

INSPECTION REPORT

**LANGFORD VILLAGE COMMUNITY PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Bicester

LEA area: Oxfordshire

Unique reference number: 130962

Headteacher: Mr J Moffitt

Lead inspector: Kevin Hodge

Dates of inspection: 8th –10th December 2003

Inspection number: 256686

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	390
School address:	Peregrine Way Bicester
Postcode:	OX26 6SX
Telephone number:	01869 369 021
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Steve Tuck
Date of previous inspection:	6 July 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is situated on the outskirts of Bicester. The school is in Langford village, largely created between 1988 and 1996. The building dates from 1996, when it opened as a seven class school on a green-field site. It expanded rapidly to 400 plus pupils within three years. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is lower than average and the socio-economic background of the pupils is generally favourable. When they start school, pupils have a wide range of ability levels, but are generally slightly above average. Few pupils are from ethnic minorities or speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils identified as having special educational needs is approximately eight per cent and is below the national average. An Early Years Partnership Unit has recently been developed within the school's existing accommodation.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18466	Kevin Hodge	<i>Lead inspector</i>	Science; Music; English as an additional language.
9053	Vivienne Phillips	<i>Lay inspector</i>	
18632	Urszula Basini	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics; Design and technology; Geography; Physical education.
1578	Maureen Sinclair	<i>Team inspector</i>	Foundation Stage; Information and communication technology; Art and design.
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Langford is a good, self-improving school. It provides a caring and supportive education for its pupils and they achieve well in a number of areas. It has a good ethos that contributes to the way pupils learn. The pupils enjoy being in the school and the standard of their behaviour is consistently high. The Foundation Stage curriculum and teaching provide a good start to the children's education. The headteacher provides clear, determined leadership and involves the staff effectively in school development and review. Some pupils' writing skills are not sufficiently developed, and aspects of pupils' day-to-day assessment are not fully effective. Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) are supported very well. The school gives **satisfactory** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The pupils **exceed** the nationally expected standards in several key subjects.
- Pupils have a **good start** to their education in the Foundation Stage.
- The provision for pupils who have SEN is **very good**.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher are **good**.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **very good**.
- The teaching and provision for pupils who have SEN are **very good**.
- Links with parents, the community and other local schools are **well developed**.
- Pupils' extended writing skills in Years 3 to 6 are **not** sufficiently developed.
- Activities planned in Years 3 to 6 **do not** always capitalise upon the enthusiasm shown by pupils.
- Pupils would like **more** day-to-day guidance about how to improve their work.

Since 2000, when results in national tests dipped, there has been improvement. The trend is now broadly static, particularly in English and science, but the school reaches higher than average attainment in mathematics. Compared to other schools whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2, results are average for both English and mathematics, but are higher in science. The school has improved areas identified in the last inspection, such as subject co-ordination, homework policy and library resources. The improvement in developing the pupils' cultural awareness has been slower. In subjects such as Information and communication technology (ICT), improvement has been good.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

The standards reached by pupils are good. The pupils achieve **satisfactorily** overall in their subject areas. The pupils in the Foundation Stage are on track to meet or **exceed** the goals children are expected to reach by the end of Reception. In Years 1 and 2, the pupils **achieve well** and reach better than expected standards in their English, mathematics, and ICT. In Years 3-6, the pupils' achievement is **satisfactory overall**. They reach better than expected standards and achieve particularly well in their reading, speaking and listening, mathematics, and ICT. In art and physical education, the pupils exceed the expected standards and achieve well in these subjects throughout

the school. **Pupils' personal qualities, behaviour and the way they relate to others are strengths of the school.** They respond well to responsibilities and expectations, such as being involved with the school council. **Pupils' moral and social aspects are developed to a good standard.** The pupils **behave very well** in nearly all lessons and are polite and courteous around the school.

The quality of education is good. The quality of teaching is good overall. The teaching is consistently good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6, the teaching is good overall, but some classes have a greater proportion of satisfactory teaching. Pupils' learning in mathematics, ICT, art, and physical education is particularly good throughout the school. The teachers have high expectations of the pupils in terms of behaviour and work routines. Day-to-day assessment of work is not fully effective in giving pupils guidance on how to improve. The school's curriculum is satisfactory, but some planned activities, particularly in extended writing, are not stimulating or relevant for pupils. The planning of mathematics, ICT, art and physical education is stronger and is helping to raise standards. The school cares for its pupils **very effectively** and makes good use of its strong and supportive links with parents. Its involvement with the **community** and other schools is **good**. A number of useful and innovative links with other schools, such as the 'BLIP' project and the school council's links with others in the town, are giving the staff and pupils a broader overview.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SCHOOL

The leadership and management of the school are good overall. The school is led effectively by the headteacher. He has helped to refocus the drive to raise standards, and has largely been successful since national test results declined in 2000. The climate for improvement is promoted by good teamwork. Day-to-day management of activities by senior staff is smooth, effective, and low key. The recently formed faculty teams are not yet fully effective, but provide good co-ordination in several subject areas such as ICT, mathematics and art. The budget this year has been limited due to falling numbers of pupils and significant reductions in external funding. The school is currently running a deficit budget, but is managing it effectively. The governors are supportive and effective in their strategic role and, in some areas such as finance, they provide significant and well-focused support.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

In general, parents are **pleased** with what the school offers and **happy** that their children like school. Some parents felt that the range of extra-curricular activities was narrow, but the inspection evidence suggests that it is better than normally found. The pupils like being involved in the school council, and the vast majority like school. However, some would like more day-to-day help in knowing how they are doing and what they need to do to get to the next level with their work.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The school's current plans have resulted in some worthwhile improvement. Three particular areas to improve further are to:

- Plan English activities in Years 3 to 6 that are more challenging, so that all pupils, particularly the highest attaining, improve their extended writing skills.
- Complete the current review of the curriculum to support teachers' planning of more stimulating and relevant learning activities.
- Review day-to-day assessment routines so that pupils have a better idea of how to improve their work over time.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

The pupils reach **good** standards and **achieve well** in a number of subject areas. The youngest pupils in the Foundation Stage achieve well. The pupils in Years 1 and 2 also achieve well and reach better than expected standards in English, mathematics and ICT. The older pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve satisfactorily overall and in a number of subjects such as reading, speaking and listening, mathematics, and ICT they achieve well. The pupils with SEN achieve well throughout the school, but older pupils do not achieve well enough in their extended writing.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The pupils in the Foundation Stage exceed the expected standards and achieve well in a number of the early learning goals set for them.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well in all areas of English. In Years 3 to 6 they achieve well in their speaking, listening and reading.
- Pupils in Years 1 - 6 reach good standards and achieve well in mathematics, ICT, art and physical education.
- In their extended writing, the pupils in Years 3 to 6 do not achieve well enough.

Commentary

1. When the children start school, the school's analysis shows that they have varying levels of ability, but are generally slightly above average. The pupils in the Foundation Stage achieve well in all of the areas of learning. Most are on course to meet the early learning goals, and some will exceed the standards expected in their personal, social and emotional development, as well as their mathematical development for example.

