

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ELMBRIDGE JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Gloucester

LEA area: Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 115487

Headteacher: Mr Stephen Ayland

Lead inspector: Mr David Whatson

Dates of inspection: 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> June 2004

Inspection number: 256053

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	354
School address:	Elmbridge Road Gloucester Gloucestershire
Postcode:	GL2 0PE
Telephone number:	01452 523632
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr John Ettle
Date of previous inspection:	7 <sup>th</sup> December 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Elmbridge Junior School is bigger than most junior schools. It is situated on the outskirts of Gloucester, where most of the houses are owner-occupied. The economic circumstances of most families in the area are close to the national average; the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, at 7.5 per cent, is slightly below the national average. Most year groups have just over 90 pupils, although Year 4 is much smaller. In nearly every year group there are more boys than girls. The school has very few pupils from ethnic minority groups; the great majority of pupils are of a white British heritage. Although there are a few pupils who use English as an additional language, none are in the early stages of learning to speak English. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is broadly in line with the national average. Most of these pupils have specific learning difficulties. Pupils' level of attainment when they join Year 3 is currently above that expected, although this does vary and is sometimes lower.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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32814	Mrs Jeanie Boldero	Lay inspector	
32136	Mrs Lesley Brookes	Team inspector	Science Art and design Geography History Special educational needs
27290	Mrs Christine Huard	Team inspector	Mathematics Religious education Personal social and health education
27240	Mr Tony Hooper	Team inspector	English Design and technology Music English as an additional language

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## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	6-8
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	9-12
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	12-17
Teaching and learning The curriculum Care, guidance and support Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	17-18
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS</b>	19-27
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	28

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Elmbridge Junior School provides a good standard of education.** As a result, pupils achieve well overall; standards are above those expected, and pupils develop good attitudes and standards of behaviour. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses<sup>1</sup> are:

- Pupils achieve well overall because of good teaching in English and science, which for older pupils results in higher than expected standards by the end of Year 6, however, in mathematics, lower-attaining pupils do not achieve as well as they could.
- Ageing resources in information and communication technology are limiting pupils' achievements.
- Good leadership and management promote pupils' achievements and school improvement well.
- Pupils are not fully involved in their own learning.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and the good provision for pupils' personal development motivates them to want to learn.
- The provision for pupils with learning difficulties is very good overall.
- Teachers' marking does not always help pupils to know how to improve their work.
- Attendance is above the national average.

Improvement since the last inspection has been good overall. Over the last six years many of the good features mentioned in the last report have been maintained. The cumulative effect of the steady pace of change has been good improvements in other areas, most notably the provision for pupils with learning difficulties. Pupils' level of achievement has also improved, as has the curriculum, the fabric of the building, and standards in some subjects.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

**Overall, pupils' achievement is good.** In Years 3 to 6, pupils' learning is satisfactory overall, but they achieve well because of sudden boosts in their learning brought about by pockets of good teaching, especially in Year 6. In relation to their prior attainment in Year 3, which was close to the expected level, these pupils have achieved well. Standards in Year 6 in English and science are above those expected. In mathematics, standards are in line with those expected, overall, because, although the higher-attaining pupils are well challenged and achieve well, and a greater proportion than average reach a higher level, some pupils, especially those of lower attainment, are not sufficiently challenged. The findings of the inspection reflect the national test results of 2003, except, where there has been an improvement in pupils' performance. In these tests, girls did better than boys, although such differences were not observed during the inspection. The overall trend in pupils' performance reflects the national picture, but the improvements in performance have been stronger in English and science than in mathematics.

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

*Key: A – well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average  
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

<sup>1</sup> The strengths and weaknesses are listed in order of significance.

Pupils do well throughout the school in personal, social, and health education, including citizenship, and standards are above those expected by the end of Year 6. Achievement is not as good as it could be in information and communication technology because ageing resources limit pupils' progress. No judgements about standards in physical education were made as no lessons were observed in this subject. In all other subjects, standards at the end of Year 6 are in line with those expected and pupils achieve satisfactorily. Pupils with learning difficulties achieve well because of the good support they receive.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, and social development is good; their cultural development is satisfactory.** Pupils' attitudes to the school and their behaviour are good. Attendance and punctuality are both good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The overall quality of education provided by the school is good.**

**Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.** The majority of teaching at the school is satisfactory, although good teaching was observed in every year group. The proportion of the good teaching seen was greatest in Year 6. The teaching of English and science is good; for mathematics it is satisfactory. The good lessons normally begin with lively, well-planned introductions that engage pupils in discussion. Most teachers have a good knowledge and understanding and this is reflected in confident teaching. Teachers have good control of their classes. Pupils are well motivated because teachers generally make the lessons interesting and the pupils' good behaviour contributes positively to their learning. In the satisfactory lessons the pace of learning is slower because teachers organise and control most aspects of the lesson so they tell pupils what to do, how to do it, and what to learn, rather than engaging pupils in discussions, valuing their ideas and encouraging them to be part of the lesson. This is exacerbated in some lessons, especially in mathematics, by low expectations. Pupils, including those with learning difficulties, make good progress because of the good deployment of the numerous and experienced learning support workers. Assessment is satisfactory. There are some good procedures to assess pupils and track their progress, but this information is not always used as well as it could be to guide teachers' planning for future learning or to involve pupils in their own learning.

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum that meets the needs of most of its pupils. Opportunities for enrichment, through visits and clubs, are good. Accommodation and resources are good overall. Arrangements for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are good and help pupils to learn well. Pupils' involvement in the school's work is satisfactory. The school fosters good links with parents; those with other schools and the community are satisfactory.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The quality of leadership and management is good.** The leadership of the headteacher and key staff is good. The headteacher is effective at establishing systems and using staff strengths to support the pupils learning. The headteacher monitors the implementation of the shared vision, while key staff, especially the senior leadership team, have a strong and effective role in leading both teaching and the curriculum enabling pupils to achieve well. Governance is good and all statutory duties are fulfilled.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents like their school and what it provides. They are pleased with their children's achievements and the good relationships between home and school. Pupils say that they also like the school and, in particular, how they learn new things in lessons, that teachers are fair, and that there is an adult to go to if they are worried.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Raise pupils' achievement in mathematics, particularly that of the lower-attaining pupils.
- Improve the quality of resources for information and communication technology.
- Involve pupils more in their own learning.
- Use assessment procedures more effectively to increase pupils' knowledge of how they can improve.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Overall, pupils' achievement at the school is good. Current standards at the end of Year 6 are above those expected in English and science, and in line with expectations in mathematics; this reflects the 2003 national test results.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in English and science.
- Pupils, particularly the lower attaining, do not achieve as well as they could in mathematics.
- Standards in English and science are above those expected.
- Pupils do not achieve as well as they could in information and communication technology.

