents and the community in the best interests of the children.
- The head, well supported by the staff and governors, provides very positive and thoughtful leadership and ensures that the whole school community is able to contribute to its development.
- Though much improved, provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is not yet good enough to enable pupils to achieve expected standards.

Since its last inspection, the school has made good improvement especially in the quality of the learning environment and the education it provides for its pupils. Standards in most subjects are growing through the school and pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are very much better.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	D	E	C	C
Mathematics	A	D	D	C
Science	C	C	D	C

*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.*

Overall achievement is satisfactory. Children in the current foundation year are making good progress and will achieve many of the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception. However, for several children, standards in spoken language are lower than expected. Pupils are achieving satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2 and standards of pupils in Year 2 are average in writing and mathematics, a little above in reading, but below in science. Boys and girls in Years 3 and 4 are achieving well and standards generally in Year 3 are above average. However, having started school with below average attainment and experienced some disruption in their learning, standards of pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 are below average. Current achievement is satisfactory but there is still ground to be caught up. Standards in ICT and religious education are below expectations but good provision in the humanities and the arts, especially music, ensures that pupils are doing as well as expected. **Boys and girls have developed very good personal standards,** especially in the very good contribution they make to their own learning by their very good behaviour and enthusiasm. To this end, the school makes very good provision for developing all aspects of pupils' personal development, notably their social and cultural development.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Blakeney Primary School provides a good quality of education. Teaching overall is good with strengths in the Foundation Stage (reception) and Years 1 to 4 in a range of subjects. Teaching assistants make a very good contribution to learning especially supporting pupils who need extra help. Provision for these pupils is good and the school is very inclusive. Staff provide a very good range of learning opportunities. Of particular note are the many and varied opportunities provided for pupils to take part in activities which enrich their learning, notably the enrichment hour and extracurricular activities. The school has a very good partnership with parents and the community, many of whom are actively involved in the life of the school. Staff know all pupils and parents well, which means that boys and girls and their parents and carers always have someone to whom they can turn for help or advice. The school takes very good care to ensure that pupils are safe and happy and able to do their best. It makes very good provision for promoting pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship development, and has been very active in promoting self esteem and community responsibility.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

This is a well run school with a very good ethos. By providing vision, motivation and strong leadership, the headteacher has enabled the well established staff to contribute to the many recent improvements to provision and the learning environment in their management roles. **Her leadership is very good and the school is well managed.** Good use is made of the outcomes of a range of monitoring activities to identify priorities and measure progress. Day to day management is very efficient and user friendly and the school's finances are managed very efficiently and monitored closely to ensure value for money. Communications and relationships within the school are very good. Governors provide strong support and are made very aware of, and are involved in, the developments and activities of the school. **They make a good contribution to the governance of the school** and ensure that all statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very pleased with the school, especially recent improvements, the friendly atmosphere and the quality of care provided by all staff. Pupils are very happy with the school and particularly enjoy all the new extension activities and their very positive relationships.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Motivate and challenge pupils in the older year groups to do as well as they can in their remaining time in school.
- Build on improvements in information and communication technology so that pupils can make the gains necessary to catch up with pupils in other schools.
- Seek to improve provision and raise standards in religious education.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Overall achievement is satisfactory. Children in the Foundation Stage (reception) are expected to achieve most of the early learning goals by the end of the year but more than usual will still be developing their language skills. Standards are average in English and mathematics in Year 2 but below in science. In the small Year 6 group, overall standards in each subject are below average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good in the Foundation Stage and in some aspects of work in Years 1, 2 and 3, notably reading; and standards are growing through the school.
- Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is above average in Year 3 but below in Years 4, 5 and 6.
- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education (RE) are below what is now expected.

Commentary

1. Results achieved by seven year olds in national tests improved in each of the past two years to well above average, easily the best ever, in reading and writing and an equal best, average, in mathematics. The achievements of eleven year olds have been much less consistent with English improving from well below average to average in 2003, mathematics falling from well above average in 2001 to well below in 2003, and science average in four out of the past five years. The small numbers involved and the turnover of pupils means that it is very difficult to make absolute judgements about the achievement of different groups from this information. However, value added data for those pupils who were present for tests at seven and eleven years old shows that they made an average improvement over the four years.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.9 (15.4)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	17.0 (13.5)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.1 (14.8)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 9 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.0 (23.0)	26.8 (26.8)
mathematics	24.7 (26.0)	26.8 (26.7)
science	28.3 (28.5)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 14 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. At the time of the last inspection, attainment on entry to the reception class was described as below average and this involved pupils now in Years 5 and 6. This trend continued for pupils now in Year 4 but, as the school's reputation improved, the next three intakes were much better. Several pupils in the current reception group have very specific learning needs mainly involving language acquisition which will mean that, despite good teaching and mainly expected standards in other

areas of learning, overall attainment in language and literacy in the Foundation Stage is currently below average.

