

INSPECTION REPORT

CHOLSEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Wallingford

LEA area: Oxfordshire

Unique reference number: 123081

Acting Headteacher: Mrs H Haigh

Lead inspector: Mrs H Bonser

Dates of inspection: October 13th – 15th 2003

Inspection number: 255792

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:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	193
School address:	Church Road Cholsey Wallingford
Postcode:	OX10 9PP
Telephone number:	01491 651862
Fax number:	01991 651649
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr S Jones
Date of previous inspection:	June1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school draws almost all of its pupils from the village of Cholsey. They come from a wide variety of backgrounds. Children's attainment on entry to the school is average overall. The number of children starting school varies considerably from year to year and consequently most classes have pupils from more than one year group. Nineteen per cent of the pupils are identified as having special educational needs, mainly as a result of learning or behavioural difficulties. This is slightly below the national average. At present, two per cent have a Statement of Special Educational Needs, which is broadly average. Six per cent of pupils come from ethnic minority groups but only one per cent are at an early stage of acquiring English. There is a relatively small movement of pupils in and out of the school during the school year. There has been a high turnover of teachers in the last two years. The post of headteacher is vacant at present. An acting headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed from the school staff for this school year. The school received the Investor in People award in 2001 and the Eco Schools bronze award in 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22870	Hilary Bonser	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage; religious education; geography; music.
1311	Barry Wood	Lay inspector	
12060	Patricia Peaker	Team inspector	English; art and design; information and communication technology; design and technology; special educational needs; English as an additional language.
28320	Robert Willey	Team inspector	Mathematics; science; history; physical education.

The inspection contractor was:

Serco QAA
Herringston Barn
Herringston
Dorchester
Dorset
DT2 9PU

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school's effectiveness is good and it gives good value for money. Standards overall are above average. Pupils achieve well by the time they leave the school as a result of good teaching, although a high turnover of teachers has contributed to some variations in the rate of pupils' progress across the school. The acting headteacher, who has only been in post since September, leads the school well.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards by the end of Year 6 are above average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science; pupils do well overall because they are well taught, although there are some inconsistencies in approach.
- Pupils develop very positive attitudes to their work as they move through the school and this makes a considerable contribution to their good achievement.
- The acting headteacher, governors and all staff work together very well as a team to continue to improve standards in all aspects of school life.
- The very good partnership the school has with parents, the local community and other schools makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning and their enthusiasm for school.
- Pupils make more rapid progress in Years 3 to 6 than in the rest of the school, where they achieve satisfactorily.
- Compared to national averages, standards in mathematics and English at the end of Year 2 and in other subjects across the school are not yet as high as in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6.

The school has responded very well to the issues identified in the last report, resulting in very good improvement in pupils' achievement. Standards and the quality of teaching and learning have improved in the core subjects and information and communication technology. An appropriate learning environment has been provided for reception children and assessment, which was unsatisfactory, is now good.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Achievement is good overall. In Years 3 to 6, boys and girls of all levels of attainment achieve well. In Reception, Years 1 and 2, achievement is satisfactory rather than good, partly because the turnover of teachers has affected the continuity of pupils' learning more than in other year groups.

Standards of the current Year 6 are above average in English, mathematics and science. Standards in Year 2 are above average in science but average in reading, writing and mathematics. In Reception, standards are average in relation to the goals children are expected to reach by the end of their reception year. Standards are average in all other subjects that were inspected, except in music where they are below average.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good overall. Pupils' attitudes are very good and their behaviour and attendance is good. The school helps pupils to show a good level of maturity by the end of Year 6.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good.

Teaching and learning are good overall, with some very good teaching seen, mainly in Years 5 and 6. It is good overall in Years 1 to 6 and satisfactory in the Foundation Stage, at present, as the new staff settle in. Teachers generally use a good variety of methods and resources to provide interesting and challenging lessons. This encourages pupils to try hard and learn well. However, the turnover of teachers has led to inconsistencies in some aspects of teaching, for example, in the effectiveness of questioning skills and in marking pupils' work. As a result, some opportunities are lost to further improve the rate of pupils' learning.

The curriculum is enriched well, especially through the very good links with the community and other schools and good extra-curricular opportunities. These motivates pupils well and makes them keen to learn. However, the planning of subjects other than English, mathematics and science does not take sufficient account of pupils of different ages in the same class and limits the opportunity for pupils to do well in them.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good.

Leadership is good. The acting headteacher, with very good support from the acting deputy headteacher and all staff, is ensuring that the school successfully pursues its well-planned programme for continuing improvement. The day-to-day management of the school is good. The work of the governing body is also good. Governors are very supportive of the school and have a clear and appropriate view of what is needed to move the school forward.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents: parents are very satisfied. For example, they feel their children enjoy school, are helped to settle in well, expected to work hard and are well taught. However, some are concerned about the disturbed behaviour of a few pupils and the lack of information they receive about their children's progress. The inspectors found the quality of information for parents is good and that pupils with behavioural problems are managed appropriately.

Pupils: most know an adult they can go to if they are worried and feel that teachers are fair to them and listen to their ideas. They feel that other children do not always behave well. The inspection team found that behaviour was good overall.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- ensure that pupils achieve consistently well across the school;
- raise standards further in Reception and in mathematics and English by the end of Year 2;
- raise standards in all other subjects across the school towards the level of the core subjects at the end of Year 6.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- provide an appropriate daily act of collective worship.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Achievement is good overall for boys and girls of all levels of attainment. It is satisfactory in Reception and Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. Standards in English, mathematics and science are above average by the end of Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in the core subjects have risen since the last inspection at the end of Year 6.
- Boys and girls of all levels of attainment do equally well by the time they leave the school because they are taught well.
- Standards are average in English and mathematics at the end of Year 2 and in other subjects throughout the school except music where they are below average.
- Pupils' achievement is better in Years 3 to 6 than in Reception and Years 1 and 2.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	13.2 (16.5)	15.9 (15.8)
writing	12.4 (14.1)	14.8 (14.4)
mathematics	14.9 (16.8)	16.4 (16.5)

There were 24 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	28.0 (28.2)	27.0 (27.0)
mathematics	28.1 (28.2)	27.0 (26.7)
science	30.1 (30.1)	28.8 (28.3)

There were 35 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. Results in the 2003 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 remained above average, continuing to keep pace with national trends and with little difference in the performance of boys and girls. Results at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics and in teachers' assessments in science fell back to well below the national average and were in the lowest five per cent compared to similar schools. However, these comparisons should be interpreted with care as this was a smaller year group of only 24 pupils, several of whom joined the school in Year 2 and had special educational needs or spoke English as an additional language. The results of those pupils who started the school in the reception class show that they achieved satisfactorily in relation to their attainment on entry. The particular characteristics of this group of pupils also explain why inspection judgements about standards in Year 2 differ from the 2003 results.
2. In the current reception class, children are on course to meet the expected goals by the end of the year in all areas of their learning and to exceed them in their personal, social and emotional development because the teaching is good in this area. In Year 2, standards are average in English and mathematics and above average in science. Standards in the Year 6 remain above

average in English, mathematics and science partly because of a high proportion of very good teaching in Years 5 and 6.

3. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT), history and design and technology, which were below average at the last inspection, have improved from below average to average. Standards are only average in most other subjects, partly due to some shortcomings in planning, but also because the main focus for development has been, appropriately, on raising standards and achievement in the core subjects and ICT. Standards in music, however, have fallen to below average. This is largely because there has been no one with sufficient expertise to lead and manage the subject effectively over the last three years. A new co-ordinator has been appointed this September.
4. It is clear from records of children's assessments on joining the reception class that standards on entry to the school have fallen to average from above average at the time of the last inspection to average. Individual progress is tracked carefully through the school from baseline assessments through the national statutory and optional tests and other assessments. This information and value added data from the local education authority was analysed, as well as past work and lesson observations. It shows that most boys and girls, including those with special educational needs, those who speak English as an additional language and higher attaining pupils, achieve well overall by the time they leave the school in relation to their prior attainment.
5. Pupils' rate of progress and achievement through the school in the core subjects was judged to be unsatisfactory in the last report. It has improved to satisfactory by the end of Year 2 and good by the end of Year 6 in relation to pupils' prior attainment. This significant improvement has been brought about as a result of effective action taken by the school to improve the quality of teaching and learning in these subjects, including the effective implementation of the national literacy and numeracy strategies and well planned staff training. There is also good provision and support for pupils with special educational needs and those in need of additional help and a good level of challenge for higher attaining pupils. The good behaviour and very positive attitudes that most boys and girls have towards their work also contribute to their achievements.
6. Achievement in the reception class is satisfactory. Although significant improvements have been made in the accommodation and curriculum for this age group, in response to the issues in the last report, there have been three teachers in three years. This has slowed further development of provision and consequently the rate of children's learning and achievement. The turnover of teachers in the last two years has also hindered the continuity of pupils' learning in Years 1 and 2 to a greater extent than in Years 3 to 6. This is one reason for the differences in the achievement of older and younger pupils. Other factors include inconsistencies in teaching and learning.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have very good attitudes towards their learning and show interest and commitment towards their work. Attendance and behaviour are good. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is also good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good attitudes to learning help pupils achieve well.
- The good behaviour of most pupils has a positive effect on their learning.
- Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults, are very good.
- The school makes good provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development.
- Collective worship does not meet statutory requirements.

Commentary

7. Pupils show very good levels of interest in lessons and all other school activities. There are opportunities for pupils to work independently, in pairs and in larger groups. Particularly in the core subjects they sustain high levels of concentration and commitment to their work because the work is well matched to their learning needs. The varied ways of working provide pupils with the opportunity to show initiative and to take appropriate responsibility for their learning. They speak about their ideas with confidence and respond well to questioning and discussion.
8. Most pupils behave well and show respect for the school, the staff and each other. They know and understand that this is what the school expects of them. Whenever there is unacceptable behaviour, there are established procedures in place that minimise the disruption to learning. There have been some temporary exclusions for unacceptable behaviour and teachers work hard with pupils and parents to reduce these occurrences. Pupils are very good at understanding the difficulties and needs of others and most behave in a sensible and mature way. The behaviour of pupils in lessons, around the school and on the playground is good and enables them to make the most of all the opportunities provided for them.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	105	0	0
White – any other White background	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	4	0	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	94	5	0

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

9. Relationships are very good. Pupils of varying attainment are teamed up in lessons such as information and communication technology (ICT) and this works well with pupils supporting one another co-operatively. This not only advances their skills in the subject but develops their personal skills. Pupils eagerly take up the opportunities on offer for personal development. They show an enthusiastic responsibility for their school through the School Council to which two pupils from each class are elected each year, giving pupils experience of the democratic process. Pupils on the Council develop mature attitudes and thoroughly enjoy the responsibility handed to them. The previous year's secretary was elected on the basis of her proposal to support the Eco-School initiative. The Council was successful subsequently in introducing bins for different types of waste. They work to an agenda, keep minutes and use their ICT skills to write these up. Such opportunities contribute to pupils' views that staff trust them and listen to their ideas.
10. The strong emphasis that the school places on personal development begins as soon as children start school and its success is reflected in the proportion of children likely to exceed the expected goals in their personal, social and emotional development by the end of their reception year. Pupils of all ages take their responsibilities as 'waste warriors' seriously. The thoughtful letters that Year 6 pupils wrote in support of their applications to be appointed as a 'buddy' to the children in the reception class shows the good use they make of opportunities offered to them.
11. Attendance is good due to the rigorous monitoring procedures, co-operation from parents and a strong focus on its importance. The good level of attendance shows clearly the pupils'

enthusiasm for school. Such regular attendance contributes significantly to the standards they achieve.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.5	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.

12. Good provision is made for moral, social and cultural education and again reflects the importance the school places on pupils' personal development. The teachers provide very good role models and pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong and helped to recognise the consequences of their actions. Good provision in Circle Time encourages pupils to respect the feelings of others and to value their contributions. There is a weekly focus on an issue that will foster co-operation and kindness such as keeping the cloakrooms tidy.
13. The good provision for pupils' social development has been maintained since the last inspection. The school is very effective in developing pupils' self-esteem and building up their confidence as learners. In class, there are many opportunities to work together, valuing different ideas and working responsibly together to achieve a particular goal. They learn about their wider responsibilities by, for example, distributing gifts to the elderly in the village after their recent Harvest Festival. This was clearly appreciated, as these words from a letter of thanks indicate. 'It is good to see that the impulse to give to others is being encouraged in your school.' Cultural development, including multi-cultural awareness, is promoted well both within the curriculum and through a good range of visits and visitors.
14. The assemblies that were observed during the inspection contributed well to pupils' moral and social development, but the acts of collective worship were either omitted or consisted only of a brief moment of reflection that added little to pupils' spiritual awareness.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good overall, with strengths in teaching and learning, the enrichment of the curriculum and the partnership with parents.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall. They are satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and good in Years 1 to 6. The assessment of pupils' work is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers match work well to pupils' needs in the core subjects and often use a good variety of methods and interesting contexts for learning which help to make pupils keen to learn.
- Most pupils concentrate very well and try hard and this helps them to learn well.
- There has been a very good improvement in assessment since the last inspection.
- Inconsistencies in teaching, mainly arising from the high turnover of teachers, hinder some pupils from improving their rate of learning further.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 35 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	7 (20%)	17 (49%)	11 (31%)	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.

15. The overall quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection although there have been considerable changes in the teaching staff since that time. In the lessons seen, there was no unsatisfactory teaching and the amount of good and very good teaching has increased. A systematic programme of monitoring and evaluation in the core subjects and well-planned staff training has helped to bring this about. However, the full impact has been hindered in some year groups, particularly in Reception and Years 1 and 2, by the turnover of teachers and consequent need to repeat training for some staff. This is one of the main reasons for some inconsistencies within teaching, which affect the rate of pupils' learning. In Reception, both the teacher and nursery nurse are new to the class this term and relatively inexperienced. This is partly why teaching at this stage of the term is satisfactory, although good training opportunities are planned.
16. In the lessons seen in Years 1 and 2, teaching and learning were good overall. However, past work shows that in several subjects teachers have relied too much on the use of worksheets, often requiring pupils only to complete single words or sentences. This has limited the development of their writing skills in particular and is another reason why achievement is only satisfactory in these year groups. By contrast, in the previous work of pupils in Years 3 to 6, there are frequent examples of varied and stimulating tasks helping pupils to both reinforce and to extend their learning in different ways. This also helps them to apply what they learn in literacy lessons about different forms of writing to their work other subjects, contributing to their good achievement.
17. There were strong features in many of the lessons seen. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language is good. Close liaison between teachers and skilled teaching assistants, good planning and assessment contribute to this and help these pupils to do well. Very good links with the local community and other schools, visits, visitors and links between subjects are used well to make learning more relevant to pupils. Teachers also use a good range of resources well to motivate pupils. Teachers organise and manage their teaching groups well and generally match work well to pupils' differing needs in the core subjects so that they feel challenged by it. Parents agree that their children are expected to work hard. However, in most other subjects, the same task is often given to pupils of different ages in the same class, limiting the rate of learning and achievement for some of them.
18. Teachers are successful in helping both boys and girls to develop very positive attitudes to their work, a good level of concentration and a keenness to improve what they can do. One way they help pupils to meet their high expectations is by the frequent use of opportunities for pupils to exchange thoughts quickly with a partner to help order and extend their ideas and articulate them clearly. Teachers manage these exchanges very well so that they do not detract from the pace of the lesson. It means, too, that all pupils are fully involved in class discussions and this aids their concentration. The strategy also contributes well to the development of their speaking and listening skills. Particularly effective examples were seen of this in Years 5 and 6.
19. The very good relationships between staff and pupils throughout the school help to motivate pupils well. There was considerable agreement among pupils in the questionnaire and in talking to them that teachers listen to them and value their ideas. This was evident in lessons

