

INSPECTION REPORT

SOUTHWOLD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bicester

LEA area: Oxfordshire

Unique reference number: 123089

Headteacher: Mrs Paula Protherough

Lead inspector: Mr Glyn Gaskill

Dates of inspection: 1st to 4th March 2004

Inspection number: 257524

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	454
School address:	Holm Way Bicester Oxfordshire
Postcode:	OX26 3UU
Telephone number:	01869 324061
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Kevin Morris
Date of previous inspection:	5 th May 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school serves an area in the northern part of Bicester. The neighbourhood and the school were built in the mid 1990's. The socio-economic background of the locality is broadly average. The school is much bigger than other primary schools. The number of pupils on roll rose significantly at the end of the 1990's and has been relatively steady since. The movement of pupils in and out of school during the school year is less than average, although it has been high in previous years. There are 18 classes. The nursery provides a morning and separate afternoon session. Currently entry to the nursery is in September and then after Easter. The school is preparing for a single point of entry in September of this year. All classes have pupils of the same age in them. The number of pupils per teacher is more generous than the national average. There is a high turnover of teachers but recruitment is not a problem and induction procedures for new staff are effective. The attainment of children on entry to the nursery is slightly below average. Their personal skills are below average. Four per cent of the pupils, a comparatively very low figure, claim free school meals eligibility. Seventeen per cent of pupils are on the special educational needs register and less than 1 per cent have Statements of Special Educational Needs. Both these figures are below the national average. Ninety-four per cent of the pupils are of white British heritage with no predominant heritage in the remainder of pupils. Two pupils use English as an additional language. In 2002 the school received the Investors in People award and the local education authority Quality Assurance Award for Early Years.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22951	Glyn Gaskill	Lead inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology
11104	Michael Fleming	Lay inspector	
31334	Barbara Atcheson	Team inspector	Foundation Stage ¹ Religious education Art and design Geography
20326	Peter Clark	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education Special educational needs
2667	Jocelyn Gill	Team inspector	English History Music Personal, social and health education and citizenship English as an additional language

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¹ The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three and ends at the end of the reception class. It is a distinct stage in preparing children for later schooling and is based on six areas of learning. These mainly refer to communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development, but also includes knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good** school. This is due to the very good leadership of the headteacher, the good governance and good leadership and management. Overall, pupils achieve well, because teaching and learning are good. They attain nationally expected standards. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Teachers work very well with teaching assistants resulting in high standards of behaviour and pupils making good progress in class.
- Standards in singing and art are very good.
- There are very good links with parents, the community, other schools and colleges.
- Pupils enjoy school, work hard and are punctual throughout the day.
- The attention given to pupils' welfare and the way their views are valued is very good.
- Whole school development planning considers relevant issues but lacks clarity and precision.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Pupils are aware of their personal targets for improvement but these are not consistently clear.
- Pupils benefit from a very good range of activities, which are additional to class lessons.
- A few pupils are too boisterous in their outdoor play at break times.

Since the school was last inspected, in May 1998, improvement has been good. Teaching has significantly improved. Standards in music are now good and in information and communication technology they are satisfactory. Curriculum plans for all subjects now effectively guide progress. Significant changes in staff and pupil numbers have been well managed.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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.

Pupils' achievement is **good**, overall, because teaching is good. Pupils' achievement in Year 2 and Year 6 is good as each has a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Children enter the nursery with slightly below average standards. As they move through the Foundation Stage children achieve well because the teaching is good. Most children are on course to meet all the expected goals at the end of the reception year. In Years 1 to 6, standards in most subjects are average. The exceptions are art, which is very good, and music, which is good. In personal, social and health education, standards are good throughout the school. In Year 2, English is satisfactory overall, but standards in writing are below average. Overall, National Curriculum test results have improved better than the national average over the last five years in Key Stage 1 and more recently in Key Stage 2. In Years 1 to 6, standards are good in the use of English to promote learning in other subjects.

Pupils' **spiritual, moral and social** development is **good** and their **cultural** development is **very good**. There are very good procedures to promote better attendance resulting in good levels of attendance. Pupils behave well in class and have good attitudes to their classwork and the rich

range of other activities on offer. A minority of pupils, mainly boys, are over-excited in the playground where they exercise much less self-control than they do in class. Overall, behaviour is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a **good** quality of education.

The quality of teaching is **good**, overall. Teaching is consistently good in the nursery and very good in reception. Teaching is good in Key Stage 1, but it is less strong in the Year 2 classes where the teacher is new to Key Stage 1 teaching. Teaching is good, overall, in Years 1 to 6. It is consistently good in Year 6. Throughout the school, teachers plan carefully and effectively involve teaching assistants in supporting learning.

The overall quality of assessment is good. Assessment is used effectively to raise standards in English and mathematics. The precision of setting statutory targets for pupils' attainment has improved significantly in recent years. Pupils are familiar with objectives for learning, which are used throughout the school. The objectives lack precision and are not sufficiently used to promote learning. Whilst there are good examples of marking it is inconsistent in pointing out how pupils can improve.

The curriculum throughout the school is good.

Pupils benefit in their academic education and personal development through the very good partnerships with parents, the community, other schools and colleges. The Bicester Learning in Partnership [BLIP] with other schools is particularly effective.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are **good**. The headteacher is particularly effective in introducing innovative projects, which benefit pupils' academic learning and social development. Through her very good leadership, the senior management and staff of the school unite to implement improvements in provision. The governing body is well organised and familiar with the strengths and weaknesses of the school. It plays an active part in shaping the future of the school. The school is self critical, identifies relevant areas for improvement and takes effective action. The plan for school improvement tries to do too much, lacks a clear priority for specific developments and insufficiently identifies costs and criteria for success, particularly in terms of pupils' standards. Financial management and administration are good and take full account of value for money.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have great confidence in the leadership and teaching in the school and the care provided. Parents are kept well informed of school events, how to help their children at home and their children's progress. Whilst parents are generally happy with behaviour in the school, there are some concerns about behaviour on the playground. Pupils appreciate what the school has to offer and get fully involved in class and extra-curricular activities.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- make the objectives for learning for individual pupils more precise;
- make the plan for school improvement more concise and easier to follow;
- continue to implement strategies to improve the behaviour of a minority of pupils in the playground.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Throughout the school, pupils' achievement overall is good and their standards of attainment are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children enter the nursery with standards, which are slightly below average and then achieve well.
- By the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 standards in a few subjects are above average.
- Achievement, overall, in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is good.
- The use of English in other subjects is good.
- Results in the National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds and 11-year-olds have improved.