3. With no barriers to learning or other factors involved, pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 have made overall solid progress this year especially in reading but excepting science in Year 2 where lower expectations have led to below average standards being produced. Pupils who find learning difficult are well supported and are making good progress towards their targets but several factors have inhibited the school's attempts to raise standards in Years 4, 5 and 6.
4. The school has gained a reputation for the way it supports pupils who find learning difficult. Records show that as a result a significant proportion of the relatively high number of pupils who joined the school in recent years are now on the special needs register and receiving extra help. This is particularly evident in Year 5. Severe problems with the behaviour of a small group of pupils last year left many pupils in Years 4 and 5 with gaps in their knowledge, and lacking confidence and enthusiasm for learning. The school worked very hard to resolve the situation but the consequences are still being felt. Staff are to be congratulated on the range of thoughtful and sometimes innovative approaches they are using to motivate and empower these older pupils to raise their achievement, and gains can be observed but there is still some way to go.
5. Standards in most aspects of ICT are as expected in Year 1 but below expectations in the rest of the school. Provision has been reorganised and some progress made but achievement in ICT is not yet good enough for pupils to make up on ground lost before the reorganisation. Good evidence in pupils' books, on display, in their recollections of past work, and in limited opportunities to see subjects in action, indicates sound progress being made in most other subjects, especially music, but in RE, pupils are not meeting the expectations of the local agreed syllabus.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Very good provision for all aspects of pupils' personal development ensures that pupils' very positive attitudes, values and behaviour are strengths of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good attitudes to learning help pupils to make a positive contribution in class.
- Very good provision for pupils' social and cultural development prepares pupils very well for life in the twenty-first century.
- The schools' high expectations of conduct are achieved very well, ensuring that all pupils are able to engage in learning.
- Very good relationships between all members of the school community contribute to the happy and caring ethos.

Commentary

6. The lively, stimulating environment that has been created along with the many enjoyable and challenging experiences offered ensures that pupils enjoy coming to this happy school. High expectations of behaviour have been set and pupils respond positively to the incentives used, behaving very well in all situations. Most boys and girls in their first year in school have already achieved the early learning goals in their personal and social development. Pupils are friendly and polite and confident when speaking to visitors. They are active learners, interested in school life and the lower three classes have a great desire to learn. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 do all that is asked of them but some older pupils regrettably lost their enthusiasm for learning in the past and are rather passive. The school is working hard to remedy the situation with some success. The involvement of the behaviour support team has had a positive impact on the attitudes and learning of the pupils they have supported.

7. The school works very hard to encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own actions and feel good about themselves. They very happily and proudly carry out any tasks they are asked to do

around the school. Older pupils take good care of younger schoolmates and the way pupils of all ages happily work together during the enrichment hour is a tribute to everyone involved.

8. Since the last report provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has been improved beyond recognition. Aspects of the curriculum, such as art and literacy as well as assemblies and religious education, make a good contribution to spiritual development. Pupils show a good understanding of what it means to respect the views of others. Very good links made with the parish church enhance pupils' spiritual development. Special school services are held each term and the local vicar leads assemblies and teaches religious education in Key Stage 2 (Years 3 to 6). Pupils have the opportunity to discuss moral issues of local and national interest and they give good support to national and international charities. The school actively promotes values such as honesty, self discipline and sound moral judgements. Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong and are encouraged to show respect for each other, work amicably together and play fairly.

9. Social and cultural provision is now a strength of the school having been 'underdeveloped' and 'limited' respectively at the time of the last inspection. Many more opportunities for pupils to show initiative within class and around the school, including through the School Council, have been provided as well as significant work on the development of social skills. The friendship bench helps pupils to feel happy and cared for with friends to play with in the playground. Pupils have a strong link into their own culture through visits to museums, Gloucester Cathedral and local history. The rich curriculum helps pupils to know about the arts and value and celebrate both the diversity and the links between their own and other cultures. Recent and current work on India and Kenya involving many subjects has enabled pupils to learn about living in a diverse society, as well as being part of the wider world. The enrichment hour is a strong contributor to spiritual, social and cultural development.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.9	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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

10. Although attendance has been unsatisfactory, because the school is small the lengthy absence of a very few pupils has distorted attendance levels. The school has the support of the community and pupils enjoy attending. All the necessary procedures for promoting good attendance are in place and the underlying attendance picture is entirely satisfactory.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
88	3	0
1	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **good** quality of education.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall with no unsatisfactory lessons, some very good teaching in reception to Year 4, and mainly good teaching in the rest.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers, teaching assistants and volunteers make highly effective teaching teams.
- Teachers plan interesting and relevant activities well matched to the learning needs of the great majority of pupils.
- Very effective strategies for encouraging pupils to take responsibility for their own work and behaviour have seen a big improvement in the contribution boys and girls make to their own learning.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 19 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	3	11	5	0	0	0

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

11. A great deal of work has been done over the past few years on improving all the structures and procedures which support good teaching and learning to good effect. At the time of the last inspection, most teaching was satisfactory with less than a third good or better - this time, over two-thirds of lessons were good or better. Examples of the improvements which have had a positive impact on learning include:

- The substantial improvements made to the accommodation and facilities in the reception class and the adoption of the Foundation Stage curriculum as a basis for planning.
- A positive decision to make learning more interesting and cohesive throughout the school by providing stimulating activities and relating work in many subjects.
- The effective development of the literacy and numeracy strategies and the adoption of planning structures which enthuse staff and enable them to work together, sharing ideas and expertise, to build schemes of work which make the above possible.
- Positive behaviour management strategies which have eliminated the 'detrimental effect' of bad behaviour on learning noted in each class during the last inspection, and are building pupils' self-esteem and ability to sort things out for themselves.
- The increase in number and effectiveness of teaching assistants, the enhancement of their teaching role and the willingness of staff to make best use of all offers of adult help.