throughout the school. Teachers take care to include and involve boys and girls of all levels of attainment in their questioning, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. Some examples were seen of the disturbed behaviour of a few pupils interrupting the flow of a lesson. Although teachers and teaching assistants managed the behaviour appropriately, it slowed the pace of the lesson and the rate of pupils' learning.

20. The very good improvement in assessment has contributed to the improvement in pupils' achievement, especially in the core subjects. For example, carefully assessed tasks set during the termly 'progress week' are based on weaknesses identified in annual tests, such as division in mathematics. From these, teachers set group targets for their class and focused teaching follows. Individual improvement is then monitored in subsequent 'progress week' tasks. This whole school approach provides good support for pupils' learning. Assessment information is also used well to identify pupils in need of additional help, which is then provided through a good variety of support programmes. These are effectively managed and taught by skilled, well-trained teaching assistants who work closely with class teachers.
21. Good examples were seen of teachers adjusting what they taught in the light of pupils' responses in the previous lesson. However, there are some inconsistencies in the day-to-day assessment strategies the school is implementing as part of the 'Assessment for Learning' initiative, as some teachers have not benefited from the initial training last year. Although all teachers make clear to pupils what they are expected to learn in each lesson, there is considerable variation in how well they help pupils to assess their own learning in relation to this at the end of the lesson. In the marking of pupils' work, there are good examples of some teachers clearly focusing on the main objective of the task and making useful comments so that pupils know how to improve their work, but this is not consistent. The quality and effectiveness of teachers' questioning skills also varies. The school is aware of these differences from their monitoring and evaluation of teaching this term and further staff training is planned to address this.

The curriculum

The curriculum is good overall. It is enriched well through additional opportunities but there are some shortcomings in planning. There is a good level of resources for learning and good accommodation overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum meets pupils' needs well in English, mathematics and science.
- Visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities enrich the curriculum.
- Good provision enables pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language to access the full curriculum.
- Limitations in planning are inhibiting pupils' attainment within mixed age classes in some subjects.

Commentary

22. At the time of the last inspection, although the curriculum was broadly based, it lacked balance and statutory requirements were not met in history, design technology and information technology. These weaknesses have since been addressed successfully. Collective worship, however, does not meet requirements.
23. Planning for English, mathematics and science is well structured, taking good account of pupils' differing ages and abilities. Planning for the other subjects, however, caused concerns at the time of the last inspection that are still not totally resolved. There is now a greater emphasis on the development of pupils' skills as well as their knowledge. The overall content of the curriculum is generally carefully planned and adjusted annually where necessary, to ensure

that pupils in mixed age classes do not repeat or miss out topics. However, in the more detailed planning of subjects, the same objectives and expectations are set for the whole class, instead of adapting these for the different year groups. This means that some pupils do not have the opportunity to fully extend their learning and this is a main reason why standards remain average in these non-core subjects. Opportunities to make links between subjects to add relevance to pupils' learning are not fully exploited, although, as a result of the high priority recently given to writing across the curriculum, these are now being developed with literacy. In history, for example, pupils write diaries, play scripts and fact files.

24. The curriculum continues to be enriched by an expanding variety of extra-curricular activities. These range from story time to an art and crafts club and from recorders to a maths club for gifted mathematicians. There are seasonal sports clubs for team games and athletics and for Maypole dancing. A web site club is about to start. All classes visit places of interest related to subjects they are studying including Milestones for history, the Oxford Synagogue and the River and Rowing Museum in Henley. The school is well supported by local churches and visitors from the community. Visiting Indian dance and drum groups have performed for all classes, making a good contribution to pupils' learning as well as to their cultural development. Such activities help to stimulate pupils' interest in their learning, contributing to their very positive attitudes. In addition, pupils in Years 5 and 6 visit the Isle of Wight for a residential visit, which, as well as contributing to the curriculum, fosters pupils' independence and social skills very well.
25. The school is committed to the inclusion of all pupils. Teachers use resources and questioning in lessons well to ensure all pupils are included. In a Year 1 and 2 mathematics lesson, the teacher asked if anyone had found difficulty with their work. Pupils talked freely about what had proved difficult, reflecting the level of trust they feel in confiding and sharing their concerns. This is a strong area appreciated by parents.
26. The school pays particular attention to ensuring that the curriculum matches the needs of those pupils identified with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. These pupils are included well and have access to the same broad and balanced curriculum as other pupils and this helps them to achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Individual education plans reflect appropriate learning activities and are matched well to pupils' needs. The targets set for them are reviewed and revised termly to make sure that they are still appropriate to the pupils' current need. In the core subjects, particularly, higher attaining pupils are given a good level of challenge in their work. The school has identified a number of gifted and talented pupils, particularly in the fields of mathematics, music and sport. A good number of additional opportunities are provided for these pupils, both within and beyond the curriculum, including a maths club run by the co-ordinator.
27. A blend of experienced and recently qualified teachers are well deployed to make full use of their strengths. Well-informed and well-trained teaching assistants motivate lower attaining pupils well, especially those with special educational needs. The range of accommodation is good. The school has very good outdoor facilities that are used well to support pupils' learning in science. The well-stocked and very attractive library contributes well to pupils' good achievement in reading. There are no corridors, however, so classes are disturbed when anyone moves around the building, as they have to go through teaching areas. Some pupils lose concentration as a result of this. Resources are good in most subjects and very good in areas such as science and physical education.

Care, guidance and support

The school has overall satisfactory procedures for pupils' care, welfare, and health and safety. It provides pupils with effective support, advice and guidance and involves them well in the work and development of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher and staff know the pupils well and their welfare has a high priority.
- Teachers have good strategies for dealing with pupils with emotional and behavioural problems, and they are fully included in the school's activities.
- The staff are very aware of pupils with problems and are effectively supported when seeking advice from inside or outside the school.
- Parents and pupils are soon made to feel part of the school family.
- Pupils feel they are listened to and their views acted upon.
- Some health and safety issues need improvement and procedures lack rigour.