Commentary

1. On entry to the nursery, children's personal skills are below average. They are average in their mathematical and language skills. The majority of children are on course to meet expectations in the goals children are expected to reach by the time they start Year 1. A few are working beyond these expectations. Children achieve well during their time in the Foundation Stage because of the good teaching they receive. Their achievement in their mathematical development and their personal, social and emotional development is very good.
2. For both seven-year-olds and 11-year-olds, inspection evidence found standards to be average in almost every subject. Whilst overall standards in English are average, standards in writing for seven-year-olds are below average. The good use of English in other subjects is benefiting English and the other subjects. The exceptions, for both age groups, to these generally satisfactory standards are in art, where standards are very good, and in music, where standards are good. Standards in personal, social and health education are good across the school. Considering the relatively low ability of the current seven-year-olds on entry to the school and the relatively high proportion of 11-year-old pupils with special educational needs, pupils achieve well. Across the school, achievement in lessons is good.
3. The average points score for the National Curriculum tests in 2003 are shown below.

Standards in national tests [SATs] at the end of Year 2 – unvalidated average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	17.8 (17.5)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	15.8 (15.1)	14.4 (14.6)
Mathematics	18.1 (16.5)	16.5 (16.3)

There were 61 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

Standards in national tests [SATs] at the end of Year 6 –unvalidated average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.8 (26.3)	27.0 (26.8)
Mathematics	25.7 (25.3)	26.7 (26.8)
Science	28.6 (26.9)	28.3 (28.6)

There were 47 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

4. Results in the National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds are improving faster than the national rate and are generally above average. Results for 11-year-olds have been declining but increased markedly in 2003, particularly in English and science. The school previously had a few years with the oldest pupils having unsatisfactory attitudes to their work and a relatively high movement of pupils in and out of school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are **good**.

Pupils' behaviour is **satisfactory**

Provision for other aspects of pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral and social development is **good**.

Attendance is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' cultural development is very good.
- A few of the pupils are too boisterous at playtimes.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons are good, overall.
- In a significant minority of lessons in Year 2, pupils lack motivation.
- The school has very good strategies for promoting attendance.

Commentary

5. Children enter the nursery with below average levels of personal, social and emotional development. Teachers and support staff are well aware of the children's needs and provide exactly the right sort of introductory activities to help them feel safe, build confidence and start to understand what learning is all about. As a result, young children begin to enjoy the nursery activities, start to use the words they hear when talking to their new friends and show inquisitive attitudes to the tasks that are presented for them. They learn to sit still and listen carefully to the teacher and quickly understand how they should behave and concentrate when they are in lessons.
6. Where lessons have pace and are stimulating, pupils are enthusiastic about their learning. Where there is a lack of challenge and teachers talk for too long the pupils become restless and lack motivation. This is notable in a minority of Year 2 lessons. Pupils behave well in lessons and in their movement around school. At lunchtime the majority of pupils socialise happily. A minority of mainly older pupils become involved in over-boisterous play. This results in disruption. A small minority of older boys show a lack of respect to midday supervisors. The school is concerned to improve this behaviour. Parents and pupils have confidence in the action the school would take if bullying was reported. The school's policies for behaviour and anti-bullying are realistic, consistently applied and are very familiar to staff and pupils. There was one short term exclusion in the last school year and there have been none since.

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	428	1	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	5	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	2	0	0
Chinese	4	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	4	0	0

The table gives the number of exclusions.

7. Several aspects of provision develop pupils' spiritual, social and moral education well. Pupils take pride that their contributions to the school council make a difference to the school. Pupils benefit greatly from the many extra-curricular activities. For example, all classes in Key Stage 2 go on one residential visit each year. This has a very positive effect on their maturity. Pupils mix with pupils from other schools in discussion groups and performing arts. All adults in school present very good, positive role models for pupils. Through this and the constructive way that individual pupils are valued, pupils' self-esteem is developed well. Discussions in lessons, particularly personal, social and health education and religious education, gives pupils a deeper understanding of codes for civilised living. In assemblies and lessons, pupils benefit from a whole school focus on a particular value each month. The high standards in art and music, raises pupils' appreciation of things that are hard to define and enables them to be both creative and expressive.
8. Pupils' cultural development is very good. During the school's 'International Weeks' each class studies the food, culture and traditions of a country. Each year group is allocated a different country and outcomes of the researches are shared in whole school assemblies. Money placed on the map of each country contributes to the school's fund raising for the charity 'Unicef Day for Change'. The strong art and music curriculum gives pupils a very wide experience of artists both from the past, living local artists and of different cultures including their own. Visits to churches and theatres further enrich pupils' knowledge.
9. Attendance is good. Pupils enjoy school so they need little persuading to attend regularly. Pupils are almost always punctual for school and lessons start on time. The school takes many opportunities to remind families of the importance of regular attendance and the consequences of unnecessary absences, including for holidays taken during term-time. The majority of parents heed these warnings.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (2002/03)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.6%	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.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

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

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching is **good** and this leads to **good** learning by pupils.
The use of assessment and its effect on raising standards is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in the Foundation Stage and Year 6 is consistently good.
- Systems for assessment in English and mathematics have a significant effect on standards.
- Improvement targets for individual pupils lack effectiveness.
- There are high expectation of pupils' good behaviour.
- Planning for teaching is very thorough.
- Teachers' specialisms are used well.

Commentary

10. Teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Teaching is consistently good in the nursery and Year 6 and very good in reception. There are weaknesses in teaching in Year 2 where the teacher is new to teaching in Key Stage 1. A summary of all the graded lessons is shown in the following table:

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 66 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	16 (24%)	33(50%)	17(26%)	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

11. Where pupils are fully engrossed in their learning, teachers use skilful questioning to bring out pupils' own ideas. The teacher's questions give scope for an extended answer and pupils are given time and encouragement to say what they think. The learning climate is such that pupils do not feel threatened by adverse comments from the teacher or their classmates if they make a mistake. Pupils' contributions are valued and used to move the lesson on, stimulating progress and pupils' involvement. Planning for lessons is very thorough. At the end of a lesson, teachers note down aspects of the lesson that were well understood by pupils or areas which need further support. Teachers have weekly lesson planning meetings in year group teams. This ensures that issues raised from previous lessons are discussed and acted upon and all pupils in the year group enjoy the same curriculum. Teachers make flexible use of the timetable. They make sure that pupils have maximum benefit if they are withdrawn from other class or school activities. By creative use of the timetable, specialist teachers will take a subject for the whole year group. This is done well in Year 1 and Year 5 and has a positive

effect on pupils' attitudes and standards. There was a significant amount of very good teaching in music and personal, social and health education, which explains the high standards in these subjects.