12. The impact of these factors could be seen in the very good lessons. In each, teaching assistants made a very good contribution as an integral part of the teaching team, often working with pupils on the special needs register. One worked with a group of young children on computers in class providing support and encouraging conversation. Another provided very focused teaching for lower achieving mathematicians in a quiet area where they could concentrate and be enthusiastic without disturbing their classmates. A third made it possible for a statemented pupil to join in an art lesson. The activities chosen and the resources used in each, combined with very skilled class

management, meant that behaviour was very good and boys and girls of all ages were totally absorbed in their work. This was very well demonstrated in the Years 3 and 4 numeracy lesson where the activities ranged from working orally counting in tens to the use of a spreadsheet to interpret data. Some use is made of particular expertise to good effect, notably in music and ICT, but this is an area that could be explored further.

13. However, there are still some barriers to learning. Some older pupils who shared a class with disruptive classmates are handicapped by gaps in their learning and by having lost some of their enthusiasm and desire to learn in the process. Current provision for ICT is a great improvement but it still makes it difficult for teachers and learners to operate at the same level as that seen in most schools. Multi-use of the hall means that indoor PE lessons are inhibited by the lack of space and the presence of furniture and equipment around the edges.

The curriculum

The school provides a **very good**, much enriched, range of learning opportunities.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The well planned mainstream curriculum is much enriched by very good activities and opportunities designed to stimulate interest and make learning enjoyable.
- Every opportunity is made to develop links between subjects to make learning coherent.
- Very good quality provision is made for personal, social, health and citizenship education.
- The accommodation has been greatly enhanced since the last inspection, but the curriculum in PE and ICT is inhibited by the quality of the hall and of available equipment respectively.

Commentary

14. The school is to be congratulated on the creative and sometimes innovative efforts it is currently making to enrich the curriculum and make it possible for all pupils to 'Learn, Enjoy and Succeed'. The recent decision to evolve a four year rolling programme of activities involving all pupils in Years 3 to 6 and a three year programme based on the Foundation Stage areas of learning from reception to Year 2 has made possible a series of further developments. Chief among these is the opportunity for teachers to plan together, share ideas and expertise and ensure that, no matter how year groups are organised within classes, teachers can plan for their classes to explore big themes across the curriculum. Although this arrangement is in its early days, staff are already saying how much it empowers them to be creative and flexible, and try other ways of working.

15. Another feature of the new approach is the time given specifically to enrichment activities in school time. Chief among these is the enrichment hour which exploits the time when half the pupils in Years 2 to 6 go swimming to give the rest opportunities to work with a range of other adults as well as school staff in mixed age groups. This involves 'bought in' experts as well as members of the school community and is very popular amongst pupils of all ages. During the inspection week groups of pupils played African drums with a professional musician and made counterbalanced toys after looking at recycled toys from Kenya with a community artist. Others were engrossed with fine cross stitch work, designed and made 'candy cushions', produced colourful and tempting pizzas from scratch, and a very young group donned 'wellies' and coats to go in the wild area to look for materials to make their own nests. At other times, pupils are given the opportunity to think about the way they and their classmates learn and develop social skills.

16. In addition, staff, governors, parents and volunteers provide a remarkable range of extracurricular activities including football for all ages, netball, art, nature study and computers. Several pupils commented in their questionnaire responses on the range of visits and visitors. Pupils have visited Gloucester Cathedral in support of their work in history and the water park at South Cerney. They use the Forest of Dean for nature study and artistic activities. Years 5 and 6 have the opportunity for a residential visit to an outdoor activities centre. Visitors to the school include an expert on falconry, a traditional Asian storyteller, a rap poet, a circus workshop and travelling theatre

companies. All areas of learning and personal development are very well supported by the school's range of extracurricular activities.

17. The school is rightly proud of the way pupils with special needs, some very special, are helped and supported in sharing in all the activities the school has to offer. Pupils who find learning difficult are quickly identified and make good progress in relation to their targets on their individual education plans. Support, mainly in the classroom but when appropriate in quiet areas, is well focused. Teachers modify interesting activities to meet pupils' needs and teaching assistants make it possible for pupils to access the whole curriculum.

18. The chief beneficiaries of major improvements to the accommodation have been the youngest children who now have a purpose built, well equipped classroom and secure outside area to learn in. Two of the remaining classrooms are satisfactory but the provision for Years 1 and 2 is not. Their classroom is one end of the school hall. Consequently physical education lessons for all pupils are constrained by the lack of space and the necessary presence of furniture, the piano and so forth around the periphery of the room. Vigorous activity could prove hazardous.

19. The removal of temporary classrooms has made it possible for the outside learning environment to be developed to provide many more play and learning opportunities and this continues with the help of parents and the community. The development of a reference library and the appointment of an administrative officer part of whose role is to manage resources have both made an important contribution to supporting teachers in providing a full set of learning opportunities.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides a **very high standard of care for its pupils**, based on a thorough knowledge of their academic and personal development. It demonstrates its concern by involving pupils well in the day-to-day life of the school.