#### Commentary

1. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2003 were, when compared with both the national average and that of similar schools, above average in English and science and in line in mathematics.

#### *Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores<sup>2</sup> in 2003*

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.6 (28.4)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	26.7 (27.1)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	29.3 (29.4)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 78 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

2. In recent years, pupils' performance has been improving in line with the national trend. However, following a whole-school focus, results in science have improved dramatically. Similarly, results in English have risen slightly faster than the national trend, because of the emphasis placed on this subject. In mathematics, however, results, have struggled to improve, even though the proportion of pupils achieving above the expected level<sup>3</sup> has increased in recent years. The results in mathematics have failed to improve rapidly, not because the school has failed to notice the underachievement in this subject, but due, in part, to the lack of continuity in subject leadership.
3. Overall, many of the pupils who sat the national tests in 2003 achieved well in relation to their prior attainment, but there are differences between subjects and pupils of different ability. The percentage of pupils reaching Level 5 was above the national average in mathematics and science. These pupils achieved well, as did most pupils in science. Although many pupils achieved well in mathematics, results were satisfactory, overall, because the proportion of pupils achieving Level 3 or below was far greater than in other subjects and greater than that

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<sup>2</sup> **Average Point Scores.** The average point scores table compares the school's performance with the national results. The calculations are arrived at by using the total of all test scores gained by pupils, and dividing the total by the number of pupils with a test result. This calculation is carried out for each subject tested.

#### **Levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 2**

The National Curriculum has been written on the basis that pupils are expected to reach Level 4 by the end of Year 6, at the age of 11. If a pupil is attaining Level 5, then he or she is reaching standards above those expected for their age. If a pupil is attaining Level 3, or below, he or she is reaching standards below those expected for their age.

found nationally; these pupils did not achieve as well as they could. In English, the proportion of pupils achieving Level 5 was lower than in the other two subjects and close to the national average. Achievement for these pupils was satisfactory. Detailed school analysis indicates that overall standards and achievement in reading were good but in writing was less so.

4. Through its own analysis, the school has recognised the differences in achievement between pupils of different abilities and within subjects. It has identified the reasons for them and has started taking many good initiatives to address them. Many of these, however, have not yet had sufficient time to impact fully on standards. As a consequence, a similar pattern of attainment and achievement is evident in the work of pupils currently in Year 6, except in English, where there has been an improvement in pupils' achievement.
5. Many pupils achieve well in English and science because the quality of teaching is good overall. However, teaching is not consistently good across all subjects. In mathematics, for example, a minority of pupils do not achieve as well as they could, because a few teachers do not provide sufficient challenge for all pupils. Although pupils make better than average progress over time, such progress is patchy because not all teaching is challenging enough. When pupils receive good teaching, as they do in most year groups, and especially in Year 6, they receive a significant boost to their learning.
6. The 2003 national test results indicate that there was a difference in the attainment of boys and girls; in English, mathematics and science girls did better than boys to a greater degree than is normally seen. The difference between the results of the boys and girls is attributed to a year group with more boys than girls, which has also been affected by a few boys with poor attitudes to learning and school. These poor attitudes resulted in the boys being excluded which, the school reports, had a generally adverse effect on the year group as a whole. This pattern of attainment between boys and girls was not typical of previous years and was not seen during the inspection.
7. Pupils with learning difficulties achieve well because of the good support they receive. Although the school is ethnically diverse, the number of pupils from each different ethnic group is too small for any analyses of test results to be statistically valid. Inspection evidence, however, indicates that these pupils achieve as well as their classmates. Those pupils who use English as an additional language also achieve well, with a number of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 in English, mathematics, and science. The school has recently started to identify pupils who are gifted and talented. There is little additional support for them, although they achieve as well as their classmates, overall, because of the teaching of pupils in groups determined by their capabilities and the proportion of good teaching, especially for the older pupils.
8. Pupils' overall achievement in many other subjects is satisfactory. This is because, on the evidence of lesson observations, discussions with pupils and the analysis of pupils' work and teachers' planning, most of the teaching is satisfactory, but not always very challenging and pupils are not involved in their own learning.
9. Most pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are good and support their learning in other subjects well. Pupils' skills in information and communication technology are satisfactory but are not sufficiently developed, due to inadequate resources, which is the cause of pupils' underachievement. No overall judgements could be made about achievement or attainment in physical education, because no lessons in this subject were observed. However, the school's records indicate that standards in swimming are good.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values, and other personal qualities**

Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to education are good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Attendance and punctuality are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' personal development is good and there are strengths in how the school promotes their spiritual, moral, and social development.
- Pupils are proud of their school and try hard to achieve to the best of their ability.
- The school has effective behaviour management strategies.
- Attendance and punctuality are good.

### Commentary

10. Pupils like school and the majority arrive in good time in the morning. The need for good attendance and punctuality is regularly reinforced in assemblies and letters home to parents. Attendance and punctuality are carefully monitored and, if there is a problem, appropriate action is taken. The overall attendance rate is above the national average and unauthorised absences are rare.

#### **Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.8	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

11. Pupils' behaviour is good in classrooms, the playground and around the school. The school's procedures for dealing with any issues regarding bullying are effective and pupils say that they feel comfortable in approaching and discussing any issues with an adult. Pupils try hard in lessons and strive to gain merit badges and 'Star of the Week' that are awarded for endeavour, attitude, and behaviour. No bullying or harassing behaviour was observed during the inspection, and pupils are encouraged either to resolve minor disagreements between themselves, or to seek out the support of an adult. The school keeps appropriate records of the few minor racial incidents that occur and, according to pupils, deals with these well. There were a number of exclusions in the last reporting years that according to the school had an adverse effect on the achievement of boys in that year group. The exclusions of that year were an anomaly, as there had been no exclusions in the previous year, or in the current academic year.

#### **Ethnic background of pupils**

#### **Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	310	4	
White – any other White background	3		
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	8	1	
Mixed – White and Black African	1		
Mixed – White and Asian	1		
Mixed – any other mixed background	5		
Asian or Asian British – Indian	6		
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	2		
Black or Black British – Caribbean	3		
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1		