12. Teaching is less effective when the class teacher talks for too long, stretching pupils' concentration to the limit. Whilst the content of the talk is very relevant, opportunities are lost to make use of pupils' enthusiasm to explore for themselves the concepts and facts being raised. The rate of pupils' learning is slowed down. This aspect was seen where the class teacher is new to teaching or to the age group involved, for example, in Year 2. Considering the length of time these pupils are expected to listen, their behaviour and attitudes are good and because of this they make sound progress.
13. Teaching assistants make a very valuable contribution to pupils' progress. This ranges from teaching small groups to carrying out assessments on pupils' attainment. The regular written guidance teachers provide for teaching assistants and volunteer helpers is simple to follow but effective in supporting learning.
14. In all classes, teachers are giving statements of what pupils are expected to know [learning objectives] by the end of a lesson or series of lessons. Pupils are aware of their own targets for improvement. These targets and learning objectives have the potential to raise standards, but they lack precision and clarity. Pupils are being given some helpful comments when their work is marked. However, this approach is inconsistent across the school. As a result pupils are not clear enough about how they can improve their own learning. The school is aware that the next step is to set clear, concise and achievable targets that pupils can work towards and review at planned timely intervals. Pupils' attainment in English and mathematics is systematically assessed and recorded for all pupils. The attainment of each pupil, the support needed and the predicted outcomes are very thoroughly considered. This leads to additional support being provided, the progress of all pupils followed and improved standards.
15. The quality of teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and sometimes very good where one pupil is taught by an adult. This has a positive effect on the achievement of the pupils in meeting their individual targets. Teachers assess pupils' progress regularly and the information gleaned is used effectively to provide well-targeted support in group and individual work. As a result these pupils learn as well as others in the class. The school prides itself in successfully monitoring the withdrawal of pupils from main lessons, ensuring they do not miss the same lesson each week.

The curriculum

The curriculum throughout the school is **good**.

Opportunities for enrichment are **very good**.

Accommodation and resources are **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy are working well.
- The school offers a broad range of interesting learning opportunities.
- The curriculum offers very good support for pupils with special educational needs and for those for whom English is an additional language.
- The small school hall limits whole school gatherings.
- The location and book provision in the school library limit its regular use.
- The quality of display is good.

Commentary

16. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is securely based on the recommended six areas of learning. Children benefit from the reinforcement of new knowledge and skills in interesting and imaginative contexts.
17. In Years 1 to 6 the school provides a full range of range of subjects, including French, to which all pupils have good equal access. The curriculum interests pupils. A good comprehensive plan has been introduced since the previous inspection for the development, monitoring and reviewing of all areas of the curriculum. This results in curriculum improvement but the improvements identified do not always clearly fit in the development plan for the whole school. The school's strategy for teaching numeracy is good, and its recent thrust to improve problem solving is clearly evident. In many of the classes, mathematics is clearly linked to problems encountered in everyday situations. The application of knowledge and skills to problem solving, investigation and research in mathematics is promoted with success. The curriculum for literacy has been successfully enhanced by the whole school development of its use in other subjects. This is having a positive effect on standards. The curricula for art, music and personal, social and health education are particularly effective in engaging pupils' interest and producing higher standards.
18. The school provides a very good range of opportunities for pupils to have experiences outside normal classroom activities. There is a rich range of extra-curricular activities providing a wide variety of sports and performing arts. Pupils benefit from educational visits and visitors to the school. For example, Year 6 pupils went to a special children's production, a play by Shakespeare and the artist in residence worked with pupils to produce sculptures in the school grounds. The fact that all Year 3 to 6 pupils go on an annual residential experience is particularly noteworthy.
19. Pupils' personal, social and health education is woven well into the general fabric of the school. Activities are carefully planned and organised, for example, healthy eating, and often involve members of the local community such as the local health authority. Pupils are committed to these developments.
20. The school accommodation is good and provides a bright, airy and attractively presented environment to support teaching and learning. Pupils take a pride in the significant amount of their work, which is on display. The outside areas of the school give a good first impression and are welcoming for parents and pupils with pleasant circulation areas. The school hall is far too small to house the whole school for formal gatherings and to accommodate the appreciative audiences who see the pupils' well-presented musical entertainments. The school library's location and book provision are inadequate for the size of the school and consequently is underused in supporting independent research.
21. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. For those whose first language is not English provision is good. Both groups of pupils achieve as well as their peers and are given every opportunity to take part in all the school's many extra-curricular activities. Well-focused support, especially in literacy and numeracy, reflect the good and sometimes very good quality adult support given in lessons and during small group activities. The school prides itself in ensuring that any pupil withdrawal from main class lessons is closely monitored to ensure that pupils do not miss the same lesson every week.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes **very good** care of all of its pupils.

Provision and guidance based on monitoring is **good**.

The involvement of pupils in sharing their views about the school is **very good**.

Systems for ensuring pupils' health and safety are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers know pupils very well and have good relationships with them.

- Pupils feel happy and secure at school.
- Pupils' welfare is greatly enhanced by nurses in the school.
- Pupils are engaged well in decisions about their learning and their school.

Commentary

22. The school has maintained its very effective health and safety procedures, including relevant systems for recording and dealing with medical issues, accidents and other incidents. Fire safety and site security are well managed. The school's system for child protection is led effectively by the headteacher. Great benefit is derived from a teaching assistant who is a trained paediatric nurse who helps to maintain staff training at a high level. Additionally there is a nurse employed by the local National Health Trust who plays a significant role in the well-being of pupils in the school and also when they move to secondary education.
23. The induction of most new pupils starts with their visits to the school while they still attend the neighbouring playgroup and is very effective. Pupils find their new school familiar and welcoming so they settle well. Good relationships between pupils and teachers are established quickly and are maintained, so pupils are comfortable approaching teachers for help. Their relationships and the friendly atmosphere give all pupils a feeling of security, which supports their responsiveness to teachers' expectations, both of high standards of behaviour and of engagement in learning, and as a result they achieve well.
24. A good understanding of pupils' academic and personal attainment and progress is established, starting with information transferred on entry, supplemented by baseline and National Curriculum assessments, and enhanced by continuous observations and the marking of pupils' work. Teachers understand pupils' progress well. The support provided for pupils who have special educational needs is very good. All pupils benefit from good support from teaching assistants who are well briefed and effectively deployed.
25. Pupils are encouraged effectively to share responsibility for developments within the school and in the wider community by participating in a school council whose proposals are taken seriously. For example, their initiative on healthy eating has been welcomed and incorporated thoroughly into school life. Pupils also play an active role in their own learning through their involvement in setting their own targets for academic and personal development.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with its parents, the local community, other school and colleges are all **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Cooperation and mutual support with other schools is very good.
- The school works very effectively with parents.
- Parents hold the school in high regard.

Commentary

26. Parents express considerable satisfaction with most aspects of the school's work. This has been sustained since the previous inspection. A few concerns were expressed about behaviour particularly in the playground. Parents have confidence that concerns about their children are promptly and effectively dealt with if the school is informed. A minority of parents say they would like to be better informed about their children's progress. Inspection findings support parents' positive views of the school and their concern about behaviour in the playground.

