

INSPECTION REPORT

St John's CE VC Primary School

Keynsham

LEA area: Bath and North East Somerset

Unique reference number: 109197

Headteacher: Mrs Glynis Dyson

Lead inspector: Mrs Joan Boden

Dates of inspection: 7th – 10th June 2004

Inspection number: 257713

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	225
School address:	Charlton Park Keynsham Bristol
Postcode:	BS31 2NB
Telephone number:	0117 986 3824
Fax number:	0117 986 9943
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr E Nall

Date of previous inspection: 20th – 24th April 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St John's is about the same size as other primary schools with 225 pupils on roll. There are roughly equal numbers of boys and girls overall, but there are considerably more boys than girls in Year 5. The school admits pupils in the September prior to their fifth birthday. Pupils have a wide range of abilities when they start school, but overall their attainment is average. Pupils come from a wide range of social backgrounds but a below average proportion is entitled to free school meals. The vast majority of pupils are white British, but a small number are of mixed race or other races. All the pupils have English as their mother tongue. A below average proportion of pupils are identified as having special educational needs, but no pupils have Statements of Special Educational Need. Most of the pupils receiving additional help have moderate learning difficulties or difficulties with speech and communication, although a small number have behavioural problems. The movement of pupils to and from the school other than at the usual times of starting and leaving is below average. Teacher mobility in the recent past has been high. Two of the three teachers in the infant classes, and three of the five in the junior classes only started at the school in September. In addition to this, at the time of the inspection, the reception class was taught by two supply teachers covering for the long-term absence of the teacher and one of the teachers in Year 4 was on maternity leave, so this was covered by another part-time supply teacher. The school was awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2002.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
12301	Mrs Joan Boden	Lead inspector	English English as an additional language Science Art and design Design and technology
11564	Mrs Jean McKay	Lay inspector	
21334	Miss S Ramnath	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage ¹ Special educational needs Geography History Physical education Religious education
26961	Mr Michael Taylor	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology (ICT) Music Citizenship

The inspection contractor was:

Altecq Education
102 Bath Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL53 7JX

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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 that provides good value for money. The leadership of the headteacher is good. Teaching and learning are good overall and pupils achieve well in English and mathematics and very well in science. At ages seven and 11, standards are above average in English and mathematics and well above average in science. However, higher-attaining pupils could do better in English and mathematics at age 11 years. Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to work are good overall.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Although the headteacher gives a good steer to the work of the school, there is a disproportionate balance of responsibilities within the senior management team that results in an excessive work load for her.
- Standards in religious education are below those expected at age 11 years.
- Pupils achieve well in English and mathematics and very well in science.
- Most pupils behave very well but, despite the best efforts of the school, a small minority of boys in Year 4 do not. Inspectors agree with parents' concern that these pupils do not always behave well.
- Marking is not always helping pupils to improve their learning
- The organisation of the school day does not allow sufficient time for subjects other than literacy, numeracy and science.
- Pupils are happy and secure in the knowledge that all adults are there to help them.

The school has improved at a **satisfactory** rate since the previous inspection. There has been satisfactory improvement in the areas identified in the previous report. There is still some way to go, however, to make the tracking of pupils' progress effective in ensuring that pupils of all abilities achieve as well as possible. Better provision in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) has led to improved standards.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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 achieve well overall. In reception, children make a good start and are on course to exceed the goals expected by the time they start in Year 1, except in their early writing skills where they are in line with expectations. Reading, writing and mathematics standards are above average by the end of Year 2. The pace of learning is maintained in the junior classes and the above average standards are maintained as pupils move through the school. Inspection evidence indicates that, in the current Year 6, standards in English and mathematics are above average, and standards in science are well above average. This is a significant

improvement in science brought about by the very good teaching of a specialist teacher. However, in English and mathematics, the most-able pupils are not achieving as well as they might because they are not always challenged sufficiently. Pupils with special educational needs are doing well for their capabilities.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. The behaviour of most pupils and their attitudes to work are **very good**. However, a small minority of boys in Year 4, present unacceptable behaviour that upsets other pupils in the class. Pupils enjoy school and, for the most part, get on really well together. They are mature and confident and relate very well to adults. Attendance is **very good** and pupils are rarely late.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching is **good** overall. However, teachers in Years 3 to 6 do not always demand enough of more-able pupils who could do more.

The curriculum is **satisfactory**. The organisation of the school day, however, means that some subjects are not covered in sufficient depth and pupils do not always achieve as well as they could. Pupils develop their literacy and ICT skills effectively in other subjects. Visits, such as the trip to London, add significantly to pupils' learning. Staff know the children very well and have their best interests at heart.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good**. The leadership of the headteacher is good. Despite her heavy workload, her management is also good. Her effective leadership and management of the school are key factors in the good standards the school achieves and hence its popularity with parents and its high standing in the community. Leadership by other key staff is satisfactory. Most of the subject leaders are new to the school and, although they have clear action plans, they have not had the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning effectively and so influence standards. Governance is satisfactory. Most governors are relatively new to the school. They have a clear understanding of what it does well and where improvements are needed.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Pupils and parents have overall positive views of the school. Parents are happy with the high standards that the school achieves. They value the school's 'open door' policy and feel that they are kept well informed. Pupils share their parents' enthusiasm and particularly like their teachers.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in religious education at age 11 years.
- Re-define the specific duties of each member of the senior management team, so that there is a more balanced workload.
- Make better use of assessment information to plan work that stretches more-able pupils in Years 3 to 6.

- Continue to focus on the poor behaviour of the few pupils who have problems.
- Improve the quality of marking in Years 3 to 6.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils' achievement is **good** throughout the school. Pupils begin in reception with broadly average levels of attainment. By the end of their reception year, virtually all will achieve, and most exceed, the standards expected in all areas of learning. In Years 1 and 2, pupils achieve well and reach above average standards in English and mathematics and well above average standards in science at age seven. This achievement is sustained in Years 3 to 6 and standards are similarly high at age 11 years. In English and mathematics, boys usually do better than girls, but nevertheless girls still achieve well. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls in science.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in reading and writing are especially strong and pupils achieve really well in their written work.
- Achievement in science is very good.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.9 (18.3)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	16.2 (16.6)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	17.8 (19.4)	16.3 (16.5)

