Main strengths and weaknesses

- All staff and governors are responding enthusiastically to new leadership.
- 

vocabulary inhibits the ebLression of ideas of many middle and lower attaining pupils when they are standards are close to those seen at the last inspection and the school is well-placed to continue to improve.

58. The upward trend in standards is supported by several initiatives that have been fostered well by good leadership and thorough management. They include:

- increasingly vigorous and expert use of national guidance for teaching mathematics, that in turn owes a good deal to a well-directed training programme for teachers – resulting in good teaching and learning;
- careful analysis of what pupils can and cannot do, in order to focus many lessons on areas of weakness;
- a successful insistence on neatness and careful presentation that reduces errors, but when they are made allows teachers to spot where pupils went wrong and help with the problem;
- the identification by many teachers, especially in Years 1 and 2, of precise skills for pupils to learn, that are extended as earlier targets are mastered;
- Well-pitched support, including small group work, for lower attaining pupils.
- Productive links with ICT, including technological teaching aids.

59. The school is aware that its higher attainers should do better and has started some potentially fruitful work – for example a 'more able club'. However, it does not aim high enough for its more able pupils. It sets targets for pupils' achievement that in many ways are thoughtful, draw on carefully collected data and help lower and middle attainers to do well – but they are not challenging enough to bring the best out of many pupils, especially the higher attainers. For example, at the beginning of last year, targets were set for Year 6 pupils: more than one-third of them were achievable with below average progress since Year 2; less than one-third demanded more of pupils than normal, steady progress. The result is often that Year 6 higher attainers become very quick and accurate with work that is pitched at the level of an average 11 year-old pupil but do not tackle harder work that is pitched at levels associated with 12 or 13 year-olds – which they could tackle successfully and enjoyably.

### Mathematics across the curriculum

60. Satisfactory use is made of mathematics to support work in other subjects. Good links are made between mathematics, science and ICT in particular, and all benefit from well-planned work on, for example, data handling, graphs and charts. Less use is made of mathematics in other subjects.

## SCIENCE

61. Provision in science is **good**

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Subject leadership is good.
- The recent renewed emphasis on investigative work is beginning to address this weakness in pupils' skills.
- Teaching is good and pupils are now achieving well.
- Standards at the end of Year 6 are improving, but not enough pupils reach levels above average for their age.

### Commentary

62. For the last few years, standards at the end of Year 2 have been lower than at the time of the last inspection. This is largely due to pupils' under-developed basic skills on entry to Year 1. Teachers' own assessments as well as inspection judgements are that standards are still below average. Standards attained in the national tests at the end of Year 6 are also lower than at the time

of the previous inspection. They have been rising gently since 2000, with a dip in 2003 when results were below the average of all schools, and well below the average of schools with a similar intake of pupils. Indications are that improvement in standards is now back on track, and in particular has gathered speed over the last few months due to subject support for teachers and a whole-school drive to improve teaching overall. As a result, pupils' attainments are now closer to average overall, although still not enough pupils are at levels above those expected for their age.

63. Subject leadership is much improved since the previous inspection. The subject leader has worked very hard to improve teaching and learning. A careful analysis of strengths and weaknesses in pupils' work and test results identified improvements needed, particularly in investigative work and recording and interpreting data. Considerable support has been offered to staff, for example through training sessions, improved resources including those that are ICT-based, and a resource/ideas file supplied for every class. Findings are fed back to staff, and pupils' work analysed for evidence of improvement in both teaching and learning. Class teaching, however, is not systematically monitored. Pupils understand better how they are doing, and what they should learn next, by completing a self-assessment sheet with staff.