27. Good information about the school's policies and procedures is provided to parents through the prospectus, governors' report and regular newsletters. These play an important role in helping parents to understand the school's approaches and in encouraging them to participate in their children's education. Reports to parents on their children's progress are good and many provide useful advice to help pupils improve. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed of their progress and are fully involved in regular reviews of their individual education plans.
28. Parents are consulted regularly and frequently about a wide range of matters and most find that any concerns they express are dealt with effectively. The headteacher's presence and approachability is much appreciated. Parents consider that the school takes good account of their views. They particularly value being informed by the school about the effect of action it has taken in response to their approaches. Through 'FOSS' (Friends Of Southwold School) parents organise frequent events, which raise useful funds for school resources and support their children's education, as well as confirming the school's importance as a feature of the local community. A good number of parents are involved in running Friends Of Southwold School or help in lessons or on school visits, and most parents report to the school what they hear when their children read at home.
29. The school has very rich and effective relationships with the neighbouring playgroup and with other schools in the local Bicester Learning in Partnership scheme, which lead to worthwhile joint activities for pupils and smooth transfers between phases. Through extensive initiatives, these institutions work very effectively to ensure the engagement in education of all children in the area. The school's relationships with other agencies including the local education authority are effective and support the school's promotion of pupils' academic and personal development well.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are **good**. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.

The headteacher provides **very good** leadership.

The overall effectiveness of management is **good**.

Governance of the school is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a clear vision of where the school is going and provides energetic and strong leadership, particularly in the provision of a rich and stimulating curriculum.
- There is a very good team spirit in the school, with leaders who are trusted and respected.
- Teaching teams are effective and their strengths and expertise are used to the benefit of pupils' achievement.
- Changes in staff and pupil numbers have been effectively dealt with.
- Governors are well informed about the school and so can take an effective part in its management.
- Self-evaluation and the action taken are effective but the school development plan does not clearly communicate this.

Commentary

30. The headteacher provides strong leadership. Staff, parents, governors and partner schools have confidence in her ability to drive forward initiatives that will lead to improvements in pupils' education. She has taken a strong lead in the development of an enriched curriculum. There is a strong focus on the creative arts, including music, which is much appreciated by parents and has significantly raised standards in these areas. The very good links with parents and the community are a direct result of the headteacher's influence and leadership, particularly in the setting up of a partnership with local schools. In recent years there has been a very high

turnover of teaching staff and a significant increase in pupil numbers. These changes have been managed with the minimum of disruption to the work of the school.

31. The leadership has created a strong sense of collegiality in the school through the establishment of teams that co-ordinate the work of each key stage, and year group. The close working together of staff means that individuals feel valued and encouraged to do their best. There is a productive relationship between the senior managers and the headteacher. Responsibilities have been clearly delegated and team leaders know what is expected of them. Teams meet regularly, planning the curriculum together and evaluating the progress of pupils. This leads to a consistency in teaching across the school and good assessments of pupils' learning needs. Team leaders are good role models, with enthusiasm and energy with which they undertake and develop their areas of responsibility.
32. Each subject is lead by a team of at least two teachers from each key stage. This means that developments are effectively implemented across the whole school. There is a high level of mutual respect between all staff, which has created a harmonious learning environment. This is also sustained through the use of teachers' individual expertise to raise standards. In music, for example, good practice is regularly modelled by the co-ordinator and, a part-time teacher works alongside non-specialist teachers to teach music. The impact of these arrangements is the rise in pupils' attainment, most notably in singing.
33. The headteacher and staff focus effectively on raising standards of achievement and the rate of pupils' progress. Weaknesses in pupils' performance are identified through detailed and regular assessments. The outcomes of these evaluations are used well to implement action that will lead to improvement. This is being seen in writing at Key Stage 2 and problem solving in mathematics across the school. Senior managers observe lessons and subject co-ordinators look at teachers' planning and pupils' work to see how well initiatives are developing. Emerging issues are used to guide staff development and performance management targets.
34. The school development plan does not reflect the practice of self-evaluation. The plan is difficult to follow as all the action plans appear to have the same status. This weakens the strategic purpose of the plan, as the key priorities for improvement are unclear. The action plans do not contain concise and precise criteria for evaluating the success of action taken. They are too vague and not focused enough on the gains expected in pupils' attainment and progress. There is no clarity on what will be monitored and evaluated, by whom and by when. The plans are not costed.
35. Professional development of staff is well-embedded in the school's practice. The school works effectively to train teachers. Several teaching assistants have been successfully trained on site and have become qualified teachers. The induction programme for staff is good and has a significant impact on the strong team spirit in the school. This aspect is particularly relevant with the high turnover of teaching staff. The newly qualified teachers are well supported through regular reviews of their practice, attendance at courses and the observation of the work of other teachers. In-service training is appropriately linked to school improvement priorities and issues identified in the direct observation of classes at work. These activities have contributed significantly to the good teaching observed.
36. The governance of the school is good. Governors are fully involved in setting the school's priorities and shaping its future development. They are active in calling the school to account in the raising of standards and challenging the headteacher when necessary. They are very supportive of the headteacher and staff, recognising and appreciating the school's contribution and value to the community.
37. Financial management and administration are good. The bursar and administration officer work well together. The modest budget deficit for this current financial year is planned for recovery in the next financial year. Best value is sought by the governors at all times when considering the purchasing of goods and services. However, there is not a clear enough link

between the budget planning and the priorities in the school development plan. The school is well staffed and resources for the curriculum are satisfactory. Funds have been well targeted at maintaining a good pupil/teacher ratio to help in the drive to raise standards. For example, a part-time teacher now works in Year 2 to provide additional support to this potentially low-attaining group. The school provides good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	945,855
Total expenditure	930,847
Expenditure per pupil	2,059

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	15,489
Balance carried forward to the next	15,008

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

38. The overall attainment of children on entry to the nursery is slightly below average. The children achieve well, particularly in reception, because of consistently good teaching in the nursery and very good teaching in reception. By the time they enter Year 1 most children have attained the nationally expected early learning goals² in all areas of learning and a few are working within the next programme of study.
39. Good planning provides exciting activities and effective assessment ensures that all children benefit from their experiences in the secure, welcoming atmosphere of the class. The accommodation is good and benefits from a well planned outdoor area, providing a rich learning environment outdoors as well as indoors. Children with special educational needs achieve well because of the good support they receive. Induction procedures are very good. They form a sound basis for strong relationships with parents.
40. All staff work very well together as a team. Their sensitive intervention helps all children to succeed. The leadership and management of the newly appointed co-ordinator are good. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. The guidance for the Foundation Stage has been fully implemented, there is now a clear structure to the day and teaching assistants support learning in a very effective way.

