

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **SEVERNBANKS PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Lydney

LEA area: Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 115746

Headteacher: Mr T Gisborne

Lead inspector: R B Bonner

Dates of inspection: 9 – 11 February 2004

Inspection number: 257433

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:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	242
School address:	Naas Lane Lydney Gloucestershire
Postcode:	GL15 5AU
Telephone number:	01594 842789
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Andrew McManus
Date of previous inspection:	30 January 2002

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Severnbanks is an average sized primary school on the edge of Lydney, a small industrial town within the Forest of Dean. There are currently 242 pupils aged from 4 to 11 on roll in nine classes. The numbers of pupils attending the school have fallen since the last inspection. The numbers of boys and girls are reasonably balanced overall, but with some significant variations between years. The school is set in an area of some social and economic deprivation. Attainment on entry to the school is well below average. These standards have declined since the last inspection. Most pupils are white British. Four are white and black Caribbean. The number of pupils claiming free school meals is above the national average. Over a fifth of pupils have special educational needs, which is also above the national average. Four pupils have statements of special educational need. These relate to difficulties with speech, language and communication, behaviour, attention and moderate learning difficulties. The school received the School Achievement Award in 2003 for improvements in test results in Year 6, and was reassessed and awarded the Investors in People Award in 2002. The school has experienced many changes in head teacher in the past three years. This has had the effect of causing significant disruption and the lack of continuity has impeded its progress. The present head teacher has been in post for two terms.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
25384	R Bonner	Lead inspector	English as an additional language Mathematics Information and communication technology Physical education
9334	J Mynett	Lay inspector	
19916	D M Kerr	Team inspector	Special educational needs English Religious education
18926	M T Ridout	Team Inspector	Science Geography History
27219	G V Evans	Team inspector	Foundation stage Art and design Design and technology Music

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Severnbanks is a sound school** that is improving and gives satisfactory value for money. Standards in Year 6 are well below average. Pupils achieve satisfactorily, however, in relation to their prior attainment. The quality of education is satisfactory. Teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, with some good teaching observed during the inspection. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The climate for learning is good.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The head teacher has a clear understanding of what the school needs to do to improve.
- Pupils enjoy school; they behave well, try hard with their work and are keen to take responsibility.
- Provision in the arts enriches pupils' learning.
- Teachers and support staff provide a supportive environment in which all pupils feel safe and secure.
- Parents are kept well informed about school activities and their child's progress.
- Standards in English, mathematics and science in Years 2 and 6, and in information and communication technology (ICT) in Year 6 are not high enough.
- Day-to-day assessment information is not sufficiently detailed to enable teachers to tailor work to the learning needs of individual pupils.
- The lack of outdoor provision for children in the reception class inhibits their development.

The school has responded satisfactorily to the key issues in the last inspection report. Standards in the national tests for 11-year-olds in mathematics and science have shown improvement. The quality of teaching and learning is better. Under the guidance of the new head teacher the role of subject leaders is developing well, but is at an early stage. The school improvement plan is an effective working document that clearly identifies the school's priorities.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

**Achievement is satisfactory** overall in the school. At the end of Year 6, results in the tests in 2003 were below the national average in mathematics and science and well below average in English. In comparison to similar schools standards were above average in science, average in mathematics and below average in English. Their low attainment on entry is why the grades for 'similar schools' are better than those for 'all schools'. Standards in English have gradually declined, reflecting particular weaknesses in pupils' spoken language. Standards in science and mathematics have risen in line with the national average. The school received the School Achievement Award in 2003 for improvements in test results in Year 6. Standards are lower in the current Year 6 than in previous years because there are a large number of less able pupils in this group, and are well below average in all three subjects.

Standards in Year 2 are well below average in speaking and listening, writing and mathematics, and below average in reading and science. In other subjects, standards in Year 2 are below average in history and geography and average in art and design and physical education. In Year 6, standards

are well below average in history and geography below average in ICT, average in physical education and above average in art and design. It is not possible to make a judgement on standards in design and technology and music in either key stage, or religious education in Year 2.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are developed well.** Attendance is unsatisfactory. Most pupils like school and respect the established values. They have good attitudes to their work and most behave well. Values are fostered well through the caring and supportive relationships that exist between staff and pupils, and the good example set by all those working in the school. Pupils are developing very well socially. The school council provides good opportunities for pupils to exercise leadership and responsibility. Too many parents are not ensuring their children attend school regularly or on time.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory.** Teachers insist on high standards of behaviour and manage pupils well. Pupils are encouraged to work hard and are often provided with good levels of support and encouragement by both teachers and learning support workers. Although teaching and learning during the inspection were good, examination of previous work shows that teachers are not always effective on building on pupils' learning. Some useful information is passed on to the new teacher at the end of each school year, but in its current form, it is insufficiently detailed. As a result, teachers are not always able to tailor the work to suit the learning needs of individual pupils. The curriculum is satisfactory overall. The school makes particularly good provision for pupils to participate in arts' projects. The school has good links with parents and the community, and works very well in partnership with the Family Learning Centre. It has satisfactory links with other schools.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are satisfactory overall.** The leadership of the head teacher is good. He provides strong, effective leadership and has a clear understanding of what the school needs to do to improve. The school runs smoothly, procedures are clear and followed. The school improvement plan identifies the most important areas for development, and reflects a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Financial management is good.

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

Parents are well satisfied with the school. They report that their children like school, and that the arrangements for their children to settle into school are particularly good. They think that teaching is good and that their children are making good progress because the teachers expect them to work hard. Pupils also show good levels of satisfaction. They comment particularly on how hard they have to work and how well their teachers help them with their work and if they are worried.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science throughout the school, and ICT in Years 3 to 6.
- Improve day-to-day assessment procedures in Years 1 to 6 to ensure that work is more closely tailored to the learning needs of all pupils.
- Provide an outdoor play area for children in the Reception class.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Achievement<sup>1</sup> is satisfactory overall, although standards are currently well below average in Years 2 and 6.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- In comparison to similar schools, standards in the 2003 tests were above average in science.
- Standards are above average in art and design in Years 3 to 6.
- Pupils who have behavioural problems achieve very well in the well-ordered and calm environment the school provides.
- Standards are well below average in Years 2 and 6 in English, mathematics and science.
- There are gaps in pupils' learning in English, mathematics and science, especially in Years 3 to 6.
- Standards are below average in ICT in Year 6.

#### Commentary

1. Children enter the Reception class with well below average attainment overall. Standards on entry to the school have declined since the last inspection, particularly in the area of communication and language skills. The children achieve satisfactorily in the reception class, but by the time they enter Year 1, the vast majority are unlikely to achieve the goals expected in any areas of their learning except physical development, where they are in line to achieve the expected standard. Again, these standards are lower than those recorded at the time of the last inspection.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	13.5 (15.8)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	11.4 (14.0)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	13.7 (15.4)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 34 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

2. At the end of Year 2, results in the tests in 2003 were well below the national average in reading and mathematics, and very low in writing. Standards in writing were in the lowest 5 per cent nationally. In comparison with similar schools, standards were well below average in all three subjects. Standards in all three subjects showed good improvements from 2001 – 2002, closing the gap on national levels, but fell significantly in 2003. As a result of this fall, the trend in the school's National Curriculum points for all core subjects was below the national trend. There were no significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls. Teacher assessments in science show the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level (Level 2) was well below the national average and those that achieved the higher level (Level 3) was also well below the national average. In comparison to schools in similar contexts, standards were well below average.