Commentary

28. Despite an above average turnover of teachers, care and welfare are good. Staff have been effectively trained in clear policies and procedures and are well supported by more experienced teachers at the school. The good level of care is greatly valued by all parents. Child protection procedures are fully in place and staff are vigilant in this area. Behaviour improves as pupils progress through the school because of the consistent application of the behaviour policy. Good attendance procedures maintain an above average attendance level.
29. The school could focus more rigorously on some health and safety issues discussed at the time of the inspection. Further training in health and safety procedures would be of benefit as at present governors and staff are not sufficiently involved in implementing the policy.
30. The school has a small number of pupils with emotional and behavioural problems. The staff have a good knowledge of each pupil and their home backgrounds and have developed good strategies that enable them to calm the behaviour of these pupils and allow them to be integrated into classroom activities. Other pupils are involved very well in supporting these pupils. Outside professional agencies contribute well to helping the pupils to moderate their behaviour. Longer serving teachers and teaching assistants have a good knowledge of pupils' special educational needs and share this well with new staff so that the pupils are supported well. Pupils who speak English as an additional language also receive good support.
31. The school has very good induction procedures. Children entering the Foundation Stage are greatly helped by the very good relationships developed with the on-site village pre-school. The buddy system ensures that new pupils joining the school are helped by older pupils. Parents are very happy with their welcome into the school and the information they receive.
32. The acting headteacher and staff give a high priority to the pastoral care of all pupils. Most pupils feel very secure in that they can trust their teachers and other adults to listen to their problems and anxieties. Many teaching assistants have additional lunchtime duties, and they are especially effective during this time in listening sympathetically to pupils. Pupils feel that they have good opportunities to air their ideas in school. They are making significant contributions through classroom discussions and the school council.
33. There are good systems in place to monitor and track pupils' achievements, both academic and non-academic. Teachers track most aspects of pupils' personal development informally. There are formal arrangements for pupils with individual educational plans. There is good feedback and discussion of issues between staff. Pupils are aware of their individual academic and non-academic targets and feel that they can influence their performance. Good procedures allow teachers to make accurate assessments of pupils and make comprehensive verbal and written reports to parents.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Partnerships with the parents and the community are very good. The links with other schools are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good partnership with parents greatly benefits the learning of all pupils.
- The acting headteacher, staff and governors work hard and successfully to produce a high level of parents' satisfaction.
- The school has very good relationships with the Wallingford Schools' Partnership and the pre-school, which smooth the transfer of pupils between schools.
- All pupils benefit greatly from their numerous contacts with the local community.

Commentary

34. The acting headteacher and governors give a very high priority to the school's relationships with all parents. Since the last inspection, there has been a significant and continuing increase in parental satisfaction and corresponding reduction in any dissatisfaction with most aspects of the school. They are particularly confident about the way in which the recruitment of a new headteacher is being handled, even though they have natural concerns about the future. One reason for this is the good level of information they receive. The very good partnership with parents increases staff confidence in dealing with all pupils and greatly benefits the education of pupils.
35. Parents feel that their role as a parent is consistently valued and their opinions respected. The school tends to gain the opinions of parents through informal conversations rather than systematically canvassing their views through questionnaires as it feels this provides a better cross-section of views. There are some parental concerns that are below the surface regarding pupils with behavioural difficulties, the high turnover of teachers and information on progress that the school is continuing to address. Parental complaints are minimal.
36. The statutory information for parents is good and is well presented to show the essential ethos and character of the school. The weekly newsletter stimulates parents' interest in the school. Annual reports to parents are comprehensive statements of what children can do in all National Curriculum subjects and contain academic targets for the following year. Most parents feel comfortable with the information they receive about their children and their achievements, but a small minority of parents would prefer a more traditional summary of information on their children's progress, giving relative positions in the class.
37. All parents have signed the home-school agreement. Most parents assist pupils well with homework, and they are given a sound view of the school's expectations. Parents are very willing to help in the school and support events very well. Parent governors are enthusiastic and knowledgeable. The parent teacher association is very energetic in fundraising.
38. The school remains at the focus of the village and links with the local community continue to thrive for the mutual benefit of both. Relationships with the local churches are good, and the school is well used by local societies and groups. The adjacent countryside is an important resource for the practical teaching of some subjects of the National Curriculum, such as science and geography. The school prospectus is particularly notable for its sponsorship by local businesses.
39. The school gains great benefit from its membership of the Wallingford Schools' Partnership. This includes eight primary schools and one secondary school. It enables pupils to take part in a variety of competitive sports activities and to receive after-school football coaching, for example from older students. Subject co-ordinators develop the curriculum through joint discussions with other school staff and receive joint training. The very close relationships produced within the partnership and joint activity days assist a well-organised transition between primary and secondary schooling for all pupils, including those with special

educational needs. The school's relationship with the on-site pre-school is particularly advantageous to the transfer of children into the reception class. It helps the exchange of information and increases the childrens confidence.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are good overall. The leadership of the acting headteacher and deputy and the management of the school are good. The governance of the school is also good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a very good, shared sense of purpose in the school.
- Rigorous monitoring and evaluation have helped standards and pupils' achievement to improve.
- The governing body has successfully developed its strategic role since the last inspection, although it does not yet have formal arrangements for monitoring the curriculum.

Commentary

40. The acting headteacher, who is supported very well by her acting deputy, has a clear vision for the future of the school founded on a child-centred provision. All staff and governors share this. The acting headteacher's caring, collegiate approach ensures that all feel involved, consulted and valued in decision-making processes and in their roles within school. In this way, the acting headteacher is promoting very effective teamwork and a climate within the school that motivates and enables all staff, while evaluating honestly and constructively the provision that the school makes for its pupils. A good example of this is the responsibility taken by individual teaching assistants for a number of support programmes and their confidence in this. Governors, staff and parents rightly perceive that the acting headteacher is not just fulfilling a 'caretaker' role, but actively moving the school forward. Parents' views show confidence that the school is well led and managed.
41. The school's strategic planning reflects the vision well, with goals for a three-year period that are supported by measurable targets and annual action plans focused on further improving standards and achievement across the school. The commitment of staff to activities beyond the school day is reflected well in the range of out-of-school activities. Subject leadership is good overall and particularly strong in English and mathematics. The school makes very good use of initiatives such as the early and additional literacy strategies. Schemes such as Investors in People, Eco-school awards, the Interactive Whiteboard Pilot and innovative strategies such as Assessment for Learning, provide further support for pupils' learning and school improvement. All initiatives are carefully evaluated in terms of their impact on pupils' progress. The use of these initiatives is a good example of the firmly embedded culture in the school of continually asking, 'How can we do this better?'
42. There has been a very good response to the previous key issues, including those relating to monitoring and evaluation. Performance and assessment data is now used effectively to track the progress of individual pupils so that any who are not making the expected progress can be given additional support or challenge. It is also used well to identify any weaknesses in the curriculum, which are then effectively addressed. One way that this is done is through the focused use of the performance management process. This has been developed as a positive tool to support the key priorities in the school improvement plan and is carefully linked to well-planned training. Systematic monitoring and evaluation of classroom practice and pupils' work has been put in place and extended this year beyond the core subjects. All of these factors have contributed significantly to the improvements in teaching and learning and pupils' achievements.
43. Governors are very supportive of the school and carry out their statutory duties satisfactorily. Since the last inspection, they have been fully involved in shaping the direction and vision of the

school and the related development planning and consequently they now have a clear strategic view of the school. They are committed to the principles of inclusion and high achievement for all, irrespective of ability, gender, background or culture. 'This is a school for the whole village' as one governor commented. They are prepared to tackle difficult issues arising from this, such as the management of pupils with disturbed behaviour. They have a clear programme for drawing up and reviewing policies. Governors are well informed and very aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, although their visits to the school tend to be informal rather than planned with a specific focus. However, the very open relationship they have with staff means they are prepared to question and discuss issues with them. This helps to inform their clear view of what is needed to continue to take the school forward especially with regard to the qualities and skills they are looking for in the appointment of a new headteacher.