Personal, social and emotional development

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and children achieve very well.
- Adults provide very good role models of caring and considerate behaviour.
- Children are given choices in many activities to help them learn to play and become more independent.
- All staff have very good knowledge of the children's needs and give this area of learning high priority in all teaching plans.

Commentary

41. Children enter the nursery with below average attainment in this area of learning. Staff are very skilful at planning stimulating experiences to capture the children's interest. These help the children develop concentration skills so that they sustain attention to their work for often quite extensive periods of time. Staff work hard to reinforce good learning attitudes. Effective questioning skills encourage children to make links in learning and to work things out for themselves within a well-structured framework for learning. Children work with a high level of independence.
42. Children are well trained to tidy up after activities and learn about hygiene. Children are happy in school and join in activities. They willingly undertake responsibilities. They play well

² These are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the foundation stage. They refer mainly to achievements children make in connection with communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.

collaboratively, and become more involved and confident in learning. They make good progress in this area of learning and all are in line to achieve the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1.

Communication, language and literacy

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and the children achieve well.
- Very good cross-curricular links reinforce learning.
- Staff effectively model the use of language as a tool for thinking.

Commentary

43. Children make steady and consistent gains in communication, language and literacy. With the exception of a minority of children with special educational needs, most children come into the nursery speaking clearly audibly and with confidence. The teachers' good questioning skills enable children to reflect and structure their thinking. In the nursery, really positive encouragement gives children confidence and ensures that they are all involved in their learning and confident to talk. Very good direct teaching helps them to think about the vocabulary associated with contexts, such as fire fighting, and also helps them to link sounds to letters.
44. As a result of the teacher's very good insistence on accuracy, children in the nursery are fully engaged as they rise to the challenge of writing their name in recognisable letters and are proud of the result. By the time they reach reception most children make their own three letter words when given the stem 'at'. Interesting activities, such as the fire station in the role play area, support the development of children's language skills in a highly effectively way. Regular story times increase children's awareness of books and their enjoyment of stories. In reception children are given good opportunities to develop secure early reading and writing skills so that by the end of the year most children will reach goals expected and a few will exceed these.

Mathematical development

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and the children achieve very well.
- Well-planned, interesting practical activities effectively support learning

Commentary

45. Children's learning is made both exciting and enjoyable. Staff frequently use the outside area to play games with individuals or small groups, involving them in counting on and adding, to develop the use of mathematical terms in real situations. Good direct teaching in the nursery enables at least half of the children to become secure in counting to five with the higher achievers in that group counting up to ten and back.
46. In the reception class an insistence on accuracy ensures that all children use the correct mathematical vocabulary as they read number sentences. An imaginative use of play dough reinforces children's skill to count to 20. As a result of good teaching children will reach the goals they are expected to by the end of the reception year with a high proportion exceeding these.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children enjoy a wide range of interesting activities that give them an increasing number of experiences of their own world.
- Staff use questioning very effectively to enhance the children's knowledge and understanding of the world about them.
- Children have good access to tools and resources.

Commentary

47. Teaching and learning are good and children achieve well. Most children are working at levels expected for their age. Imaginatively planned activities support learning well, stimulate children's curiosity and enhance their understanding. Through skilful use of questioning and sensitive interaction by the teacher, children correctly use cooking utensils.
48. The fire station in the role-play area of both the reception and the nursery class extends early experiences beyond the home and school. This gives children the opportunity to make sense of a widening community. In both the nursery and the reception class, children sustain interest in computer programs, which meet their needs. They click and drag and use the keyboard. Children are developing a good awareness of different faiths and beliefs. Children make good progress in this area of learning and all are in line to achieve the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1.

Physical development

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good and children achieve well.
- Learning in the outside classroom is effectively planned to give children a rich variety of stimulating activities
- In the hall a good range of strategies challenge and inspire the learning needs of all children.

Commentary

49. Children pedal wheeled toys at speed and change direction in the secure outdoor area attached to the nursery. They work collaboratively, taking turns and helping to push when required. In the hall, nursery children move with confidence and respond well to the challenges from the teacher. Effective direct teaching helps them to make very good progress in their skills so that they move with a high degree of control and help to get the apparatus out with safety. Children in reception really enjoy their work in the hall and become engrossed as they extend their floor work, in a very creative way, on the apparatus. The children are very well organised and get the apparatus out quickly, efficiently and with a high level of independence.
50. All children achieve well, developing skills quickly and securely. Children develop their manipulative skills well by handling dough, scissors and brushes, and manipulate small construction equipment with dexterity. Good teaching ensures that all children are in line to achieve the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1.

Creative development

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and a wide range of imaginatively planned activities extends the children's experience.
- Skills such as cutting and sticking are developed well and the children's achievement is good.
- Role-play and other well-planned, stimulating activities encourage the children to use their imagination.

Commentary

51. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Most children are in line to reach the early learning goals by the time that they enter Year 1. In both the nursery and the reception class, a well-planned curriculum together with a wide variety of materials and media allows children to explore colour, texture, shape and form, safely using different tools. In the nursery, children use scissors and paste with confidence as they become absorbed in making their own collage. They gain great enjoyment as they experiment with colour as they paint.
52. Staff interact and support role-play effectively so that the story line is kept alive and children develop the skills that enable their creativity to have expression. In the reception class children sing simple songs from memory and match movements to the sound. The teachers' commitment and enthusiasm creates a very positive working atmosphere and as a result children have the confidence to try new skills to draw recognisable plans for the models that they are to make.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The emphasis on pupils' writing in all subjects is leading to raised standards.
- Pupils are enthusiastic and competent readers.
- Assessment is good.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Standards in writing in Year 2 are below average.
- Standards in speaking and listening are rising.
- Library provision is unsatisfactory.
- The development plan for the subject lacks precision.
- Leadership and management are good.

Commentary

53. At the end of both key stages, standards in speaking and listening are in line with national expectations. A few pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 are attaining above average. The recent focus on raising standards in pupils' oracy work is beginning to have a positive impact. Most teachers use good questioning to enable pupils to explore and explain their ideas. Where pupils are hesitant speakers, time is given to encourage them to contribute, which most do. Pupils take advantage of the many opportunities they are given to share their thoughts, such as discussion time in personal, social and health education and in the school council.