<sup>1</sup> Achievement is a measure of how well pupils are doing, taking their progress and their capability into account.

<sup>2</sup> The tables shown in this commentary give average points scores for pupils. Each level in the national curriculum is given a number of points. Pupils are expected to move on one point every term, so if a school's scores are one point below the national, their pupils are, typically, a term behind.



### **Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003<sup>3</sup>**

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.0 (25.5)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	25.9 (25.6)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	28.3 (28.4)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 34 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

3. At the end of Year 6, results in the tests in 2003 were below the national average in mathematics and science, and well below average in English. In comparison to similar schools, standards were above average in science, average in mathematics and below average in English. Based on their prior attainment pupils' progress was below average in mathematics and science, and well below average in English. This reflects that there has been some underachievement in the past. The trend in the school's average National Curriculum points for all three subjects was broadly in line with the national trend. The school received the School Achievement Award in 2003 for improvement recognised by coming out of special measures.
4. Pupils are achieving satisfactorily overall. They achieve well in many lessons, but weaknesses in day-to-day assessment and record keeping has led to pupils being given work that does not effectively build on their previous learning. Too often in English and mathematics, pupils are moved on too quickly before they have mastered the basics. This weakness and a legacy of unsatisfactory provision in the past have resulted in pupils, particularly in the juniors, having gaps in their learning. Under the guidance of the new head teacher this situation is beginning to be rectified. The introduction of daily guided reading sessions, for example, is already beginning to raise standards, particularly in Years 1 and 2, where teachers keep detailed records of progress to help pupils make steady steps in learning. An initiative to improve speaking and listening has improved pupils' listening, but their speaking skills are still less well developed. In order to raise standards in mathematics, pupils in Years 5 and 6 have been grouped according to ability so that teachers can more effectively meet their learning needs. These pupils also have individual targets for improvement in English and mathematics to help them to become more involved in their learning and to encourage them to try harder. These are recent initiatives and have yet to have a significant impact on raising standards.
5. The low levels of attainment in Year 2 largely reflect the decline in the levels of attainment of children entering the school in the Reception class. Standards in the current Year 6 class are generally lower than in previous years because this group has a very high number of pupils who have special educational needs. The school has improved its provision for the teaching of ICT and pupils in Year 2 are now attaining standards that are broadly average. In Year 6 standards are beginning to rise but they are not yet high enough.
6. In other subjects of the curriculum standards in Year 2 are average in art and design and physical education, but below average in geography and history. In Year 6 standards are above average in art and design, average in physical education and below average in religious education, geography and history. It is not possible to make a judgement on standards in design and technology and music in either key stage, or religious education in Year 2. Low standards in geography, history and religious education in Year 6 mainly reflect the weaknesses identified in pupils' speaking and writing skills. However, the school does not fully capitalise on opportunities to develop pupils' writing through these or other subjects.

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<sup>3</sup> The tables shown in this commentary give average points scores for pupils. Each level in the national curriculum is given a number of points. Pupils are expected to move on one point every term, so if a school's scores are one point below the national, their pupils are, typically, a term behind.

7. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all the school's activities and achieve as well as their classmates. They make sound progress in learning, and in the development of self-esteem and confidence. This is due to the support they receive and to the account teachers and support assistants take of the carefully chosen targets in their individual education plans. Pupils who have behavioural problems achieve very well in the well-ordered and calm environment the school provides.

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

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Attendance is unsatisfactory.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils have a very good awareness of their responsibilities as part of the school community and form good relationships with others.
- Behaviour around the school is good and pupils understand and respect class and whole-school rules.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are good as a result of the caring learning environment provided.
- Pupils show respect for their teachers and are keen to learn.
- Too many parents are not ensuring their children attend school regularly or on time.

**Commentary**

8. Pupils respond well to the developing positive learning environment of the school, which effectively promotes working together and taking responsibility. In the Reception class, children are beginning to learn to listen and co-operate with both adults and other children. They tidy up quickly after activities and help each other when their job is finished. In the rest of the school, pupils respond well to the school's provision for personal, social and moral development. Parents feel that the school helps their children to behave well, but a small number are concerned about bullying and harassment. No signs of aggressive behaviour were seen during the inspection. The school has implemented good procedures to raise awareness of the positive learning environment of the school and pupils are beginning to play an important part.
9. There are good examples of older pupils supporting others well in the newly introduced Peer Mediation Programme, which encourages pupils to talk together to solve the problems in the playground. Standards of behaviour are good in the classroom situation, during assemblies and in the dining room. Nearly all pupils listen attentively and carry out tasks enthusiastically. They work well in pairs and larger groups and listen to each other in discussions. In a music lesson in Years 5 and 6, for example, pupils worked successfully together to sing a two-part round and shared instruments co-operatively.

**Exclusions**

***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	242	1	1

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

10. Pupils throughout the school have a good sense of what is right and wrong following the exemplary role models of the staff who use praise and encouragement well. The school has worked hard to develop positive responses from pupils and value their contributions to the improvements in the learning environment. For example, the School Council is taking an active role in suggesting improvements for the benefit of all such as the introduction of new play equipment for playtime use.
11. Pupils show a willingness to learn and most settle quickly in lessons. They sustain interest and most remain on task in lessons and during assemblies. The atmosphere in the school is calm and pupils are well mannered, friendly and polite. They understand the school rules and know that unacceptable behaviour will be dealt with fairly but firmly. The good provision for moral development has made a strong impact through rewarding good behaviour and encouraging pupils to take responsibility for their actions. The whole school is rewarded with a treat such as a theatre visit when targets for good behaviour are achieved. The strong emphasis on the development of pupils' social skills results in good relationships between adults and pupils. Discussion with pupils from Year 6 confirmed that they like school and respect their teachers, valuing their support in their learning. Pupils with special educational needs show the same positive attitudes to school as their classmates. They enjoy their lessons, concentrate well and try hard to succeed at their work.
12. Spiritual development is satisfactory. Time is given during assemblies to reflect on what they have heard and most pupils use this time well. They are beginning to respect the feelings of others and listen to their views and ideas. Links have been made with local churches and representatives from different denominations lead assemblies and Bible story telling sessions on a regular basis. This provision contributes well to pupils' spiritual development.
13. The provision for pupils' cultural awareness is satisfactory. Religious education is increasing awareness of non-Christian beliefs and values. Art and design makes a good contribution to the multicultural awareness through work related to African and Aztec culture and through a cross-curricular link with English.