44. Although variations in the number of pupils starting school each year make forward planning difficult, effective financial planning and management minimise the impact of this. In decisions about staffing and other resources, the governing body is very clear about obtaining value for money, judging, for example, the effectiveness of spending decisions on support staff by the impact on standards and achievement in the national tests.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	478859	Balance from previous year	63474
Total expenditure	484036	Balance carried forward to the next	58296
Expenditure per pupil	2350		

Note The large carry forward was a result of money set aside for alterations to the buildings to create a new classroom, which are now paid for and completed.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

45. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage has improved since the last inspection. There is now a dedicated Early Years Unit that provides appropriate indoor and outdoor accommodation, although the school is aware that the outdoor area needs further development to allow its greater use for learning activities. Internal accommodation is suitably organised and resourced well to support the different areas of children's learning. However, at present, it does not present an exciting and stimulating environment to fire children's imagination, especially in the book and role-play areas.
46. The children enter Reception with average attainment. Boys and girls achieve satisfactorily overall in relation to their individual starting points as a result of satisfactory teaching. This too is an improvement, as a third of teaching was judged unsatisfactory in the last report. However, frequent changes of staff have continued to limit further systematic development of provision, which is another reason why children achieve only satisfactorily. Another is that until this year the youngest children have only received one term of part-time education before moving on to Year 1. The effects of this continue to be seen in their achievement in Years 1 and 2. This year, all children have had the opportunity to begin school part-time in September.
47. Other improvements have been made in the planning of the curriculum, which is now broad and balanced, and in assessment procedures. Children's responses are carefully noted and used to adjust the planning of subsequent activities, which helps them to make steady progress. The good induction arrangements have been further enhanced by even closer links with the village pre-school, which moved into accommodation within the school at Easter, adjacent to the reception class. The provision is managed satisfactorily. At the time of the inspection children had only been in school for just over a month on a part-time basis. The records and work of children from the previous year were also taken into account in the judgements made.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children achieve well overall, reaching standards above those expected for their age by the end of the year, because the good teaching in this area ensures they know what is expected and respond well.
- More opportunities could be given to children to encourage them to take greater responsibility for their own actions.

Commentary

48. Good induction procedures help children to settle quickly into school and this is much appreciated by parents. The teacher and nursery nurse ensure that the environment provided and the ethos of the class help the children to feel secure and confident in trying new things. Children quickly learn to respond well to the high expectations of behaviour. When necessary, the adults correct the children firmly but gently and positively, supporting self-esteem. Several examples were seen during the inspection of children working together co-operatively and independently. In a group where children were intent upon their task of making models from junk materials, they were behaving sensibly and sharing resources well. One child was heard to say politely, 'Excuse me, I need some more (cardboard tubes) like this'. The nearest child responded by helping him to look for some. Most children were already able to undress and

dress themselves sensibly and unaided and walked in an orderly way to the hall for physical activities. They were keen to take turns, in pairs, to take the register to the office and did so confidently.

49. As yet, this term, children are not encouraged to take enough responsibility for daily routines such as getting out and tidying away the resources they use. However, there were other examples of adults promoting the development of personal and social skills well. For example, in a well taught 'circle' time to foster children's self-esteem, the teacher used her voice quietly and effectively to create an atmosphere of excited anticipation. At the same time she explained the important 'rule' of not telling anyone else, as she showed a box containing 'something very special' to each child in turn. The children were fascinated as they peeped into the box but all managed to remain silent until invited to share what they had seen (their own reflection).

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents support their children's reading at home well.
- Children's listening skills are promoted more effectively than their speaking skills.

Commentary

50. The majority of children are on course to attain the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the reception year and they achieve satisfactorily as a result of satisfactory teaching. Although many of the children use a quite limited vocabulary, most speak in simple sentences. Good attention is given to the development of listening skills and even at this early stage this is reflected in the interest with which almost all children listen to stories or join in familiar songs and rhymes. The children were also able to listen to each other without interrupting as they took turns to suggest something they thought they were good at, such as 'I am good at helping'. Some good examples were seen of adults questioning children effectively to help them develop their language skills and extend their vocabulary, for example, as they took small groups of children on a 'sound' walk around the school. However, other opportunities were missed to extend their speaking skills, both during teacher-led and play activities and in the day-to-day interaction with the children.
51. Although only a few pupils start school with a secure knowledge of sounds or sight vocabulary, pupils of all levels of attainment show interest in books, and the majority can suggest a favourite story and 'read' a story from the pictures. The regular support children receive at home contributes well to this and to their growing knowledge of initial sounds and key words and is evident from the well-used home-school reading diaries. The encouragement children receive to take books home and the useful guidance given to parents about ways of helping their children supports this. In the teaching of phonics, the teacher's good use of a glove puppet who 'confuses' his sounds motivates the children well to 'correct' him in a way that reinforces their own learning.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults question children well in group work and use interesting activities to support learning.
- Children's understanding of mathematical language is not always reinforced sufficiently.

Commentary

52. Most children are on course to reach the expected goals by the end of the reception year and achievement is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Appropriate opportunities are provided to develop the children's mathematical skills during the day. For example, the teacher uses registration as a way for children to explore ideas such as 'one more' and to practise their counting skills to 20. Higher attaining pupils do this confidently, counting heads accurately. Average and lower attaining children join in number rhymes and counting eagerly but do not yet always match objects to numbers correctly.
53. In a lesson about the concepts of longer and shorter, the children were well motivated by the outdoor activities. They enjoyed the challenge of working together in small groups to construct, for example, a line of large building blocks shorter than the fence, or a chain longer than the bench. The adult with each group questioned individual children well as they worked, helping them to use language more accurately to compare different lengths. However, in introductory and final parts of the lesson, the teacher did not spend enough time reinforcing previous learning of mathematical language before introducing new terms and consequently some children were confused and lost interest. Opportunities to draw out and encourage children's mathematical understanding, during sand and water play, for example, are not sufficiently focused or exploited.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

54. It was not possible to make an overall judgement of provision or standards in this wide area of learning, but the quality of teaching and learning in the work seen was good. The children took part in small groups in a well-planned 'sound' walk around the school and in the grounds. The children worked sensibly in pairs to record the sources of different sounds pictorially on small whiteboards. Some used a simple tape recorder to record what they heard. The adults leading the groups questioned the children well, encouraging them to explain their initial responses in more detail and extending their vocabulary. As a result of this, as well as the enthusiasm and good role modelling of the adults, the children observed closely and listened intently. They thoroughly enjoyed the activity, some remarking excitedly, 'This is fun', as they returned to the classroom. Their good learning was evident in their recall of what they had heard during the subsequent class discussion. Teachers' planning for this area of learning shows good breadth and balance. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children use their bodies with good control when they run and develop appropriate manipulative skills.
- In a physical education lesson seen, children did not have enough opportunities to refine some of their movements.