64. Evidence shows that teaching has improved relatively recently as a result of the revised curriculum, support from the subject leader and whole-school developments. Learning in class is now good, and lower attaining pupils are well provided for. The standard of their work is close to that of the middle attaining pupils. This is a considerable improvement since the last inspection. Throughout the school, pupils have a good level of factual knowledge, but are weaker in investigative work. The youngest pupils find this aspect very difficult. On one occasion, pupils in Year 1 could not grasp the concept of, in an experiment, changing one variable only, such as giving seeds water or not, when designing an investigation into growth. The teacher persevered extremely well, but pupils' idea of *fair testing* at the end of the session was that it was not fair to let one plant die by not giving it any water – which says something about their moral development! By Year 6, pupils understand the elements of fair testing. They can say whether a test is fair and recognise variables, constants and ways of measuring what they want to find out, but they find applying this knowledge to designing their own investigation difficult without support. This factor is holding back the standards they attain.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

65. Provision in information and communication technology is **good**

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have risen since the last inspection and are at nationally expected levels.
- Teaching is good and pupils learn enthusiastically and well.
- Resources are good and improving.

### Commentary

66. When the school was last inspected, some aspects of ICT were not studied and resources were limited. Curriculum coverage is now good. The computer suite, with its computerised white board, and computer stations in other parts of the school, now support a rich curriculum. Teachers and support staff use the resources well. They are expert, enthusiastic and confident and this transmits to pupils, who respond with gusto to the subject. Improvements to teaching have been managed well; the curriculum manager gives advice on planning and monitors teaching, giving helpful feedback. This is usually informal and oral, and the absence of feedback notes makes it difficult to monitor the longer term impact of the process.

67. Throughout the school pupils achieve well. They listen carefully to teachers' carefully phrased explanations and instructions and, by Year 2, master skills such as the use of the keyboard and mouse in order to construct data bases; while doing this they effectively use a technical vocabulary that includes, for example, 'drop down menu', and 'word bank'. By Year 6, pupils construct 'PowerPoint' presentations, blending text, pictures and sound, and understand how the internet can

be used for research purposes – and how to use it safely. On occasions, pupils' eagerness tends towards over-excitement and so to loss of concentration. However, teachers handle this well, capitalising on the enthusiasm and controlling behaviour very well. These high levels of interest extend to an out-of-school-hours club that is very well attended and supplements class learning effectively.

68. Some parts of the curriculum prove difficult to cover, but in these instances good use is made of outside expertise. The *control* aspect of ICT is covered partly by using links with the Business Partnership Centre, with the bonus of pupils meeting different sources of expertise. Plans are well advanced to enhance provision by buying increasingly sophisticated equipment (for example a data projector). Training for staff in the use of new resources is regarded as crucial and training days are allocated to ensure that the full potential of new equipment is realised.

### Information and communication technology across the curriculum

69. Some key subjects benefit considerably from their links with ICT, largely because much ICT planning is designed systematically to use literacy, numeracy and science as vehicles for learning about ICT. Thus learning in all of these subjects is enhanced. Pupils' growing skills in the use of ICT for research purposes also makes helpful contributions to most other subjects.

## HUMANITIES

70. As this is a Church Aided school, the inspection of Religious Education was carried out under section 23 of the School Inspections Act 1996 and is reported separately. Two **history** (Years 2 and 3) and four **geography** lessons (Years 3, 4 and 6) were observed; some of the pupils' past and current work was scrutinised and discussions held with the subject leaders. Nevertheless, this was insufficient to make judgements about the overall quality of provision and pupils' achievement in either subject.

71. The **history** curriculum is based on national guidelines and is well planned to appeal to pupils' interests. History is regularly taught, taken seriously and pupils put a good amount of effort into it. Subject leadership is good and improved since the last inspection. The new manager has worked very hard in her own time with a view to improving both teaching and learning, for example by improving resources, supporting staff with ideas and developing a portfolio of pupils' work to be used as a model for teachers' assessments of pupils' developing skills. The school's analysis of pupils' work has focused on the impact of such developments and shows improvements. Subject management is satisfactory, as the school is not yet geared up to enable the foundation subject leaders to fully implement their ideas. There is no whole-school system for assessing and tracking pupils' skills over time, and teaching is not monitored. These important aspects, therefore, cannot form the basis for improving standards, which remain around national expectations by Year 6, as they were at the time of the last inspection.