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

12. Pupils with learning difficulties are integrated well with their classmates and supported well by staff. This enables them to feel valued and to make a positive contribution to the day-to-day life of the school.
13. Pupils' spiritual and moral development is good as a result of the school's Christian principles, and the spiritual and moral element they experience in assemblies and lessons, such as music and art. Assembly themes, such as the one on refugees during the inspection week, have a strong moral message. These themes, and the time taken in some classes to discuss pupils' actions, and their consequences, promote good moral development. Because of the school ethos, and the good role models provided by staff, pupils have a firm understanding of right and wrong and what is fair. Opportunities to enhance pupils' spirituality are developed in lessons where they arise, although they are not specifically planned for. School displays, however, do encourage pupils to think of the bigger questions of life, such as those generated by the recent 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of D-Day. Pupils are expected to be aware of those less fortunate than themselves and are encouraged to be so by regularly being involved in charitable fund-raising.
14. Good provision for pupils' social development also supports their moral development well. All staff have high expectations of behaviour, and behaviour management is consistent and effective across the school. Pupils relish opportunities to take responsibility, although these are currently rather limited. Opportunities include being chosen as a monitor to help teachers in the classroom and pupils in Year 6 being called upon to assist wherever they can. For example, they visit the adjacent infant school to help with the youngest children. Although there is no school council that could involve pupils in the life of the school, there are detailed plans for its introduction for the coming autumn term.
15. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Through many subjects, such as geography and history, and some after school clubs, such as country dancing, pupils develop a reasonable awareness of their own culture and traditions. Through religious education, assemblies, and visits from members of the Muslim and Jewish faiths, pupils' knowledge of world religions is developed, but, as there have been very few visits to different places of worship, and limited contact with schools in contrasting localities, pupils' appreciation of the diversity of modern British culture is limited.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Because the quality of teaching varies between subjects and year groups, teaching is satisfactory overall. However, it is often better, as there is a significant amount of good teaching, especially in English and science. Assessment is satisfactory. There are many good assessment procedures, but not for all subjects. The curriculum is sound overall and is supported by a good range of activities that enriches pupils' learning. The accommodation and resources are good. The school makes good provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. Staff know their pupils well and this enables them to provide good support, advice and guidance. The involvement of pupils in the life of the school is satisfactory. Links with parents are good and, although there are some good links with other schools and the community, these are satisfactory overall.

### **Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, however, it is good in English, science, and for the older pupils. There are many good assessment procedures, but not for all subjects and the information gathered is not always used as well as it could be to ensure that all groups of pupils make the same good progress. The information these systems provide is not always used as well as it could be.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good in English and science, and pupils achieve well in these subjects.
- Good teaching, especially in Year 6, boosts pupils' learning.
- Pupils are not always encouraged to become involved in their own learning.
- The information provided by many good assessment procedures is not always used well.
- Pupils are not fully involved in evaluating their own progress and do not always know what to do to improve.

## Commentary

16. Although the school and the parents evaluate teaching as good, inspection evidence indicates that this is not true across the whole school. The proportion of good teaching has increased since the last inspection and some good teaching was seen in every year group. However, as at the time of the last inspection, the quality of teaching and learning remains satisfactory. This is because, although teaching is mostly good in English and science, especially for older pupils and more able pupils in mathematics, more often than not it is satisfactory for younger pupils at the school, the lower-attaining mathematicians, and in subjects such as information and communication technology. Because of this inconsistency in the quality of teaching, within subjects and for pupils of different abilities, pupils make satisfactory gains in their learning, while achieving well overall through the boosts that their learning receives from good teaching, especially in Year 6.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 37 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	3 (8%)	13 (35%)	19 (52%)	2 (5%)	0 (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.*

17. In the good lessons, teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and how to teach it. This is particularly true of English and science. Lessons in these subjects are planned well, often identifying different activities for pupils of different abilities. Teachers know their pupils well, and by deliberately choosing interesting and challenging activities that are delivered at a fast pace they engage pupils' good attitudes and desire to learn. As a result, pupils are productive, collaborate well together, and make good gains in their learning. The very good lessons also have these characteristics, together with an element of humour that makes learning fun and imaginative activities that engage pupils very well in their learning. The most notable feature of these lessons is the teachers' high expectations that spur pupils on to greater efforts and thought.
18. The support for pupils with learning difficulties is also good, and helps them to achieve well. Teachers know the pupils well and have very good support from the school's special needs co-ordinator, who is an experienced and dedicated practitioner. Well-written individual education plans are used well by teachers and learning support workers to guide these pupils in their work.
19. The satisfactory lessons, like the good lessons, do have elements to commend them. The most notable of these is the quality of relationships. Because of the high level of care exhibited by most staff, all groups of pupils, including those who use English as an additional language, said they feel safe, secure, and able to ask for help when in difficulty. All pupils have equal access to learning, as teachers always seek to include a wide range of pupils through their questioning and actively ensure that pupils work in pairs or groups.
20. In many lessons pupils' learning was satisfactory because the pace of learning was steady. But in these lessons pupils' involvement was often too passive because teachers directed

lessons too closely, allowing pupils little freedom to choose, discuss or work independently. The teachers' questioning further limited pupils' involvement, or thinking, since many of the questions asked were aimed at a specific pupil, or required a one-word answer, giving little opportunity for pupils to expand their own ideas. At worst, teachers did not give pupils enough time to think and, therefore, answered the questions themselves. This limited pupils' interest and productivity. This was often exacerbated by teachers' low expectations in the mathematics lessons for lower-attaining pupils.

21. In the occasional unsatisfactory lesson, pupils' lack of interest bubbled over into unsatisfactory behaviour that was not always managed well; teachers did not make clear their expectations or deal with pupils' restlessness in a consistent manner.
22. Assessment is satisfactory. Information gained from regular testing across the school is used well in English, mathematics, and science to identify possible underachievement. This has helped raise achievement in some subjects, and for some pupils, as in the case of the more able mathematicians. In English, mathematics and science, assessment data is often used well by teachers in their planning, so that they prepare appropriate tasks for pupils of different abilities, although, on a few occasions, evidence indicates that more able pupils could be challenged a little further. Assessment information is also used to write targets for improvement, but these are quite general, do not specifically address the needs of individuals or small groups of pupils, and are rarely known by pupils themselves. This limits the pupils' involvement in their own assessment and learning.
23. Assessment procedures in many other subjects are satisfactory. At the end of a topic or unit of work, pupils' work is assessed against what is normally expected for their age. Although this gives teachers a reasonable insight into pupils' attainment, the information is not used sufficiently to support pupils' future learning. In many subjects, such as information and communication technology and religious education, lessons are not being planned for pupils of different abilities, so, for some pupils, work is not always sufficiently challenging. Although pupils' work is regularly marked, it rarely informs pupils about how they could improve their work. This again limits pupils' involvement and slows their learning.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum is sound overall and is supported by a good range of activities that enrich pupils' learning. The accommodation and resources are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils with special educational needs are provided for well.
- Provision for pupils' personal development is good.
- Insufficient use is made of local resources to enhance the curriculum.
- There is a good range of out-of-school opportunities.
- Ageing computers limit pupils' achievement.

### **Commentary**

24. The curriculum has improved since the last inspection, in that the school now ensures that all subjects are allocated enough time to enable adequate coverage of the curriculum. The National Literacy Strategy is firmly in place and supports pupils' achievement. The National Numeracy Strategy has not yet had the same impact on pupils' achievement in mathematics because of the numerous changes in subject leadership. The school has adapted much of the national guidance on teaching other subjects, but in some subjects, such as information and communication technology, such adaptation has not been sufficiently tailored to the needs of all pupils. Although most aspects of each subject are covered well, those elements of independent practical work in mathematics and science are not as well developed as they could be.