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

1. In the tests for seven-year-olds, overall standards in reading, writing and mathematics have been consistently high for the past four years when compared with all schools nationally. Compared to similar schools, standards dropped in writing and mathematics in 2003, but nonetheless they were still above average. Boys do better than girls in all three subjects. Over the past five years, against the national trend, they have outperformed girls nationally. Despite the tracking that the school does, it is not able to give reasons for the better performance by boys. In science in 2003 all the pupils were assessed as at least reaching the standard expected for their age, and an above average percentage reached the higher Level 3.
2. Inspection evidence confirms the pupils' performance in tests. Pupils read fluently and this helps them in all other aspects of their work. Their writing is imaginative and their spelling is usually correct. The school's good emphasis on developing mental calculation means that pupils have the facts at their fingertips to solve problems.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.8 (28.2)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	28.1 (28.2)	26.8 (26.7)

science	28.6 (28.7)	28.6 (28.3)
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There were 33 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. In English, compared to schools nationally, overall standards in national tests at age 11 have alternated between above average and well above average for the past four years. In 2003 a well above average percentage of pupils reached Level 4² and an above average percentage reached Level 5. Compared to similar schools, they alternated between average and above average. A well above average percentage reached Level 4 but only an average percentage reached Level 5. Based on prior attainment, standards are not as high as they could be, although in 2003 they improved to average from being well below average in 2002. Overall standards were brought down because a below average percentage of pupils reached Level 5.
4. In mathematics over the past four years, compared to schools nationally, standards have been above average except in 2001 when they dropped to average. Compared to similar schools, they have been correspondingly average and below average. Based on prior attainment, there has been an overall downward trend. For the past two years, standards have been well below average. Test results follow a similar pattern to English with the performance at Level 5 bringing down overall points scores.
5. In science, there has been a downward trend in test results. When compared to schools nationally, standards have fallen back from above average to average for the past two years. Compared to similar schools, the picture is worse. From average in 2000, they dropped to below average in 2001 and 2002 and to well below average in 2003. Based on prior attainment the trend has gone from below average in 2000 and 2001 to well below average for the past two years. As with English and mathematics, not enough pupils reach the higher level.
6. Boys do slightly better than girls in English and mathematics, although both boys' and girls' attainment is above the national average. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls in science. Their overall performance is in line with the national average.
7. Test data indicate that the value added between Years 2 and 6 is well below average. However, based on the last five years, the trend in the school's average points score was in line with the national trend.
8. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils achieve well in English and mathematics and that standards are above average in the current Year 6 class. Speaking and listening skills are well above average. All the pupils are very articulate and speak clearly. Although their writing is well above average in terms of imaginative content and style, a weakness lies in careless presentation, which often means that they do not pay enough attention to spelling and punctuation. In mathematics, their firm grasp and ready recall of number facts enables them to solve problems quickly.
9. In science, inspection evidence indicates a very significant improvement on the performance in tests of the past two years. It is clear that the action taken by the school to address the weaknesses has really paid off. Standards now are well above average because of the specialist teaching pupils have had. Their scientific knowledge is most impressive, and they can solve thinking problems effectively because they have been taught well to consider all the evidence.
10. Achievement in ICT is satisfactory and pupils at ages seven and 11 reach the standards expected. The school has kept pace with the raised national expectations. In religious education, although pupils achieve at a satisfactory rate in Years 1 to 5, they do not achieve

² Levels Key Stage 2 – The National Curriculum has been written on the basis that pupils are, by the end of Year 6, when pupils are age 11, expected to reach Level 4. If a pupil is attaining Level 5 then he or she is reaching standards above that expected for a child of his or her age.

well enough in Year 6 because not enough work is covered. As a result, standards at age 11 are below those expected in the locally agreed syllabus.

11. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and make good progress towards the targets identified for them in their individual education plans. This is as a result of good support, and activities planned by teachers, that tackle the pupils' individual needs. They make good progress in general in most subjects, and particularly in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have **good** attitudes to school and the vast majority behave well at all times. The personal development of pupils is **good** overall. The moral, social and cultural development is **good**, and spiritual development is **satisfactory** overall. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Foundation Stage show very good attitudes to work and to each other.
- Pupils are keen to come to school, mainly feel secure and confident in school and build effective friendships.
- The school sets high expectations for pupils' conduct and works hard to achieve them.
- Parents are very supportive of the school, and ensure their children attend regularly and arrive on time.
- Pupils respond well to the opportunities that promote their moral development.
- A small minority of pupils in Year 4 display disruptive and unruly behaviour.

Commentary

12. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Parents spoken to during the inspection thought their children flourished socially, and learnt to share, take turns, to concentrate on activities and to listen to each other. Children show very good attitudes to work and to each other.
13. Most pupils behave very well as they move around the school and in the playground. They listen attentively in lessons and enjoy their learning when the teaching is interesting and practical. Nearly all, including those with special educational needs, want to learn and succeed. Pupils work well in pairs and in small groups, working constructively and sharing resources. They are interested in their work as seen during a science lesson, which dealt with creatures and their environment. Pupils respond well to the school's provision and this leads to their greater maturity as they move through the school. Concerns which were expressed by parents at the meeting, in letters and during the inspection about the disruptive and unruly behaviour of a very small minority of pupils, were found by the inspection team to be justified. Teachers do their utmost to ensure that these pupils gain an understanding of the impact of their actions on their classmates, and the school's policy is mainly effective in teaching pupils how to understand and deal with bullying. There are, however, occasions when pupils who display challenging behaviour have a negative effect on the learning and progress of their fellow pupils. All members of staff take a keen interest in pupils' wellbeing, and when spoken to during the inspection pupils said with confidence that they would have no hesitation in approaching an adult if they had a problem.

14. The majority of pupils with special educational needs have the same positive attitudes to school as their classmates. They are happy to work with adult assistants who provide good quality support. They respond well to staff who have high expectations of good behaviour, but a few pupils, particularly boys, find it difficult to meet the school's high expectations of good behaviour.
15. Circle Time³ discussions in some classes and worship assemblies play their part in providing opportunities for reflecting on actions and values. In most assemblies a candle is lit to provide a focus for moments of reflection but too often teachers omit the reflection time and miss these and other opportunities throughout the day for pupils to develop their spirituality. The school's high expectations for behaviour, which parents appreciate, help to ensure that pupils develop a keen awareness of right and wrong.
16. The school provides good opportunities to promote pupils' social awareness, for example, by giving them set responsibilities. Pupils in Year 6, for instance, help out in the computer suite, organise a fun day during the summer term, and look after younger children during the lunch break. However, there is no school council, and pupils do not have regular opportunities to have a say in the running of the school. Pupils are encouraged to consider people less fortunate than themselves through fundraising for local and national charities. They are very much involved in raising funds for a primary school in Uganda, and they also have a link with a village in India. However, not enough is done to prepare them for living in a multi-ethnic society, and there is no clear whole-school approach to developing this area. This was a judgement following the previous inspection.

Attendance

17. The school's overall attendance rate of 95.7 per cent is high in comparison with other schools. Parents are clear about their responsibilities to send their children to school regularly and on time. Parents recognise that this regular attendance has a positive impact on their child's achievement. Punctuality is mainly good at the beginning of the school day, and a prompt and efficient start is made to individual lessons.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.2	School data	0.1
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
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³ During Circle Time pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. It is agreed by all pupils that no interruptions should occur and only one person at a time will speak. Respect for other pupils' views will occur at all times and therefore pupils feel confident that they can talk with ease and free from any form of interference or interruption from other children.

White – British	225	1	0
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QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

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

Teaching and learning

Throughout the school, the quality of teaching is **good** overall and pupils achieve well. Teachers plan and prepare their lessons very well, so that no teaching time is lost. The lively approach that most teachers adopt motivates the pupils. Pupils have positive attitudes because the warm relationships between all adults and pupils create a good atmosphere for learning. Assessment is **satisfactory**. Although most teachers assess pupils' work thoroughly, they do not always use what they know to match work accurately enough to the pupils' needs. They do not always challenge more-able pupils enough.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most teachers adopt a confident and lively approach that captures pupils' interest at the start of lessons.
- The good relationships between staff and pupils lead to good behaviour and a keenness to learn.
- Teachers do not always use assessment information well enough to match work accurately to pupils' needs.
- More-able pupils are not always challenged enough.
- In Years 2 to 6, the marking in English and mathematics does not always indicate to pupils how they can improve their work.
- Teachers plan lessons in great detail and identify exactly what pupils are going to learn.
- Support staff are good at helping lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs to join in with lessons.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 33 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	5 (15 %)	16 (49%)	12 (36%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages.