Strengths and weaknesses

- Physical and emotional care of a very high standard is provided for all pupils.
- Strong trusting relationships enable pupils to go to any member of staff for help or support.
- Good monitoring systems enable the school to know how well pupils are doing.
- The school has good procedures for seeking and taking account of pupils' views.

Commentary

20. The school takes very good care of all its pupils. All the necessary procedures for ensuring health and safety are in place with appropriate arrangements for first aid and the administration of medicines. A member of the governing body is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the school health and safety policy; contracts are in place for regular safety inspections of school apparatus and equipment. The headteacher is the designated person for child protection purposes. All staff, including lunchtime supervisors, are aware of child protection matters and know what to do in cases of concern. The school works hard to promote a healthy environment for its pupils with a strong emphasis upon healthy eating. Parents are encouraged to provide only healthy snacks for breaktime consumption and the School Council is trying to develop a healthy-snack tuck shop. The school has gained a local education authority Healthy Schools Award in recognition of its work in this regard and for its work in personal, social, health and citizenship education. Relationships between children and all adults in school are very good, and the wide range (and high take-up) of extracurricular opportunities ensures that pupils are well known to a number of adults. In the pupils' Ofsted pre-inspection questionnaire, the great majority (94 per cent) replied that there was an adult in school to whom they could turn if worried.

21. Since the last report all areas have improved with the provision of support, advice and guidance now a strength. In this small school the staff know the pupils very well as individuals and much of the care is informal. Good procedures in place to monitor progress in English, mathematics and science

help the school to track pupils' progress carefully. Good assessment procedures are in place for other subjects and personal development. All pupils have literacy and numeracy targets which they are encouraged to work towards. Pupils are aware of them. However, as yet few take responsibility for monitoring their own progress. Targets for personal development are agreed with individual pupils.

22. Good arrangements for pupils to become involved in the running of the school mean that pupils feel that their views are valued. The School Council, which consists of two pupils from each of Years 3 to 6, meets fortnightly. Members consult their classmates before meetings and report back afterwards. They discuss matters such as play equipment and the idea of a healthy food tuck shop. All felt that their views were taken into account by the headteacher and staff. The members of the School Council were able to talk about their role with maturity and common sense. The entire school was consulted over activities to be included in enrichment afternoons.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

This is a school that promotes **very good links with parents and the community** and is highly valued by them. Good links have been forged with other providers, especially the cluster of associated small primary schools.

Strengths and weaknesses

- Very high quality formal and informal links with parents make a substantial contribution to the confidence and mutual trust of the whole school community.
- The standard of information provided for parents is very good.
- Very good links with the community enrich pupils' learning considerably.

Commentary

23. Parents feel welcome in the school's friendly, relaxed atmosphere. At the beginning of the day, younger pupils are brought into school and settled by their parents, who frequently stop to look at the child's work or have a swift word with staff. Many minor issues are successfully resolved in this easy, informal atmosphere. Staff are available at the beginning and end of the day and the headteacher is in the playground, greeting parents and children. Parents are welcome at school events such as the Christmas drama productions or church services for Harvest or Easter. A number of parents work voluntarily in classrooms, supporting enrichment afternoons or helping to run extracurricular events. The school sees parents and their particular talents as a resource. The lively 'Friends' association acts as a social bridge between school, parents and the community, as well as raising considerable funds. Parents contribute to their children's learning at home by supporting the school homework policy.

24. In the Ofsted pre-inspection questionnaire, 98 per cent of parents said that they were kept well informed about their children's progress. Parents have three formal opportunities a year to meet their children's teachers in addition to their unrestricted informal access. Newsletters, written in jargon-free, parent-friendly language are issued on the same day each week, so that parents will know immediately if they have missed one. Parents are kept informed of the topics their children will be studying by termly curriculum newsletters and new parents are invited to meetings on how literacy and numeracy are taught. For parents with Internet access, the school website is a valuable source of information. Pupil reports are satisfactory. They provide good detail on the child's approach to, and progress in, English and mathematics, together with the National Curriculum level at which the child is working, and a comment on the child's personal development. Much less detail on the foundation subjects such as history, geography, art and music is provided, and reports do not include targets for future endeavour.

25. The school is at the heart of the community with strong links with the local church. The vicar visits the school frequently to take assemblies, religious education lessons and to run a church-based club - Jesus and Me. Pupils use the church for all the major Christian festivals, for Christmas

drama, carol services and nativity plays; the community are invited to attend these functions. Community figures come into school to help run extracurricular clubs and enrichment afternoon activities, such as African drumming and the football clubs. Good use is made of the locality to enrich pupils' learning: for example pupils combined with children from neighbouring schools in a 'Forest to forest' project of music and dance, linking the Forest of Dean to the Brazilian rainforest. There is good co-operation between the school and a group of other small local primary schools, and between the school and the village pre-school group. Links with the secondary school to which the majority of pupils transfer are effective. Liaison between the Year 6 teacher and Year 7 staff at the secondary ensures a smooth transition. Pupils are familiar with the secondary school as they use its pool for swimming lessons and they make a familiarisation visit before they transfer.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall **good leadership and management** are helping the school to improve steadily. **Very good leadership is provided by the head**, good management by the whole staff team, and the governing body makes a good contribution to each.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The head provides very good vision, motivation and a sense of educational ambition and involves the whole school community in the decision making process.
- The whole staff work together very well as a team well supported by the governing body.
- Relationships and communications within the school and with governors, the local community and parents are very good.
- The school has a very positive, inclusive ethos and is well run.