72. Topic work, for example on seaside holidays in the last century (Year 2), the Egyptians (Year 3) and the Greeks (Year 5) shows that pupils gain an increased understanding of different eras, how to interpret sources of evidence and the links between the past and present. Teachers bring the subject to life by the good use of interesting resources, whole day themed events, visits and visitors to school. One such example observed was the use of a well-produced video on the mummification process to support Year 3's work on the Egyptians. The pupils were very attentive and good questioning at the end of the lesson showed that the pupils had understood the elements of the process, and why they were carried out. They particularly liked the gory parts, which helped them remember the facts, and knew, for example, that spices were used to disguise the "disgusting" smells.

73. No **geography** lessons were observed in Years 1 and 2, and, because of their under-developed English skills, completed work does not indicate what these pupils know and understand about geography. Geography is taught well to pupils in Years 3 to 6. Teachers use questioning very

well to draw out and extend what pupils know, and generally have a relaxed and humorous approach, which keeps pupils interested. As a result, they are well behaved, and keen to learn. They show a good grasp of geographical knowledge, such as how to read maps of various scales, and the effect of pollution on the environment. However, even the higher attainers amongst the Year 6 pupils still need support in applying these skills on their own, for example, to explain the differing importance of features common to different environments, such as water in arid or wet climates. Standards attained by the end of Year 6 are, overall, as expected for pupils' age, as they were at the time of the last inspection.

74. Subject leadership is good. The geography manager is reflective and keen to improve standards. She has conducted work trawls and analysed the subject's strengths and weaknesses. She is diligent in supporting staff by giving out ideas sheets and by improving resources, and keeps up-to-date with developments by participation in local and national groups and events. However, her work is not as effective as it could be because some whole-school management systems are not in place. For example, time has not been given for development work during school time, or to monitor teaching. There is no consistent whole-school assessment of pupils' developing skills. Such information cannot, therefore, be used as a starting point for systematic improvements in teaching and learning. The structure of the timetable, whereby geography is sometimes taught in very short sessions, also restricts achievement at times. On three occasions observed, the class had under 30 minutes for their lesson, and were just getting into the swing of the activities when they had to stop for lunch.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

75. No lessons in **art and design**, **design and technology** or **music** were seen so that no judgement can be made about provision in these subjects. For many classes, art shares the timetable with design and technology and only a little of either was being taught at the time of the inspection. Art on display show that pupils make suitable use of different materials. Notably, atmospheric drawings in chalk on paper by Year 6 pupils captured well the qualities of winter trees. A popular after-school art club appropriately provides pupils with additional creative opportunities. Work in design and technology included winding mechanisms that pupils produced as part of a topic on pirates, and models connected with an Ancient Greece topic, covered as homework, and into which many pupils and several parents had put considerable effort. No full lessons were seen in **physical education**, although parts of four different lessons were seen. These indicated that pupils reach generally average standards in gymnastic activities and some could interpret music through dance both skilfully and gracefully. However, there was insufficient evidence to make judgement about overall provision in the subject.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

76. Insufficient work was seen to provide an overall judgement on provision for pupils' **personal, social and health education and citizenship education**, but from conversations with pupils and teachers, it is clear that provision is established informally and that pupils are effectively supported as they develop in maturity. The tasks pupils are asked to undertake to help the smooth running of the school vary in the degree of responsibility involved in accordance with the pupils' ages, from delivering juice to classrooms (Year 3) to helping keep peace in the playground (Year 6). The introduction of opportunities for pupils to sit in a circle and discuss concerns helps them reflect on life at school. The pairing of pupils in Years 5 and 3 for reading, while insufficiently structured to be fully effective, is nevertheless beneficial to both, fostering friendships across age-groups and providing the younger pupils with good models of behaviour and attitudes to copy. The formality of electing class representatives to the School Council and of its proceedings gives pupils an appropriate sense of being involved in the overall life of the school. The Gold Award for health-promoting schools attests to the pupils' success in developing the personal health aspects of PSHE and Citizenship.

77. The management of this area of the school's curriculum is at present too informal, as the appointment of a new area leader is pending. There is a scheme of work and teachers' planning is monitored but there is no monitoring of lessons and so no check on the quality of pupils' learning.

# PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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