

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST SAMPSON'S CE JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Cricklade, Swindon

LEA area: Wiltshire

Unique reference number: 126317

Headteacher: Mr M E Ferris

Lead inspector: Martin Kerly

Dates of inspection: 13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> October 2003

Inspection number: 257949

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	7 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Boys and girls
Number on roll:	205
School address:	Bath Road Cricklade Swindon
Postcode:	SN6 6AX
Telephone number:	(01793) 750 452
Fax number:	(01793) 751 067
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Cath Forshaw
Date of previous inspection:	1 <sup>st</sup> June 1998

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

St Sampson's CE Junior School serves the small town of Cricklade. It shares an extensive site with the neighbouring partner infant school. Almost all of the 205 pupils live in and around the town, where St Sampson's is the only junior school. They come from a wide range of backgrounds with the large majority living in privately owned detached and semi-detached homes. Very few qualify for free school meals. The school population is almost totally White, with a tiny proportion of pupils from ethnic minorities. The attainment of many pupils on entry to the school is above the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is close to the national average; three of these are autistic, and one is visually impaired. There are only two pupils for whom English is not their first language and there are two traveller pupils.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
12783	Martin Kerly	Lead inspector	Mathematics, Information and communication technology (ICT), History, Geography
31758	Ted Tipper	Lay inspector	
27667	Carolyn Renault	Team inspector	English, Religious education, Personal, social, and health education (PSHE), Special educational needs (SEN), English as an additional language (EAL)
23744	Peter Howlett	Team inspector	Science, Art and design, Design and technology, Music, Physical education

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**St Sampson's is a good school and provides good value for money.** Standards are above the national average; pupils achieve well during their time in the school and they are taught well.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are well above the national average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and above average in music, history and geography.
- Almost all pupils achieve well during their time in the school.
- The teaching and learning across the school is good.
- There is a broad and rich curriculum.
- Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes about school.
- The school is well led and managed by the headteacher and senior staff.
- The school values all pupils equally and successfully addresses their needs.
- A minority of boys have negative attitudes towards their written work and do not achieve as well as expected in writing.
- Pupils' investigative skills in science are less well developed than other aspects of the science curriculum.
- There is no long-term whole school strategic development plan.

The school has maintained the previous strengths identified in the last inspection and made good progress at improving the weaknesses: pupils' standards in information and communication technology and design and technology have improved; the statutory curriculum is now fully in place; identification of pupils with special educational needs and the provision for them is now good; and teachers use good strategies to assess their pupils' progress during lessons.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	A	A	A	C
mathematics	A	B	A	C
science	A	B	A	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.*

*Note: The 2002 results are the most recent national comparative data available at the time of the inspection.*

**Almost all pupils of all abilities achieve well during their time in the school, including those with special educational needs and those who are gifted and talented.** The 2003 national test results indicate overall standards have improved further in reading, mathematics and science; standards in writing declined. Inspection evidence shows pupils arrive in school a little above average and many leave significantly above average, particularly in English and mathematics. A minority of boys, some of whom show poor attitudes towards written work, achieve less well in writing.

**Pupils have good attitudes towards school, each other and themselves. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.** They are positive about their work and most contribute well to the life of the school. Almost all pupils behave well in lessons and throughout the school day. Attendance is very good and pupils arrive in school on time.

### QUALITY OF EDUCATION

**The quality of education provided across the school is good. Teaching is good in all year groups and the pupils learn well.** Good teaching is spread across all National Curriculum subjects observed, with around one-fifth of teaching seen being very good, particularly in English and information and communication technology. Pupils respond well to the imaginative activities planned for them, and show interest and commitment to their work, which is often carefully linked to more than one subject. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and in many lessons, particularly in English and mathematics, work is carefully matched to the differing abilities of pupils, providing them all with an appropriate level of challenge.

The curriculum is broad and carefully planned, with many very good enriching activities systematically integrated within the studies programme. Provision for music, drama and sport is very good. There is scope for further integration of information and communication technology. Pupils are well known by the staff members who respond sensitively to their specific individual and personal needs. Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress and needs.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The school is well led and managed.** Leadership by the headteacher and other senior post holders is **good**. The school is **well managed**. The governance of the school is **satisfactory**.

The very experienced headteacher provides a clear vision for the direction and work of the school and sets high expectations of staff and pupils; his commitment to inclusion for all pupils effectively permeates the ethos of the school. The deputy headteacher and other senior managers are good role models; they operate well, as do the subject leaders, in helping to maintain high standards. Governance has improved since the last inspection. Governors are supportive and committed, and fulfil their statutory responsibilities. They are involved in reviewing the annual development plan and drafting priorities for the future, but in the absence of a strategic long-term plan, their involvement in helping shape future priorities remains somewhat limited. There are effective procedures by which the school analyses its own performance. Financial management is good and the principles of best value are applied rigorously.