## Attendance

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

Authorised absence	
School data	6.4
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.4
National data	0.4

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

14. Attendance continues to be unsatisfactory, with attendance figures well below the national average. This low figure continues to be caused by the large number of families taking holidays in term time and a small minority of pupils with irregular attendance. The school is taking action to address these issues, with parents being informed of the need to ensure their children attend school regularly. The head teacher and school administrator carefully monitor absences and work closely with the educational welfare officer to follow up individuals with irregular attendance. The parents of these children are not supporting the school by ensuring their children attend regularly and the lack of attendance is impacting on their levels of achievement. A small number of parents are also not getting their children to school on time in the mornings. The registration periods are well used to provide a productive and settled start to the day.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, with examples of good teaching throughout the school. There are however, weaknesses in teachers' assessment. The curriculum is satisfactory with particular strengths in the provision of pupils' personal, social and health education and participation in the arts.

### Teaching and learning

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have very high expectations of pupils' attitudes and behaviour.
- Teachers and learning support workers provide good levels of encouragement.
- The lack of detailed information on pupils' attainment and progress sometimes leads to pupils being given work that is not sufficiently tailored to meet their learning needs.

### Commentary

#### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 33 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	3 (9%)	17 (52%)	13 (39%)	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. Standards of teaching have continued to improve since the last inspection because of good levels of monitoring, support and guidance from the head teacher and advisers from the local education authority. Even so, there is still room for further improvement. Although much of the teaching seen was good, close examination of previous work indicates that teachers do not always provide appropriately challenging work that builds effectively on pupils' previous learning. In both English and mathematics, for example, too few teachers adapt the national guidance to meet the learning needs of groups and individuals within the class, or provide sufficient time to consolidate learning at each stage. As a result, a significant minority of less able pupils in the junior classes have gaps in their learning. The problem is compounded because teachers have insufficient detailed information about pupils' learning and so find it difficult to tailor the work to the learning needs of individuals.
16. Teachers generally have a secure knowledge of the subjects they teach and demonstrate this through their clear explanations. They present lessons in a variety of ways that excite and capture pupils' interest. In a very good English lesson in the Year 5/6 class, for example, the teacher effectively used 'story cards' to illustrate teaching points and involve the pupils in their learning. The pupils enjoyed sorting through the cards planning their 'fantastic tale', paying particular attention to the 'quest path' their heroes and heroines were to follow. They worked together well in their groups as they discussed and negotiated each step of the tale. The teacher effectively monitored the progress of each group, asking challenging questions to encourage pupils to think more clearly and accurately about the detail of their stories. These factors contributed significantly to the very good progress that pupils made.
17. Resources were also well used in a religious education lesson on Judaism in the Year 1/2 class. A candle was lit to set an appropriately reflective atmosphere as the teacher discussed with the pupils what Jews might do in a temple. The teacher worked well in linking pupils' own experiences to the theme of the lesson. She used the tone of her voice well to engage and maintain pupils' interest and provided pupils with good opportunities to develop their skills of

speaking and listening. This lesson also contributed very well to pupils' spiritual development through the very good opportunities for reflection.

18. A feature of all lessons is the high expectations teachers have of pupils' behaviour and attention. Most pupils respond well to these; they listen well and display positive attitudes to their work. Teachers and learning support workers are consistent and patient and as a result pupils feel their contributions are valued. This appreciation helps to build their self-esteem and encourages them to try harder. The majority of lessons move along at a good pace that challenges pupils to work hard.
19. In better lessons, teachers use the session at the end effectively to revisit the learning objectives and to assess what the pupils have learned. These observations provide the basis on which teachers plan the next stage of pupils' learning. Teachers often use a range of different types of question to check pupils' understanding. However, in a minority of cases, teachers ask focused questions to a narrow range of pupils without fully assessing the understanding of a wider group. The quality of teachers' marking of pupils' work is variable. In the best cases, teachers provide pupils with a clear view of the quality of their work and where they need to improve. There are a few examples where work is not marked and in others where there is a cursory tick. Marking is not always used effectively to set high expectations or to raise standards.
20. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. It is often good when they receive additional support from skilled learning support workers and the specialist teacher. On these occasions pupils make good and sometimes very good progress in their learning. Teachers plan tasks that take full account of what pupils need to learn in literacy and numeracy, and there is extra support from assistants in these and in other lessons. Assessment for these pupils is good. Individual education plans identify the next steps of learning for each pupil and teachers review these termly with the special needs co-ordinator and with parents.

## **The curriculum**

The overall breadth of curricular opportunities is satisfactory. Provision meets statutory requirements. It is suitably enriched by educational visits, the contribution of visitors and a variety of extra-curricular activities. Accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory overall.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils have equality of opportunity and full access to the full range of school activities.
- Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all aspects of school life.
- Provision in the arts enriches pupils' learning.
- The good range of resources in music and for pupils with special education needs enriches learning.
- The lack of outdoor provision for children in the reception class inhibits their development.

## **Commentary**

21. Changes in school leadership have slowed the overall rate of improvement. However, the school is now working hard, and with some success, to increase the effectiveness of curricular provision. It is building a curriculum that begins with the needs of the child. For example, the setting of pupils by ability for mathematics lessons in Y5 and Y6 helps teachers to tailor learning more closely to their needs. The provision of lessons in personal and social education together with the contribution of daily assemblies is having a positive influence on the climate of learning and the quality of life in the school. According to age and aptitude, the pupils have equality of access and opportunity to all aspects of the school's provision. This is an inclusive school and there is no evidence of discrimination on the basis of gender or ethnicity.

22. The work done in planning the curriculum across the school is thorough and the focus of proposals under discussion is very promising. Strong emphasis is placed on teaching literacy and numeracy. This is reflected in the school's daily timetable, but there is evidence that parts of the non-core curriculum, such as geography and history, are a little fragmented in terms of the way pupils learn and develop their newly acquired knowledge and skills in relation to their previous learning. The school is rightly exploring opportunities to maximise cross-curricular links and is keen to ensure pupils enhance their basic skills across subjects. At the present time there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop writing skills in other subjects, for example, in history, geography, science and religious education.
23. The school's provision for the support of learning outside the school day, mainly through homework, is satisfactory. The school's provision in the arts is significantly enriched through the contribution of artists and visiting musicians and theatre groups. For example, the school won sponsorship for a project for pupils to create artwork from re-cycled materials under the guidance of an artist. Pupils' awareness of sustainable development and the need to care for the environment is successfully raised through initiatives to improve the school grounds and pupils in Y5 and Y6 recently won an energy conservation competition. The school is currently working with the Schools' Football Initiative with the aim of creating a local centre for sport, for primary aged pupils.
24. Learning is well supported by knowledgeable, well-qualified and suitably experienced teaching and support staff. The staff are well deployed and in their roles as subject leaders and the teachers make a positive contribution to curricular development. There is an effective partnership between teachers and support staff that has a beneficial impact on the quality of learning. Learning support workers play a particularly valuable role in ensuring pupils with special educational needs are fully included in lessons, by adapting work for them and helping them keep up.
25. There are sufficient good quality learning resources to meet the needs of the curriculum. The provision in music and for pupils with special educational needs is particularly good. In some classes, however, there is insufficient practical mathematical equipment to meet the diverse learning needs of all pupils. This limits the progress that pupils make. The accommodation provides ample facilities for the number of pupils' on roll. The main shortcomings relate to the buildings' original design as a secondary school on three floors. A number of rooms provide specialist teaching areas and facilities such as a library, music room and an ICT suite. These are generally used well to support pupils' learning, but there is capacity for more effective use of the computer suite. The building benefits from spacious grounds and a good start has been made on revitalising the outdoor environment. The lack of outdoor provision for children in the reception class inhibits their development.