Commentary

55. The children are likely to reach the expected goals by the end of their reception year and they achieve satisfactorily. In a lesson in the hall and when playing outside, most children showed good co-ordination skills and awareness of space, changing direction or adjusting speed confidently to avoid others in chasing games. All children improve their manipulative skills by handling play dough, and using an appropriate variety of simple tools and small toys. Most could manage the fastenings on their clothes when changing for a physical education lesson.
56. In the lesson seen, teaching and learning was satisfactory overall. The good variety of activities helped to keep the children interested and good attention was given at this early stage of the

year to successfully encouraging the children to listen to and follow instructions quietly. A teaching assistant was used well to note children's responses. In the main activity, the children were encouraged to explore new ways of moving and controlling a beanbag with their feet. Several children showed imagination in their ideas and all improved their skills in this. However, at other times in the lesson children were not given enough time or opportunity to practise and refine other skills that were introduced, such as controlled stopping or hopping, with the result that some activities lacked purpose.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

57. It was not possible to make an overall judgement of provision or standards, but the art work on display was at an appropriate level. However, not enough purposeful or creative use is made of the role-play area for imaginative play or for the development of pupils' language skills.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good and standards by the end of Year 6 continue to be above average.
- Teaching is effective in helping pupils make good progress in lessons.
- Very good subject leadership gives a successful impetus to improvement.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have too few opportunities to develop their writing skills.

Commentary

58. By the end of Year 6, pupils' achievement is good in all aspects of the subject and particularly in speaking and reading. Pupils' work seen during the inspection shows that overall standards continue to be above average. Standards at the end of Year 2 are average and achievement is satisfactory. This is a considerable improvement from the last inspection when standards were below average at the end of Year 6 and pupils' progress throughout the school was unsatisfactory.
59. A number of factors have contributed to the improvements in pupils' achievement. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall with some very good teaching in Years 5 and 6. Teachers have high expectations and most provide demanding work for pupils. Since the last inspection, the school has adopted the national literacy strategy. This has resulted in good improvement in the quality of planning, assessment and teaching and is having a positive effect on standards. Lower attaining pupils, those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress because they are supported well by teaching assistants who ensure that they understand what they have to do to improve. The high quality of this support is a particular strength of the teaching, enabling pupils of all levels of attainment to achieve well. There is a strong commitment by teachers and teaching assistants to raising standards. To this end, the targets they have for individual pupils are shared with them and progress towards them is carefully monitored.
60. Teachers encourage high standards of speaking in terms of clarity and delivery. In a very good Year 5/6 lesson, the teacher encouraged pupils to talk in order to clarify and explore their ideas. She emphasised the need to substantiate their findings with evidence from a variety of sources and they responded very well, expressing themselves fluently. Teachers value highly pupils' responses and younger pupils develop their confidence as speakers when they are asked to share their work in front of the class. This does much to raise their self-esteem, particularly when those listening attentively applaud spontaneously.

61. Teachers give reading a high profile in the school. This helps higher attaining pupils by Year 2 to read with expression and good intonation, paying attention to punctuation. Other pupils read well but some, when they are faced with an unknown word, have limited strategies for working it out. Only the higher attaining pupils in Year 2 are secure in using contents and index pages. By Year 6, pupils are reading very fluently from a wide range of texts. They demonstrate very good attitudes to their reading and have preferred authors such as C.S.Lewis, Tolkien and Roald Dahl whose books they discuss with enthusiasm. They understand that there is a variety of reading skills and know when each is of relevance. They have a clear understanding of how to locate information not only by using the books in the well-stocked library but also by using information from the Internet selectively.
62. Teachers set a good range of writing for pupils in Years 3 to 6. This means that pupils have good opportunities to explore a variety of writing styles, acquire new skills and develop their ideas. Their poetry writing shows a good understanding of personification and similes, which they use effectively. Across the school, the basic skills of literacy are taught well. In Years 1 and 2, the writing of higher attaining pupils shows some of the characteristics of narrative writing. They choose words appropriate to the subject and they have a growing understanding of punctuation. However, teachers frequently give pupils work-sheets for practising skills. Thus, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to write independently with the result that only a few pupils are able to extend their ideas logically and sentence structure is not well developed. This is the main reason for the difference in standards and achievement between Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 to 6, although staff changes over the last three years have also slowed the rate of progress of some younger pupils. In all classes, although books are always marked, the quality of the comments needs to be improved so that pupils have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve in the next piece of work.
63. The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject very well. The good planning is the result of high quality analysis of the strengths and weaknesses seen in pupils' work. Her emphasis on high quality assessment procedures allows teachers to plan effectively and to build on what pupils have already learned. All this results in a strong and effective focus on continuing improvement throughout the school, which has a strong impact on raising standards and achievement.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

64. Teachers ensure that pupils in Years 3 to 6 have good opportunities to use their literacy skills in other subjects. In history, pupils in Year 6 write and develop their narrative and playwriting skills. However, in Year 2, work-sheets in subjects such as history and science are used too much to record information and opportunities are lost to develop simple narrative or factual writing. Teachers are good at emphasising the correct use of specific vocabulary and encouraging pupils to use this. By Year 6, pupils are confident, articulate and fluent speakers.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards by the end of Year 6 are above average because teaching is good.
- Good provision is made for pupils of different abilities in mixed age classes.
- The subject is led very well and, together with the good assessment procedures, contributes well to pupils' achievement.
- Information about pupils' learning is not always shared with them and pupils do not monitor their targets.
- Mathematics skills are not sufficiently developed through other subjects.

Commentary

65. Standards in mathematics are above average by the end of Year 6 as a result of the very good teaching older pupils receive and the good use of investigations to challenge and develop their thinking skills. As a result, pupils achieve well in Years 3 to 6. Standards are average in Year 2 where pupils have experienced changes in teaching staff and there is an over-reliance on worksheets. Achievement overall is consequently only satisfactory, although in the lessons seen, teaching and achievement were good.
66. The teaching seen during the inspection was never less than good. In the two classes for pupils in Years 5 and 6, it was very good; learning was made both exciting and fun. During the inspection, pupils were learning to express the likelihood of events as fractions as part of the unit on probability. In one lesson, good use was made of an interactive whiteboard and the class enjoyed a game of 'Play Your Cards Right'. This was an excellent vehicle for calculating the probability of a higher or lower card appearing next. The pace of all the lessons seen and the teachers' very good subject knowledge and focused questioning held pupils' attention, promoted clear thinking and moved them forward in a logical and systematic way.
67. The national numeracy strategy has been adopted since the last inspection and this has been effectively used to plan for classes that span two age groups, each of which includes pupils of varying ability. Careful planning ensures that all pupils are set tasks that offer sufficient challenge but are within their capability. In a lesson in a Year 1 and 2 class, for example, all pupils were using coins to make a given amount. This varied in difficulty depending upon the age and ability of the pupils in each group. A lunchtime maths club runs for pupils identified as gifted mathematically. This stimulates their enjoyment of the subject as well as developing their skills.
68. Leadership and management of the subject are very good and this has contributed significantly to the improvement since the last inspection when standards at the end of Year 6 were judged to be average and pupils' progress unsatisfactory throughout the school. The co-ordinator observes lessons and leads training sessions for other staff when she identifies a need. Good practice is also shared. The school has a good understanding of standards in the subject overall and pupils' work is sampled regularly. Pupils' progress is consistently assessed and tracked from year to year and the ways in which they need to improve are shared with them. Unfortunately, no time is allocated to allow pupils to reflect on these targets at regular intervals and to decide whether or not they have been achieved. This prevents them from taking responsibility for the speed of their own learning. The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent. For the most part, it is ticked with occasional encouraging comments added but little advice about how the work might be improved. Resources are of good quality and used well to support learning.