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

Parents and pupils have positive views of the school. The parents have been consulted on a number of issues and the very large majority report feeling welcome in school, encouraged to participate and well informed about their children's progress and the life of the school. Pupils like and support their school and report being treated fairly. A minority of pupils report that some other pupils behave badly. The pupils appreciate the work of the school council.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important things this effective school should do to improve further are:

- To improve the attitude towards writing of a disaffected minority of boys in order to raise standards in writing.
- To raise standards of pupils' investigative skills in science.
- To develop a whole school long term strategic development plan.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects**

Achievement overall across the school is good. Achievement of boys and girls is consistent in all subjects, except in writing, in which girls do much better than boys; girls achieve well in writing, as do most boys, however, a minority of boys achieve less well in writing than they should.

Standards in all the core subjects are well above the national average in tests at the end of Year 6. Standards in other subjects are at least in line with national expectations and in some subjects they are above national expectations.

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

- Standards in speaking and listening, and in reading, are well above the national average and above those in similar schools.
- Standards in mathematics across the school are above the national average.
- Standards in writing, especially of girls, are above the national average.
- Standards in science are above the national average, except for investigative science, which is broadly in line with the national average.
- The well above average standards in national tests in the three core subjects have been maintained over time.
- Standards in geography, history, music and aspects of physical education are above national expectations.
- Compared with those in similar schools, almost all pupils of all abilities achieve well during their time in the school, including those with special educational needs and those who are gifted and talented.
- Pupils achieve at least as well as expected, given their prior levels of attainment. In some subjects, they exceed expectations.
- A minority of boys do not achieve as well as expected in writing.

#### **Commentary**

##### ***Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2002***

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.8 (29.0)	27.0 (27.0)
mathematics	28.8 (27.4)	26.7 (26.6)
science	30.3 (29.4)	28.3 (28.3)

*There were 60 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

1. This table of results for 2002 is the most recent available for national comparisons at the time of the inspection. It shows that standards in the school were well above the national average for English, mathematics and science. The results from the 2003 national tests in English, mathematics and science, and from inspection evidence of the pupils in the school, indicate that the above average standards in mathematics and science have improved further. Standards in speaking and listening, and in reading, are now well above average and pupils are achieving well in these aspects. The school exceeded its targets for 2003 in mathematics and science in relation to the proportion of pupils who achieved the national expectation and the proportion that exceeded it. In English, standards in boys' writing declined; the school failed to achieve its target in writing in terms of the proportion achieving national expectations, although



the proportion exceeding the nationally expected standards was greater than the published target and that found in other schools.

2. Evidence from pupils' work in Year 3 and Year 6 indicates that most pupils are achieving well during their time in the school in all three core subjects. The 2003 test results for boys' writing show a decline in standards from the previous year and in relation to girls' writing. The school analyses its performance data well; and, in relation to the fall in standards in writing, has produced a detailed plan with many good strategies for addressing the issues. Inspection evidence confirms a small minority of boys underachieving in writing, but across the school standards of writing are frequently above the national average. Whilst overall standards in science are well above the national average, the pupils' skills in planning and conducting scientific investigations are not as high as they could be, and lag behind standards in scientific knowledge.
3. Pupils' achievements in geography, history and music are good and in these subjects standards are above national expectations, with many pupils performing at a high level. Pupils are making good progress in information and communication technology (ICT) and are now achieving in line with national expectations, having previously been below expectations. Achievement and standards in art and design, design and technology, and physical education is broadly in line with national expectations. Achievement and standards in religious education are in line with expectations within the locally agreed syllabus.
4. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are gifted and talented achieve well given their respective starting points on entry to the school. There are no differences in the overall rates of achievement between the small minority of pupils with physical and emotional difficulties and those of other pupils. Pupils for whom English is an additional language have made very good progress and are now performing at least in line with, and on occasions above, the national expectations for their age.
5. Pupils are able to use their good literacy and numeracy skills, and their sound ICT skills, to effectively support their studies of other subjects. There are frequent well-planned opportunities for this within the curriculum.

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

Attendance is **very good**. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons and about the school are **good**. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils arrive punctually at the start of the day and for lessons.
- Pupils' attendance is very good and they are rarely absent.
- Pupils like school and take a full part in all that it offers.
- Relationships are good.
- Playtimes are friendly and safe.
- Pupils' overall spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is good, with particularly good provision within aspects of moral, social and cultural development.
- Most pupils are interested in all their work and try their best.
- A small minority of pupils, mostly boys, display negative attitudes towards writing.

### **Commentary**

Attendance is very good. There have been no exclusions for many years.

### Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2001 – 2002 (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	3.5
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.1
National data	0.5

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

### Exclusions

#### Ethnic background of pupils

#### Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
No ethnic group recorded

No of pupils on roll
148
3
1
1
59

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0

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

6. The school's procedures are very effective in promoting attendance and parents respond by ensuring pupils attend regularly and arrive punctually. Pupils show interest in school life, both in lessons and in the varied extra-curricular activities that are on offer.
7. There is a small minority of pupils, mainly boys, who demonstrate a negative attitude towards writing and do not apply themselves as wholeheartedly as in other subjects, such as mathematics and other work.
8. Pupils show good respect for adults and for one another, playing well together during playtimes. Their behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. The school has introduced a zero tolerance approach to disruptive behaviour and has effective procedures to combat bullying, racism and other forms of harassment. Pupils know they can speak to someone if they should have a problem. They are encouraged to challenge prejudice, for example, in a Year 3 lesson when the pupils were challenged to consider gender stereotyping of boys not showing emotion and girls not playing football.
9. The school's ethos reflects the values and attitudes it wishes to promote. Assemblies are seen as an important opportunity for the school to reaffirm the values and beliefs it wishes to promote, such as telling the truth, keeping promises and respecting the rights of others. Assemblies are also used to celebrate pupils' achievements and to praise and reward pupils through systems such as house points, merits, credits and star pupil awards. Pupils are encouraged to become confident and independent, for example, by setting up resources for assemblies and physical education, by accessing dictionaries and other equipment during lessons, and by taking part in the school council procedures.
10. Spiritual development is identified by the school as concerned with developing self-knowledge and sensitivity to others, and linked to many aspects of the curriculum. Assemblies offer opportunities for worship, incorporating a spiritual and prayerful attitude. The teachers foster curiosity by providing interesting experiences for pupils in lessons and extra-curricular

activities. The school complies with the requirement to provide a daily act of worship through assemblies and class prayers. Pupils learn to understand and respect the beliefs of others through religious education (RE) lessons and assemblies. They learn to respect the feelings of others and express their own feelings through the ethos of the school, as well as in lessons such as "circle time". The consistent approach by teachers to the school rules and moral teaching ensures that pupils learn right from wrong.

11. The school has an effective programme for helping pupils understand and fulfil the responsibilities of living in a community. For example, the school council facilitates consultation across the school on issues that affect the school community, such as the purchase of books for the school library. Pupils develop good understanding of social problems; a successful element of this is through the school's fund-raising activities for a range of charitable causes, such as a Gardens for Schools in Africa project, UNICEF and Comic Relief.
12. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good, with music and drama being particular strengths. The evidence of learning about other cultural traditions to prepare pupils for living in a multicultural society is satisfactory. There is little cultural diversity in the school and local community, but more could be done to involve people from ethnic minority groups to visit school and share their traditions and culture. Pupils have very good opportunities to learn instruments and perform together. There is a strong tradition of pupils performing in school drama productions that take place several times a year and pupils have frequent opportunities to see professional theatrical productions, such as the Years 5 and 6 visit to Stratford-upon-Avon.

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

### **Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching is **good** and, as a result, pupils **learn well** in lessons.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching in English and information and communication technology (ICT) is good, and frequently very good, supporting good learning by pupils of all abilities.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and successfully link learning from one subject to another.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils in nearly all lessons.
- Teaching assistants make a very good contribution to teaching and learning in a range of subjects, and particularly in ICT, and in support of pupils with special educational needs.
- Teachers assess pupils' progress carefully during lessons and adjust their plans accordingly.
- Assessment, tracking and targeting of individual pupils in mathematics and English is good.
- Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and pupils respond well, creating a learning ethos in lessons.
- Pupils apply themselves well and work hard without direct supervision.
- Homework is carefully structured and used very well to extend and reinforce learning in lessons.
- The pupils are motivated and engaged by a range of stimulating and carefully planned activities.
- Assessment in science and some foundation subjects does not identify clearly enough the next step in learning for individuals or groups of pupils.
- Curriculum planning is sound, but in some subjects there are few formal procedures identified for assessing and recording pupils' progress.

## Commentary

13. The good teaching and learning reported at the time of the last inspection has been maintained, with some further overall improvements. All the teaching and learning in lessons is at least satisfactory; more than two-thirds is good or better, and around one-fifth is very good. The good teaching is spread across all National Curriculum subjects observed; this in itself is commendable.