54. Standards in reading are average, overall. The vast majority of pupils are enthusiastic readers. They read fluently and with good expression. In Key Stage 1, pupils apply their knowledge of the sound letters make to read unfamiliar words. Many use contextual clues and illustrations to understand the story. All pupils understand the difference between fiction and non-fiction texts and all explain how they locate information from reference books using the contents pages and index.
55. Standards in writing are average by the end of Key Stage 2, but below average by the end of Key Stage 1. The current Year 2 has a large number of lower ability pupils, the majority of boys showing very low attainment on entry. Although this group has made good progress, attainment is below average in spelling, handwriting, and punctuation. Pupils write for a wide range of purposes and this is improving the organisation of their writing and their use of language. However, their vocabulary is limited and sentences have a simple structure. At the end of Key Stage 2, average standards have been attained by good progress in the organisation of writing, the clear sense of audience and the use of lively language to engage the reader. Progress is slower in the consistent and correct use of punctuation and spelling. Standards in handwriting vary from average, overall.
56. The quality of teaching and learning are good. This leads to good achievement across the school. Teachers plan well to produce well-structured lessons that interest pupils. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and know what pupils' learning needs are. Work set for pupils effectively builds on previous learning which enables them to make good progress. The placing of pupils in classes of similar abilities and additional lessons provides challenge for all abilities, including the more able. Most teachers employ a wide range of teaching strategies to ensure that all pupils are fully engaged in the lesson and learn effectively. In the best lessons there is very effective questioning and high expectations that push pupils to extend their thinking and make connections with previous learning. In a few lessons, pupils sit too long listening to the teacher and, although behaviour is very well managed, pupils occasionally lose concentration during these times.
57. Assessments are used thoroughly and systematically to effectively identify pupils' learning needs. Pupils are familiar with their own targets for improvement so they know what is expected of them. These targets are generally precise so pupils' work can be assessed against them. Teachers write encouraging comments when they mark pupils' work and there are examples where it is made clear what pupils must do to improve. This practice is not consistent across the school.
58. The work of support staff has a positive effect on the progress made by pupils with special educational needs and those very few who use English as an additional language. These pupils make good progress because they receive regular, direct teaching in small groups appropriately focussed on practical and oral work. They are well integrated in whole class sessions and participate confidently.
59. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The literacy team works well together and influences improvement in all areas of the school. They have good subject knowledge and provide effective guidance for colleagues through training and regular advice. Pupils' standards are recorded very systematically with provision for each pupil considered and the likely future performance predicted. The outcome of this good use of assessment is the improved provision for the low attainment of the current Year 2 leading to pupils' good achievement.
60. The development plan for literacy is not specific enough to guide actions for improvement. The aims are very broad and do not reflect the more precise work which the school does. The criteria for measuring the success of actions are insufficiently linked to pupils' attainment. Strategies for monitoring the progress of the plan and evaluating the outcome, are not included. The plan covers one year only so there is no longer-term view of the key future priorities for the subject. Library facilities are inadequate for this size of school. The library is

very small, in an open circulation area with a very restricted range of books. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.

Literacy across the curriculum

61. The use of literacy across the curriculum is good. The school has deliberately focussed on this to encourage reluctant writers, as well as providing a range of opportunities for pupils to write at length and for different purposes. This is proving successful as there are many examples of good quality writing in history, geography and personal, social and health education.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

62. The school provides very good opportunities for pupils to learn French from Year 1 onwards. The specialist skills and enthusiasm of the teacher are used very well to interest the pupils in the language and ensure enjoyment in their learning. One lesson was observed during the inspection in Year 3. As a result of the teacher's very good command of the language and a very good range of strategies, pupils are achieving very well. They understand a good range of basic questions and instructions. They respond to simple questions with simple sentences. The teacher makes very good use of French in class and, as a result, pupils are developing well their abilities to give correct answers in a range of everyday situations. Their vocabulary when identifying animals is very good. The teacher's expertise and high expectations are helping to develop a good awareness of pronunciation.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- After relatively low standards in Year 6, the school has successfully focused its priority on raising standards.
- The quality of teaching is good and consequently most pupils learn well.
- Recent improvements in assessment procedures and performance data have given the school a more accurate picture of its strengths and weaknesses.
- The subject action plan requires greater precision in terms of priority and monitoring achievement.
- Strong leadership and management are positively driving standards upwards.

Commentary

63. The provision in mathematics is good, currently meeting the needs of all pupils well. The relatively low standards attained in previous National Curriculum tests for 11-year-olds have been reversed. There are very positive signs that standards are on an upward trend as mathematics is now a priority for development across the school. The school has set challenging targets for Year 6 in 2004 that reflect well on its ambition to drive forward improvement in the provision for mathematics throughout the school. The results in the National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds were above average in 2003. The present Year 2 has a high proportion of pupils whose overall ability is lower than the current Year 3 and the additional provision made for them is leading to good achievement.
64. Inspection evidence indicates average standards of attainment in Year 2 and Year 6. The relatively high proportion of less able pupils, mainly boys, are receiving effective additional support with their learning. Considering the higher proportion of lower attaining pupils, achievement is good.
65. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers clearly transmit their enthusiasm for the subject and capture pupils' interest well. Learning proceeds at a brisk pace and is enjoyable. Well-planned activities, suitable for all pupils' levels of learning, capture their interest and obvious enjoyment.

Expectations are high and the quality of presentation of pupils' work is of a good standard. Very clear explanations ensure all pupils understand how to complete the tasks successfully. In many lessons the use of correct mathematical language is actively encouraged and used. Teaching assistants, well directed by teachers, play an important and valuable role in assisting groups of pupils and individuals such as those with special educational needs to improve their levels of mathematical knowledge and skill. At times, the introductory parts of the lesson is too long, with pupils sitting for extended periods before starting activities. As a result many pupils become restless, especially boys, and levels of motivation prove difficult to recapture.

66. Leadership and management and the use of assessment are good. A strong subject management team is successfully moving the subject forward and there is good capacity for improvement. Greater precision in regular test result analysis and better evaluation of strengths and weaknesses have started to impact positively. Marking is consistent in its regularity and positive nature. However, it often fails to indicate clearly to pupils how they can improve. The use of learning objectives are increasingly having a positive effect on pupils' progress. The observation of lessons has had a positive effect on teaching and learning. One significant outcome is the improved use of pupils' problem solving skills and applying mathematics in everyday situations. Lesson observations have also gone some way towards identifying strengths and weaknesses in teaching, but they do not focus with enough rigour on standards achieved or the rate of progress of different ability groups. Since the previous inspection, improvement has been satisfactory. The present subject action plan covers a range of relevant issues, however, greater precision needs to be given to ranking priorities in order of importance to maintain and raise standards. Once a target has been achieved it needs celebrating before moving on to the next.

Mathematics across the curriculum

67. The use of mathematics across the curriculum is satisfactory. Pupils often use mathematics as part of their work in other subjects, developing an appreciation of the practical uses of their skills. For example, in a healthy eating project, graphs and data collection successfully assisted pupils' observations. Measurements of length and capacity are made in design and technology and science.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The progress of pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 is good.
- Teachers plan and evaluate lessons thoroughly, which promotes pupils' involvement in lessons.
- The use of assessment is helping to raise pupils' attainment.
- Pupils carry out experimental work well but their investigative work lacks structure.
- Planning for development lacks clarity.