Mathematics across the curriculum

69. Pupils do not have enough planned opportunities to use their mathematical skills in other areas of learning. In science they had created tables to track the development of mould on food samples, for example, and in history sorted events into chronological order. Overall, however, mathematics has few links with other subjects.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards across the school are above average, partly because scientific skills are taught well through practical activity and experimentation.
- The curriculum has been designed well with mixed age classes in mind.

- The school's environment and their resources are used well to promote good learning in science.
- An over-reliance on worksheets in Years 1 and 2 restricts pupils' development of recording skills.
- Teachers' marking is inconsistent and does not often tell pupils how they can improve.

Commentary

70. Science enjoys a high profile in the school and a number of pupils come from families where parents have a scientific background. Standards are above average and achievement is good at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, although progress is more rapid in Years 3 to 6 than in the earlier years in school. This is seen in a greater proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in the national tests at the end of Year 6. This is a very good improvement from the last inspection when pupils' progress was unsatisfactory. Pupils now develop a good knowledge and understanding of each of the main strands of the subject and their scientific skills of planning a fair test, using scientific equipment and recording their findings in a variety of ways are well practised. As a result, pupils learn to think scientifically and can apply their knowledge and skills readily to new ideas and concepts. They achieve well as they move through the school as a result of the many opportunities for practical work in all aspects of the subject. Pupils in Year 6 commented that the reason they enjoy science is because, 'We are often testing out things'. This approach was observed in another Year 5/6 lesson where pupils were devising an experiment to show the effect of non-physical exertion on pulse rates.
71. The curriculum, about which concern was expressed at the time of the last inspection, has been re-designed with mixed age classes in mind. Planning now ensures pupils can develop their skills and knowledge progressively by using a two-year rolling programme and having activities geared to pupils of different abilities in most lessons. Learning objectives are shared with the pupils, although not all teachers help pupils to review their learning against these at the end of the lesson. Lessons are taught at a good pace and very good questioning maintains pupils' interest and challenges their thinking. However, there is inconsistency in the marking of pupils' work, especially in the use of comments to explain how it could be improved.
72. The school has a good range of resources that have been catalogued for ease of use and are easily accessible. The school's grounds are exceptional in the opportunities they provide for scientific learning. As well as wood and grassland, there is a large pond with dipping areas and a nature reserve that is well used during the summer months by all pupils. The Northmoor Trust has supported the school well by managing the nature reserve and working with groups of pupils. The local primary schools support each other through 'Partnership Science' and the school has regular science days. The school is an 'Eco-school' and is environmentally friendly using compost bins and water-butts to minimise waste.
73. A new co-ordinator took on the role in September 2003 and, as yet, has not monitored any lessons. She recognises the need to reduce the number of worksheets used with younger pupils to enable them to record their work more effectively and to develop their literacy skills in science lessons.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' learning benefits from a well-resourced ICT suite and several interactive whiteboards.
- Good teaching is having a positive effect on raising standards.
- The subject makes a good contribution to the way pupils work with each other.
- Lack of regular technical support reduces pupils' opportunities to use the computer suite.

Commentary

74. Pupils' attainment has improved significantly since the last inspection when it was below average, progress was unsatisfactory and insufficient use was made of ICT. The school has been successful in addressing the issues of raising attainment and ensuring that all elements of the National Curriculum programme of study are taught. There is now a dedicated computer suite, which teachers use effectively to develop pupils' computer skills, and a scheme of work that allows teachers to plan progression in learning and cover the programmes of study. The quality of teaching has also improved as a result of staff training. Consequently, standards of attainment at the end of Year 2 and at the end of Year 6 are now average. Achievement in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory, and it is good in Years 3 to 6, where pupils are working from a lower base of knowledge and skills.
75. The teaching observed was consistently good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and maintain a good pace of learning. They question pupils well, which helps them both to assess and to consolidate pupils' learning. Good management focuses pupils' attention on the lesson task. For example, in a Year 1/2 lesson, the teacher effectively integrated the ICT activity with English. Not only did pupils develop their skills in instructional writing but they also demonstrated their ability to log on, open their personal files, select a program, word process their text and at the end of the lesson save their work prior to logging off. Lessons are well planned and teachers are becoming skilful in using the interactive white-board to make their explanations clear.
76. Teachers in Years 5 and 6, where interactive white-boards are installed in classrooms, use this technology well to embed ICT in literacy and numeracy work, and increasingly in other subjects. Pupils' learning benefits from this. In a well-taught lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6, the teacher extended their knowledge and understanding of the use of spread-sheets. Her insistence that they use the appropriate technical vocabulary enhanced their ability to give explanations and instructions. Teaching is effective because the correct balance is achieved between the time devoted to the teacher's instruction and demonstration of skills and the time allowed for pupils to practise them. This results in good progress. Teachers use teaching assistants well to provide for lower attaining pupils, those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language.
77. Pupils are very enthusiastic as a result of the good teaching and they maintain a good level of concentration and patience when working at a computer. They work well individually and in pairs, more competent pupils readily giving help and advice to their peers.
78. The school has recently experienced some technical difficulties with the operation of the ICT suite, which led to loss of access for pupils. The school is pursuing the possibility of employing a technician, which should overcome such problems in the future and ensure that pupils always have full access to the breadth of the curriculum. There is competent management of the subject, which is supporting well the drive to raise standards further. The teacher with responsibility for ICT is new to the role and has high aspirations for the subject, which is very well resourced. Good assessment procedures are in place and careful records are used to help pupils to develop their skills progressively.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

79. ICT is used satisfactorily as a tool in other areas of the curriculum, particularly in those classrooms where an interactive whiteboard has been installed. Opportunities for pupils to use personal computers as a support for their learning are not yet fully used by all teachers.

HUMANITIES

Religious education and history were inspected individually and are reported in full below, but work in geography was not inspected.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The overall curriculum is well planned and well balanced. Good resources and varied teaching methods in most lessons motivate pupils well and contribute to their positive attitudes.
- The same work is usually given to pupils of both year groups in a class, which limits their rate of progress.
- The marking of pupils' work does not help them to know how to improve it.

Commentary

80. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and boys and girls of all levels of attainment achieve satisfactorily overall, as at the time of the last inspection. The co-ordinator, who leads the subject well, has improved the curriculum considerably since that time. It is now carefully planned and adjusted as necessary each year in response to any changes in class organisation. This helps to ensure that pupils neither miss nor repeat topics as they move through the school and that there is continuity in their learning. There is a good balance between the study of Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism. The co-ordinator has recently refined teachers' planning in response to weaknesses she had identified and as a result, in the lessons seen, there was a better balance between learning about and learning from religions than was evident from a scrutiny of pupils' past work.
81. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, with some that is good. Good examples were seen of teachers using interesting activities and well-chosen resources that helped pupils to learn in different ways and motivated them well. Some teachers also provided good opportunities for pupils to extend their speaking and listening skills through discussion. In a well-taught lesson for Year 5 and 6 pupils, the teacher captured pupils' attention through the use of an interactive whiteboard to 'tour' a Christian church. This helped them to compare its features successfully with those of other places of worship they had studied. She used skilful questioning effectively and gave pupils frequent opportunities to explore their ideas through paired discussion in a way that significantly increased their understanding of the purpose and symbolism of common features. This, in turn, prompted thoughtful responses such as, 'They help you to know how to pray to your God'.
82. Through the encouragement of the co-ordinator, who leads the subject well, teachers are now using a good range of artefacts, the good links with the local churches and visits such as that to a synagogue in Oxford to base pupils' learning on first-hand experience. This adds to pupils' interest and contributes well to their positive attitudes. Past work also showed that older pupils, especially those in Years 5 and 6 reinforce and extend their learning through a good variety of written tasks that also give them the chance to apply the different writing skills they are learning in English.
83. However, one of the main reasons that that pupils achieve only satisfactorily is that within each class, teachers do not take enough account of the different year groups within the class in the objectives they set or in the expectations they have of pupils. For example, they usually set the same task for all pupils. Consequently, older pupils in the class do not always have the opportunity to fully extend their learning. In some classes for younger pupils, past work, as well as some lessons, showed that tasks were often limited to the completion of unchallenging worksheets. In most classes, although teachers mark pupils' work regularly, they give no indication of how well pupils have met the objectives of the task or of how they could improve their work. These are further reasons why pupils' achievement is only satisfactory at present.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The requirements of the National Curriculum are now fully met and standards across the school have improved since the last inspection.
- The scheme of work now relates to the development of skills.
- More resources are needed to support the change of emphasis in teaching.
- Too many worksheets are used in Years 1 and 2.