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

Systems to ensure pupils' health, safety and welfare are very effective and pupils are well supported during their time at school. Pupils feel safe and secure, and value the fact that they are consulted about different issues and their views are taken into consideration.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The behaviour and pastoral support worker provides good levels of help to pupils who have difficulties in school.
- Effective induction procedures enable pupils to settle into school quickly.
- The school's comprehensive procedures ensure pupils' health and safety, care and welfare.
- The school consults very effectively with pupils and takes note of their views.
- The school's systems to monitor and assess pupils' personal and academic development are insufficiently rigorous.

## **Commentary**

26. This is a very caring school. The overall provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is very good. Teachers and support staff know the children in their classes well and provide a supportive environment for pupils. Arrangements for child protection and procedures relating to health and safety are securely in place with risk assessments regularly undertaken. There are very good links with the adjacent Family Centre and Early Years Centre, and the induction process into the school is well thought out and effectively implemented. Children in the reception class settle happily because of the early contact with the school, and the kind and caring way they are introduced to their teacher and classmates. The transition arrangement for older pupils ensures that progress to the next stage of education is as smooth as possible.
27. Most pupils are very happy; they feel safe and well looked after. Parents speak very highly of the care and support offered to their children, which results in them enjoying school and making good progress. They feel the school promotes equality in a consistent way and treats pupils fairly. The non-teaching staff are well qualified and offer valuable support and assistance to those pupils in their care, which has a positive impact on their confidence and achievement. The recent recruitment of a pastoral/behavioural support worker has been very effective in developing a number of effective behaviour strategies in the school. The behaviour contracts and sensitive interventions are some of the successful inclusion strategies in place to help those pupils who find difficulties in responding appropriately to the learning environment. This assistance is making a significant contribution to their personal and social development, by helping to set boundaries and raise their confidence and self-esteem.
28. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early on and their progress is monitored carefully. The school works closely with outside specialists, and acts on their advice to ensure that these pupils receive the best possible help whilst they are at the school. Apart from these pupils, there is insufficient use of target-setting or formal systems in place to monitor and promote pupils' personal and academic development. This has a detrimental effect on the continuity of pupils' learning.
29. Pupils are generally very happy at school. They feel confident that they can go to an adult if they have problems or concerns, and that they will be listened to. They also talked of the opportunities provided through role-play sessions during personal and social education sessions. Older pupils have been trained to provide an additional support role through the peer mediation scheme. They feel this has been very effective in resolving difficulties at lunch and play times. Overall, pupils are very positive. They feel they have a voice and are consulted and listened to, with their views taken into consideration through the school council.

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

The partnership with parents, the adjacent Family/Early Years Centre and the local community is good. Partnership with other schools is satisfactory.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school has developed a strong supportive parent body and actively consults with them.
- The contact with parents keeps them well informed about school activities and their child's progress.
- The links fostered with the local community enhances curriculum opportunities.

## **Commentary**

30. Parents expressed a high level of satisfaction about the work of the school. They are pleased with the stability offered by the new head teacher, and think the school is well led and managed

and that staff are approachable. Information to parents is good. There are regular newsletters, which celebrate school successes and keep parents updated about forthcoming activities and events. Curriculum maps provide an outline of what classes will be covering in different areas each term, to enable parents to support their child at home. Parents are kept well informed about the progress of their child through regular consultations, and parents with special educational needs are involved in the review meetings. The annual reports to parents clearly identify what their child has covered and how well they are doing, as well as providing targets for improvement. However, they do not give any indication about how well their child is doing in relation to what is expected for a child of that age, or in relation to national averages.

31. The school is seeking ways of developing closer partnerships with parents, thus enabling them to become more fully involved in their child's education. Parents of children with special educational needs receive good information about their progress. The school offers regular opportunities for parents to discuss their children's progress and, if necessary, to meet with outside specialists involved with their children's learning. The school encourages parent volunteers, but only a few are able to spend time in the classrooms or listen to readers, although more help out on trips or when pupils go swimming. Curriculum evenings in the past have been well supported and there are plans to run more, as well as consult with parents more actively and involve them in policy reviews. Parents are supportive of different activities and large numbers attend the carol services, sports days, mini marathon and bedtime story sessions. The Friends Association is run by an enthusiastic group of parents and holds a number of successful social and fund raising activities each year, which helps to purchase additional resources for the school.
32. Community and business links are effective and pupils are benefiting well from the close partnership arrangements with the local community and other schools. The links with the on-site Family Centre and Early Years Centre is particularly successful. This involves use of the school facilities and frequent visits to classrooms, which helps children when they transfer to the reception class. Joint courses have been run offering information and skills development for parents. Links with partner institutions, local church groups, artists, local radio stations and old peoples' homes, to name just a few, offers a number of enrichment opportunities for pupils. They have been able to develop new creative skills, take part in plays and broadcast a carol they had written.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership, management and governance are satisfactory. The leadership of the head teacher is good. Senior managers provide a calm and purposeful working environment for pupils.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The new head teacher provides strong leadership and has a clear understanding of what the school needs to do to improve.
- The school is run in a calm and orderly manner and pupils feel secure and cared for.
- The school governors carry out their legal responsibilities effectively and take an active part in the work of the school.
- There is a strong sense of teamwork and commitment at all levels to school improvement.
- Procedures for checking the work of the school are still being developed and few have been in place long enough to have an impact on standards of work.
- The role of subject managers in monitoring standards, teaching and learning is underdeveloped.

### **Commentary**

33. All those involved with the leadership and management of the school have worked hard since the previous inspection to minimise the disruption caused by frequent changes in head teachers, and ensure that the school has continued to run smoothly and efficiently on a day-to-day basis. The new head teacher has quickly established the confidence and respect of staff



and governors, and has a clear understanding of what the school needs to do to improve further. Due to the impact of the new leadership, pupils are now achieving satisfactorily, whereas they were not previously. The school improvement plan has been drawn up in full consultation with staff and governors, and is a useful management tool that will help the school move forward.