Commentary

26. The school has improved greatly over the past few years thanks to the vision and energy of the head. With her support, largely the same staff team have developed their roles and functions to good, and sometimes very good, effect. While the primary focus has been on raising standards and improving the learning environment, great care has been taken to give everyone a voice and the opportunity to share in the decision making process. Through this, agreed whole school policies and ways of working have been established with clear and specific roles and responsibilities. Everyone on the staff fully understands his or her respective role and is committed to fulfilling it and to improving constantly.

27. All teaching staff carry out significant responsibilities for leading and managing aspects of the school's work conscientiously and well, but in reality, they work together as a team sharing ideas and supporting each other in all planned developments. To this end the implementation of performance management and the development of the school improvement plan have provided structured agendas for individuals and the school community to plan for, and monitor and evaluate improvements. The achievement of 'Investor in People' status was a very good indicator of the positive impact of this process in terms of staff development. The many improvements and developments around the school show the impact of improvement planning and the care taken to achieve value for money.

28. Monitoring and evaluation have high priorities with the lead taken by the head who keeps a very close watch on what is happening. Standards, classroom practice and the effectiveness of policies and procedures are kept under review by responsible staff and governors. More detailed assessment procedures for 'tracking' individual pupils and similar groups through the school have made this an even more rigorous process.

29. Very important in the smooth running of the school is the school secretary who provides a warm welcome and easy point of communication with the school, and very efficient administrative back-up to the head, staff and governors. The openness of the school, best seen at the beginning and the end of the day, means that formal systems are very well supplemented by an array of

informal interactions which make a very important contribution to good communications and day to day management.

30. Recent years have seen major developments in the governance of the school. Many members of the governing body are relatively new but, strongly led by the chair, their knowledge of, and impact on, the role of the governing body and the life of the school is significantly greater than in the past. Focused training, regular planned school visits, involvement in full and committee meetings and the open ethos of the school have given them the confidence to challenge as well as support senior management. Difficult issues have been faced and major policy decisions, such as the extension to the buildings, driven through.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	234442	Balance from previous year	50121
Total expenditure	240365	Balance carried forward to the next	44198
Expenditure per pupil	3004		

31. Currently the school is carrying forward well above the recommended levels of funds. This has been suitably earmarked for improvements and contingency.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The overall quality of education in the Foundation Stage is good. Boys and girls are achieving well in all areas of learning and, this year, most should achieve the learning goals expected before the end of reception in all areas of learning except aspects of language development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are provided with a rich range of well planned relevant activities.
- Teaching is always at least good in each area of learning with the teaching assistant making a very good contribution, and children are achieving well.
- The Foundation Stage is well accommodated, resourced and organised in the classroom and in the outdoor play area.
- Personal, social and emotional development is very well promoted.

Commentary

32. The 14 children in the Foundation Stage who started school in September share their class with younger Year 1 pupils who were in the same class the previous year. The well resourced indoor and outdoor facilities are now a feature of the school and, with the adoption of national planning arrangements for all areas of learning, boys and girls in their first year are well provided for. The current intake includes several children with particular needs and overall attainment is a little below average, notably in expressive language. However, with low numbers in each year group, this is not always the case with some intakes: for example Year 3 is much better. Very good arrangements are made for settling children into school when they first start and the school has a good relationship with the village pre-school group. Good teaching ensures that all children achieve well and the appropriately planned curriculum provides a wide range of interesting and relevant activities, well matched to their needs. The teacher and the teaching assistant, along with several well deployed volunteers, work very well as a cohesive team, promoting and carefully monitoring all children's progress.

33. Arrangements for promoting **personal, social and emotional development** are very good and boys and girls are making the progress necessary to achieve what is expected before they move into Year 1. Classroom routines are well established and very well used as a means of helping children to gain confidence and learn how to live and work in a community. Children are comfortable working independently and in groups such as when playing together with the toy house. They follow the very good role models for behaviour, relationships and working together set by adults and older classmates. In a session focused on developing social skills, every child waited patiently for their turn and listened to and appreciated the efforts of their classmates.

34. With regard to **communication, language and literacy** speaking skills are less well developed than social skills and the school has taken positive steps to start to remedy the situation with the teaching assistant receiving training and support to work with children in this area. Boys and girls are confident. They listen very well and many are very chatty and willing to respond in discussions but several find it hard to express themselves clearly. Some are in the early stages of acquiring literacy skills but all can write their own names and recognise, sound out and copy some letters. Some are beginning to 'write' for themselves encouraged by the example of their Year 1 classmates.

35. Reading is encouraged by the easy availability of attractive books and the freedom for children to go and use them. Shared reading, visits to the library and the use of writing around the classroom encourage children to notice and learn words that interest them or they can use. Boys and girls are encouraged to take books home to 'read' with their parents and the teaching assistant and volunteers encourage this process by logging progress and changing books regularly. As a

consequence of all this activity, reading and writing skills are developing steadily and most children should achieve the early learning goals by the time they move into Year 1.