2. In English, pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well and reach good standards. They listen carefully, speak confidently, and develop their writing effectively. Their reading skills are also well developed. The pupils in Years 3 to 6 also achieve well in reading, speaking and listening. The majority of pupils' writing skills are secure and develop progressively through Years 3 to 6, but their extended writing skills are not sufficiently developed. The pupils use their skills satisfactorily in other subjects such as science, geography, and ICT. The highest attaining pupils particularly do not develop their skills sufficiently. This is often caused by activities that fail to motivate or to extend the pupils' abilities. The second table on the next page indicates that the oldest pupils slightly improved the school's national test results in English from last year so that they are now broadly similar to the national average.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17 (16.6)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.6 (14.4)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	17.4 (17.2)	16.3(16.5)

There were 62 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.3 (25.6)	26.8(27)
mathematics	27.5(27.5)	26.8(26.7)
science	29(29.4)	28.6(28.3)

There were 56 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. Pupils achieve well in mathematics and reach good standards by the time they are seven and eleven. The school's national test results are higher than average this year for both younger and older pupils. This maintains the trend in results for Year 2 pupils, but reflects an improved picture for results reached in Year 6. In science, the inspection finds that pupils reach the expected standards throughout the school. In the science tests last year, all pupils reached the expected levels. This was not repeated this year but the oldest pupils still reached standards slightly better than the national average.

4. The trend in national results for each subject shows improvement from a low point in 2000, and they exceed the national trend in 2002. This year they are ahead of national trends. In relation to other schools whose pupils attained similar results in Year 2, the results for the oldest pupils compare better in mathematics and science than English.

5. In ICT, art and physical education, the pupils achieve well and reach good standards throughout the school. Good teaching, learning and resources are supporting these subjects well and pupils' skills are confidently developed.

6. Provision for pupils with SEN is very good, an improvement on the last inspection findings. This is due to high quality leadership and the implementation of very good strategies to support learning. Pupils benefit from the strong focus on teamwork, involving the special needs co-ordinator (SENCO), the headteacher, the class teacher, and the learning support assistants.

7. No significant differences in current achievement between year groups were noted during the inspection, although the good achievement found in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 is not fully sustained into Years 3 to 6. Writing is an example where teaching is not as consistently good; progress is therefore slower and achievement is not as high. This is particularly true for the highest attaining pupils. There are areas where pupils in this phase of the school achieve well however, such as in their reading, speaking, listening, mathematics, ICT, and other physical and creative subjects. There are no significant differences in either attainment or achievement between girls and boys, or between pupils from ethnic minorities and other pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

8. Pupils have **good** attitudes to work and their personal qualities, including spiritual, moral, social, and cultural awareness, are fostered **well**, in general. Their attendance and behaviour are **very good**, in response to the school's high expectations. This is similar to the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils are happy to come to school and work hard in lessons.
- The school has firm, high standards of behaviour that pupils usually achieve very well.
- Parents make every effort to ensure that their children come to school regularly.
- The school works hard to promote good relationships and clear understanding of right and wrong.
- The school's approach to developing spiritual and cultural awareness is less concentrated and consistent than its work on developing other personal qualities.

Commentary

9. Pupils of all ages and backgrounds say they like school: *'it's good, in a quiet area and the trips are fun'*. They settle to work happily when they understand what they are expected to do and can see how activities help them to learn something new. Some feel that learning is not as much fun as they would like. This is particularly when they go over old ground or there is no obvious link to other work. As a result, pupils are willing, but not consistently eager or curious. Their enthusiasm for interesting, practical lessons is strong, however. When teaching is stimulating and pupils understand what to do and why, they rise to the challenge. For example, in a Year 5 history lesson, skilled, lively, quick questions and answers about the life of Elizabeth I caught and held the interest and imagination of the class.

10. The school recognises that pupils have different experiences and skills when they join, including varied understanding of the behaviour expected. As a result, it works very hard to help even the youngest children to begin to understand the importance of listening, taking turns and following simple rules so that everyone can work and play happily together. It has been successful in using a consistent, firm and positive approach to discipline to develop high standards of behaviour. The normal high standards dip a little when individuals with specific difficulties find it hard to follow the rules and their classmates' good example, or when lessons are less interesting. By the time pupils reach Year 2, they are very clear about what is expected and their behaviour around the school is usually very good. There have been no exclusions.

11. Many good opportunities for helping out in class and around school, such as taking play equipment in and out at lunchtime, ensure that pupils develop a sense of responsibility. The school has an active school council, and some pupils are members of an area council called *'BLIPKIDZ'* that provides good experience of decision-making and use of initiative for members. Residential trips and group work also reinforce skills of co-operation and awareness of others' rights and contributions well. Pupils think that they are lucky to be somewhere *'where it is easy to make friends'*. In general, the school is good at helping pupils to follow rules, understand the right thing to do and get on well with others. It is less determined and consistent in its efforts to foster spiritual and cultural awareness and there were few examples seen where staff made the most of the opportunities that arose. There were relatively few examples on display of a range of cultural traditions that are part of our diverse society because the school's promotion of cultural awareness is uneven. Good work in Year 4 classrooms, inspired by Aboriginal traditions, enables pupils to develop a reasonable awareness of other cultures. Pupils' personal qualities develop well, overall, in response to the focus on their work habits and behaviour.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.2	School data	0.1
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.

12. As parents want their children to be in school, they ensure that absences are kept to a minimum. Attendance levels are well above the national average. This, together with positive attitudes and high standards of behaviour, provides a very good basis for rapid progress, but as yet, the school has not harnessed these strengths fully to drive up standards and raise achievement.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **good overall**. The curriculum provides a secure framework for teachers to plan, but does yet fully exploit the interests and potential of the pupils.

The quality of teaching is good overall, taking into account the learning in the lessons seen, the management of the pupils' behaviour, and the way teachers display and organise work. This was particularly noted in ICT, religious education, physical education, and art. The use of teaching assistants and the teaching of the pupils with SEN are also good.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is **good**. Assessment procedures are **satisfactory**. This maintains the provision found at the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Good teaching takes place throughout the school.
- The good use of numeracy strategies improves learning.
- Teachers develop good relationships with pupils.
- The pupils with SEN are taught well.
- The higher attaining pupils are not consistently challenged to do their best work.
- Teachers do not always provide pupils with a clear knowledge of what they have to do to improve.

Commentary

13. The teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are good. Teachers organise activities well for children and give them a good range of learning opportunities. Most are working towards their early learning goals and are well prepared for entry into the older classes. One very good lesson developed the pupils' social skills very imaginatively. Good assessment procedures enable clear planning for the next stage of learning. There are good working relationships between teachers, support staff, and pupils. This makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning.