Commentary

18. The overall good quality of teaching has been maintained since the previous inspection. It is sharpest in Years 1 and 2 where some very good teaching was seen. The main feature of these lessons was the intricate planning of activities and the grouping of pupils that ensured just the right amount of challenge to take their learning forward. As a result, the pupils positively bubbled with excitement as they learnt new things.
19. In the Foundation Stage, most of the teaching seen was good. Here the children enjoy a wide range of interesting and well-planned activities. The teachers keep a very careful check on how well each child is doing and focus activities well to take their learning forward. The result is that children achieve very well in the short time before they start in Year 1.

20. Most teachers are confident in their subject knowledge, and this enables them to stimulate pupils' interest with imaginative approaches to lessons. The good learning atmosphere that most teachers create by the way they treat the pupils has a very positive effect on learning. Pupils like their teachers, so the vast majority behave well and are eager to learn. As a result, they build well on their learning as they move through the school.
21. Although most teachers mark and assess pupils' work carefully, teachers in Years 3 to 6 do not always use the information they have to stretch more-able pupils. This is very noticeable in numeracy and literacy. Where learning is satisfactory overall as opposed to good, it is usually because more-able pupils are not being stretched. While most marking gives pupils good pointers for improvement, this is not always the case.
22. Teachers plan and prepare their lessons well, so no teaching time is lost. They use a good range of stimulating resources to keep pupils interested and involved, particularly at the start of mathematics and science lessons. They are good at explaining to pupils exactly what they are going to learn, and pause at timely intervals to check that the intended learning is taking place. This leads to overall good learning in most lessons.
23. Most teachers use questions well to draw out what pupils already know, and make them think to take their learning forward. The challenge to pupils to explain their answers helps them to consolidate their ideas. In a very few cases, teachers are too quick to supply answers instead of making pupils think for themselves. When pupils have difficulty in understanding, teachers are very supportive and lead them forward in small steps to a better understanding.
24. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good overall. In class lessons, tasks are often well matched to the needs of pupils who have special educational needs, particularly in English and mathematics. Teaching assistants are used effectively in group activities, where they monitor and support pupils well. In addition, praise and rewards are used appropriately to encourage and motivate reluctant pupils. These strategies ensure that pupils generally make the same progress in lessons as other pupils. However, at times, a small number of pupils, who have behavioural difficulties, do not concentrate sufficiently on their work, behave poorly, and so do not get enough done. This is distracting for other pupils and wastes time.

Assessment

25. Assessment practice has improved since the previous inspection and is now satisfactory overall. In the Foundation Stage, procedures for assessing children on entry to school are good. Very detailed individual records of children's attainment are maintained in all areas of learning. These assessments are used well to plan further work.
26. In Years 1 to 6, assessment procedures are good in English and mathematics and satisfactory in science. Pupils' results and achievements are tracked carefully so that issues relating to progress can be identified and acted upon. Good use has been made of assessment information in literacy and numeracy to inform curriculum developments and planning. However in Years 3 to 6, teachers do not always use what they know about pupils' prior learning to ensure their learning activities are well matched to their needs. As a result, although pupils achieve well in the core subjects, more-able pupils could be stretched more. Systems for assessing and recording pupils' progress in subjects other than English, mathematics and science, although in place, are inconsistent and the

monitoring of pupils' academic progress in these subjects is largely a matter for individual teachers.

27. Teachers' use assessment information well to plan the right work for the class, for groups of pupils and for individuals who have special educational needs. Teacher's marking of pupils' work is inconsistent. The best examples contain positive comments and suggestions of ways in which pupils can improve their work, but often marking is a series of ticks.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **satisfactory** overall. However, although curriculum is **satisfactory** overall, more opportunities could be provided for learning outside the school day. All pupils readily engage with the curriculum and find learning fun because of appropriate and interesting activities that teachers plan for them. However, the curriculum is weighted heavily towards English and mathematics and some non-core subjects are not taught in sufficient depth in some year groups. The accommodation is **satisfactory**, and levels of resources for learning are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for children in the Foundation Stage gives them a good start to school, however, the curriculum in the rest of the school is not well balanced.
- Cross-curricular links are planned into most areas of the curriculum.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The school ensures equal access to the curriculum for all pupils.
- The Foundation Stage outdoor play area is cramped and there is not enough large climbing apparatus.

Commentary

28. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good. It provides a wide range of well-thought-out activities that make learning fun. The provision in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory. It is securely based on the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. However, the curriculum is not as well balanced as it should be. This has resulted from an extension of the school day that was effected by providing additional time at the start and at the end of the morning session. Although the school employs the well-accepted strategy of planning for some subjects, such as geography and history, to be taught in allocated blocks, there are significant gaps in time when some subjects are not taught. Pupils thus experience difficulty in recalling what they have learnt previously and, in some cases, do not have opportunities to study subjects in sufficient depth. This means that they do not have the opportunity to learn and to achieve as much as they could.
29. Teachers' planning makes good use of national guidance. A particular strength in planning is the identification of links between subjects. This makes learning more relevant for pupils while also enabling them to practise the skills they learn in numeracy, literacy and ICT in a range of situations. Pupils in Year 6, for example, showed that they are able to use their ICT skills in English, producing very realistic, simulated posters, newspaper and magazine articles to construct a 'Who-done-it?' challenge for others to solve. The individual subject expertise of teachers contributes effectively to the strengths in planning.

Schemes of work are now in place for all subjects, a weakness at the time of the previous inspection. However, there is insufficient provision for the needs of the more-able pupils.

30. Pupils with special educational needs have full access to the curriculum. Needs are identified early and clearly so that appropriate support can be given. Individual education plans set out very clearly, in plain language, the targets pupils should be aiming to reach and the support they will be given. Overall, the good provision for pupils who have special educational needs helps many of them to make good progress towards their targets
31. Provision for the enrichment of the curriculum is satisfactory. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting expressed the view that there were too few opportunities for sport outside the school day. The school responded appropriately by engaging the services of an outside provider to run 'multi-sports' sessions on a weekly basis. Recorder tuition as well as a community project focused on Uganda and links with schools in Italy and France make a further contribution to the enrichment of the curriculum. Pupils benefit from visits such as those to the local library and synagogue. Older pupils also benefit from a residential visit organised by the school.
32. The school's accommodation is satisfactory, appropriately maintained and has recently benefited from the addition of the new ICT suite. Indoor accommodation is mainly adequate for teaching the National Curriculum, although the library is inadequate for pupils to carry out independent learning and research. The storage of resources in the hall poses safety risks for its use for physical education. The exterior accommodation is pleasant and has plenty of play space, although the Foundation Stage area is still cramped and has little shaded space despite the improvements made since the time of the previous inspection. Most subjects are adequately resourced with books and equipment, but there is no access to large climbing apparatus for children in the Foundation Stage, and there are not enough books about other cultures. Overall, the continuing investment in new resources and in improving the accommodation is having a positive effect on the ethos of the school.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes **good** care of its pupils. There are **good** personal support and guidance procedures and the school makes **satisfactory** efforts to involve pupils in the work of the school and its development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have a secure and trusting relationship with adults in the school.
- Staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities to guide and support all pupils.
- Pupils with special educational needs receive good support advice and guidance.
- There are good induction arrangements for young children entering the school.