34. Governors share the head teacher's vision and commitment to improving standards. They meet regularly and ensure they have a working knowledge of the school, both through an organised system of committees and through informal links and visits. Recently, their knowledge of the school's work has been enhanced by the better quality information they are now being given on pupils' performance, and on information gained from questionnaires to parents and pupils about their views of the school. A system of regular monitoring has been devised to set a clear focus for their visits to school and to link them to the priorities identified in the school improvement plan. The head teacher is working hard to improve and implement systems for checking the quality of the school's work, but some of these have not been in place long enough to have had a significant impact on pupils' achievement.
35. A notable feature of the school is the positive climate for learning that has been established. All adults with leadership responsibilities lead by example, setting and expecting high standards of courtesy, respect and consideration for others. This leads to a calm and orderly working environment in which all pupils, including those with special educational needs, thrive. Pupils feel secure because they know they are respected and cared for. Pupils with special needs are fully included in school activities and there are equal opportunities for all. As a result of this supportive environment, pupils' behaviour is good and they have positive attitudes to learning.
36. The school is soundly managed. Management systems have improved since the arrival of the new head teacher and teaching staff are now clear about their roles and responsibilities. There are appropriate systems in place for appraisal, training and support. The head teacher has already begun procedures to extend professional interviews to non-teaching staff and these are being welcomed. New teams have been set up to improve communication across the school, and a strong sense of teamwork and unity of purpose is developing. The school manages its finances efficiently. The current under spend is clearly earmarked to protect staffing levels against falling rolls. The secretary and finance officer play effective roles in the day-to-day management of the school, and in budget management and administration. The head teacher and governors follow recommended procedures, in order to obtain good value for money.
37. Curriculum leaders manage their subjects conscientiously and ensure teachers are well resourced. They keep up-to-date with curriculum development and act as subject advisers to colleagues. In the past, formal systems for checking the quality of teaching and learning, and the standards of pupils' work, have focused mainly on core subjects of English, mathematics and science. In other subjects, the role of curriculum leaders in evaluating teaching, learning and pupils' achievement, and taking steps to raise standards is still underdeveloped. The management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Administrative tasks are carried out efficiently and funds targeted for special educational needs are spent appropriately. The special needs co-ordinator has worked hard this year to limit the impact of recent changes in funding by reviewing the provision to ensure that it meets the needs of pupils across the school.
38. In the past four years, staff have worked very hard to respond to many new initiatives and much advice. Some of it has resulted in raised achievement of pupils. The initiative to improve reading, for example, is already raising standards in Years 1 and 2, and improving older pupils' enjoyment of reading. Other initiatives, such as the focus on oracy, have had less impact because they have not been followed through rigorously enough and not enough has been done to check their effectiveness. The school is now very well placed to consolidate these initiatives and move forward. Very good relationships exist between all those

responsible for the work of the school, and there is a shared will to succeed and monitor the school's success in a systematic way.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	837,770
Total expenditure	813,748
Expenditure per pupil	3,130

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	50,451
Balance carried forward to the next	74,473

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **satisfactory**. The children enter the Reception class with well below average attainment overall, with skills in physical development slightly higher. It is unlikely that all children will achieve the national Early Learning Goals in the majority of areas of learning, but most are on course to achieve the goals in physical skills. The teacher provides satisfactory leadership and management, and both she and the learning support worker successfully provide a safe caring learning environment for the children. There are effective systems for monitoring children's progress. The adults concentrate the focus effectively on improving children's personal, social and communication skills due to the low level of speaking and listening skills identified on entry. The curriculum is satisfactory and covers all the areas of learning, effectively meeting children's needs, but provision for outdoor play using wheeled vehicles and climbing equipment to develop gross motor skills is unsatisfactory.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Induction procedures ensure close involvement of parents and staff from the Family Centre adjacent to the school.
- Adults give positive encouragement to children demonstrating their expectations for behaviour and attitudes to others.
- At this stage of the school year children still have little knowledge of social skills and accepted conventions.
- Children continue to have short concentration spans and have difficulty in remaining on task.

#### **Commentary**

39. Before the children enter school the teacher and support worker spend time with staff from the Family Centre ensuring that children have a smooth transition. Adults work closely together to ensure that they know the children and are well informed of their individual needs. Parents are included in "fun" activities such as Bedtime Story sessions and tea parties and these activities help to raise their awareness of their children's learning.
40. Children are becoming aware of the expected behaviour in school, such as using "please and thank you and excuse me", walking quietly and sensibly around the school. In a session investigating fruit with the teacher, children had to be reminded to ask in the correct way for a piece of fruit instead of using phrases like "Give me some!" During the inspection there were examples of children unable to sit for appropriate periods of time and evidence of restless behaviour. Most children are not expected to achieve the Early Learning Goals in this area of development by the end of the Reception year.

### **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The teacher recognises the need to improve skills in speaking and listening and activities provided have this focus.

- Stories are used effectively in other areas of learning.
- Children are still unable to make predictions or ask questions. There is considerable evidence of non verbal communication such as head shaking.

### **Commentary**

41. Children enter the school with well below average skills in speaking and listening, and teaching is effectively focussed on providing further opportunities to extend these skills. Activities during the inspection included role play when the teacher encouraged children to make predictions and extend questioning skills. However most children are unable to ask questions and staff are aware that this should remain a continued focus for this group of children. They continue to use non-verbal communication skills such as head movements and this indicates that most children will not achieve the expected standards in this area of learning by the end of their year in the Reception class.
42. The teacher has a satisfactory awareness of the needs of the children in this area of learning and uses stories effectively as a focus for concentrating their listening skills. These are often linked with other areas of learning, such as stories on a jungle theme.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The teacher uses practical activities satisfactorily to support children's understanding.
- Children are beginning to use simple mathematical vocabulary.
- Teacher's planning does not show appropriate tasks for children of different abilities.

### **Commentary**

43. The teacher and support worker take some opportunities to reinforce mathematical understanding in other areas of learning and children are learning to recognise and use numbers to ten in a variety of ways. Some children are beginning to understand the meaning of taking away one when using numbers to ten.
44. Some children are able to identify how many more straws are needed during the milk session, and in group work related to investigating qualities of different fruit, they use mathematical vocabulary appropriately linked to colour shape and size, using sphere circle and square.
45. Opportunities were missed to plan activities for the more able children in the class. Evidence shows that children's achievement in this area is low and only a minority of children are likely to reach the required standard on entry to Key Stage 1.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is used effectively to stimulate children's interest and curiosity.
- Planned activities are matched appropriately to children's individual needs.
- The teacher misses opportunities to reinforce children's learning.

## Commentary

46. During the inspection, the planned activities gave children the opportunity to use their senses to explore textures and sensations. When investigating the qualities of fruit they had the chance to feel, smell and taste. The teacher used this opportunity well to stimulate children's language skills to describe texture, colour and shape.
47. Following shared activities with the teacher there was no evidence of opportunity for discussion to consolidate children's learning. Due to the low attainment on entry in this area of learning the majority of children are not expected to attain the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception year.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for physical development is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Apparatus in the gym is used well to extend a variety of children's physical skills.
- Provision for outdoor play activities is very limited.