14. The overall quality of teaching in Years 1 to 6 is good, with a small number of very good examples of teaching seen in Year 2 and Year 5. This promotes good learning overall. In Years 3 to 6, the teaching observed was never less than satisfactory, and in some classes it was consistently good. In these age groups the learning, although satisfactory overall, is more variable. For example, it is good in mathematics, ICT, art and physical education, but in other subjects such as English or religious education it is satisfactory.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 60 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	5 (8%)	33 (55%)	23 (35%)	0 (0%)	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.

15. The teachers are secure in their subject knowledge and use it to good effect in individual lessons. The school has responded well to the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, and the teaching of literacy and numeracy is good overall, particularly in mathematics. Teachers plan their lessons well. They use the national guidance effectively to produce good weekly and medium-term plans for the teaching of English and mathematics. Other nationally recommended guidance provides the basis for schemes of work for science lessons and the majority of other subjects.

16. Nearly all the teachers try to ensure that all pupils engage in good learning opportunities, irrespective of their ability, by trying to provide worksheets and activities that meet their needs. In some otherwise satisfactory lessons, however, the teachers' expectations are too low, and the activities planned too predictable. For example, in English, there was an over emphasis on completing grammatical exercises rather than on devising stimulating work that allowed the pupils to develop their skills more imaginatively. In science, some investigative work with electrical circuits was too straightforward and did not fully motivate the pupils.

17. The resources are used well to promote good learning in many subjects. In English work, some resources such as workbooks do not fully extend the pupils' writing skills imaginatively, particularly for the higher attaining pupils. The teachers make good use of time, with an appropriate balance between guidance and activities. This helps to hold the pupils' attention, and lessons generally move at a brisk pace. Nearly all the teachers use good questioning skills to extend pupils' learning, knowledge and understanding. They respond well to this, and try to please their teachers with the quality of their work. Pupils work independently, and, when given the opportunity, enjoy taking more control of their own learning through well-managed group activities. The satisfactory and often good learning that takes place in most lessons is enhanced by teacher's effective organisational and managerial skills. Nearly all create a working environment that enhances learning.

18. All pupils have equality of access to the school curriculum, and the teachers ensure that no groups of pupils, such as those with SEN, miss key learning. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with SEN is very good. This is an improvement on the previous inspection, when this quality was satisfactory. Teachers and learning support assistants plan effectively together to ensure that lesson activities match the pupils' education plans. In literacy and numeracy lessons, learning support assistants provide good support in the whole-class sessions as well as in small group and one-to-one work. They make a good contribution to pupils' progress. Highly skilled teaching was seen during withdrawal classes, with work tightly structured to meet the precise requirements of pupils, backed by expert knowledge of a range of learning needs.

19. The assessment procedures in English, mathematics and science are satisfactory, and enable teachers to track pupils' progress over time. On a day-to-day basis, however, the pupils are not always sure about what they need to do in order to extend their learning and improve the quality of their work. For example, the marking of work is satisfactory overall, but there are relatively few examples where it helps pupils to make significant improvement in their work over time. The school appropriately uses nationally produced tests to assess the progress of both individuals and classes. This gives the teachers a good insight into ways of modifying teaching and plans.

THE CURRICULUM

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that is **satisfactory** overall. This maintains the picture found at the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The curriculum is well developed in some subjects such as mathematics and art.
- Pupils with SEN have a good range of work planned.
- Visits and residential trips enhance and extend the curriculum for all age groups.
- The English curriculum does not provide the full range of writing opportunities.
- Although well under way, the review of curriculum is not yet enabling teachers to plan activities that fully motivate pupils.

Commentary

20. The curriculum is planned satisfactorily in nearly all areas and is good for the youngest children in the school. The opportunities given to extend the oldest pupils' writing skills are too limited. The school makes good use of the national strategies in mathematics and English. Pupils' basic skills in mathematics are well structured, but the planning of some activities, in writing for example, isolates them rather than gives them a real context. The quality of planning in personal social and health education (PSHE), physical education, and art is good, providing for a wide range of imaginative activities. Subject planning for focused teaching in ICT is good and opportunities are used satisfactorily across the curriculum.

21. The youngest pupils in the Foundation Stage are given a rich, broad, and balanced curriculum. All areas of learning are covered well. There is a good balance between independent learning and directed activity, and they are prepared well for starting in the Year 1. The school is reviewing the way it plans activities for different subjects in Years 1 to 6 and is seeking a more creative approach. This is outlined clearly in its improvement planning, but is at the early stages of change. It has not yet had enough time to influence a rise in pupils' achievement, or to develop the 'seamless curriculum' the school is committed to achieving. The natural and relevant links that exist between some subjects, however, are increasingly taking place. For example, in the Year 6 study of Tudor Britain, pupils plotted the voyages of exploration. They learnt about different structures and ways of building houses, and made pendants as well listening to Tudor music. By creating more links with other subjects, the pupils saw a relevance to their learning that helped them develop a deeper understanding.

22. The provision for pupils with SEN is very good overall. The school has implemented the Code of Practice well, although it has yet to involve all pupils in the setting of targets. The curriculum makes very good provision for pupils with SEN because of the early identification of problems and the accurate matching of learning needs to appropriate activities and support. The school uses external specialists very well to implement and underpin the detailed and systematic programmes. There are exceptionally good links with the secondary schools, with a planned induction and arrangements for the transfer of information.

23. The provision for extra-curricular activities is good. The curriculum is extended by a good range of residential fieldtrips and of educational visits for all age groups. For example, in Years 3 to 6 pupils experience a range of residential trips, lasting from three days to one week. This includes a residential centre on the Isle of Wight. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities, such as The Children's University, football for girls and boys, recorder club for pupils in Years 1 to 6, cycling and road safety. Many pupils take part and compete in the local area competitive games and sports activities. Other enriching activities take place such as an arts and sculpture week. Visitors from the local community such as the police and members of local businesses make regular visits.

24. The school is attractive, well maintained and cared for. The grounds are skilfully landscaped and designed for imaginative play. The quality of display around the school, as well as the grounds, supports the teaching of the curriculum for all pupils. The level of teaching staff is matched well to the pupils' needs. Many teachers have specific subject qualifications and strong interests in developing their own skills. The numbers of learning support assistants is generous and are used well. The resources are satisfactory overall with good equipment for physical education and mathematics, and very good ICT resources. While resources are adequate for English, they are not used as well as they might be to provide the pupils with a wide range of imaginative writing activities. The resources for the Foundation Stage curriculum are good, and enable a good variety of indoor and out activities to take place. All long-term and medium-term teaching plans are stored on computer, and the school's 'digital library' is innovative and helpful. These plans are readily available for all staff, who developed and adapted existing plans for this purpose.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes **very good** care of pupils and involves them **very effectively** in its life. It offers them **good** support, particularly if they have SEN. This maintains the quality of provision found at the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The school has very effective policies and procedures to safeguard pupils' health and welfare.
- Arrangements to settle new children into school are very good.
- Pupils are sure that they have someone to turn to if they have a problem in their work or play.
- The school asks pupils for their views and they feel that they are taken seriously.
- Pupils do not always feel that they have enough guidance on how to do better and achieve more.