25. The school provides well for pupils' personal development with the result that their behaviour is good and their attitudes are positive. This helps them to learn well. Personal, social and health education, which includes sex and relationships and drugs education for older pupils, is provided for well. The curriculum is taught through a good scheme of work which is well matched to the ages and understanding of the pupils in each year.
26. The curriculum has been adapted well to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties. At the time of the last inspection it was noted as an area for development. Due to very good leadership, there has been a significant improvement in the quality of provision; it is now a strength of the school. The school has identified pupils who are gifted and talented, but, as yet, has not provided a significant amount of support for them.
27. The school provides a good range of additional learning opportunities and clubs. These activities embrace a range of topics and include residential visits, music, and sport. The school choir participates successfully in local music festivals, and school sports teams take part in local tournaments. However, the school misses some opportunities to enrich pupils' learning through the use of readily available local resources, such as visitors, and visits to places of interest in the local community. This limits opportunities for the pupils to gain first-hand experiences, or to develop a strong empathy for and understanding of the topic being studied. For example, when studying Islam, pupils in Year 6 did not have the opportunity to visit one of the local mosques in Gloucester to extend their knowledge of Islam in the local area and modern day British society.
28. The school is well staffed by experienced and knowledgeable teachers. Pupils are supported well by learning support workers, although there are very few general teaching assistants because of lack of funding. This means that in some lessons, particularly in subjects such as mathematics, lower-attaining pupils do not always receive the benefit of additional support to enable them to make maximum progress. The school makes good use of the accommodation, which, both inside and out, is spacious. There have been significant improvements in the fabric of the building since the last inspection, and further extensive refurbishment is planned, for example, installing new windows. However, the computer suite still has inadequate ventilation. Resources for nearly all subjects are good and enable the curriculum to be taught effectively, the exception being in information and communication technology, where computers in the computer suite are outdated and neither networked nor connected to the Internet.

### **Care, guidance and support**

The school makes good provision for pupils' care, welfare, health, and safety. Staff know pupils well and this enables them to provide good support, advice and guidance. The involvement of pupils in the life of the school is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school looks after its pupils well by ensuring that they work in orderly, caring, and safe surroundings.
- The care, support, and tracking of pupils' progress linked to their individual goals are particularly good for those with learning difficulties.
- There are no systems for seeking pupils' views in shaping the life and work of the school.
- Induction arrangements are good.

### **Commentary**

29. The school has succeeded in maintaining a secure and constructive environment noted at the time of the last inspection that addresses pupils' academic and pastoral needs and enables them to learn and enjoy their time in school. Staff and governors give due consideration to health and safety and child protection matters, with a low incidence of accidents and appropriate liaison with external agencies. The governing body has improved its risk assessment procedures since the last inspection and they are now good. Pupils are treated equally and their learning is supported by awareness of, and timely attention to, their welfare

needs. The ambience of the school is that of caring vigilance, and staff are trusted by nearly all pupils who answered the pupils' questionnaire to help them with any concerns about their work or personal worries. The vast majority of parents are also pleased with the quality of care provided by the school and regard their children as being treated fairly and encouraged to become mature. The induction of pupils is well managed. There is a good transfer of information from the local infant school to the juniors. There is also a well planned programme to introduce pupils from the infants to the junior school.

30. Assessment procedures in English, mathematics, and science are good. A recent review of systems has led to the introduction of a good computerised system that quickly identifies possible underachievement. New procedures have also been introduced into other subjects, such as information and communication technology, but there is a lack of consistency in style and approach between subjects.
31. A strong feature of how the school looks after its pupils is the quality of support for pupils with learning difficulties. Very good assessment procedures for those with learning difficulties are appropriate and thorough. Pupils' targets are often written and regularly reviewed with the contribution of pupils themselves, so that they know exactly what is expected of them and how they are succeeding.
32. Although there are no formal arrangements for monitoring personal development, staff know the pupils well and, on a daily basis, good procedures are in place for recording merit and discipline issues. Achievements in all aspects of school life are rewarded and announced within the school and to parents. The school encourages pupils' social development and all pupils are expected to fulfil responsibilities appropriate to their ages. For pupils in Year 6, these responsibilities extend to helping in the neighbouring infant school.
33. The lack of involvement by pupils in all the routine workings and development of the school is a weakness. There is, currently, no school council, or other mechanism, by which pupils can contribute to the work of the school. There are well-advanced plans to start a school council in September 2004, with peer mentoring which, if successful, should give pupils the opportunity to gain a greater understanding of being part of a larger community, and to be fully involved in the life of the school.

## **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

Links with parents are good, and satisfactory with other schools and the community.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are supportive of the school, and value what it has to offer.
- There is an effective partnership between home and school that makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning.
- Home-school agreements do not incorporate the pupils' perspective.
- The school's association with the wider community is undeveloped.

### **Commentary**

34. The school has maintained its good partnership with parents since the last inspection. A significant majority of parents hold the school in high regard; they believe it teaches their children well and is sensitive to their needs. The range, quality, and timeliness of information provided by the school to parents are good. Parents like the parent consultation evenings. Pupils' annual reports for parents are clear, and contain information and assessment relating to pupils' academic achievements and personal development, and their targets for English, mathematics, and science.
35. Some parents feel the school could be more approachable, yet said that they are well received when they are concerned about anything. However, except on specific matters, their views are

not regularly canvassed. Most parents view the junior school as having a more formal approach to education than the infant school; they felt that they had not always been well prepared for this change. Conversely, many parents commented very positively on the headteacher's efforts to keep them well informed about the processes involved in transferring to secondary education. Complaints are rare, and should it be needed, the procedure for handling them is good and clear.

36. The home-school agreement involves only teachers and parents. As they lack the perspective and involvement of pupils, they fail to harness and encourage their contribution to their own learning. The governors' annual report to parents has minor statutory omissions, failing to detail school security and arrangements for pupils with disabilities; otherwise, it is a clear and user-friendly document.
37. There is an active parent-teacher association that organises activities and fund-raising events. Parents are active supporters of, and help with, residential and off-site trips, although there is little regular parental assistance in school, due largely to parents' work commitments. Evidence indicates that parents make reasonable contributions to pupils' learning at home, by ensuring that homework or reading is undertaken.
38. Overall, the links with other schools are satisfactory; that with the infant school is good and supports the transfer of pupils from one school to another well. The infant school passes on their academic records so that junior school staff know where to target their support to promote good achievement. Because pupils transfer on to many secondary schools; 15 this year, the logistics of detailed liaison with so many is very difficult. When significant numbers of pupils go to a particular school, greater efforts are made to establish good links with them. For example, there is a close relationship with the local grammar school that provides French tuition in the second part of the summer term to pupils in Year 6.
39. Visitors to the school bring a mix of musical, sporting, and religious input to enhance the curriculum and pupils' learning. The school is host to Gloucester Symphony Orchestra and Elmscroft Football Club. However, there are few systematically organised links with local industry or the community that strengthen governance or decision-making.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Overall, the quality of leadership and management is good. The leadership of the headteacher along with the management and governance of the school is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has a clear vision, a sense of purpose and high aspirations.
- The headteacher's strength lies in his ability to empower others.
- Key members of staff have a central role in the good management of the school.
- Governors play a positive role in school improvement.