36. **Mathematical development** is broadly as expected with most children able to count, recognise and write numbers up to 10 and match one to one. Some are already able to use larger numbers alongside pupils in Year 1 and add and take away by counting. Children all know simple shapes and can talk about their properties: for example that a triangle has three sides. Mathematical development is well promoted through structured teaching by the class teacher and the teaching assistant and through exposure to activities that encourage mathematical thinking. In the lesson observed, children used non standard measures including body lengths and giants' footprints to measure distances around the school, estimating and comparing as they went.

37. Most children are in the earliest stages of their **creative development** enjoying experiencing and experimenting with various media, tools and instruments. The classroom is set up to allow children to 'play' constructively with mathematical and creative equipment in free time which they do happily. Much of this has been associated with the current topic on Jack and the Beanstalk, as in role play noted below and a music lesson exploring the sounds of instruments and following the beat of a taped version of 'Fe, Fi, Fo, Fum'.

38. In discussion, few children in the current reception group show the depth of experience or understanding observed in **knowledge and understanding of the world** seen in many other schools. However, they are being given plenty of opportunities to learn ranging from using computers and tape recorders, exploring sounds and hearing in science, and searching the grounds for nest materials in the enrichment hour.

39. The provision of a secure outside area next to the new Foundation Stage/Year1 classroom has considerably enhanced the opportunities to promote children's **physical development** although poor weather during the inspection week meant that, although planned, it was rarely in use. Boys and girls have many opportunities to develop fine motor skills as they handle small tools such as pencils, crayons, paintbrushes and scissors, and frequently work with construction materials and other tabletop equipment. More formal indoor PE lessons are more difficult because of the cramped accommodation although, in the lesson observed, children combined Jack and the Beanstalk role play with sequences of movements very well showing control and awareness of space and body well up to expectations.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good, particularly efforts to improve standards in speaking and listening.
- Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are below expectations.
- Provision for reading is good in reception and Years 1 to 4, but does not have sufficient priority in Years 5 and 6.
- The time spent on writing in English lessons and across the curriculum is less than usual.

Commentary

40. Standards for pupils in Year 2 are in line with national expectations whilst those for Year 6 are below. Pupils' work is monitored regularly and results analysed. Tracking procedures indicate good progress in Key Stage 1 and highlight the slower progress made by older pupils. Individual literacy targets are set for all pupils and pupils are reminded from time to time to work towards them. Older pupils are encouraged and involved in self assessment. Pupils are eager to contribute to lessons,

answering questions and sharing ideas. When talking about a subject familiar to them and of interest pupils explain themselves well using appropriate vocabulary. However, where creative thought is required pupils find speaking more difficult and ideas become more disjointed. Listening skills are good particularly in Years 1 to 4 and enhance teaching and learning. Opportunities for role play and drama further add to pupils' speaking and listening development.

41. The profile of reading in Years 1 to 4 is high with positive results. Well structured guided reading sessions give the opportunity for direct teaching and for pupils to enjoy a range of books. However, time spent on this area of learning lessens as pupils get older with opportunities to experience and appreciate books diminishing with standards not being high enough by the end of Year 6. Younger pupils take home a range of books to read including their school reader and books chosen from the library. Pupils in Years 1 to 4 are heard to read regularly in school with the aid of very able teaching assistants and volunteers. In most classes home/school reading records are completed regularly ensuring that teachers and parents know how boys and girls are doing, and records are maintained to monitor progress.

42. A good range of writing for different purposes is covered but the actual time pupils spend writing is less than that seen in other schools. The presentation of work is satisfactory with much of pupils' work in English books being better than in other subjects. Handwriting is not sufficiently consistently joined and legible, although most pupils in Year 6 are well able to write clearly and use a pen. Pupils work independently from an early age and are able to write in sentences, and become engaged in descriptive writing, sounding out regular words. Some written work is word processed for presentation purposes but information and communication technology is underused for drafting and editing. Writing is a priority on the school's current improvement plan.

43. Teaching is good overall with very good support provided by teaching assistants. Teachers listen to pupils, value their contributions and assess answers to extend learning. Where very good stimulus is provided and sufficient support given, such as story planners, better quality work is achieved. Marking of pupils' work encourages pupils well. However, it is variable in how it aids pupils to improve their work or know how well they are doing. Planning for the mixed age classes is being well managed. The many new reading books for use in literacy along with the visiting library van, makes reading resources good. The well catalogued library with pupil librarians, and an appointed and timetabled fortnightly library time to exchange books, provide an opportunity for pupils to choose from a wider range. In addition, pupils have access to the Internet for research.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

44. Speaking and listening skills are developed well across the curriculum. These enable pupils to learn from others, be involved in discussions and record facts accurately. Literacy skills in history, geography and science include the use of non fiction books and the Internet to research information. Writing includes the use of skills which have been taught: for example note taking, used in an appropriate context, such as recording information from a video in geography, and some opportunities for more extended writing are provided across the curriculum.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Through the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, thorough and systematic planning and good resources are having a positive impact on standards.
- Attitudes to mathematics are good and pupils are nearly always fully engaged and on task during lessons.
- Standards in Years 4 to 6 are below expectations.