## Commentary

48. In a good lesson in the gym the teacher used the current theme to create a walk in the jungle. Children were able to demonstrate their awareness of space when travelling under, over and through a variety of balancing equipment with developing coordination and control. It is likely that most children will achieve the Early Learning Goals at the end of the reception year. There is no provision of wheeled vehicles or climbing equipment specifically for the children in this class. This means that they are unable to develop a sense of space, balance and confidence in an outdoor environment.
49. It was not possible to make an overall judgement of provision or standards in **creative development**. Work on display shows the use of different media such as paints, use of the digital camera and collage skills. There is little evidence of children using 3D materials.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well below average at Year 2 and Year 6. However, pupils enter school with poorly developed communication skills and achieve satisfactorily for their abilities.
- There are gaps in pupils' learning, especially in Years 3 to 6.
- The national guidelines for English are taught appropriately and this ensures pupils experience a wide range of speaking, listening, reading and writing experiences within English lessons.
- Teaching is never less than satisfactory and there is much good teaching in Years 1 and 2.
- Weaknesses in teaching lie in marking and record keeping.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to their work and present their written work well.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to write in subjects other than English.
- The subject is soundly managed and resourced, but there has been little opportunity to monitor the impact of recent initiatives.

## Commentary

50. Standards in English were well below average in national tests last year and are likely to remain very low this year in spite of teachers' best efforts to raise them. There are several reasons for this. A larger than average proportion of pupils entering school has language skills that are well below those expected for their age. As a result, they have a lot of ground to make up. In the past, not enough was done to ensure that the youngest pupils had the wide range of speaking, listening and play experiences they needed to develop their use of language, and for older pupils in particular there is a legacy of underachievement in this aspect of language. The school has recently taken steps to improve opportunities for speaking and listening throughout the school through a focus on these skills. This has had some impact and pupils are now good at listening, both to each other and to their teachers. Their speaking skills are less well developed, however. Few use interesting vocabulary in their work and too many of the oldest pupils struggle to speak in grammatically correct sentences. Whilst teachers are aware of pupils' language deficiencies, too few regularly plan specific opportunities within all lessons for pupils to talk about their work in a structured way, and this is limiting development in this aspect of their work.
51. Teachers plan lessons in accordance with the national guidance for literacy and this is effective in ensuring that teaching across the school is at least satisfactory, and there is much good teaching, particularly in Years 1 and 2. Lessons are well structured so that pupils are well prepared for the main activity and achieve what is expected of them in the lesson. Pupils write for a wide range of purposes and pupils' books contain examples of extended stories, poetry, letter writing, instructions and reports. Teachers are good at using the work of well-known authors as a starting point for pupils' own work, and this helps them with ideas and vocabulary. Pupils with special educational needs receive extra support, often from an experienced classroom assistant, and this ensures they are fully included in lessons and achieve success. Weaknesses in teaching lie in marking and record keeping. Although teachers keep a range of records about pupils' progress, they do not use the information well to ensure pupils' next steps in learning build securely on what they have already learnt. Marking does not always tell pupils what they should do to improve. This is particularly noticeable in spelling, where pupils move on too quickly before they have mastered the basics. Too few teachers adapt the national guidance to meet the needs of groups and individuals within the class, and consolidate learning at each stage. This sometimes leads to pupils being provided with work that is inappropriate to their learning needs.
52. This year teachers have improved the way they teach reading through the re-emphasis of daily guided reading sessions and this is already beginning to raise standards, particularly in Years 1 and 2, where teachers keep comprehensive records of progress to help pupils make steady steps in learning. The positive impact of these sessions can also be seen in Years 3 to 6, where pupils are enjoying their reading more and beginning to appreciate the work of different authors. In general, pupils have positive attitudes to their work. They behave very well in lessons and try their best. When asked to work in pairs and groups they do so sensibly. Pupils working on haikus in a Year 6 class demonstrated this well when they read their work to each other so that their partner could check whether they had the correct number of syllables in each line. Pupils quietly clapped out the beats and helped each other find words that would fit the line. Pupils take care over their handwriting and present their work well.
53. Much time and hard work has been invested in the development of the subject. The subject is now appropriately resourced and the subject manager has worked with outside advisers and consultants to introduce initiatives to raise standards. Systematic monitoring of the school's work is not yet well enough established to have a positive impact on standards, teaching and learning.

## Language and literacy across the curriculum

54. Teachers do not make the best use of work in other subjects to develop pupils writing skills and there is only a limited amount of written work in pupils' history, geography, science and religious education books. Word processing skills are developed appropriately in ICT and there are good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills in personal, social and health education lessons.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well below average at Year 2 and Year 6.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' attention and efforts.
- Teachers and learning support workers provide good levels of support and encouragement.
- Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to their work.
- Work is not always sufficiently tailored to meet the learning needs of individuals.

### Commentary

55. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are currently well below the national average. Standards are lower in Year 6 this year because there are a significant number of pupils with special educational needs in this group. Since the last inspection standards in Year 2 have fallen, reflecting a decline in standards of children entering the school in the reception class. Pupils are achieving satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment.
56. Average and more able pupils in Year 2 have a satisfactory understanding of the value of numbers to 100, but less able pupils find this work difficult. Most pupils successfully add and subtract two single digits to 10, but average and less able pupils do not recall them mentally. Many pupils do not have a secure grounding in number facts. Most recognise odd and even numbers, and identify some of the properties of common two-dimensional shapes. Average and more able pupils solve money problems, but less able pupils struggle with this level of work. There are similar weaknesses in pupils' mental and problem solving skills in Year 6. Average and less able pupils struggle to recall multiplication facts and this has a detrimental effect on their ability to calculate fractions of whole numbers and compare equivalent fractions, for example. Most pupils add two two-digit numbers accurately and explain clearly what they did to solve the problem. They know the value of numbers beyond one thousand and accurately describe the properties of some two and three-dimensional shapes.
57. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. At the beginning of lessons, learning objectives are shared with pupils so that they know what they are going to learn. Teachers in most classes effectively use a range of resources, for example number lines and 100 squares to illustrate the lesson and engage the pupils in their learning. Teachers often provide clear step-by-step instructions so pupils can make connections in their learning. In most classes particularly good attention is paid to the development of mathematical vocabulary. In a good lesson in the Year 1/2 class, the teacher provided pupils with a good range of strategies to develop their mental skills. Class teachers and teaching assistants know their pupils well and patiently encourage and support their learning. In response most pupils try hard and make at least satisfactory progress in their learning.
58. In many lessons, appropriate work is provided to challenge all ability groups, but because teachers do not have detailed information about pupils' previous learning this is not always the case. On these occasions, teachers struggle to pitch the work at the right level and are sometimes led into over-supporting pupils in their efforts to help them learn. Examination of pupils' previous work further illustrates the problem, with examples of the most and least able

pupils being provided with the same work, with little account taken of their specific learning needs. This clearly limits the progress that these pupils make. In the past, pupils have been moved on too quickly with insufficient opportunities for learning to be reinforced. This has resulted in pupils, particularly in the juniors, having gaps in their learning. The school has recognised this problem and has grouped pupils in Year 5 and 6 by ability to try to overcome it. This is a positive step in enabling teachers to more effectively meet the learning of all pupils.