### **Commentary**

40. As at the time of the last inspection, the headteacher provides a sensitive and quietly enthusiastic leadership. However, following his attendance on courses aimed at his own professional development, this has become sharper and more innovative. This has resulted in an approach that empowers others in the school to take responsibility for leadership as well as establishing a secure system of monitoring and self-evaluation that involves most of the school's stakeholders, but not always parents. This provides a clear insight into the school, its strengths and needs. The vision for the school in terms of improved achievement is clearly reflected in the school improvement plan and shared by all.
41. The system of school self-evaluation has the headteacher at its centre. However, it is constructed so that, through a robust system of monitoring and accountability, all staff play

their part. There is a very clear system of termly monitoring activities, reports and discussions based on the agreed areas for development identified in their subject development plans. Each subject is, therefore, continually kept under review. The two senior staff at the school play a pivotal role in the monitoring of the curriculum, and of pupils' achievement and, through this, the identification of whole school and individual teachers' development needs. Their experience and expertise make them good role models for both teaching and curriculum leadership. They are, therefore, well placed to act as agents of change and to facilitate communication throughout the school, so that there is quite a good consistency in practices and procedures.

42. Teachers' classroom performance is regularly observed. Some of this is undertaken by subject co-ordinators, most notably English and mathematics, as these are both school priority areas. The headteacher, however, casts his net wider, for example monitoring the impact of the recent initiatives in physical education or providing greater direction and support to staff when the need arises. Much of this monitoring is focused on the quality of teaching, and clear direction is given on improvements needed; this, in part, accounts for the proportion of good teaching at the school. However, these observations and recommendations are not sufficiently focused on pupils' different learning styles and how teaching can be modified to address them.
43. In adopting an approach that empowers others, and providing opportunities for subject co-ordinators' professional development, the effectiveness of subject leadership has improved since the last inspection. The co-ordination of many subjects, such as English, mathematics, science, and information and communication technology are good, and this has established a good momentum capable of sustaining continued school improvement. The co-ordination of the provision for pupils with learning difficulties is very good, and accounts for the significant improvements in this provision since the last inspection.
44. The potential impact on pupils is at the centre of all financial decisions, and the school seeks best value for money in its spending as demonstrated in the process undertaken to decide upon the new computers for the suite. Although it has had a substantial carry forward, far in excess of the recommended five per cent, it has used its available resources well to further its educational aims. The infant school warned them several years ago that there were far fewer pupils in one intake than was normal and to avoid having to introduce mixed-age classes the school, with support from the governors, started to save money to pay for an additional teacher. This small year group is now the current Year 4 class. In addition, the school was conscious that, after a period of neglect, considerable sums were needed to improve the fabric of the building, for example new toilets and windows. The carry forward is now being steadily reduced, due to improvements in the building, and the employment of a teacher to keep Year 4 in single-age classes. It is projected that, by the end of this financial year, the carry forward will be quite low at three per cent. However, the schools strategic planning has taken this into account.

***Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003***

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	699,645
Total expenditure	752,583
Expenditure per pupil	2,130

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	67,992
Balance carried forward to the next	15,054

45. The governing body makes a good contribution to the leadership of the school and supports it well, especially in those issues relating to the accommodation. The governors also provide good strategic guidance by giving their support and encouragement to new initiatives, such as support for gifted and talented pupils. Governors are clearly aware of the school's strengths and of the difficulties it has faced and of how the school is attempting to overcome them. They are provided with sufficient information to keep them informed and for them to ask questions about what actions are being taken and how effective these have been, for example, efforts to

improve achievement in mathematics or the quality of teaching. By doing this, they are both supportive and challenging. The governing body fulfils all of its statutory duties.

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

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above those expected and have improved since the last inspection.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good and pupils achieve well.
- Pupils are not always sure about what they need to do to improve their work.
- Opportunities for pupils to use computers are limited.

#### Commentary

46. Standards in the 2003 national tests were above the national average and pupils achieved well in relation to their prior attainment. The inspection confirms that standards and achievement in the current Year 6 are similar. This is a good improvement on the findings of the last inspection, where standards were in line with those nationally and pupils made satisfactory progress. Pupils with learning difficulties achieve well because of very good support. Although there was a difference in the attainment of boys and girls in the 2003 national tests, this was not apparent during the inspection. Similarly, no difference was noted between the achievements of pupils from different ethnic groups, or those who use English as an additional language, and the rest of the school.
47. The teaching of English is good and pupils make good gains in their learning. Lessons are thoroughly planned, using the guidance given in the National Literacy Strategy. Pupils, therefore, build well on their previous knowledge and understanding. The good relationships evident in so many classes, and teachers' high expectations about behaviour, promote pupils' desire to be productive and achieve well. Teachers track pupils' performance carefully, and this enables them to prepare challenging activities for pupils of different abilities. Pupils with learning difficulties are closely supervised by well-qualified and experienced learning support workers, either in class or in small groups. Carefully constructed activities that closely match their individual learning programmes ensure that these pupils make good gains in their learning.
48. In Year 6, pupils' spoken language and listening skills are above those expected. This is because in many of the good lessons, not just in English, but in other subjects as well, teachers' skilful questioning and imaginative approach effectively develop pupils' speaking skills. For many of these questions there is not always a right answer, but pupils are expected to use full grammatical sentences to express their ideas and views. However, this is not always the case, and in many of the satisfactory lessons observed in other subjects, teachers did not sufficiently encourage pupils to discuss and contribute their ideas. On some occasions, teachers do not give pupils sufficient time to think of an answer, but answer for them, limiting pupils spoken language development as well as their interest in the subject.
49. Pupils' written work is above the expected level in Year 6 because the co-ordinator has planned a programme for writing that has contributed well to improving standards. Its strength lies, not only in its development of skills and regular opportunities to write in different styles, but in the numerous links made to other subjects, where pupils are expected to write to a similarly high standard as they do in their English lessons. However, the presentation of written work is not always of the expected standard, with some pupils in Year 6 using pencils instead of pens. Marking is always supportive and refers to the specific aims of each piece of work, but it does not always contain comments that help pupils to improve their work. Similarly, pupils do not always know what their target may be in the next step of their learning. There are good displays

to celebrate pupils' work in English. Some of this is word-processed. However, little use was made of the computers in the classrooms during the inspection and pupils do not use them regularly to draft and edit their work.