Commentary

68. At the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards are satisfactory and achievement is good. In 2002, the National Curriculum tests for 11-year-olds dipped to well below average but regained its previously average position in 2003. Pupils work carefully and thoughtfully in their experimental work. They apply their previous, satisfactory knowledge well to new situations, using creative imagination to explain basic scientific principles. They listen well and use correct scientific vocabulary in their discussion with adults and each other. From Year 2 onwards, pupils develop a reasonable understanding of scientific 'fair testing' when they control aspects which are variable and measure outcomes. Their ability to raise their own questions for a reasoned experimental procedure, leading to a valid conclusion, lacks a consistent structure. This is particularly the case in a significant proportion of Year 2 pupils where the organisation of their

written work is lacking. There are several instances of pupils' limitations in writing hindering their pace of learning in science.

69. Teaching and learning are good in both key stages, overall. There are examples of very good teaching, particularly in Year 6. One feature of this very good teaching is the way in which pupils' verbal contributions to the lesson are brought out, valued and used to help the progress of the class. This tactic promotes very good involvement from pupils. There is a tendency in Year 2 for too much talking by the teacher where the teacher is new to this age group. Pupils work hard at maintaining concentration during these long sessions. Pupils behave well in lessons and always try their best. Class teachers make good, well planned use of support teachers and teaching assistants, when available. This particularly helps pupils with special educational needs make good progress. All class teachers plan thoroughly and consistently across year groups. This gives all pupils access to a full curriculum.
70. Leadership and management are good. The observation of teaching and learning and the appropriate action taken as a result has been effective in improving provision. The co-ordinating team has been very recently appointed and has received relevant professional development to match their new responsibilities. There is a well-established system for teachers to plan lessons and evaluate the impact of lessons on pupils' learning. Regular testing in all year groups results in teaching being directed to promote pupils' positive progress. The use of learning objectives is having an increasingly positive effect on pupils' progress. The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent. There are several examples of encouraging comments made but a lack of guidance as to how pupils can improve. Overall, assessment procedures are good and are having an increasingly positive effect on standards. Priorities for development in the subject, and the action taken, are very relevant to raising standards and pupils' interest. The written plans for development are too ambitious and lack practicality. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been good progress since the previous inspection.
- Learning resources are good and well managed.
- From Year 2 onwards, pupils are very skilled in setting up and closing down their work on computers.
- All pupils share their time on computers amicably in well-established routines.
- Pupils make good progress in both key stages.
- Teaching and learning are good.

Commentary

71. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards are in line with expectations and achievement is good. This is a great improvement since the previous inspection when standards were below average across the school.
72. Pupils in Year 1 work enthusiastically when they give correct instructions to direct the movement of a robot. Pupils in Year 2 efficiently log-on to their previous work. They confidently navigate their way through basic on-screen commands. They use programs to produce colourful drawings and the production and simple editing of text. They are not familiar with producing their own graphs.
73. By the end of Year 6, pupils produce interesting presentations involving images, text, movement and sound. They use word processing programs and editing techniques effectively, producing well laid-out text. Spreadsheets are used to produce a range of different types of graph but they are not familiar with the use of spreadsheets for calculations. Databases are

used to sort and classify facts. There is limited use of emails to communicate within school and to schools in another country. Pupils benefit socially and academically from visits to an education centre based in the Oxford United football club. They enjoy these visits and produce good quality videos and gain expertise in controlling robots.

74. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers organise lessons so that pupils make good use of the time available on the computers. The grouping of pupils, mainly in pairs, to work on the computers is well established. Pupils waste little time in settling to their work and share the equipment very well. Lessons are carefully planned so that all classes in each year group have the same curriculum. Teachers add notes to these plans to show how well the pupils coped with the content. These notes are used effectively to guide weekly planning sessions. Manageable and effective systems are in place to track pupils' progress in lessons over the year. Teaching assistants and the technician are fully involved in supporting learning.
75. Leadership and management are good. The subject co-ordinator is innovative and knows the subject very well. The school took a bold step to convert a kitchen area into a well-equipped computer suite, including a large display screen, which projects images produced by the computer. Through the continuing professional development of staff, these resources are used well. The control and sensing aspects of the curriculum for Key Stage 2 are being covered by external providers so that pupils have access to the whole curriculum and benefit from visiting other learning centres. The part-time technician plays a vital role in sorting out basic faults in the computer network so that maximum use is made of equipment. Her time spent with computers is growing and her other duties in whole school administration have been offset by the appointment of a part-time school bursar. There is a good range of well-organised software to support learning in other subjects. There are two computers in most classrooms, which are used to support learning. The school is meeting statutory requirements in the subject, which was not the case at the previous inspection. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

76. The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is satisfactory. Good use is made in history with pupils' use of text, clip art and animation to present information of the Victorians and World War II. The use of digital photographs supports work in religious education and paint programs enhance pupils' appreciation of art. Databases are used to promote better understanding in science and music. The use of word processing and data presentation, such as graphs, is limited.

HUMANITIES

77. In **geography** and **history**, three lessons in total were observed and pupils' work, teachers' planning and class display were looked at and conversations were held with pupils and teachers.
78. In **geography** in Key Stage 2, standards observed were satisfactory. Teaching, learning and achievement were good. From pupils' work seen standards in geography appear satisfactory. In one lesson where the pace was brisk and all pupils were fully engaged, skills in mathematics were used well to draw graphs to compare the rainfall and temperature between Bangalore and London. The well-informed teaching in a lesson in Year 5 led to a high level of interest as pupils compared the towns of Hook Norton and Bicester. Pupils used their literacy skills well to write purposefully about this and designed a poster to promote sustainable development.
79. There was good teaching and learning in the one **history** lesson observed. Pupils used photographs of World War II evacuees to raise questions about events at the time and the reasons for them. Through careful guidance, pupils were able to understand the limitations of using only one historical source. Pupils were very interested in their work. Pupils' work, across

the school, shows a satisfactory level of understanding about people's lives in the past and the different experiences of those of different status and gender. Pupils use a range of historical sources to learn about the past. Educational visits have a very positive effect on pupils' understanding of life in the past. There has been satisfactory progress since the previous inspection. The curriculum is better structured and pupils are better equipped to carry out enquiries in the subject.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons make an effective contribution to pupils' personal, social and moral development.
- Religious education is well led and managed.