Commentary

25. The parents and children feel that the school looks after pupils very well. Comprehensive arrangements are in place for child protection, and the school is very vigilant about everyday welfare, health, and safety. It involves welfare agencies and the school nurse very effectively in its PSHE programme. Daily routines, including registration, are carried out very carefully so that any problems, including unexplained absence, are followed up promptly. The school gives this area of work a high priority and does all it can to work with parents and other agencies with a clear focus on children's best interests. The parents are particularly appreciative of all that the school does to help children with SEN, both academic and medical.

26. The school works very well with the Cygnets Nursery on site, and with all those involved in caring for pre-school children. This includes local families and helps to ensure that children settle into school very well. Regular, informal contact with parents enables staff to check on changes of behaviour and to give encouragement or praise to boost morale when necessary. Good relationships with pupils help them to ask for help when they need it. They believe that their views are heard and acted on, not just through the school council, but when they discuss issues such as the quality of playtime.

27. The school has elaborate assessment records to ensure that pupils' progress is tracked in a number of ways, but on day-to-day basis this is less effective. As a result, although support for pupils with SEN is focused very well on the steps they need to take to make good progress, this is not always the case for others. Pupils said that this is often clearer in mathematics, where they are more likely to be told the specific skills they need to practise, such as times tables, to reach a higher-level next time work is assessed.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a **good** working relationship with parents, the community, and other schools. This maintains the provision found at the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The school makes good efforts to work productively with parents, which benefits standards of care.
- Good links with those involved in early years and secondary education ensure that transfer into and out of the school is smooth.
- Good links with other schools and organisations in the area enable the school to offer a better PSHE programme.
- Parents receive a good range of information, but it is not always focused clearly enough on how they can work with the school and help their children to achieve all that they can.

Commentary

28. In general, parents are pleased with what the school offers. They are happy that their children like school, are expected to work hard, and seem to be making good progress. Some have reservations about how seriously the school takes consultation, because they saw little action after a spring parental survey. Some views of parents appeared not to be addressed, but the responses were analysed very thoroughly and some changes made, for example to homework arrangements. The school recognises that some improvement to the level of information is desirable, such as keeping in touch with parents who are unable to come in during the day. Some parents felt that the range of extra-curricular activities was narrow. The range is better than normally found in many schools, and has improved. The school has a good partnership with parents in general, based on good relationships with the staff, who are always available at the end of the day. This contributes to high quality care.

29. The school is involved actively in various community partnerships that enable local schools to pool ideas for dealing with particular local challenges in raising standards. These partnerships have supported the school's work with local agencies, particularly in health care, to help families whose children are in need of support at particular times. In addition, the pupils benefit from related work led by the school nurse and community police on how to keep safe. Good links with secondary schools result in great enthusiasm from the pupils who are due to transfer during the year. The privately run after school and breakfast club on site works well with the school to provide continuity of care for children.

30. The parents would like to know more about how their children are doing and the improvements needed. Reports on pupils' progress often focus more on what the class has been studying. Teachers provide descriptions linked to levels at which pupils are working, but sometimes the detail obscures individual strengths and weaknesses. For example, the reports rarely include simple ideas of how parents can help children to do better in particular subjects. The pupils do not contribute to their own reports on progress. This reduces the sense of achievement in information sent home, compared to their ongoing 'passport points' or special pieces of work for visitors.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **good** overall. The governors give **secure** support in all areas of the school's work. The last inspection found a similar picture.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The headteacher manages and leads the school with determination and vision.
- The senior staff, governors, and managers are committed to improvement.
- The governors are supportive and have a satisfactory knowledge of the school's strengths and weaker areas.
- The systems for the co-ordination, monitoring and planning of subjects are new and are not yet fully effective.

Commentary

31. The headteacher leads the school well. Since the last inspection, over half the staff have changed, but the headteacher took the opportunity to refocus efforts on raising the attainment of pupils. This included a necessary focus on improving the national test results for the oldest pupils, as these had declined significantly in 2000. In addition, there are a number of initiatives devised to maximise achievement of pupils. This term, the co-ordination of subjects was revised. 'Subject leaders' and 'faculty convenors' now support the existing team leaders responsible for the standards achieved by different age groups. This has increased the responsibility and involvement of staff in raising standards, but the system is comparatively new. It results in many staff having multiple responsibilities, which reduces the impact of subject development or monitoring. The headteacher and senior staff provide very good role models for other staff and pupils. They promote a caring, sensitive approach. The headteacher has a very good focus upon promoting the values and ethos of the school. All staff work hard to make pupils feel valued in their daily activities, such as assemblies, and around the school. The work involving pupils with SEN is good and all pupils are, where possible, included in all activities.

32. The management of daily routines is smooth and effective. School improvement planning is thorough and wide-ranging and covers all aspects of the school. There are a number of goals and targets for development. These are relevant and well documented. The team leaders and headteacher analyse test results thoroughly to see where progress is being made or improvement is needed for individuals and classes. This gives senior staff a good overview of trends in attainment over time. The school approaches staff development seriously, and the headteacher has mentored and coached team leaders in their roles. Some staff have just completed the nationally promoted leadership training for senior staff. The annual performance review arrangements, overseen by the deputy headteacher, are well managed and up to date. A strength of the school is the team approach fostered by the senior managers. All staff are valued, including the teaching assistants, office, and caretaking staff. They make a valuable contribution, and the teaching assistants are particularly effective in supporting pupils within lessons.

33. The governance of the school is satisfactory, and there are emerging strong features. The governors are enthusiastic and supportive to the headteacher and the school. They have accurate knowledge of areas of the school's work, such as health and safety and the curriculum. Their involvement with directing and managing the finances of the school is particularly good. Their own organisation is thorough, with meetings clearly planned a year in advance. The minutes of meetings reflect their commitment to supporting the school, and acting as critical friend when necessary. They are also particularly aware of the needs of the community and they support recent developments such as the partnership early years unit. Their monitoring on a day-to-day basis is satisfactory. They have worked together well with the headteacher to maintain the good aspects of the school while supporting the areas that he has identified for improvement. The chair of governors is supportive and meets the headteacher regularly to review progress and difficulties. A suitable range of committees oversees the work of the school effectively. Some are innovative in

their thinking. For example, the 'inner child' committee, formed last year, seeks to bring together knowledge about pupils' social and academic progress. This includes both the review of national test results, and the way pupils receive praise, such as the 'passport points system' used in the school.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	885,340.00
Total expenditure	891,096.00
Expenditure per pupil	2,189.00

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	27,352.00
Balance carried forward to the next	-5,756.00

34. The financial arrangements are administered appropriately. The priorities for development are budgeted effectively, and both the bursar and headteacher monitor expenditure closely. The headteacher regularly carries out a cost benefit analysis of different initiatives to ensure value for money. Due to reduced pupil numbers, combined with lower overall funding this year, the school is running a deficit budget. However, the governors, in agreement with the local authority, have an agreed plan to reduce this deficit over three years. The arrangements to implement 'best value' principles are managed securely. The governors have sought the views of parents about the effectiveness of the school. For example, they sought their views informally when the number of classes had to be reduced. When comparing the relative costs and expenditure with other similar schools, the local authority produces figures to help comparisons, but this is at the early stages of being effective in comparing costs. Taking into account the staffing levels, the standards reached and the income available per pupil, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