59. Leadership and management is satisfactory overall. Since her appointment in September, the subject leader has worked effectively in identifying where pupils have particular weaknesses in their learning and has a clear view of where improvements need to be made. She has analysed the national test results and has developed whole-school targets for improvement. Although at a very early stage, the creation of numeracy teams is a positive step in involving teachers in the future development of this subject. Assessment procedures are improving, with teachers beginning to keep records of pupils' achievements against 'Key Learning Objectives'. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have now been given targets for improvement. Much of this work is new and has yet to have an impact on raising standards.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

60. Although the national numeracy strategy has been implemented satisfactorily in mathematical lessons, teachers do not systematically plan for pupils to use their mathematical skills in other subjects. Mathematical skills are used in science and history, however, when data is presented in the form of graphs and bar charts. Younger pupils undertake traffic surveys and older pupils' use their knowledge of calculations when constructing databases, graphs and spreadsheets in information and communication technology. The current provision contributes satisfactorily to pupils' learning but there is still potential for further development.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Levels of achievement are improving in Years 1 and 2.
- There are gaps in pupils' learning, particularly in Years 3 to 6.
- Assessment is not sufficiently used to ensure that planning meets the differing learning needs of all pupils.
- There is limited use of ICT in science.

### **Commentary**

61. At the last inspection pupils were making at least sound progress in science. Progress was more consistent in the infants than the juniors because of the legacy of previous weaknesses in provision. The present picture is not dissimilar. Progress is at least satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, but in Years 3 to 6, although progress is satisfactory overall, gaps in pupils' prior learning sometimes slows progress. This is especially so where pupils need to draw on prior knowledge to use scientific language, for example, to predict the behaviour of different fluids.
62. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a sound knowledge of growing plants. They know the conditions for germination, name the main parts of a plant and further their knowledge through investigating whether plants need water, and if other liquids can be substituted. In other topics, they name a variety of materials, learn that change takes place in living organisms, identify the uses of electricity, investigate sound and light and begin to describe forces such as gravity and magnetism. However, when asked to recall their learning, pupils often find it difficult to remember key words such as 'germination' and 'prediction'. Their knowledge of the properties of materials, for example, is insecure.



63. In Year 6, pupils have a sound knowledge of light, shadows and simple electrical circuits. They readily name the major organs of the human body, have some knowledge of the requirements for a healthy diet and can describe how some materials, such as water, change state from a solid to a liquid, or to a gas, in certain conditions. However, pupils often find it difficult to use the correct term for a scientific process, such as 'evaporation' or 'condensation' without a prompt. They enthusiastically recall carrying out an investigation into the effect of exercise on heart rate and know how to make a test fair. In discussion of particular topics, such as electricity and plants, they demonstrate sound knowledge, but their recall of the properties of materials, and knowledge of such topics as electricity, forces and sound, is less secure.
64. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in both key stages. Teachers use questions well, both to help pupils refresh their memories of previous work and also to help evaluate what they have learnt. Teachers in both key stages have sound knowledge of the subject and are mindful of the need to pay particular attention to developing pupils' understanding of scientific vocabulary. Planning follows a clear scheme of work and lessons are often linked to practical investigations. When given the opportunity, pupils are able to develop their own investigations to prove ideas that they have thought out for themselves. This aspect was developing well in a Year 6 class, where pupils were investigating the reaction when chosen substances were mixed. By contrast, in a Year 2 class, although the work was explained well, and questioning was used appropriately to revise pupils' knowledge of plants, a helpful planning guide for investigations was used inappropriately to record the investigation at the end of the lesson. The pupils were given too little scope to plan how to carry out an investigation for themselves, or to make predictions and this limited their progress in developing scientific skills. Examination of pupils' previous work indicates that investigations are often over directed, either by the requirements of the task, or by the teacher. Pupils, therefore, do not have sufficient opportunity to take appropriate responsibility for their own learning and to develop the work beyond the minimum asked for.
65. Although there are appropriate procedures in place to monitor pupils' achievements at the beginning and end of each unit of work, day-to-day assessments are not always being used effectively to help plan work to meet the needs of all the pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are often clearly identified and work is suitably targeted. However, for the majority of the pupils, teachers rely heavily on the scheme of work for the lesson content rather than plan on their own evaluation of what pupils have already achieved. Work is, therefore, not always sufficiently distinct to challenge pupils at their own level, leading to underachievement by some and difficulties for others.
66. The leadership and management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator monitors and evaluates provision appropriately and has a clear view of strengths and weaknesses in the subject and how pupils' performance compares with local averages. Priorities are therefore appropriate and focused on raising standards. There are sufficient learning resources available, although there was very little evidence of ICT being used to develop learning in science.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching appropriately builds on pupils' previous work and promotes effective learning.
- Pupils' positive attitudes contribute well to their learning.
- Standards in Year 6 are not yet high enough.

## Commentary

67. Standards in Year 2 are average, but they are below average in Year 6. Levels of achievement are satisfactory overall, but could be better. Many pupils who attend the school do not have computers at home and are not able to practise the skills they learn in school. In spite of this, standards continue to improve in line with staff confidence and expertise. Each class is provided with sessions in the computer suite, but there is capacity for it to be used more often than it is. Similarly computers in classes are not always used to their full potential.
68. More able and average pupils in Year 2 use their computer skills confidently to write their stories, although less able pupils struggle to find the correct keys. Most pupils control the mouse accurately, for example, when using art programs to illustrate their work.
69. Pupils in Year 6 successfully 'log on' and access the program they require, using drop-down menus. More able pupils successfully use a database, moving quickly and fluently around the program, sorting and grouping information. A group of less able pupils, however, clearly lacked confidence and required a significant amount of support to achieve this task. Pupils know how to combine pictures and text, for example, when writing about the Christmas story, and have used the Internet to good effect to research the Victorians and famous authors. In discussions, pupils recall using a digital camera to take photographs, but have little recall of using sensor equipment or having recently used a computer to control a screen robot.
70. The quality of teaching and learning seen during the inspection was good overall. At the beginning of each lesson, teachers clearly explain the lesson objectives so that pupils know what they were expected to achieve. Teachers are effective in linking pupils' past to their current learning. They provide clear, step-by-step instructions, effectively illustrating key teaching points. In response, pupils listen well and are able to make good progress through the lesson. Teachers manage the behaviour of pupils well, providing them with good levels of help and encouragement. In response, most pupils work hard and are supportive of one another's learning. In better lessons, teachers display good subject knowledge through their clear explanations and expert interventions. A few teachers still lack confidence, but nevertheless work hard to ensure that pupils are well supported.
71. The school has developed a good management plan that provides a clear structure for the improvement of the subject. As a result of the implementation of the plan standards are clearly rising but there is still more work to be done, particularly in Years 3 to 6.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

72. Overall, the use of computers across the curriculum is satisfactory. Programs are sometimes used well to support pupils' learning in English and mathematics, for example, in developing reading and writing skills or practising number skills and creating graphs. Pupils use the Internet to find information about famous authors and to research, history and religious education topics, but there is little evidence of computer programs being used to support pupils' learning in other subjects, for example, in science. This lack of provision limits pupil's progress in this and other subjects.