Commentary

80. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection and are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus at the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils achieve well because teaching is good, encourages interest and enthusiasm for the subject and helps pupils make good progress in lessons. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and encourage them to think deeply. Pupils are well challenged by activities that are carefully matched to their needs.
81. In Year 1 pupils are absorbed in the discussion comparing Christian and Muslim weddings. These very good attitudes lead to productive engagement and good progress. Religious artefacts are of good quality and well organised. Resources are used well to better pupils' understanding. Lessons provide effective opportunities for pupils to practise their speaking and listening skills, showing that they have thought about what they have learned, and formed personal opinions from their learning. For example, in a discussion in Year 6, the teacher's well-framed questions enabled pupils to recall previous learning when discussing sacred texts. Pupils' social, personal and moral development is well supported through religious education.
82. The subject co-ordinator is knowledgeable and leads and manages the subject effectively. The current emphasis to make cross-curricular links between topics studied in religious education and those studied in history and geography is helping pupils understand issues in a wider context. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

83. **Physical education** and **design and technology** were sampled. **Art and design** and **music** are reported in depth.
84. It is not possible to give a judgement on provision in **physical education**. All aspects of the two lessons observed in physical education were satisfactory. The management of behaviour and the use of time were positive aspects of the teaching. The size of the hall is a restricting factor on pupils' freedom of movement. Management and leadership are good. The school has rightly identified the need to improve teachers' subject knowledge to further develop pupils' movement and dance capabilities. The quality and range of extra-curricular activities is good and pupils achieve well in these activities. The pupils benefit from the very good range of sports specialists who visit the school, including well-qualified coaches for hockey, netball and girls' football. The records from weekly swimming sessions show that the majority of pupils are on track to meet the requirements to swim 25 metres by the end of Year 6. All National Curriculum requirements are being met.
85. The two lessons observed in **design and technology** were satisfactory in all respects. Pupils attain broadly average standards but their skills are not systematically developed. In Year 1

pupils confidently evaluated plans for their model of playground equipment. Year 4 pupils designed moving parts, involving levers, to be included in story books written by themselves. This successfully linked work in English and science. The quality of the finish given to products is satisfactory. Information and communication technology makes an insufficient contribution to pupils' learning through planning, modelling or control. Pupils work together very co-operatively in their group and class work is making a very positive contribution to pupils' social skills. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is enthusiasm for the development of the subject, but a lack of planned opportunity for systematic monitoring and evaluation.

Art and design

Provision for art and design is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards and achievement are very good.
- The passion and commitment of the subject leaders has a direct impact upon standards.
- The curriculum is very good.
- Learning makes a very effective contribution to pupils' cultural development.

Commentary

86. Pupils at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 achieve standards well above expected levels. This is much better than at the time of the previous inspection when standards were judged to be in line with national expectations. Achievement is very good. The enthusiasm and expert knowledge of the subject co-ordinators has underpinned a well-planned scheme of work, which offers all pupils a wide range of artistic experiences in two-dimensions and three-dimensions. Leadership and management of the subject are very good.
87. The work on display around the school and discussions with pupils is testament to the fact that artistic skills are taught well. As they get older, pupils learn increasingly more complex skills using a wider range of media. Skills, knowledge and understanding are developed systematically through a wide experience of tools, media and processes. Three-dimensional work varies from woven sculptures using different materials, including willow, to a large, atmospheric model of the Great Wave by Katsushika. Pupils study artists from the past such as Joan Miro and Andy Warhol and work alongside local artists so that they develop a broad experience of concepts and artist activities. This work is very effectively led and managed to motivate and enthuse pupils' creativity.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards, overall, are good and singing is very good.
- Teachers are enthusiastic and have good subject knowledge, which stimulates pupils to achieve well.
- Subject managers lead by their own good practice and are well organised.
- There is a good range of extra-curricular activities in music.
- Very good progress has been made since the previous inspection.

Commentary

88. Standards and achievement in both key stages are good, overall, and very good in singing. When pupils sing they control their breathing well, stand correctly and achieve clear diction. They sing very tunefully, with expression and feeling, and harmonise well. In the highest quality singing, they expressively vary the pitch and tempo of sound to convey the mood of the song. The music sung is varied and challenging. Pupils demonstrate good listening skills in assemblies where a wide variety of recorded music is played and discussed.
89. Teaching and learning are good and, at times, very good. The teachers' subject expertise is strong and they have high expectations of pupils in both the accuracy and quality of sounds being made. Lessons are well structured and there are effective strategies to ensure all pupils actively participate. Pupils respond well. Pupils' progress is good in lessons, clubs and assemblies because teachers do not accept the first attempt but provide careful guidance and demonstration as to how to improve.
90. Improvement in music since the previous inspection has been very good. Standards were below average and a key issue for development. The impressive improvement has been brought about through the recruitment of staff with music expertise, including an enthusiastic, and knowledgeable subject co-ordinator. Leadership and management are good. Through the well-planned deployment of staff, only specialists and enthusiasts teach music. There is now a good scheme of work, which effectively guides progress in pupils' learning and provides stimulating planning guidance for teachers. The specialist music room is well used and resourced with a good range of tuned and untuned instruments.
91. The extra-curricular clubs provide very good opportunities for pupils with a musical aptitude to develop their talents further. The enthusiasm boys and girls have for music is shown in the good attendance for orchestra and the choir. The orchestra demonstrates a good standard of playing and pupils' ability to read music. The staff and parents are rightly proud of the quality of performance in music. Musical productions are well attended and a recent CD has been well received.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

The provision for personal, social, health education and citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good.
- The curriculum is good.
- Achievement and attainment are good.

Commentary

92. Teaching and learning are good and, at times, very good. Pupils respond well to this and achieve well. The curriculum is carefully planned in all year groups giving good coverage of issues in interesting contexts. Attainment is good in Key Stage 1 and very good in Key Stage 2. All classes take part in activities known as circle time. The class sits in a circle, has well established rules for speaking and discusses specific issues, which they relate well to. Adults and pupils openly share their thoughts and experiences on personal themes such as friendship. This work is well planned and effective in developing pupils' emotional and social skills. This results in pupils becoming increasingly able to talk about their feelings with confidence and sensitivity, to work in groups and listen carefully to others. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are being very effectively developed through these sessions.
93. School assemblies contribute well to pupils' personal development. A 'value' such as 'friendship' or 'respect' is the focus for assemblies over a month. This is followed up in classes where it is explored in greater depth. Health education is an effective part of the curriculum and pupils readily identify aspects that make a healthy lifestyle. There are carefully organised courses for sex education and the dangers of drugs and smoking. The local National Health

Trust nurse and the teaching assistant who is a qualified paediatric nurse make a very significant contribution in this area. Year 6 pupils benefit from visits to exhibitions on citizenship presented by many organisations in the community such as the emergency services and utility companies.

94. The work of the school council and that of the joint council with other local schools, is making a significant contribution to pupils understanding of their role as citizens in a democracy. The council has representatives from all year groups. Council meetings are well organised. The council has successfully influenced improvements, such as playground provision and healthy eating campaigns. The joint council has put its views about facilities in the town to a councillor, who is taking their ideas to the town council. Pupils across the school are adamant that both councils do make a difference in that their views are taken account of and action subsequently implemented.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

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	3

Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	3

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
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	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
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).