35. The provision for 4 and 5 year olds is good, and a strength of the school. This is a similar picture to that found by the last inspection. The majority of children have attended pre-school groups and enter Reception with experiences and aptitudes that are, overall, slightly above national expectations, although the range is wide. They make good progress and, by the time they leave the Reception class, most will have reached their early learning goals and many will exceed them. Children achieve well because of good teaching and a well-planned curriculum that successfully balances activities that children choose and those directed by adults. Progress is consistently assessed and linked to a curriculum that has a degree of flexibility built into it, so that individual needs are met. A Partnership Foundation Stage Unit has recently been established. This will allow summer-born children to receive a longer early years education and enable the school to offer a systematic development for children aged 3 to 5. A strong team of staff is led well by a new and experienced co-ordinator. Very good procedures help pupils settle easily into the new routines and to enter Year 1 with confidence.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Children achieve well because staff set high standards with clear boundaries and guidance.
- Excellent relationships form the basis for the positive and caring atmosphere that underpins the good personal and social development.

36. The personal, social, and emotional development of the children is generally better than expected for their age. Teaching is good. Routines are well established. The majority respond well to the high expectations of staff who carefully develop positive attitudes for those with underdeveloped social skills. For example, a number of children, who were receiving extra help, were firmly but gently reminded of the rules for speaking, listening and taking turns. The accommodation's slightly awkward shape in places sometimes means it is not easy to check how children are behaving. The children are generally helpful; they respect each other and the wide range of good resources, including computers. Parents play an integral part in their children's' education, talking freely to staff, who know their children well. A positive relationship among all adults involved helps promote good personal, social, and emotional development.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Careful planning and good teaching develop language and literacy skills well.

37. The majority of children are on course to meet national expectations for language and literacy development. The teaching and learning is good. A number are set to reach the higher standards associated with Year 1 work. All the children, with their parents, regularly choose a reading book to take home, and this reinforces the good, more formal teaching done in class. The teaching of

sounding words out, or 'phonics', is particularly effective in promoting good reading and writing. A group of younger children made good progress as the result of the skilled teaching of 'B'. They were engaged by the antics of a badger puppet and the clear modelling of the sound by the teacher. There are many opportunities to listen to stories. Children recognise letter shapes and sounds. The majority of children know their name and many can write it. A few are beginning to write words in meaningful strings.

38. Work seen in the children's records indicates that they are taught handwriting in a systematic way. Planning details the tasks and learning intentions and ensures that children learn in a structured manner. One reason for the good development of language and literacy is that every opportunity is taken to extend vocabulary and speaking and listening skills. For example, children not only experienced mixing primary colours but also learnt words to describe their feelings. Children are good at speaking and listening, partly because they are such a strong focus in the class, and also because the stress on independent learning increases their confidence.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Children achieve well because of good teaching.
- A good range of attractive practical learning strategies and resources promotes learning well.
- Mathematical development is extended well throughout the school day.

39. The teaching and learning are good. Many children are working at levels higher than expected for their age and will exceed the expected levels by the time they start the National Curriculum. Younger children, who needed additional support, made very good progress in a group where the Nursery nurse focused on counting up to 10 and counting backwards. The majority were able to do this and this represented very good achievement compared to their previous learning. They enjoyed working with hoops and animals as they learnt about sets and patterns, although not all were good at repeating and extending them. A considerable number are able to add and subtract simple numbers. This is due to well-chosen practical activities that interest them and to the constant reference to mathematical concepts throughout the day. For example, they are encouraged to take three giant steps or seven tiny steps when queuing to leave the classroom. They discuss the number of paints they use when trying to mix new colours and the number of toys and items they can find whilst learning to read and write. Good use is made of a range of resources to maintain interest.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Good planning indicates that a range of topics is covered.
- The effective use of challenging questions extends the children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them.
- There is a very good focus on the key learning points during some activities.

40. Most children are working at levels expected for their age with some on course to exceed them. Teaching and learning are good and planning covers this aspect of children's development well. The pupils recalled references to visits they have made, as well as visitors promoting learning about the local environment and their school, homes and family. A well organised and focused

activity resulted in a good understanding of the design process as the children were continually challenged to refer to their plans during the making of a Christmas decoration. Children know about torches and the teacher effectively communicated the role played by light and darkness in forming shadows. Cooking helps children understand that materials change and the effects of mixing, beating and heat on foodstuffs. Information and communication technology (ICT) activities enhance language and literacy; talking books abound and there is a good range of software. It extends mathematical experiences in many ways and is often used to enhance pupils' artistic experiences.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in this area of learning is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- A good range of equipment supports the learning well.
- Access to a well resourced outside play area is good.
- Planning for physical development, both inside and outside is good, but on the odd occasion, there is a lack of focus on teaching key skills.

41. The majority of children are on course to meet the expectations in this area of learning, with some reaching higher levels. The teaching and learning are good. Equipment for outdoor structured play is of high quality. Climbing apparatus and a variety of construction kits, sand and other toys result in good physical development. Overall teaching is good and pupils achieve well. For example, a group of children extended these skills well whilst riding tricycles. During outdoor play there was a satisfactory focus on enhancing ball control but a more rigorous reference to the key points would have produced better results. There was good teaching during an activity in the hall when children mimed animal movements, making good use of space and co-ordinating well. Children have constant opportunities to practise and enhance other skills, such as the ability to handle a pencil and use scissors.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teachers plan a **wide range** of activities to support learning and children achieve well.
- There are **good** opportunities to link creative activity with other aspects of the child's development.

42. Teaching and learning are good. Pupils are on track to reach the early learning goals by the end of Reception. Areas such as shops and writing areas encourage imaginative play and writing. This also occurs as the result of the careful planning of a Post Office activity linked to Christmas, with an adult delegated to extend language and role-play. Children use percussion instruments whilst singing Christmas songs and are also taught the names of the instruments and how to hold them correctly. There was a similar emphasis on language during a well-taught activity that centred on mixing primary-colour paints and using hands to explore texture. Good observational drawings of flowers were seen. The wide range of experiences available as a free choice results in good range of creative development and role-play opportunities.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- By the end of Year 2, pupils exceed the expected standards.
- Standards in speaking, listening and reading are good throughout the school.
- Learning assistants are used well to support learning.
- Extended writing activities in Years 3 to 6 do not always challenge pupils to improve.
- The day-to-day assessments do not always inform pupils how to improve the quality of their work.

Commentary

43. The younger pupils build well on their good start in Year 1 and they reach standards at the end of Year 2 that are above average. This is reflected in the most recent national tests, although compared to similar schools, the pupils' results were average. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 continue to make good progress in their listening, speaking and reading skills, though progress in written work is not sufficient for the highest attaining pupils. This was also reflected in this year's national assessment task where the standards reached were average. When compared to schools whose pupils reached similar results in Year 2, the school was average. Pupils with SEN achieve well throughout the school.