Commentary

33. The school provides good care for its pupils within a secure and caring learning environment. Pupils spoken to during the inspection say they like their teachers and readily turn to them for extra help and guidance. In lessons observed, pupils were seen to help each other and to share resources well. Good relationships are a strong feature in the school and staff work hard to encourage pupils to think positively and to make the

right choices and decisions. Staff know pupils very well and informally monitor and track aspects of their personal development. The very small minority of pupils displaying disruptive behaviour are looked after well, although there is not a consistent approach to rewards and sanctions. Systems are in place for eliminating intimidating and oppressive behaviour, and these are effective for the majority of pupils. However, for the very small minority of disruptive pupils they are not successful.

34. Staff are experienced and knowledgeable in, for example, first aid and child protection. Parents are informed in the case of accidents. Mid-day supervisors look after pupils well during the lunch break, and first aid is well managed and delivered. Staff are aware of specific needs such as asthma. The cleanliness of the school is maintained to a very high standard and there is no vandalism or graffiti. However, as mentioned in the previous report, the junior playground has a very uneven surface, which results in a number of playground accidents. The school also lacks separate changing facilities for older boys and girls as they prepare for physical education lessons. The lack of storage space also mentioned in the previous inspection is still a problem, although now chemicals are safely locked away. Many parents in letters, at the meeting and spoken to during the inspection would like their children to have access to water bottles in the classroom, and parents of girls would also like them to be able to wear trousers during the cold winter months.
35. Pupils with special educational needs receive good quality care and advice overall. Parents receive a folder containing targets for these pupils, to which they can add information as their children progress through the school. Parents spoken to during the inspection praised the way the school cares for pupils with special educational needs.
36. Parents spoken to during the inspection thought that induction arrangements were good. They looked forward to the induction meeting and also to the packs of information provided by the school. The school's close relationship with the pre-school groups that children attend ensures that the children are confident about starting school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has **good** links with parents and **satisfactory** links with the community and other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are well informed about the school and their children's standards and progress.
- The contribution parents make to their children's learning at school and at home makes a positive contribution to their achievement.

Commentary

37. The good links with parents, noted at the previous inspection, are still evident. Parents are well informed about the school through the prospectus, newsletters and other correspondence. Parents of pupils with special educational needs say they receive helpful information about the personal and academic progress of their children. Parents are also well informed about their children's progress through the annual report, and in the twice-yearly consultation evenings. Parents spoken to during the inspection said they felt comfortable about approaching the school with concerns, and particularly parents of nursery children, thought the information they received helped their child to settle more easily into school life.

38. Parents are regularly involved in discussions with the class teachers where children have special educational needs and are kept fully informed of the support that their children are receiving. They are involved in regular reviews of the targets set in pupils' individual education plans.
39. Many parents are actively involved in the work of the school, for instance, by listening to reading, accompanying pupils on their walk to the local swimming pool, and on trips. The very active parents association has recently donated £5,000 towards equipment for the computer suite. Parents at the meeting liked the homework diaries used by pupils in Years 5 and 6.
40. There are satisfactory links with the community, including the strong links with the church. Pupils visit the parish church for services, and the local vicar takes weekly worship assemblies in school. These links with the church are firmly established, and pupils speak positively and knowledgeably of the services in the church. Visitors from the local community extend and enrich the curriculum, as do visits to places of educational value. Older pupils were looking forward to going on their residential visit, while younger ones were going to a 'Teddy Bear's Picnic' at Westonbirt Arboretum.
41. Although a number of parents who completed the questionnaire thought that the school didn't seek their views, all the parents spoken to during the inspection said they would have no hesitation in approaching the school if they had a problem. A large number of parents have indicated that they would like their children to have drinking water in their classrooms, for instance. This has not been resolved. However, parents said they particularly appreciated the open-door policy of the headteacher. Pupils spoken to during the inspection said they were looking forward to going on to the next stage of their education. Links with the local comprehensive school, which hosts induction days, and also visits from teachers to St. Johns, are satisfactory. There are good procedures in place for pupils entering the school. Links with colleges are in place and many students are welcomed on short placements.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good**. Governance of the school is **satisfactory**. The headteacher provides **good** leadership and manages the school **well**. Leadership by other key staff is **satisfactory**. However, the headteacher is taking on too great a responsibility for tasks that need to be shared by senior management.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a disproportionate balance between responsibilities within the senior management team that is resulting in an excessive workload for the headteacher.
- The headteacher's and governors' aspirations for the school are high.
- There are very good induction procedures for new members to the school team and strong support from staff to help them to develop.
- The school's finances are managed well and focus effectively on overall priorities.
- The role of subject co-ordinators is underdeveloped with regard to monitoring and assessment.

- Governors are developing a clear understanding of the direction that the school needs to take.

Commentary

42. The leadership and management of the headteacher are good. Her effective leadership and, in particular, her ability to establish a strong team is having a direct impact upon maintaining the good standards that are evident throughout the school. Standards in English and mathematics are consistently above average because of the commitment of teachers and their support for one another. The headteacher maintains a strategic overview of the school and has a very thorough understanding of the experience and potential of her staff. Performance management systems are employed well in order to directly contribute towards school improvement. There are good systems in place for the day-to-day management and also competent support from the school's administrative staff, so that the school runs smoothly. However, the current long-term absence of a member of the senior management team, coupled with a workload that is too heavily focused upon the headteacher, is limiting the time available to address all the issues that have been appropriately identified for taking the school forward.
43. The development plan, while providing an overview and key information on immediate priorities, together with subsidiary action plans for the major initiatives, is not extensive enough to enable more comprehensive forward planning for staff development and for subjects in the curriculum. Neither are success criteria always detailed or specific and measurable with the responsibility for monitoring this highlighted.
44. The governance of the school is satisfactory overall. The headteacher and chair of governors have a very effective working partnership. They meet regularly to review current issues and keep a check on standards. They act as 'critical friends' because of the good flow of financial information and increasing involvement in policy making. Although governors do not directly monitor the curriculum either by observing lessons or by reviewing subject budgets and action plans, many make time to visit the school, while subject co-ordinators provide progress reports for governors to consider. Governors are enthusiastic and passionate about helping the school to develop and have a clear understanding of what it must do to improve. They share the high aspirations of the headteacher and they are, for example, drafting an induction pack for new governors in order to ensure that the expertise that they are able to bring will be used to its full potential. There are similar, high quality procedures in place for the induction of teaching and non-teaching staff. A well-set-out school handbook provides very good guidance for new members and the school goes beyond formal requirements for settling in newly qualified staff. All teachers have time released from classroom responsibilities each week so that the school is already well placed to implement the next stages of the remodelling of the workforce in order to ensure that teachers' time is fully focused on pupils and on raising standards.
45. Although senior management and, sometimes, core curriculum co-ordinators observe lessons, feeding back information to teachers to help them to improve their performance, other subject managers do not. Despite opportunities to scrutinise planning and pupil's work, this results in ineffective monitoring of progress and limits the school's capacity for making an accurate assessment of either the provision being made for pupils or the levels that they are reaching.
46. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is managed well. Parents are regularly involved in discussions with the class teachers where children have special educational needs and are kept fully informed of the support that their children are

receiving. They are involved in regular reviews of the targets set in pupils' individual education plans.