50. Standards in reading are above those expected in Year 6. There are daily opportunities for pupils to read. Their progress is monitored closely, so that those who may be underachieving can be given support and guidance. Learning support workers effectively lead small group reading sessions for those experiencing difficulties. Reading books are taken home regularly and pupils are encouraged to use their reading skills in other subjects, for example, when reading detailed instructions in information and communication technology lessons. Library skills are taught well in lessons, and pupils know how to use an index and a glossary. However, as at the time of the last inspection, the centrally situated school library has little seating available and the stock of books is not well-suited to develop pupils' research skills or an interest in reading.
51. The subject leader has been in charge of English for some years. She manages the subject well and has a clear idea of what needs to be done to improve standards. She monitors teaching and pupils' work and analyses the results of the national and other tests to target any areas of weakness. The assessment procedures are very thorough and help staff to see how groups and individuals are progressing. Pupils are given targets in literacy, but the use of these varies from class to class and does not always give pupils a clear picture of what they need to do to improve their work.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

52. The school encourages pupils to develop their literacy skills in all subjects. This has resulted in pupils developing note-taking skills in design and technology and writing longer pieces in history and religious education. In other subjects, such as music and science, good use is made of technical terms, and this helps pupils to widen their vocabulary.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards have risen, particularly for higher-attaining pupils.
- Teaching and learning are consistently good in Year 6.
- Lower-attaining pupils are not achieving well enough.
- Too much reliance is placed on a commercial scheme of work that limits the scope of problem-solving activities.

### **Commentary**

53. Standards in mathematics in Year 6 are generally in line with those expected. This is an improvement since the last inspection and reflects the results of the national tests of 2003. Overall, pupils achieve satisfactorily, when taking into account their level of attainment when they enter the school. Although there was a slight difference in the attainment of boys and girls in the 2003 national tests, this was not noted during the inspection. Pupils with learning difficulties are supported well by tasks that generally match their needs well. However, work in pupils' books is too often left unfinished, which would indicate that it is not always set at the correct level.
54. Appropriate analysis of data and good monitoring of teaching and learning have played a significant role in raising standards, but more still needs to be done. For example, the school sets pupils according to their ability. This has helped raise standards, but, although achievement is satisfactory overall, there is a difference in the achievement between groups of

pupils. This is mainly because of the quality of teaching that is satisfactory overall, but varies across the school.

55. A good proportion of the pupils currently in Year 6 are on course to reach the higher Level 5. They achieve well, as do many pupils in the top end of the school, because much of the teaching they receive is good. Lessons always begin with lively, well-planned, mental starters. Most teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of mathematics, and these are reflected in confident teaching, accurate use of terminology, and clear explanations when responding to pupils' questions or misconceptions. Teachers have good control of their classes. Pupils are well motivated because teachers generally make the lessons interesting and pupils' good behaviour contributes positively to their learning. Although pupils achieve well, the work in their books indicates that they are sometimes insufficiently challenged.
56. Lower-attaining pupils do not always achieve to their full potential because the quality of teaching is often only satisfactory. This is because teachers do not always make the best use of time. The pace of lessons is sometimes too slow, particularly for younger pupils, and no time targets are set to give them an incentive to complete their work. The workbooks provided to lower-attaining pupils in Year 6 are those designed for much younger pupils, and are significantly different from those that are used by the rest of the year group. This is not conducive to raising self-esteem or achievement. However, these pupils do achieve well over time because the teaching of lower-attaining pupils is generally better in Year 6 than further down the school. Pupils receive good support in lessons and teachers ensure that they give them appropriate strategies to help them work out calculations.
57. In many lessons, especially those for lower-attaining pupils, there were few opportunities for pupils to evaluate or discuss their use of strategies. This is because there is, at present, too much emphasis on working from a commercial scheme of work, and insufficient emphasis is placed on pupils being active learners by, for example, solving number and word problems by themselves using other sources. The subject leader is aware of these problems and is taking action to address them. Where action is taken to improve pupils' problem-solving skills, they make better progress. For example, in one lesson, pupils in Year 5 could calculate the sum of two numbers up to ten thousand, quickly selecting an appropriate method of calculation in order to solve the problems set.
58. Across the school marking is weak and gives little indication of how pupils might improve their work. In addition, pupils are not expected to go back and correct their mistakes. Although teachers do provide targets for pupils, these are too general to provide specific support and direction.
59. The leadership and management of mathematics are good. Detailed tracking systems have been put in place to identify strengths and weaknesses and to monitor progress through the school. Both the headteacher and the subject leader have monitored teaching and discussed strengths and weaknesses with individual teachers. Common factors of good and less successful teaching are dealt with at staff meetings giving points for development on the subject. Priorities for development identified by the school are appropriate, for example, developing expertise in problem solving. There was little use of information and communication technology during the inspection because of the limitations of the school's computer systems.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

60. The provision in mathematics across the curriculum is sound. Pupils have a range of opportunities to use their mathematical skills, for example, when making graphs in science, and by using their skills in measurement when making models in design and technology.

## SCIENCE

Provision for science is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well because of good teaching.
- Standards in Year 6 are above those expected.
- There is insufficient challenge or encouragement in practical activities for pupils to learn for themselves.
- The marking of pupils' work does not always give clear guidance on how to improve.
- Insufficient use is made of computers in lessons to enhance learning.

### Commentary

61. In the 2003 national tests, pupils' performance was above average when compared both with schools nationally, and similar schools. Current standards are similar to these and also similar to those found at the time of the last inspection. In relation to their prior attainment, all groups of pupils achieve well, regardless of background, ability or gender. This is because pupils make good gains in their knowledge, understanding and skills in most aspects of the science curriculum. However, although pupils are involved in practical scientific activities that encourage their thinking and evaluation skills, these opportunities do not receive as much emphasis as other parts of the curriculum and pupils' achievements in this area are largely satisfactory.
62. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers prepare resources carefully and, through good questioning and stimulating practical activities, constantly challenge their pupils to draw scientific conclusions. Pupils frequently work in pairs and small groups when carrying out practical work. For example, in a very good Year 3 lesson, pupils used basic shadow puppet theatres which they made themselves, and which enabled them to further their understanding of transparency, translucence, and opacity through experiments with torches. Pupils responded with good levels of interest and curiosity, as well as excitement and awe at the results. However, although pupils have the opportunity to undertake practical experiments, the class teacher closely controls these. Pupils do not have a great deal of independence or choice and this limits their learning in this aspect of science. A shortcoming in teaching lies in how pupils' work is marked. While there is evidence of some good marking, too many comments relate to the effort that pupils have applied and do not give them the guidance they need to improve their work.
63. Science makes an effective contribution to the development of pupils' literacy and mathematical skills, as pupils have to undertake accurate measurements and record their findings. However, in the main, computers are not used as well as they might be to support scientific work.
64. The enthusiastic subject leader brings expertise and experience to the role and the overall quality of leadership and management is good. He has reviewed the policy and developed a subject action plan. A new scheme of work, more closely matched to the identified needs of the school, has had a positive impact on raising standards. The leadership team monitors workbooks regularly against agreed criteria and observes lessons to inform decisions about teaching, the curriculum, and professional development. The school has, within the last few weeks, introduced a new assessment scheme that complements the new scheme of work. It has not yet had time to make an impact, but has the potential to move the subject forward and raise achievement.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **unsatisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Outdated resources in the computer suite hinder pupils' achievements and the use of information and communication technology across the curriculum.
- Good co-ordination is overcoming the obstacles to raising achievement.