44. Many pupils are confident speakers when they arrive in Year 1, and they are keen to respond to teachers' questions and to talk about their work. Well-planned structured role-play also makes a positive contribution to the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills. Pupils continue to make good progress in their oral skills, and are confident in their ability to articulate their ideas and opinions in a logical way.

45. Word-building skills are well taught in Years 1 and 2. The structured reading scheme put together by the school is used well to promote skills. The majority of pupils receive good support for their reading at home as part of the home-link reading scheme. This helps to support the standards reached in reading. By the time pupils are seven, they exceed the expected standards. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are keen readers. Most pupils display good reading and comprehension skills. These are well developed and extended during guided reading activities, with the result that standards reached by the oldest pupils in reading are also good.

46. Standards in written work by the time pupils are seven are good and exceed the national expectation. They achieve well, building on the good start in the Foundation Stage. The pupils develop and build on the basic skills of spelling, punctuation, and grammar when they enter Year 1. They learn how to use them within increasingly demanding activities that allow them to write for different purposes and in different styles.

47. The standards reached in writing by the time pupils are 11 are in line with expectations. The majority of pupils achieve satisfactorily, but the highest attaining pupils do not. Pupils continue to focus on the development of basic skills in Years 3 to 6, though they are sometimes explored in isolated exercises rather than meaningful writing activities. This slows their progress. For example, some pupils worked on a number of exercises on verbs and adverbs, but did not have the opportunity to explore their uses in different types of writing. The pupils spend a significant amount of time working on comprehension activities based upon a commercial scheme of work. These activities help to develop pupils' ability to read for understanding, but they limit the challenge for the higher attaining pupils in their writing. For example, there are too few opportunities for pupils to redraft their work and use more imaginative language. Pupils are given the chance to respond in

writing to a range of extracts from literature, but a number of these activities are too formal and lack imagination. The satisfactory and sometimes good progress made by pupils in individual lessons is helped by their ability to work with sustained concentration and their keenness to learn.

48. The overall quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 is consistently good. The quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory. Good teaching and learning is evident within some classes. Lessons are usually well planned, organised, and managed. In Years 3 to 6, some activities are repetitive and do not extend the pupils' writing skills, particularly for the higher attaining pupils. All teachers develop good relationships with pupils and this helps their learning. Reminders about time help maintain the pace of the lessons, but pupils are not always aware of how much work to complete within the time. Day-to-day assessment of work, although regular, does not always give the pupils sufficient guidance about how to improve. The teaching of the pupils with SEN is good. They have a range of support that is helping them to achieve and learn effectively. The school uses a satisfactory range of procedures to assess pupils' attainment and to track their progress within school. The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory, with the English co-ordinator and team leaders putting into place good documentation and schemes of work to support teaching and learning in most areas of the subject.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

49. The range of written work seen in other subjects was relatively limited but satisfactory overall. Some good examples were seen, particularly in history, where pupils produced some good extended written work on Henry the VIII's fleet ship the Mary Rose. Pupils also use their writing skills appropriately in subjects such as science, where they are expected to record their findings and to write up their experiments. Some pupils also develop their skills in writing up the agenda and minutes for the school council meetings.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teachers have secure subject knowledge.
- Monitoring and assessment are thorough.
- Planning is good.
- The higher attaining pupils do not always have activities that challenge or motivate them to achieve their best.
- Older pupils are not always sure about how to improve their work.

Commentary

50. Standards throughout the school are good. In the 2003 national tests, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 and at the end of Year 6 was above average. Almost two thirds achieved the expected level and one third of seven year olds attained the higher levels. Most pupils make good progress and achieve well. Pupils with SEN are very well supported through the school and achieve standards that are similar to those of their classmates. However, the higher attaining pupils do not achieve as well as they could, particularly in Years 5 and 6.

51. Since the last inspection, the school has experienced some variations in attainment and provision. The co-ordinator left and, along with other disruptions, this resulted in standards dropping to below the national average three years ago. Since then, steady improvement has raised the standard to above average. However, this falls short of the position at the previous

inspection, when standards were well above average in Year 6 and above average in Year 2. Throughout the school, pupils learn how to devise their own strategies for calculation and solving number problems. Their competence with numbers is good, especially in using their mental agility. Some ICT programs, such as Excel, are used satisfactorily for number handling activities such as changing variables in a problem.

52. The numeracy hour has had a positive impact on the development of skills that pupils can use in everyday situations. In Year 6 the work in pupils' exercise books is well presented, showing clear progression of concepts and skills. In Year 2 this has not been developed to the same extent. Homework for the older pupils contributes to the development of skills and concepts.

53. In the majority of the lessons observed in Years 3 to 6, teaching was good; in Years 1 and 2, there was a balance of good and satisfactory teaching. The strengths of teaching included careful planning with a range of activities to aid learning for all but the highest attaining pupils. The teachers often shared the aims of the lesson and showed good levels of subject knowledge. The pupils with SEN are well supported, and good use is made of additional help. Teachers make good use of the assessment and evaluation of attainment, which are on going throughout the lesson and at the end of each topic. Although longer-term targets are set to show pupils' achievement, in Years 3 to 6, specific targets for each pupil are not set. This restricts pupils' knowledge of how they can improve.

54. The organisation and management of the subject are good. The knowledgeable convenor has an overview of the mathematics curriculum, monitoring, and assessment. She has been instrumental in structuring schemes of work with the help of phase leaders. The phase leaders are responsible for maintaining the standards and pupils' achievement. They feed back to the subject coordinator to see where improvements are still needed. Resources are used well to support individual activities such as counting with number lines and number apparatus.

Mathematics across the curriculum

55. The opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy skills across the curriculum are satisfactory. For example, in science, Years 5 and 6 pupils use graphs when they investigate their heart rates after exercise. They also compile tables of information. In discussion, pupils realised the importance of using their mathematical knowledge when measuring, for example in design and technology. The younger pupils sometimes count numbers, for dinners for example, and know how to use a stopwatch when timing activities for others in science experiments.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The results obtained by the oldest pupils in the latest national tests compare well with those of similar schools.
- Opportunities for 'hands on' investigations are good.
- The pupils enjoy the subject and work together well.
- The co-ordination of the subject is effective.
- Some activities planned in Years 3 to 6 could be more interesting and demanding for the higher attaining pupils.

Commentary

56. Standards of attainment for pupils in Years 2 and 6 are similar to those expected nationally. For the pupils in Year 2, this matches the findings of the last inspection. The higher standards found by the end of Year 6 in the last inspection have not been maintained, owing to the school's focus on raising standards in English and mathematics. The latest national test results for Year 6 matched national averages, and compared well with the results obtained by similar schools. Throughout the school, pupils achieve satisfactorily and the pupils who have SEN achieve well.