47. The Foundation Stage is led and managed well. Very good planning provides a good range of interesting and often exciting activities which provide all children with a good start to their schooling.
48. Governors are becoming more active in asking searching questions about the status of the improvement plan, reviewing its progress and the direction that the school needs to take. However, neither they nor the staff as a whole are directly involved in the drafting of the plan so that the cycle of school self-evaluation is impeded by the fact that the ownership of it is not universal.
49. Financial controls are good. The finance committee monitors spending carefully and makes sure that best value is obtained, while targeting spending directly on priorities outlined in the development plan. Recommendations arising from audit reports are implemented quickly and governors ensure that balances carried into the next year are not unduly high so that pupils currently in the school are not disadvantaged by reserving for the future, funds that should be available for them.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	571,893	Balance from previous year	28,170
Total expenditure	578,831	Balance carried forward to the next	21,232
Expenditure per pupil	2,573		

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

50. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good** because of the good leadership and management by the co-ordinator. Overall, children are well prepared for transfer to Year 1. Their achievements are good because of the well-planned curriculum and the good quality of teaching and learning. Assessment procedures are very thorough and effective in securing good rates of progress by children. Induction procedures are good and children make a happy start to school. The accommodation indoors is satisfactory but outdoor facilities have weaknesses due to the limitation of the site.
51. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average. Children achieve well and virtually all will achieve, and most exceed, the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the year in all areas of learning. Children who have special educational needs are identified quickly. They are fully integrated and, in most cases, make progress at the same rate as the rest of the class.
52. At the time of the previous inspection, this aspect of the school was inspected according to the areas of learning for children under five. Since then, the Foundation Stage for children's learning has been introduced. This means that in the present inspection, provision for the youngest children was inspected according to the nationally recommended Early Learning Goals⁴ for the Foundation Stage. As a result, valid comparisons cannot be made.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good opportunities are provided for children to take responsibility.
- Clear routines successfully encourage children to behave well.
- Children are clearly happy, feel secure, and enjoy the range of activities on offer.
- Good teaching and use of teaching assistants enable children to settle into class routines quickly.

Commentary

53. Children achieve well and by the end of the Foundation Stage most exceed the goals they are expected to reach. Clear routines are established in the classrooms, so they know what is expected of them and how to behave. As a result, children demonstrate very good attitudes towards each other and are kind, co-operative and helpful. Most try hard with the activities offered and are developing good levels of concentration, as demonstrated when working independently or completing worksheets. Nearly all children are confident, talk happily to visitors about their activities and form very good relationships with adults and with one another. They take responsibility for themselves such as when changing for physical education. Several initiate playing together, sharing equipment and taking turns.

⁴ Early Learning Goals 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.

54. Teaching is good in this area of learning and children's personal, social and emotional development is given a high priority. Children are managed very well and adults have clear expectations of their behaviour. Staff make every effort to encourage children's positive self-esteem by ensuring that each child's uniqueness is valued. Adults provide good role models, particularly when they talk to and question the children. Praise is offered appropriately and very good opportunities are provided to develop children's skills of independence. The calm and friendly manner of the teachers and other adults has a positive impact on the very good behaviour and attitudes children have to learning.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The use of questioning by teachers and support staff to extend children's language skills aids their learning greatly.
- The teaching of initial sounds is effective.
- Opportunities to promote early writing are not systematic or rigorous enough.

Commentary

55. The majority of children are on target to exceed the goals expected by the end of the Foundation Stage. Overall, most children are fluent, articulate speakers who are eager to answer questions. They readily share experiences and talk at length in well-formed sentences using a growing vocabulary to express their ideas, for example, when discussing special books. Listening skills are above average and this supports children's learning effectively in all areas of learning. Most listen well for extended periods, respond quickly to instructions and like to join in when they can, for example, with the familiar words of '*The wheels of the bus go round and round*'. Early reading skills are developing well. Children enjoy books, handle them carefully and regularly take books home to share with adults. Most recognise simple words and successfully identify many initial and final sounds of words, for example, 'nod' and 'round' both end with the same sound. Average and higher-attaining children know how to put sounds together to form words and higher-attaining children are well on their way to attaining Level 1 of the National Curriculum. They know the term 'author' and 'title' and identify correct letter sounds and use various strategies to read unfamiliar words. In writing, most children write their names independently. Higher-attaining children write sentences with the correct spelling of simple words and are beginning to use full stops and capital letters correctly, for example, when writing about the ducklings that have been incubated in the classroom.

56. The quality of teaching and learning is good in most aspects and, as a result, children achieve well. Adults are aware of the importance of spoken language and purposefully intervene to engage children in conversation and increase their vocabulary in language sessions, role-play activities and individual discussions about their work. Staff use praise well to build confidence and have very good questioning skills that enable children to share what they know and what they want to find out. This has a positive impact upon the rate of children's learning and achievement. The teaching of initial sounds is good and children take part in the school's literacy programme, which has been adapted for this age group. Although opportunities are provided for children to develop early writing skills

the current arrangement does not prepare them sufficiently for work in Year 1. Overall, there is insufficient adult intervention when children are practising letter formation or 'writing' for a range of purposes.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

- Provision for children's mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Number work is woven well into everyday activities.
- Children's achievements are good and above expectations for their age.
- An extensive range of appropriate activities is planned to support learning.

Commentary

57. Children achieve well and, by the end of their reception year, many are on target to exceed the goals expected, particularly in early number work. Number games are thoughtfully planned and these help children to develop their mathematical understanding of ordinal numbers. A good example is when children order a line of objects and accurately identify the first, second, tenth object. They successfully investigate different ways of making five and correctly match numbers and shapes. Most continue patterns and develop mathematical vocabulary, such as '*smallest and largest*' and '*fatter and thinner*' when sequencing pictures. Children confidently name squares, triangles and circles, identify identical shapes in a picture and recognise three-dimensional shapes such as cube, sphere and cylinder.
58. Teaching is good in this area and this has a positive impact on children's learning. It is clear and precise so that the children know what is expected of them, and work is effectively planned to meet the needs of all children. There is a good balance between practical activities and written work and opportunities are seized to encourage children to count and recognise numbers in many different situations.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

- Provision for children's knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good range of activities aimed at teaching children about the world around them ensures that they achieve well in this area.
- Good links are made between speaking and listening and knowledge and understanding of the world.
- There is good development of scientific knowledge.
- The teaching assistant and other volunteer adults offer very valuable and effective support.

Commentary

59. Children achieve well and exceed the expected level required by the end of the Foundation Stage as a result of a wide range of well-planned activities. They understand the needs of living things when caring for the ducklings that have been incubated in the classroom, carefully observing them as they grow. All children use ICT to support their

learning. Most know the function of the buttons on the keyboard and operate the mouse skilfully to move objects on the screen. They develop the skills of cutting, joining and building well by using a good range of materials. Stimulated by the ducklings children design and made homes for them. They confidently discuss the past and present in the context of talking about their families and when sequencing a series of photographs showing changes from babyhood to old age. Good opportunities are provided for them to extend their understanding of their local community through visits to the church, park and the shops. They discuss special books and places and are beginning to learn the importance of major religious festivals such as Christmas and Easter.

60. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are provided with good opportunities to explore at first hand by handling growing things and objects as well as gaining knowledge from looking at books. They are curious, keen to learn and quickly learn new vocabulary. Adults are very well deployed and use skilful questions to probe the children's understanding. Their sensitive use of praise and encouragement raises the children's confidence and self-esteem and results in them having a positive attitude and response to learning.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for creative development is **good** and provision for physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Activities are well planned and cover all aspects of creative and physical development.
- Teachers make the most of the limited accommodation outside, but there is access to a hall for physical education lessons.
- Pupils are becoming increasingly aware of their own and others' space both in the classroom and through outdoor play.
- Opportunities for children to use large outdoor climbing equipment are lacking.

Commentary

61. In creative and physical development, most children exceed the expected level in the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. The majority draw and colour pictures with varying degrees of accuracy and detail as demonstrated in their paintings of the ducklings and successfully mix paints to make different shades and colours. They enjoy singing and know a good number of songs and rhymes by heart, many of which provide additional practice for their number work. Imaginative play is very successfully fostered through activities in the play area where children undertake different roles with confidence in 'St John's Travel Agency' and the 'Mobile Home.' Since the previous inspection, the school has made good efforts to develop the outdoor play area. Although access to large climbing apparatus is still limited there is a good range of wheeled toys and children have regular access to the playground and the hall for physical education lessons. Most children show good control and co-ordination when propelling wheeled vehicles and are becoming increasingly aware of their own and others' space. When indoor, they balance with good levels of expertise, and successfully work in pairs to create a range of 'strong shapes'. In classes, they use pencils, brushes, scissors and other small tools with increasing confidence and skill.
62. The quality of teaching and the quality of learning in the aspects of creative and physical development seen were good with some strong features. In all classes, teachers plan a wide range of stimulating activities for the children and very good links are made with other areas of learning. All adults intervene actively in order to develop children's language skills and encourage imaginative play. Staff have a very good awareness of the children's safety when promoting physical skills. Expectations are high and children respond accordingly. Clear routines have been established in which the children's confidence is developed and praise is well used to encourage good behaviour and good techniques.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and standards are at least above average at ages seven and 11 years.
- Pupils' good reading skills support their learning very well in other subjects.
- Teachers are very good at motivating the pupils to write imaginatively and expressively.
- Pupils do not always pay enough attention to handwriting, spelling and punctuation.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to write for a range of different purposes.

Commentary

63. Overall standards have improved since the previous inspection when pupils in Year 6 were only achieving average standards. Over the past four years, standards in national tests at age seven have been consistently high and at age 11 they have fluctuated between above and well above average. Inspection evidence indicates that this pattern is set to be repeated in the latest tests. Standards at age seven and 11 are above average.
64. Standards in speaking and listening are well above average throughout the school. Children start school with good speaking skills and teachers plan good opportunities to build on these. By the age of 11, they are very confident speakers. This is because teachers plan good opportunities for pupils to talk about their work and put forward their ideas, for example, by explaining how they have arrived at an answer in mathematics. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' speaking and listening skills are nurtured very well. They listen very attentively to well-chosen stories and enjoy re-telling these.
65. Standards in reading are above average in Year 2 and Year 6. By the end of Year 2, most pupils read aloud fluently and interpret stories well through lively expression. Throughout Years 3 to 6, pupils are introduced to a wider range of literature and compare different styles of writing. Teachers make good links between reading and writing, encouraging pupils to try out different styles in their own writing. The pupils' good reading skills benefit their learning in other subjects.
66. Standards in writing are above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. However, in Years 3 to 6, although the imaginative content of pupils' story writing is impressive and grips the attention of the reader, in their enthusiasm to get their ideas on paper, pupils are often careless in their writing. Teachers, in their determination not to put pupils off writing, do not always put enough emphasis on correct spelling and punctuation. This means that pupils perpetuate these mistakes and do not see the relevance between the skills they learn in lessons and their purpose in writing.
67. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 are particularly good at teaching reading. They use a good range of activities to teach pupils the sounds that different letter combinations make. This helps the pupils to tackle unknown words. Through their hard work and imaginative choice of activities, the teachers in Years 1 and 2 have the gift of making learning into a series of games that the pupils enjoy playing. As a result, they soak up the learning and make good progress.
68. In Years 3 to 6, teachers build well on what pupils already know and can do. They are very good at firing pupils' imaginations and encouraging them to model their writing on well known authors. However, they do need to encourage pupils to write for different purposes and in different styles.
69. The subject is led and managed well. The co-ordinator is a very good practitioner who provides a good role model and support for other staff. Her good management is reflected in the way pupils from both classes in Years 1 and 2 are grouped according to their ability. This means that they can achieve more because the work is matched to their ability rather than to their age.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

70. Teachers make good use of pupils' speaking, reading and research skills across the curriculum. However, although pupils are given opportunities to write for different purposes in a range of subjects, careless mistakes in writing are not picked up in teachers' marking. This means that pupils do not make the link between the skills taught in literacy lessons and their use in everyday writing.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average at ages seven and 11 years.
- Teaching is good overall, so pupils achieve well.
- Pupils do not receive sufficient feedback from marking.
- Higher-attaining pupils are not always stretched.
- The good relationships that teachers establish with pupils result in positive attitudes to work.
- Activities in lessons are frequently too prescribed.

Commentary

71. Standards have improved since the previous inspection. In all areas of mathematics, pupils reach standards that are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The school's results in national tests have remained at a level well above average in Year 2 over the last four years and above average overall for Year 6. Standards seen during the inspection confirm that, as a result of teaching that is often good and sometimes very good, pupils across the school learn a range of mathematical strategies and skills effectively so that their achievement is good. However, although the vast majority of pupils in Year 6 reach the level expected for their age, the proportion of pupils attaining at the higher Level 5 is not high enough.
72. Teaching is good overall. Teachers have good subject knowledge that enables them to deliver lessons confidently. They are good at identifying opportunities to use mathematics in other subjects. This makes learning interesting and relevant to the pupils. Pupils use the correct mathematical terms as a matter of course because they are introduced to them at an early stage. Homework is used well to reinforce and extend learning, being well linked to work that is undertaken in lessons. As a result, pupils apply themselves enthusiastically to their learning and show that they can solve problems that are set for them in mathematics and in other subjects where mathematical skills are required. However, the marking of pupils' work does not set and track individual targets or provide them with a clear indication of how well they have done and what improvements they need to make. Because of this, pupils are less able to take the initiative for extending their own learning. Extension activities usually provide further tasks at a similar level to the main focus of the work rather than being directed towards requiring pupils to apply their learning or develop ideas. This means that more-able pupils are not challenged enough.
73. Pupils enjoy their work because of the good relationships that exist between them and the adults who support them. Their concentration sometimes diminishes, however, when work is not matched accurately enough to their needs, such as questioning at the beginning and end of lessons.

74. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator has been effective in ensuring that the national strategy has been consistently followed throughout the school and that appropriate training has been provided, including opportunities for staff to observe the lessons of teachers that have particular expertise in the subject. Monitoring and assessment procedures are becoming embedded and this has had the effect of enabling teachers to begin to make predictions on the expected progress of individuals. However, these predictions do not take place throughout the school and no guidance is currently provided on the expected progress through the levels that pupils of differing abilities may be expected to make. Thus, while pupils in Year 1 are expected to exercise initiative in planning and carrying out their own surveys of favourite fruits and then organising their results in bar charts, pupils further up the school achieve good standards but are sometimes restricted in a lesson by, for example, only having the opportunity to practise strategies for identifying the factors of numbers. The use of games and puzzles to explore and reinforce concepts is a strong feature of the school and pupils show that they are especially well motivated when engaged in such activities.

Mathematics across the curriculum

75. Teachers take good opportunities for pupils to use and develop their mathematical skills in other subjects. Graphs are frequently used to communicate information in many areas of work, while measurement skills, such as were evident in one pupil's ready response to the task of carefully pouring an exact quantity of water onto a plant during an experiment on growth, are also applied. In history, pupils create time lines that show events in chronological order and help them to gain an understanding of when important events took place.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Years 5 and 6 benefit from specialist teaching and get a very good grounding in factual knowledge.
- In Years 1 and 2, pupils' learning is enhanced because the work is firmly rooted in practical experiences.
- In Years 3 to 6, pupils do not have enough opportunities to plan and carry out their own investigations.

Commentary

76. The above average standards at seven and 11 have been improved upon since the previous inspection. They are now well above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Although overall test results in Year 6 have slipped in the past two years, inspection evidence indicates that the latest test results will show a significant rise in standards. This is because of the school's very good decision to employ a specialist teacher whose excellent subject knowledge enables her to deliver lessons confidently. In the current Year 6, all but a very small minority have reached the standard expected for their age and over half have reached the higher level.

77. In Years 1 and 2, pupils develop a good scientific understanding because of the strong emphasis on practical work. The very good teaching supports them well in their work and encourages them to explore their own ideas. Teachers really challenge pupils to think about what they do, posing questions such as, *What do we know about plants?* and *What do you want to find out now?* They are particularly good at helping pupils to refine their ideas and thus move learning forward. The pupils really enjoy the challenge and work very well in mixed-ability groups to share ideas. The pupils' good literacy and mathematical skills help them in their work and lessons are able to proceed at a fast pace. For example, they brainstorm their ideas in groups and present them on large sheets for discussion with the rest of the class. Measuring accurately is part of their make up, as one girl showed when she measured out 50ml of water for her investigation.
78. In Years 3 to 6, the emphasis on investigational work is not so strong. There is a lot more direction by teachers rather than pupils exploring their own ideas. However, through whole-class investigations, they acquire well above average knowledge of scientific facts. The very good teaching in Years 5 and 6 really challenges pupils to think and to question their ideas. A perfect example of this was seen in a lesson in Year 5 when pupils had to draw on their previous learning to say whether grass was a flower. Although most of them did not readily recognise grass as a flower, they drew on their very secure knowledge of seeds and pollination and concluded that it was.
79. The subject leader is new to the school and, she has not had any opportunity to gain a clear view of teaching and learning overall. However, the success of the headteacher's decision to employ a specialist teacher to tackle the weaknesses in Years 3 to 6 indicate very good leadership and management.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The recently established ICT suite has made a significant impact on the school's provision for the subject.
- There are no consistent systems in place for monitoring and assessment.
- The school is only in the early stages of providing pupils with experiences in using ICT for the purposes of control and measurement.
- Classroom based computers are not used enough to support learning across the school.

Commentary

80. Since the previous inspection, when there were weaknesses in some aspects of the subject in Years 3 to 6, the school has improved its provision for the subject by establishing a spacious ICT suite that has an interactive whiteboard and sufficient computers to enable effective, whole-class teaching to take place. Because of this, both teachers and pupils are better able to share resources and the frequency of their use is significantly increased. Teachers demonstrate a good level of understanding as they, for example, make use of the large image on the whiteboard to demonstrate to a whole class of pupils from Years 3 to 6 how to use spreadsheets to model outcomes that will calculate the results of applying simple formulae, while also providing opportunities for the children to explain their thinking on how they might make adjustments to the contents of cells. The subject manager has further ensured that teachers have received adequate

training and support with the result that standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. Standards meet national expectations in Year 2 and Year 6. All pupils respond well to a well-organised curriculum for each year group, achieving at a rate that is appropriate for their age.

81. Although pupils mainly understand what is expected of them, sustain concentration and collaborate well, they do not have sufficient opportunity to become aware of their own levels of achievement because the school does not have a universal system for assessment in the subject. Teachers in Years 5 and 6 have carried out evaluations at the end of units of work but these do not identify the future learning needs of individual pupils. The subject manager does not currently have time allocated towards carrying out lesson observations so that neither is it possible to develop a clear picture of teaching and the learning that results from this in order to further sharpen the focus of development. The quality of teaching therefore remains satisfactory across the school and pupils respond with learning that meets expectations and that will enable them to be at least in line with nationally expected standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The consistent use of technical vocabulary such as 'icon', 'resize', 'toolbar' and 'copy down' provides pupils with an effective and efficient means of readily communicating their thinking with one another and with their teacher, while plenary sessions regularly address what has been learned during the lesson. Less effective teaching and learning occurs when pupils are too heavily directed in the tasks they undertake, so limiting opportunities for them to extend their own ideas and understanding.
82. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has successfully addressed issues raised during the previous inspection when computers were not used either to model and predict outcomes using spreadsheets or to carry out the measurement and recording of, for example, temperature, sound, light or pulse rate with sensors. However, although data-logging apparatus is being used, it is loaned from another school and the newly purchased software for demonstrating the capacity of computers to control events such as the switching on and off of lights, motors and other devices is only just being introduced. The school has now set in place a scheme of work that is drawn from national guidance but is being amended to match the current stage of development and the individual needs of pupils and teachers. This is having the effect of supporting teachers in their planning for progression and continuity in the subject as well as enabling them to harness their commitment and enthusiasm to provide activities that inspire pupils and make learning relevant. For example, Years 1 and 2 pupils consider the effectiveness of using ICT for producing collaged posters compared with traditional methods of cutting up pictures and sticking them onto paper around handwritten titles and labels. In Year 5, following a project in which ducklings are nurtured in school, pupils explore the potential of ICT for simulating on screen the features of ducks, altering size, shape and colour, rotating and grouping images.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

83. During the inspection, classroom based computers were not frequently in use to support learning in the subjects that were being taught although some pupils were being provided with opportunities to search for information by accessing the Internet and to gain experience in editing text. However, ICT work carried out in the suite is being used well by the school to enhance learning in other subjects. Digital cameras are used by pupils to record activities, word processing skills are appropriately applied to the writing of instructional text in English work and reflective symmetry is explored through using tools

available in a paint program. The majority of classrooms also have ICT display boards that not only attractively display pupils' work in a number of curriculum areas but also provide helpful guidance for pupils on how to use a range of computer functions.