Commentary

84. Since the time of the last inspection, the curriculum has been reviewed and schemes of work redesigned so that the requirements of the National Curriculum are now fully met. Planning now helps pupils to develop their skills progressively and to avoid repetition of content in the mixed age classes. This was clearly reflected in the lessons seen. However, resources now need to be supplemented to support this approach. In a lesson that was focusing on interpreting the stories depicted on Grecian urns, black and white photocopies were providing the source material. The poor quality of these detracted from an otherwise good lesson. There was little evidence of work or expectations being adapted to cater for different age groups in each class. This is a weakness and is the main reason why achievement is satisfactory by Year 2 and Year 6, even though teaching was good in the lessons seen. Nevertheless, pupils' attainment has risen in the subject and standards are now average in Year 2 and Year 6 as a result of the more cohesive and structured schemes of work.
85. In the lessons seen, learning objectives were shared with the class. Work was adjusted to the abilities of pupils and teaching assistants were used well to support pupils with special educational needs. Focused questioning drew information effectively from pupils and artefacts and pictures helped to maintain their interest. An interactive whiteboard was used very effectively in a lesson where pupils in Years 5 and 6 were being asked to arrange several periods in chronological order and then assign famous people to the correct period. Whilst marking the books of older pupils, teachers comment on how work might be improved or extended and this has also had an effect on raising standards, although this is not consistent across the school. The extensive use of worksheets with younger pupils does not allow those of higher ability to develop their skills to the full.
86. A strength of the current provision is that teachers give pupils opportunities to learn from first-hand experience and practical activity, which brings the subject alive. Each year group has an opportunity to visit a place of historical interest and visitors come into school to tell pupils of their experiences. The most exciting experience for pupils last year was the Time Team Big Dig. The co-ordinator leads the subject well and has addressed the criticisms made in the last report well. A checklist of skills is used appropriately to assess pupils' work but no monitoring of teaching has taken place. The co-ordinator sees samples of pupils' work but this is not yet done systematically.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Music was inspected individually and is reported on in full below. Work in design and technology, which was judged to be below average in the last report, was sampled. Work in art and design and physical education was not inspected.

Design and technology

87. There were no lessons on the timetable during the week of the inspection and no samples of pupils' work were available. However, the design books of pupils in Years 3 to 6 were studied, pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 were interviewed and the subject was discussed with the co-ordinator. This indicates that standards are average at the end of Year 2 and at the end of Year 6 and have improved since the last inspection. Achievement is satisfactory across the school. Pupils have an understanding of the context and purpose of design. They can confidently discuss what they have designed and pupils in Year 6 are aware that their proposed design sketches will affect the quality and appearance of the final product. Their design books show that they use an appropriate range of materials, components and techniques to design and make quality products. There is evidence in talking to the pupils that teachers promote safety routines and insist on careful usage of tools. All the pupils appeared to find enjoyment in the subject and talked proudly of finished products that they had taken home.
88. The co-ordinator leads the subject satisfactorily, ensuring that there are elements of cross-curricular work and that the scheme of work incorporates examples to support teachers' planning. Year 6 pupils spoke enthusiastically of work they had done last term in making hats for Rama and Sita when they were learning about aspects of the Hindu faith in religious education.

Music

Provision in music is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Planning does not enable pupils to develop their skills and understanding systematically.
- Some teachers lack confidence in teaching the subject.
- The newly appointed co-ordinator has considerable expertise and is already working effectively to improve standards and achievement.
- There are appropriate opportunities for extra- curricular musical activities.

Commentary

89. Evidence from the three lessons seen, singing during assemblies, and discussions with teachers and pupils show that standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are below average and boys and girls achieve unsatisfactorily as they move through the school. This is a decline since the last inspection. One reason for this is that, although the planning of the curriculum covers the elements required in the National Curriculum, it does not provide for nor promote a clear progression in pupils' skills and understanding from Year 1 to Year 6. Another reason is that there has been no co-ordinator for the last four years to lead development in the subject or to support non-specialist colleagues. The school has been aware of the fall back in standards. This situation is being addressed this term with the appointment of a co-ordinator with considerable expertise and the identification of music as a priority for improvement in the school development plan.
90. In the lessons seen, the quality of teaching and learning was satisfactory overall, with some that was good. Although pupils made at least satisfactory progress within the lessons, it was clear that their knowledge and skills were below average in all year groups. For example, pupils in Year 2 found some difficulty in identifying long and short sounds and in reproducing them with any accuracy on untuned percussion instruments. They had limited knowledge of the names of these. Many of the Year 3 and 4 pupils found difficulty in following simple rhythmic patterns using body percussion and were at an early stage of exploring how changes in pitch might be recorded with symbols. This lesson was planned well and in the well chosen, varied activities, the teacher showed a good understanding of how to move the pupils' learning on. Although some Year 6 pupils have a sound understanding of the different musical elements, this is largely because they receive instrumental tuition. Other pupils have difficulty in copying a two-

note pattern vocally and have few of the skills they need for composition and performance at the expected level. However, they made good progress in the lesson seen, as the teacher pitched an introduction to the pentatonic scale at just the right level for them and gave them good opportunities to practise and improve each well chosen activity. The singing heard in a whole school assembly lacked enthusiasm, shape and expression.

91. There is a good range of opportunities available for pupils whose parents wish them to have instrumental tuition from visiting teachers, including recorder, flute, guitar and 'cello lessons. Pupils who learn to play instruments have regular opportunities to extend their experiences by playing together in concerts and year group productions. Choirs are also formed from any pupils wishing to join and perform for events such as concerts, festivals and carol singing. A drumming workshop for pupils run by visiting Indian musicians has also enriched the curriculum this term.
92. The co-ordinator is already demonstrating good leadership and support for colleagues. She has drawn up a useful action plan for the development of the subject this year. She has nearly finished revising the scheme of work, ensuring that it enables pupils to develop their skills in all aspects of the subject progressively and is planning training and additional resources to support colleagues in areas where they lack confidence in their teaching.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

93. There was not enough evidence to report on this area individually, but one lesson for pupils in Years 4 and 5 was sampled. In this, teaching and learning were satisfactory. The school uses visits from the 'Life Education' bus, the Northmoor Trust and a physiotherapist appropriately to enrich its provision for personal, social and health education. There is a well-planned programme for sex education for pupils in Years 5 and 6 taught by teachers and the school nurse to mixed gender groups. Some aspects of health education, such as the dangers of misusing drugs, are part of the science curriculum.

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	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
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	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
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	2
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the acting headteacher	3
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).