57. Pupils' investigative skills and 'hands on' approaches are develop well. In Year 1 for example, pupils understood the importance of choosing different locations when investigating light and reflections using Christmas baubles. In Year 2, the pupils gave good accounts of how they compared the durability of different materials for making trousers for a storybook character. They knew the concept of a fair test, such as keeping the size of the materials the same. The older pupils in Years 3 to 6 also have appropriate opportunities to investigate, but in some lessons this is not readily extended. In a lesson in Year 4, the pupils' general investigative skills were developed satisfactorily, but there were missed opportunities to extend the activity, or to make the task more relevant. In a similar lesson in Year 6, the pupils eagerly investigated different types of electrical circuits by adding extra bulbs or changing connections. The activity created more relevance for them by discussing why Christmas tree lights, brought in by the teacher, did not work.

58. Discussion with pupils and scrutiny of their work in Years 1 and 2 indicate they cover a satisfactory range and number of activities that link well to their interests. They are taught appropriate skills, such as understanding what simple apparatus they will need, and making predictions before they start an investigation. The older pupils in Years 3 to 6 also cover a satisfactory range of activities, such as investigating the effects of exercise on the body, or how forces act upon objects, and studying micro-organisms.

59. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Some good teaching was observed. Teachers plan and select methods appropriately, although some activities do not challenge the pupils' thinking sufficiently, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Overall, the pupils learn satisfactorily and have good first-hand experiences, using the appropriate apparatus. In all classes, teachers have good relationships with pupils. This helps them to learn. The teachers promote group work well. The pupils organise themselves willingly and they collaborate effectively. The recording of work is usually satisfactory, but occasionally lacks structure. In the younger classes, the pupils use a simple planning outline called the 'planning house' that works more effectively.

60. The subject is co-ordinated well. The team leaders and convenors have produced a subject plan of action, much of which has been implemented. The monitoring of teaching and learning carried out by the headteacher and deputy has focussed upon evaluating the quality of teaching. To pinpoint more specific subject areas for development, there are plans for this monitoring to be carried out by team leaders next term. The resources for the subject are satisfactory, and the planning follows national guidance. In some instances in the older classes, failure to modify this to the specific needs of the school reduces its relevance and interest for the pupils.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The oldest pupils reach good standards.
- Good teaching and learning are underpinned by very good resources.
- The pupils' tasks are assessed well but the wider aspects of the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are not established.
- Leadership and management of the subject are effective.

61. By the end of Year 2, pupils are confident in using computers and their learning is good. They achieve well and exceed the standards expected nationally. They know about saving and printing, and can handle a mouse and use a keyboard. Year 2 pupils control a floor turtle and produce simple instructions to make it follow a path through a set of obstacles. Many do this without needing to make much amendment. Pictures and other images are created. Good revision of earlier learning sets a helpful context for the new lesson, as do clear explanations of the key points.

62. By the end of Year 6, the pupils exceed the expected standards nationally and achieve well. Pupils in Year 5 use a spreadsheet to calculate and some to explore the effects of changing variables. Pupils in Year 3 achieve well and reach high standards in lessons when presenting text and graphics to produce Christmas cards of their own design. Lower achieving pupils, and those with SEN, make good progress as the result of informed one-to-one support and frameworks to help understanding. This stress on meeting the needs of pupils with a range of ability was repeated in a Year 6 class. The higher attaining pupils were successfully challenged to explain the effect of changing the wire during a lesson on how to use a program to create and change electric circuits. Pupils in Years 3 - 6 also benefit from the detailed planning that ensures good and systematic coverage of the ICT curriculum. All teachers are involved in the scrutiny of pupils' work against specific levels of attainment, and this good assessment indicates that standards above national expectations are reached.

63. The quality of teaching and learning in classes was good in the majority of lessons. The teachers' good subject knowledge and skilled demonstrations result in high quality learning, characterised by pace and pupils' enthusiasm. Pupils with SEN are well supported and guided in activities. Skilled use of an interactive whiteboard focused pupils' attention on the essential learning points. One class, taught by the deputy headteacher, responded with gasps of awe as a particular facility to merge and enhance images was displayed. At times, pupils improved their learning because of good involvement in the interactive process but this was not a regular feature.

64. Co-ordination of the subject is effective. It combines vision with secure administrative skills and a strong team approach to enhance attainment. As a result, there has been good improvement since the last inspection and standards and achievement have risen. Planning and the assessment of pupils' skills are good. However, the co-ordinator is not yet involved in classroom observation that might promote the spread of good practice and the early identification of areas that require support.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

65. There is satisfactory use of ICT as a tool to support learning in other subjects. Good self-evaluation by the school has rightly identified this as a priority for future development in order that the quality of this provision equals that of other aspects of ICT. For example, there is a thrust to use word processing and desktop publishing to extend literacy skills, but pupils missed opportunities to use spell checks in other lessons and to use the computers effectively to draft passages. Information and communication technology (ICT) was well used to support science and mathematics teaching and pupils described using the internet to research the Tudors.

HUMANITIES

It was not possible to observe **geography** lessons and work from last year was not available. The teachers' planning indicates that pupils study all areas of the National Curriculum over the year, but it is not possible to make an overall judgement on provision in this subject.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The good teaching in the subject leads to good learning.
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, and cultural development.
- There are missed opportunities to develop pupils' literacy skills.

Commentary

66. Observations in lessons and the scrutiny of a very limited amount of written work indicate that pupils, including those with SEN, make satisfactory progress in the subject and achieve standards in line with the expectations and demands of the locally Agreed Syllabus. The findings are similar to those of the last inspection.

67. At this stage of the term, all of the lessons observed were linked to the theme of Christmas and the nativity story. Pupils in Year 2 developed their knowledge of the Christmas story, and were encouraged to think how Joseph and Mary would feel as they set out on their difficult journey to Bethlehem. The lesson was linked effectively to the overall theme of journeys. The pupils were asked to voice their own concerns about journeys they had taken. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 took a more dramatic approach to the Christmas story, as they broke it up into scenes, and performed them one after the other in order to present the nativity story. The pupils took control of their own learning and worked with real interest as they acted out the story effectively, and linked the scenes together using both recorded and live music.

68. Although other areas of religious education were not directly observed, the planning reveals that pupils are given the chance to respond to all the areas of the agreed syllabus and to consider a number of world religions, including Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Sikhism and Hinduism. Pupils consider the prophets, celebrations, special books, and places of worship of different world religions and come to appreciate how they affect peoples' lives.

69. Many of the activities carried out in class are of an oral nature and there is more scope for written work to extend pupils' writing skills. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, with some good teaching seen. For example, in Year 4 the retelling of the Christmas story as a play was enjoyed by the pupils, and encouraged their literacy skills. Lessons are well planned, organised, and managed, with pupils being given the chance to take control of their own learning through well-planned group activities. Whole-school and classroom assemblies make a positive contribution to the subject, with issues extended in class activities. There are opportunities for pupils to visit the local church, and the local vicar comes into school to lead assemblies.

70. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The humanities co-ordinator has been in post for a comparatively short time, and is currently assessing how standards in the subject might be best improved. The subject makes a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual, social, and cultural development, as the pupils consider religions within their cultural environment and consider rights, wrongs and responsibilities.

HISTORY

The provision for history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The teachers use resources well, including visitors to the school, to promote pupils' learning.

Commentary

71. Pupils throughout the school, including those with SEN, achieve satisfactorily in the subject and reach standards in line with expectations for their age. Standards in the subject have been maintained since the last inspection.

72. The pupils in Year 1 make satisfactory progress in their knowledge of changes over time as they consider old and new toys and appreciate how materials change over time. The pupils' pictures and written work on the great fire of London help them to develop a simple understanding of cause and effect, whilst their short study on the life of Samuel Pepys helped them to appreciate how individual impact lives on history. The activities carried out by pupils are well matched to their abilities and interests.

73. At a local level, a visitor to the school made a positive contribution to a Year 4 class lesson. Good questioning skills from the pupils helped the class consider the changing nature of Bicester from the end of the First World War. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 made sound progress in their knowledge of the Tudor period as they considered the life and achievement of Elizabeth I. In all lessons, the pupils listen with interest to their teachers before moving on, with sustained interest and attention, to their writing activities. Pupils had already put together some good written work in response to their study of the reclamation of Henry VIII's fleet ship, the Mary Rose. Work on display indicated that some pupils have been involved in personal research on the World Wide Web.

74. The overall quality of teaching in the subject is satisfactory, with some very good teaching and learning observed in a Year 5 class where they studied aspects of Tudor life. The focus on the different learning needs of the class, combined with the strong subject focus, motivated the pupils very well. Lessons are well planned, organised, and managed with teachers using resources to good effect to promote pupils' learning.

75. Occasional visits to places of historical interest make a useful contribution to pupils' knowledge and understanding. These include visits to the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford to support pupils' studies on Ancient Greece, and a visit to reconstructed Roman fort to extend pupils' knowledge of Invaders and Settlers. Leadership and management in the subject are satisfactory. The new humanities co-ordinator is currently assessing what needs to be done in the subject to raise standards.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

No lessons were observed in **design and technology** during the inspection. Evidence from models, artefacts, design plans, evaluations, and schemes of work was examined, but no overall judgement can be made about provision or standards of attainment. In **Music**, only part of one Year 1 lesson was observed, and a singing activity held in the hall for lower juniors. The pupils are aware of how to introduce expression and variations in dynamics to their singing and vocal sounds. This, along with singing in assemblies, was of a satisfactory standard.

Art and design

Provision in this subject is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils achieve well as a result of the generally good teaching.
- Pupils work with a wide range of stimulating media.
- The children benefit from the school's strong links with the local arts community.
- There is good co-ordination of the subject.
- There is not a consistent focus on developing high quality drawing skills in the older classes.

76. The pupils' attainment and achievement are above national expectations throughout the school. The high standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

77. Pupils use a wide variety of media and their successful efforts are displayed around the school. These are often the result of the frequent workshops that are led by outside specialists, usually linked to developments within the local community. Pupils experience a range of artistic techniques, such as collage and printing, which are extended as they move through the school. There is no discernible difference in the achievement of boys and girls, or pupils with different ethnic backgrounds. Boys and girls achieve equally well, irrespective of background. A considerable amount of high quality work was seen on display and in portfolios, indicating that the more able pupils are challenged.

78. By the end of Year 2, pupils have studied Rousseau's jungle pictures and made models of them, using batik methods to dye fabrics. They make mono-prints during their topic on toys and use pastel, chalk and charcoal to draw teddies. Work on display and in portfolios indicates good teaching and learning. In one particularly successful lesson, Year 2 pupils remembered the key facts about the work of Barbara Hepworth. They respond well to the teacher's continuous prompts to consider form, light and shape when making their own sculpture in a similar style. Pupils are enthusiastic about their art and were keen to discuss their earlier work in wood and clay. They had been well taught to think about their work and to try to evaluate what they had done.

79. The quality of teaching and learning for Years 3 to 6 is good. The pupils achieve well. Sketchbooks are used and pupils generally benefit from teachers' good subject knowledge and planning. A Year 3 class, stimulated by their visit to the local museum, carefully looked at their initial sketches when designing a Greek tile. Year 4 pupils continue to view the examples of wall hangings when combining a range of materials for their own efforts. In all these lessons, the pupils' artistic endeavours are improved by the teachers' high expectations. For example, they use a range of materials with reference to their tactile qualities. On the odd occasion, the focus on teaching basic drawing and sketching skills to the oldest pupils was not as well developed. The pupils are well motivated and have positive attitudes to the subject, encouraged by teachers' good subject knowledge and planning.

80. Co-ordination of the subject is good. Staff have worked hard at establishing and maintaining very good links with the local arts community. This is the foundation for some of the good work in the school and its exciting nature.

Physical Education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The pupils reach above average standards throughout the school.
- The physical education curriculum is well balanced and broad.
- There is good new equipment for many activities.
- Teachers have secure subject knowledge and their planning is good.

Commentary

81. Throughout the school, pupils make good overall progress. The attainment of the pupils is above that expected nationally. Pupils' attainment in dance is strong. At the last inspection, standards in Year 2 were above the national expectations and achievement was good. These standards have been maintained, but improved in Years 3 to 6. The pupils' achievement is good throughout the school. By the time pupils reach the oldest classes, they are winning trophies for achievements in athletics and in boys' and girls' football. This suggests that standards are high at the end of in Years 3 to 6 in physical education, sports, and athletics. Dance is a particular strength of the school. Pupils throughout the school show good levels of control and movement, and few are self-conscious of their efforts.

82. Teaching is generally good. Teachers know the subject well and plan effectively, emphasising skill development with optimum involvement from all pupils. The pupils in Years 1 and 2 demonstrated a sensitive approach to movement in response to music. They moved their bodies imaginatively to create imaginative shapes, varying speeds in time to music. Most pupils can evaluate each other's' movements in order to improve. Year 3 pupils engaged in outdoor activities showed that they work effectively in teams, dodging, passing, marking their partners, and using a range of tactics. Their knowledge and understanding of strategies are good. The curriculum is broad and well balanced with appropriate time given to the main components of the physical education curriculum. During the week of inspection, dance and outdoor games were taught.

83. The subject is well organised by a convenor who monitors planning. Phase leaders monitor the subject's development and pupils' skills. The good range of equipment for physical education, together with well-planned lessons and good teaching ability, ensures high standards and good overall achievement.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

The overall provision is **good**.

84. Within the varied lessons, pupils gained good basic ideas about the consequences of particular actions, and about how to get help, how rules work and what makes us special. This was the result of careful guidance from teachers' quick questions and answers. The school sees PSHE as significant for pupils' development. Its programme is good and benefits from strong contributions by visitors in work linked to health, personal safety, sex, and drugs education. These help pupils become aware of how to lead a healthy life and develop self-confidence.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	2
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	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
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	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
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	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).