Commentary

45. Standards in mathematics are improving through the school but for reasons noted in 'Standards Achieved by Pupils' earlier in this report, attainment is lower in the older year groups and although current progress is satisfactory, achievement over time is not as good as in the younger age groups. This was well demonstrated in a Years 4 to 6 lesson where good teaching saw pupils of all ages learn the difference between polyhedra and polygons and show they understood symmetry. However, subsequent work using commercial materials showed that most younger pupils within the group knew regular shapes but could not recall a rhombus, equilateral or other type of triangle, or use other than very simple properties to describe shapes. This meant the teacher having to revise plans for the following day, a process that has been not uncommon since September. Pupils' books show good coverage of all necessary work since September.

46. A very good example of what is possible was observed in a Years 3 and 4 class where the teacher made very good use of all available help to provide activities which met the needs of a very wide range of previous attainment. Following a sharp and well targeted mental warm up which served as an introduction to work for the lowest attaining group, this group moved to a quiet area to work with a teaching assistant on multiples of 10. While the core activity was to collect data and draw graphs in maths books, higher attainers moved on to work with a student making very good use of the interactive whiteboard to model the use of a spreadsheet to interpret data collected in science involving Blakeney and Kenya. The amount of work recorded in the books of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is much less than in Years 3 to 6 but in the lesson observed and in discussion with pupils it is clear that they have a good understanding of basic number and are achieving well.

47. Teaching observed during the inspection ranged from satisfactory to very good but work in pupils' books indicates a much more consistently good picture. Very good use is made of teaching assistants to support learning, often of those who find mathematics difficult. Good use is made of the numeracy strategy materials in planning but the school is increasingly modifying these to meet the needs of its pupils. Good records are kept of pupils' progress which enable teachers to track their attainment against expected levels. The subject is well resourced and teachers make very good use of the interactive whiteboards as a teaching aid.

Mathematics across the curriculum

48. In common with other subjects, whenever possible teachers use maths in other areas of the curriculum to add purpose and relevance to learning. One good example is noted above and another came in the enrichment hour when pupils of all ages carefully measured out the ingredients for their pizzas.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils participate in practical activities with interest and predict outcomes well.
- New planning arrangements enable teachers to plan together and share ideas and resources.
- Standards in science are below expectations in Year 2.

Commentary

49. The national scheme of work has been well adapted to the needs of the school with a strong focus on investigations, enquiry and the use of scientific method and language. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are now working on parallel topics such as weather and climate, while pupils in the two younger classes are working on the senses. This was observed in lessons and in pupils' books and has the advantage of making it possible for teachers to plan together and make the most of their expertise

and available resources. Investigations undertaken include predicting the outcome and drawing conclusions from their results as in investigations on shadows, and currently in predicting the weather from data collected. In discussions, pupils show they know the importance of a fair test and accurately use scientific language when describing work they have completed. Satisfactory teaching and good support provided by teaching assistants ensures that pupils achieve satisfactorily in science lessons in Years 3 to 6. However, in the Years 1 and 2 class the teacher has been basing work on Year 1 materials without providing for extension activities for Year 2 pupils with the result that their knowledge and understanding in science is currently below expectations.

50. A portfolio of pupils' work has been collected to provide samples of attainment for comparative purposes. Work samples and formal assessment results have been analysed to monitor progression and continuity. Practical resources are good and pupils use the Internet to research facts such as maximum and minimum temperatures in Kenya for comparing with data collected by pupils in Blakeney on the same days. The Nature Club held in the enrichment hour enables pupils to explore their surroundings and enthusiastically extend their scientific knowledge.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in ICT are below what is now expected.
- Pupils have a very positive attitude to work in ICT.
- By consolidating resources, improving software, installing interactive whiteboards and undertaking relevant training, the school has made it possible for groups and classes to be taught ICT skills.

Commentary

51. Although provision for ICT is much improved and the model recently adopted has the potential to develop into an appropriate way forward for the school, it is not yet good enough to make it possible for Blakeney pupils to match the achievement seen in other schools. Although the school disagrees this, combined with a history of not taking sufficient advantage of all the national initiatives to build up standards over the years, has meant that the majority of pupils are working at levels below, and sometimes well below, those now common across the country. This was demonstrated in the limited skills and knowledge of most pupils in the lessons observed, the lack of real evidence of pupils' work in many aspects of the subject, and in pupils' accounts of their experience of ICT since they have been in the school.

52. Examples of the way current provision inhibits learning were seen in the two lessons observed. In one, the need for three pupils to be working at one computer meant that almost without exception, one pupil took very little part in the activity. In another, pupils had real difficulties routinely saving their work because they were using freestanding computers. Time was lost and some pupils lost the work they had been working on.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

53. This is an area where the school is now making progress. Several examples, many already noted, were observed of ICT being used in other subjects precisely because of the portability of the laptops and the provision of interactive boards. As staff and pupils' skills and understanding improve, this area has great potential for contributing to the school's drive to make learning more coherent and enjoyable.

HUMANITIES

54. Work sampled in **geography and history** largely by looking at work in books and on the walls and by talking to pupils, gives a good indication of the importance given to these subjects with the reorganisation of the way work in them is planned. Although it is not possible to arrive at an overall judgement about provision, there is every indication that standards in both are as expected. Very important in this is the way cross-curricular links are made such as in using ICT to access temperature data for Kenya to be used for comparative purposes in science.