HUMANITIES

84. In humanities work was sampled in **history** and **geography** with only one lesson seen in geography and none in history. In both history and geography, pupils' earlier work shows standards are around the levels expected at the end of Year 2. There was insufficient evidence to form a judgement about standards at the end of Year 6. Overall, it is not possible to form secure judgement about provision and teaching in both these subjects.
85. In **history**, pupils in Year 2 understand that life in the past differed from their own experience when highlighting changes in school days from the Victorian times. They learn about events from British history such as *Remembrance Day* and about famous people and their contribution in the past and the present, for example, *Florence Nightingale*, *Neil Armstrong* and *George Stephenson*. In Year 6, pupils develop research skills and use secondary sources appropriately to look for specific information on the period they are studying, for example, World War II. They learn about the lives of the Vikings and make detailed studies of aspects of life in Victorian times describing the main changes and difference between then and now.
86. In **geography**, Year 2 pupils have a satisfactory understanding of their own locality through studies developed around the local area. They compare and contrast their own experiences with those in the fictional island of *Struay*, noting the difference in building, transport and leisure to that with which they are familiar within Kenysham. In Year 6, pupils understand the use of keys and symbols on maps and successfully use secondary sources such as books, atlases and the Internet to investigate the weather in different parts of the world.
87. Leadership and management for history and geography are satisfactory. Throughout the school, teachers regularly mark pupils' work, but little written advice is provided to let pupils know how they could improve their work. Good use is made of the local environment and visits to the Imperial War Museum, and other historical places of interest help to bring the subjects alive for pupils, and have a positive impact on their learning. At present the monitoring of teaching and learning, the assessment and recording of pupils' progress and the use of ICT to enhance learning are inconsistent.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils do not achieve well enough in Year 6 because not enough work is covered.
- There are good links with literacy and the development of writing skills in the work seen in Years 4 and 5.
- Teaching and learning are not monitored closely enough to help bring about improvements in the subject.

Commentary

88. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 so that standards by Year 2 are in line with the expectations of the local agreed syllabus. In Year 2, pupils know that Jesus is a special person for Christians and that the special book telling stories about his life and work is called the Bible. They visit the local church and learn about some of the main features, and through mock christenings are beginning to understand important Christian occasions. They know some of the customs and practices of Judaism, such as, the food used at Shabbat and the significance of Hanukkah to Jews.
89. By Year 6, standards are below those expected. Discussion with Year 6 pupils and the limited amount of written work, show that pupils are unsure of the traditions and beliefs of the major world religions they have studied in Years 3 to 5 and are unable to readily make factual comparisons between them. They do not apply the rules, for example, from different religions or discuss how these may have an impact on their own lives. Although pupils recall with some support the holy books and special places of worship of different faiths they have superficial and sometimes confused ideas about Muslim and Jewish customs. Overall, pupils' work shows a very patchy coverage of the local agreed syllabus and so there are many aspects of their knowledge, skills and understanding that are not as good as would be expected for their age.
90. The main reasons for pupils' unsatisfactory achievement in Year 6 are the school's emphasis on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science in the autumn and spring terms resulting in the lack of consistent coverage of the curriculum. As a result, pupils are not building their knowledge, skills and understanding systematically. For example, in Year 6, there is very little recorded work from September 2003 to May 2004.
91. No judgement can be made about the quality of teaching in lessons in Years 2 and 6 because none were seen. Evidence from work and discussion with pupils indicates that the quality of their learning is satisfactory in Year 2 but unsatisfactory in Year 6. Of the four lessons seen in the other year groups, teaching was good in one and satisfactory in three. Overall, teachers have sufficient subject knowledge and developing confidence to enable them to interpret and deliver the curriculum. In the best practice, the teacher successfully used a range of interesting teaching strategies to motivate pupils, and the lesson was well planned to take account of the theme of the assembly. Effective use of questioning enabled the teacher to extend pupils' thinking logically as they explored ideas relating to the aims of charities. Values were sensitively addressed as pupils offered examples of their contribution to a range of charities, for example 'Children In Need'. Throughout the school, pupils' response to the subject is good.

92. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Not enough is done to check on the quality of teaching or pupils' work and deal with weaknesses in order to improve learning and pupils' achievement especially at the end of Year 6. Assessment procedures are inconsistent and information is not always used well to inform planning. Worship assemblies make a positive contribution to the development of understanding, with some of the issues introduced in assemblies being extended in religious education lessons. Good use is made of visits to place of worship, such as the local church and synagogue to stimulate pupils' interest in the subject.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

93. No judgement can be made about provision in **art and design, design and technology** and **physical education** because insufficient evidence was collected. Timetable arrangements meant that no lessons were seen.
94. The **art work** on display matches expectations. Teachers place suitable emphasis on teaching basic skills and there is a good balance between two and three-dimensional work. In **design and technology**, the work seen was mainly of a satisfactory standard. However, while the finished products match expectations, pupils' design skills are under-developed. There are satisfactory links to pupils' work in science. There is currently no co-ordinator for either subject. The headteacher's busy schedule means that she does not have enough opportunity to get a clear overview of what is happening throughout the school. Although an inspector accompanied pupils to the swimming baths, the purpose of this was to check up on behaviour and safety issues that the school had raised. As a result, no report is made on **physical education**.

Music

95. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection. Although one extra-curricular activity, teachers' planning, discussion with groups of pupils and singing during a morning assembly provide additional evidence, it is not possible to make any overall judgements on either the standards attained by pupils or on the quality of the school's provision across the school.
96. In their singing during the assembly and the one lesson observed, in which Year 6 pupils were preparing for a performance, pupils demonstrated an ability to sing in unison and to maintain pitch. Many project their voices well, with clear, accurate diction, while also being made aware of the need to observe the phrasing of the melody. During the Year 6 lesson, taught by the subject leader, the high quality of the teacher's own singing, established a very good model for pupils to follow. She used her good subject knowledge well to lead pupils to identify from the score identical musical patterns. Many pupils demonstrate that they are able to sustain rhythm such as when, during assembly, a pupil confidently accompanied an African hymn by beating out the rhythm on a 'Djembe'.
97. Pupils enjoy the subject and are enthusiastic about the opportunities they have for listening and appraising across a range of musical styles. They express an appreciation of the impact of the mood of pieces of music and they express opinions on their likes and dislikes. Discussion with pupils and opportunities highlighted in teachers' planning indicate that pupils have a good understanding of the musical elements of pitch, duration, dynamics and tempo and the ways in which these are used to create the effects they seek. Pupils do not, however, have frequent opportunities to interpret and compose in either formal or graphical notation.

98. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Planning for the curriculum indicates that pupils are able to build on their previous learning and that all elements of music are taught, although no use is made of ICT to support the development of composition or analysis of music. A commercial scheme of work is used to provide guidance for teachers who are less confident in their subject knowledge and this is a good resource. The school has recently accessed the local education authority's advisory service to further improve provision in the subject. The curriculum is enhanced by high quality, peripatetic music tuition and, although there is a charge made for this activity, the school provides a number of instruments that may be loaned out to pupils who wish to participate. Pupils have the opportunity of learning to play the recorder in an after-school club. Although the school has made a conscious decision not to have an 'elite' choir, music festivals and performances for the local community provide frequent opportunities for all pupils to participate in musical activities that take place in front of an audience.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

99. Only one lesson was seen in this area of the school's work and so no judgements are made about overall provision.

Commentary

100. The school sees pupils' personal development as an important part of its work. Aspects of personal development are covered in personal, social and health education lessons, across other subjects and during 'Circle Time' discussions where specific issues of importance to pupils are explored. The impact of timetabled lessons, enrichment activities and the school's good ethos ensure that pupils make good progress in their personal development, learn about health, and know how to function as positive members of society. Members of the community, such as those from the church and the health service contribute well to aspects of pupils' personal, social and health education.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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