## HUMANITIES

73. Pupils' work was sampled in **history, geography** and **religious education**, with two lessons seen in religious education one in history and none in geography. It is, therefore, not possible to make secure judgements about provision in these subjects.
74. The planning of work in **history and geography** is informed by appropriate schemes of work that cover well the requirements of the National Curriculum. The school is making good use of the local environment, such as in a study of Victorian Lydney, to enhance work in both history

and geography. Resources to support teaching and learning are good in history and satisfactory in geography.

75. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 recall aspects of their previous work, such as fieldwork in the town well. The pupils talk enthusiastically about people and events such as the Fire of London, Samuel Pepys, Florence Nightingale, Guy Fawkes and King Henry VIII. However, their detailed knowledge is limited and their sense of chronology is insecure. Their knowledge of geography is less well developed, although they confidently describe recent work when they undertook a street survey.
76. The older pupils show enjoyment and interest when talking about the Egyptians and Greeks, although their comments lack detail. In current work they are beginning to identify similarities and differences between the Victorian period and the present. However, although they identify changes in Lydney for example, they lack confidence in sequencing historical events and periods. In geography, there are gaps in pupils' knowledge. They have some knowledge of maps, such as how to use a key, but their recall of previous work about rivers is insecure and their knowledge of contrasting areas is limited.
77. **Religious education** has been a recent focus of development by staff and the subject manager has worked hard to update the policy and resources to take full account of the guidance for teaching in the Locally Agreed Syllabus for the subject. The school is now well equipped to teach the units of work planned for each year group, and there are appropriate books and artefacts to support the teaching of Christianity, Islam and Judaism.
78. There was only a small amount of recorded work in pupils' books on which to make a judgement about standards. Discussions with pupils demonstrated that they had RE lessons regularly, but Year 6 pupils in particular could recall little of what they had learnt and had only a limited understanding of the importance of religious beliefs and practices in other peoples' lives. Standards are below those expected for pupils of their age. In general, teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to record their work in the subject, and there were few examples of personal and reflective writing in older pupils' books.
79. In the two lessons seen, teaching was at least good and some very good teaching in a Year 1/2 class resulted in high levels of interest and engagement in a lesson about the origins of Hannukah. Pupils listened intently as the teacher recounted the story, and the use of role-play to illustrate it helped them appreciate how those involved must have felt about the desecration of their holy place.
80. School assemblies contribute significantly to pupils' learning in the subject. The 'Open a Book' group from the local church visits weekly to present Bible stories in a lively and meaningful way, and pupils enjoy these visits greatly. In discussions with them, much of what they could recall about Jewish and Christian stories was as a result of the assembly presentations. Other stories help pupils think about what is right and wrong in a situation and how their actions can affect other peoples' lives.

### **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

81. In creative, aesthetic and practical subjects, only two lessons were seen in **physical education**, one in **art and design** and **music** and none in **design and technology**. In addition to observing the lessons, inspectors spoke to co-ordinators about their work, talked to pupils about what they had learnt, and sampled pupils' work. It is not possible to make a firm judgement about provision in any of these subjects.
82. Standards of work seen in **art and design** were average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. Pupils are given a stimulating range of techniques including pastels, painting and three-dimensional work with natural objects, clay and textiles. There are good examples of work, using recycled art and pottery tiles, produced by pupils in Years 3 to 6 working with artists in the community. The subject leader has developed portfolios of pupils' work and the scheme of

work identifies skills development and guidance for the non-specialist teacher. Art is used well to support learning in other subjects.

83. In the one **music** lesson and singing in assembly, standards were in line with expectations. In the lesson, pupils from Year 5 and 6 were able to sing a two part round successfully, and developed their skills of accompaniment satisfactorily, using un-tuned instruments. They worked well together, demonstrating an awareness of rhythm and tempo.
84. In **design and technology**, the school follows the nationally recommended scheme of work. Whilst there is evidence of this subject being taught throughout the school on a two-year rolling programme, the emphasis on literacy and numeracy has meant that it has not been the focus of development for some time.
85. In **physical education**, standards in Year 2 and 6 are broadly average and pupils achieve satisfactorily over time. Pupils in Year 2 have some insights into the effect of exercise on their bodies. They comment on how their breathing and heart become faster after they had completed their warm up. Pupils demonstrate a satisfactory awareness of space as they move around hopping, jumping and skipping. They balance on different parts of their bodies, and try to improve their performance by stretching their fingers and toes. In gymnastics lessons, pupils in Year 5 and 6 confidently move on and around gymnastic equipment, displaying satisfactory levels of co-ordination. Pupils link together jumps, rolls and balances into fluent sequences, seeking to refine their skills, for example, by attempting more difficult balances or by transferring movements onto the apparatus. More able pupils link elegantly performed cartwheels to very demanding balances demonstrating very good levels of control. By the end of Year 6, most pupils will be able to swim 25 metres with a significant minority achieving longer distances.
86. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan and organise their lessons well. They pay particular attention to health and safety matters, in particular when pupils are putting out apparatus. Routines are firmly established and pupils respond positively to the high expectations of teachers. In the lessons observed, the teachers in both the Year 2 and Year 6 circulated well and provided pupils with good guidance on how they could improve their performance. The teachers provided pupils with good opportunities to experiment and develop their own ideas, which enabled all pupils to achieve well. Throughout the lessons, teachers were positive and supportive, which helped to build pupils confidence and encouraged them to try hard. In response, pupils worked with great energy and enthusiasm, clearly enjoying what they were doing, and making good progress.
87. The curriculum is satisfactory and provides for the progressive development of pupils' learning. This subject has not been a focus for development in recent years, but there have been positive initiatives to develop pupils' skills in football, cricket and tennis.

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

88. Pupils' personal, social and health education is a particularly good feature of the curriculum. The programme places strong emphasis on developing self-knowledge and positive self-esteem. It explores attitudes, relationships and responsibilities and includes sex education, drug and alcohol awareness, personal safety and the beginnings of citizenship. Initiatives such as the training of pupils in Year 6 as peer mediators, is helping all the pupils to be more considerate and responsible, especially at playtimes. This is helping to promote the good relationships evident in and around the school. Pupils also benefit from the helpful contribution of daily assemblies in raising their awareness of religious teachings and of moral and social values. The religious education programme also provides good opportunities to raise pupils' awareness of diversity.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
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
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>6</b>
Pupils' achievement	4
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	5
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>4</b>
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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