### Commentary

65. Standards, as they were at the time of the last inspection, across all strands of the National Curriculum, are in line with those expected at the end of Year 6. As a result, all pupils, including boys and girls, achieve satisfactorily. Their achievements are limited, however, because the computers in the suite are old, they are not connected to the Internet, and do not have a CD-ROM facility. Because of this, the quality of provision has deteriorated since the last inspection. Teachers do, however, make the best use of the machines they have in these rooms and the good quality computers and interactive white boards that are based in the classrooms.
66. Teaching is satisfactory and pupils make steady gains in their learning. Most lessons are characterised by good relationships and high expectations of behaviour. They are, therefore, orderly affairs. Pupils, both individually and in pairs, apply themselves satisfactorily. So, for example, pupils worked productively in Year 6 when creating presentations about Gloucester that included hyper-links to famous places. Much of the planning is good, especially the plans that cover a half term's work. These ensure that lessons progressively build on pupils' previous learning. Because of this, pupils in Year 4 acquired a reasonable understanding of branching databases. However, in many of these lessons the teacher continually told pupils what to do and how to do it; teachers rarely asked for pupils' views, opinions or thoughts. This approach limits pupils' achievements because they have insufficient opportunities to apply their knowledge or think for themselves. When available, teachers make good use of the interactive whiteboards to act as a focus for a lesson, and pupils are becoming increasingly confident in their own use of them. Although more interactive whiteboards are being installed this summer, many classrooms do not have one and, since the suite is not networked, and many of the computers are not powerful enough to run some programs, many lessons are based around using the one computer in a classroom. This hinders teachers' delivery of lessons, as pupils do not always have a full view of the screen and have insufficient time to practise their newly learnt skills.
67. A new whole-school procedure has recently been introduced across the school that identifies what pupils can do and what they need to do next, but it does not involve pupils in assessing their own work or efforts. The assessment information the teachers possess has yet to feed into their planning, so that activities for pupils of different abilities are planned. Because of this, and the lack of involvement in their own learning, some pupils, especially the more able, are not always sufficiently challenged.
68. Subject leadership is good. The co-ordinator is both knowledgeable and experienced and has used this well to improve resources at the school, such as the interactive whiteboards, and to develop a three-year strategic development plan that will greatly enhance the resources in the school; much of which should be completed by September 2004. These plans have been presented to the governors who have given them their full support. The plans, however, do not address the need to improve the ventilation in the suite. The heat in this room during the summer can be uncomfortable both for staff and pupils. During the inspection it adversely affected pupils' concentration and productivity. There is also good management of the subject. Staff knowledge and confidence has improved since the last inspection because the subject leader has undertaken much of their training and continues to offer advice and guidance. He also closely monitors their planning and pupils' work, and has given constructive feedback to teachers in an attempt to improve provision.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

69. There are many well-planned activities that combine both information and communication technology and other subjects. Pupils in Year 3 are currently composing their own music using their class computer, and pupils in Year 6 spoke enthusiastically about how, using control technology, they regulated the flashing of a light in a lighthouse as part of their geography work. However, in spite of these good links, the use of information and communication technology is no more than satisfactory across the curriculum, as the limitations in resources mean that all the opportunities to use computers cannot be fully exploited.

## HUMANITIES

Neither **geography** nor **history** was inspected in depth as, due to the structure of the timetable, it was not possible to see sufficient of either subject to make an overall judgement about provision.

70. A scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work indicates that standards in **geography** and **history** are in line with expectations and pupils make steady gains in their learning. Curriculum planning indicates that all aspects of both subjects are fully covered and there are good links with other subjects, such as literacy and numeracy. Pupils write at length in history and use their numeracy skills in mapping. Some good links have been established with information and communication technology, for example, controlling the flashing lights of a lighthouse, but not all opportunities have been fully explored because of aging computers. A good system of assessment for geography has been developed. Samples of pupils' assessed work have been arranged according to year group, levels, and subject matter in a portfolio. This helps teachers to provide appropriate work for pupils of different abilities. But evidence of progress in history is more limited. Overall, subject leadership is satisfactory. In both subjects there is evidence of lesson observations, development plans that are appropriate and regularly reviewed with the leadership team, and collated portfolios of work. Good use is made of the local environment, for example, work on the historical and geographical significance of Gloucester has supported pupils' learning well.

## Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils steadily develop an awareness of other religions and cultures of the world.
- Assessment systems have yet to be fully established and marking does not always help pupils know how to improve.
- Resources for the subject are good.

### Commentary

71. Pupils' attainment is broadly in line with the standards expected in the locally Agreed Syllabus. Through discussion with pupils, it is clear that pupils are developing a sound knowledge and understanding of other faiths and cultures, and they show an appropriate respect for these. However, at times their understanding is rather limited and shallow. For example, in response to a question about how they would prepare for a pilgrimage, a pupil in Year 5 wrote, 'find someone to look after the pets, book a ticket, pack, and remember to switch everything off', rather than anything to do with spiritual or mental preparation. Standards have, however, improved since the last inspection, when they were judged as being below expectations.
72. The coverage of the curriculum is satisfactory and teaching is sound, enabling pupils to achieve satisfactorily in lessons. Pupils with learning difficulties achieve as well as other pupils. The main focus is on learning about Christian teaching, but pupils also learn about Judaism and Islam. The teaching is sound overall. Teachers plan carefully for the needs of pupils of

differing attainment levels, are confident with the subject and manage pupils well. Both attainment targets of the Agreed Syllabus; learning from religions and learning about religions, are appropriately developed. Topics are linked well to developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural awareness. However, pupils' achievement and involvement in their own learning are limited, because there is a reliance on learning from books, rather than first-hand experiences, and pupils do not have any opportunities to visit either the local mosque or synagogue, although a visit to the local church is organised.