55. No lessons were timetabled for **history** during the inspection. However, time was given to analysing pupils' work and discussions were held with pupils. Satisfactory coverage of the programmes of study through a rolling programme includes studies of the local area. Visits and visitors are valued and are a positive aid to pupils' historical, geographic and cultural learning. Pupils show enthusiasm for the activities linked to history in which they participate. Younger pupils show interest and are able to refer to events in Britain such as the Great Fire of London and the Plague as well as famous people and inventions. Year 6 pupils are familiar with chronology, recalling factual knowledge and understanding of aspects of British history, talking knowledgeably about Blakeney in Tudor times. They made comparisons between life in Victorian times and the present, and successfully linked their studies with geography.

56. In **geography** younger pupils are familiar with their local environment and have observed features within Blakeney and made comparisons with Gloucester. They have a growing factual knowledge of the world. Older pupils study contrasting countries in detail and lifestyles within the country and the UK. In the one lesson observed, pupils used emerging note taking skills whilst watching a video of daily life in Nairobi to record similarities and differences. Much work in humanities makes a very positive impact on pupils' cultural development.

57. Links with literacy are made in recording work through the application of skills and the opportunity for more extended writing, as well as the whole school focus on speaking and listening. Links with art are made in such studies as designing Ancient Greek pottery, and science in the study of weather patterns.

Religious Education (RE)

Provision in RE is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Links to personal and social development are strong providing good moral teaching.
- The involvement of the local vicar using his specialist knowledge is good.
- Pupils' knowledge and understanding of the Christian and other world faiths are less than expected.

Commentary

58. From the analysis of pupils' work and in discussion with pupils it was evident that much of their understanding is not applied or retained and that standards are below those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils in Year 2 explain the importance of special people, books and friends in their lives. They are familiar with some of the major Christian festivals but are unable to recall Bible stories or the link with religious teaching to their lives. Year 6 pupils are well informed about Hinduism and could recall in some detail the religious elements. They could talk a little about stories and people in the Bible and the more able pupils have given some thought as to the teaching from some of these events. The impact on the provision for spiritual development is good.

59. Teaching covers the religions of the locally agreed syllabus. The vicar's specialist subject knowledge has provided pupils in Years 3 to 6 with good learning opportunities. The very good use of appropriate resources maintains their interest and enables good learning to take place. The

worksheets used limit the use of recording skills and links with other areas of the curriculum, and do little to extend pupils' learning.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

60. Art, design and technology (DT), music and physical education (PE) were not primary foci of the inspection but sufficient activity and other evidence was available for inspectors to note the importance the school gives to these curriculum areas as part of its drive to enrich pupils' learning. Although it was not possible to form a judgement about provision in individual subjects, overall provision including the many extras the school provides in many of these subjects is very impressive for such a small school.

61. **Art** has a growing profile in the school. Staff are committed to providing a wide range of activities and opportunities in art to enrich pupils' learning and contribute to their cultural awareness. Good examples of this came in lessons where pupils created block prints of Indian miniatures and where younger pupils learned about Impressionism through studying the work of Monet. The display of pupils' art work is seen as an important way of celebrating effort.

62. Whilst no **design and technology** lessons took place during the inspection, many of the activities in the enrichment hour involved designing and making, often to a high standard. One group made pizzas from scratch producing colourful and very tempting snacks. Another, working with a community artist, were designing and making counterbalanced toys based on re-cycled Kenyan models. Other pupils were designing and carrying out very detailed cross stitch work and a final group were making 'candy cushions'. Good cross-curricular links are made which provide a focus for designing and making.

63. **Music** has a strong presence in the school with many lessons in other subjects accompanied by music chosen to complement learning. It is well led by a music specialist who takes the pupils in Years 5 and 6. This good use of subject expertise and good teaching in the other classes makes pupils' achievement in music consistently good throughout the school. With the youngest children exploring sounds and following the beat, Years 1 and 2 using a backing track and improvising accompaniments with tuneful singing, Years 3 and 4 working on seven square ostinato patterns, and Years 5 and 6 working on cyclic patterns, pupils of all ages achieved commendable standards in challenging tasks.

64. As was shown during the inspection, the size and multiple use of the hall inhibits work in indoor **physical education**. However, teachers do the best they can and pupils follow a structured programme and cover all the necessary aspects of the subject. Swimming makes an important contribution to activity levels with half of Years 2 to 6 visiting a local pool half-termly. Physical education is an area much enhanced by extracurricular activities and the school is very active in local sporting activities and competitions notably, given the facilities, gymnastics.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP (PSHEC)

65. Very good provision is made for personal, social and health education and citizenship. The school sees pupils' personal development as an important part of its work and good progress has been made to help pupils develop respect for each other and themselves. An agreed policy and framework is in place for PSHEC which includes work on health, drugs, sex education, and personal safety. It is supplemented across the curriculum and in circle time to provide the opportunity to focus specifically on aspects of pupils' personal development appropriate to their current needs. This helps pupils to develop a safe and healthy life style, gain confidence, raise self esteem and share feelings and concerns with others. The oldest pupils are well supported in their learning through the 'Thinking Skills' programme. Pupils are encouraged to talk and listen to others as well as suggest ways to help things to be better. Tracking of pupils' development in this area is in place.

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	5
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	5
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	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
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	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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