73. There are good quality displays promoting the subject around the school. In addition, the subject leader has purchased a range of informative posters and good quality artefacts to enhance the quality of learning. Systems of assessment have yet to be devised, and teachers' marking of work does not always suggest ways of making improvement. Pupils' writing skills are developed, but there are few planned opportunities to improve literacy, or to make use of computers to support pupils' learning. The subject is led and managed satisfactorily. The subject leader is well organised and has conducted an audit of resources and monitored planning, which has helped to raise standards.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

74. **Art and design** and **physical education** were not a focus of this inspection and, therefore, no definitive judgements can be made about provision.
75. **Art and design** is taught on alternate half terms with design and technology. During the inspection a selection of pupils' work was sampled, together with teachers' plans. From these, and from evidence in wall displays, it is likely that standards are in line with expectations. Examples of sketching and watercolour work were noted but few examples of the use of a variety of other media. There are a reasonable number of links with other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 4 used a spray bush in a computer program to obtain the effect of pointillism as used by Seurat. No judgement could be made about the leadership and management of the subject as the co-ordinator was away on long-term sick leave.
76. No **Physical education** lessons were observed, however, the school's records indicate that the very high standards in swimming at the end of Year 5 noted at the time of the last inspection have been maintained. The subject has recently been a priority in the school improvement plan. This has given the co-ordinator the opportunity to develop the subject well with the support of the headteacher and the Gloucester City Education Action Zone<sup>4</sup>. A new scheme of work has been introduced and staff training provided, to promote the continuous development of skills through all strands of the National Curriculum across the school; this has been closely monitored by the headteacher. Pupils are assessed regularly, but there are a variety of procedures used across the school. A recent introduction of additional funds has boosted the quality and quantity of resources so that they are now good. The school benefits from extensive grounds and a good-sized hall, the wooden floor of which is soon to be replaced. There are a good number of out-of-class activities and competitive events that support pupils' learning well. These activities, especially the weekend football club, are well supported by parents. The uptake of these activities is carefully monitored to ensure that all pupils have equal access. Pupils also have the opportunity to go on a residential visit that enables them to develop their physical education skills through a range of adventurous activities.

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<sup>4</sup> An education action zone is a government funded project to raise standards and achievement. The school is not part of an education action zone, but has benefited from its support.

## Design and technology

The provision for design and technology is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' expertise has improved since the last inspection, as has pupils' achievement.
- The teaching of the subject improves pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy, but not their computer skills.
- Pupils are not fully involved in their own learning.

### Commentary

77. Standards in the subject at the end of Year 6 meet expectations and all pupils achieve satisfactorily. Pupils learn an appropriate range of techniques for cutting and joining. Due to improvements in curriculum planning and teachers' knowledge and understanding, pupils now use a wider range of materials and techniques than seen at the last inspection. There has, therefore, been a noticeable improvement. Teaching and learning, however, remain satisfactory. In all lessons seen, the insistence on good behaviour ensured that lessons were orderly and safe, and pupils could learn. The planning identifies good opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills, by getting pupils to plan and evaluate their projects. Similarly, opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy skills are well developed by the setting of work that requires accuracy of measurement, or the making of scaled drawings, as in the Year 6 project on shelters. However, due to limited access to modern, powerful computers, the use of information and communication technology in this subject is limited. Individual lessons, as well as plans that cover longer periods of time, are thought out well, so that pupils use a range of tools and their learning builds steadily on their knowledge and skills. Each of these stages, however, is directed closely by the teacher and this limits pupils' learning, as pupils have little opportunity to explore or learn from their own mistakes. The subject leader has recently developed a system of recording the progress of individual pupils and groups and this is to be introduced throughout the whole school in September 2004. It does not, however, fully include pupils in assessing their work or the setting of targets. The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory.

## MUSIC

The provision for music is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The many opportunities to learn musical instruments support pupils' achievement well.
- The music curriculum is an enriched one.
- There is no system of assessing the achievement of pupils.

### COMMENTARY

78. Standards in music noted at the time of the last inspection have been maintained; in Year 6 they are in line with those expected and pupils achieve satisfactorily. During the inspection, the singing in assembly was satisfactory. Although most pupils participated, their contributions lacked dynamics, or any sense of joyous celebration. Although the school takes care to identify the composers of the pieces that are played, pupils in Year 6 have only a very limited knowledge of classical composers and their works.

79. Teaching and learning in the subject are satisfactory. The school uses a commercial scheme of work to support teachers who are less confident about teaching the subject. This promotes the steady development of pupils' skills in singing, composing, appraising, and listening. In lessons, high expectations of pupils' behaviour and good relationships ensure that teachers can support pupils and encourage them all to have a go. On many occasions, the use of

commercially produced taped music provides a good focus to a lesson and a series of well-paced activities. Not all teachers are, however, secure in their knowledge, and, in some lessons, pupils' skills in singing and use of chime bars were not fully developed because staff lacked the necessary subject knowledge. In these lessons, insufficient emphasis was given to pupils evaluating their work. There is no system for assessment that either involves pupils, or informs teachers about how well groups or individuals have achieved. As a result, lessons are not always matched to pupils' different abilities and, sometimes, activities are too complex for the majority to understand.

80. As the subject leader is on long-term sick leave, no judgement can be made about leadership or management. Other elements of the school's provision, however, support pupils' learning well; in particular, the numerous opportunities to learn a musical instrument, public performances, a good number of visiting musicians and out of class clubs. Pupils also benefit from a dedicated music room. It is spacious, but not particularly welcoming, and there is little display to inform pupils about music or to stimulate their interest.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

Provision in personal, social and health education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' moral and social development.
- The leadership and management of the subject are good.

### **Commentary**

81. Pupils achieve well in this subject, as pupils' personal development has a high profile in the school and specific personal, social and health education lessons are timetabled appropriately. Many opportunities are taken to introduce concepts of looking after oneself and of citizenship in other lessons, and, as such, personal, social and health education does much to enhance pupils' personal development. Pupils have a good understanding of the ways to keep safe and healthy and this is well reinforced by visits from the school nurse and also the 'Life Education' programme that visits the school each year. This deals most particularly with the issues of drug use and abuse that are then appropriately followed up in the classroom. Pupils have a good understanding about relationships and the problems faced by people in society. For example, in a Year 6 lesson pupils were exploring friendship, but took this beyond personal friendships to consider the plight of refugees and asylum seekers and the notion of extending friendship on a wider scale. The subject leader has a very good grasp of the subject and fully appreciates what needs to be done to extend it. There are advanced plans to introduce a school council and peer mediation in September. This is an extremely good initiative and has been well thought through to extend pupils' responsibilities and involvement in the work and the life of the school.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
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	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the 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).*