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

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	5	14	9	0	0	0

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

14. Almost all pupils consistently show a positive attitude towards their lessons, the work in hand and the subject, and these attitudes, together with good behaviour management and relationships, contribute strongly to the overall good learning ethos. An exception to this is for a small minority of boys who appear not to value the importance of writing and who, in some lessons, make less progress than they should. Part of the overall enthusiasm and interest by pupils is as a result of well-planned and stimulating activities, which motivate and engage the pupils.
15. Teachers prepare lessons well, taking care to ensure that the activities really support the intended learning and are frequently connected to learning in another subject, so the pupils can see a sense of purpose to the activity. Teachers carefully assess and check pupils' previous knowledge and understanding in the subject, and in the best lessons, they plan a range of activities to reflect the abilities of different groups. In most lessons, teachers have high expectations, and pupils are challenged and extended during the lesson, boosting their learning. In a small minority of lessons, mainly in foundation subjects, there is insufficient planned provision for different activities to ensure that pupils of different abilities are suitably challenged, and limited systematic recording of progress by the different ability groups.
16. Throughout most lessons, teachers use a good range of assessment strategies, in addition to checking pupils' prior knowledge at the start of the lesson. For example, in mathematics lessons, the use of mini whiteboards by the pupils enables the teacher to quickly assess the individual responses and understanding of every pupil; in ICT lessons, teachers move between groups of pupils, questioning them to clarify their levels of confidence and understanding; and in many lessons pupils' written and recorded work is carefully marked with helpful comments to demonstrate how pupils can improve further. In geography and history, the pupils are fully involved in the assessment of their work and are required to produce an overall evaluation at the end of a unit of work, along with a target for their next study. In a minority of lessons assessment strategies are less well developed, for example, in science and religious education, where teachers do not use their assessment sufficiently to adapt their planned teaching and set different activities, according to the potential of different groups of pupils, limiting the progress made by pupils in the lesson.
17. The good and very good teaching and learning in ICT is strongly supported by the presence of a teaching assistant, who prepares the material and demonstrates aspects of the software to the pupils during the lessons in the ICT suite. The combination of class teacher and ICT teaching assistant is a powerful model for raising the rate of learning and pupils are progressing well in the acquisition of ICT skills; teachers' confidence in teaching the subject has grown similarly.

18. Teaching assistants in other lessons also contribute well, especially to the good learning of pupils with special educational needs; in the better lessons, these assistants engage with specific pupils whilst the class is working together as a whole, enabling these specific pupils to access the points being taught and to contribute. In many lessons, the assistants work effectively with small groups during part of the lesson; the teachers manage the assistants' contributions well, with careful planning and sharing of pupils' progress. The small minority of pupils with physical disabilities and emotional difficulties are carefully supported in lessons by teachers and teaching assistants; some specialist equipment is used, for example, jumbo print books and a laptop, and both teachers and a teaching assistant have been trained in strategies to work with autistic pupils. Homework is adapted for these pupils and members of staff liaise closely with parents to ensure the pupils are able to take part at an appropriate level.
19. Homework is effectively used in all year groups in a number of subjects and lessons throughout the week; as a result, it makes a good contribution to the pupils' learning. Pupils approach homework conscientiously and most are well supported at home in this. Teachers set short-term curriculum targets with pupils and most of the pupils are clear about their targets. Their homework is responded to conscientiously and marked frequently in relation to the learning objectives of the activity.

## **The curriculum**

The school provides a **good** range of worthwhile curricular opportunities that cater for the interests, aptitudes and particular needs of pupils, and ensure good progression in pupils' learning.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school has maintained a commitment to a broad curriculum meeting all statutory requirements.
- There are very good opportunities for enrichment through many well-planned visits linked to integrated studies.
- The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been well embedded within the school practice.
- Provision for music and drama is very good.
- There is a good range of after-school activities.
- The curriculum is inclusive and there is good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Teaching assistants provide very good support to individuals and small groups during lessons.
- The school does not have a long-term strategic plan for curriculum development and improvement.
- The extensive grounds are not used to best advantage to enhance the overall curriculum provision.

## **Commentary**

20. The curriculum enables most pupils to achieve well in all subjects. The National Curriculum programmes of study have been organised in such a way as to provide a broad and balanced curriculum, with good continuity in teaching and progression in pupils' learning. All statutory requirements are met. This is an improvement from the time of the previous inspection when not all statutory requirements were being met. The curriculum is reviewed regularly, but there is no long-term strategic plan for its improvement or adaptation to innovative national developments.
21. The integrated studies approach, which is consistent throughout the school, ensures learning is relevant. It is very successful in helping pupils see connections across subjects or areas of learning. For example, writing about historical or geographical studies has a real purpose and the frequent planned visits linked to studies provide a good stimulus for pupils to learn well.

The school is committed to the creative arts, especially music, drama and to sport. Provision in music is very good, with almost all pupils learning to play a musical instrument and regularly performing. Medium-term curriculum planning ensures that each National Curriculum programme of studies is taught with appropriate coverage and progression through the integrated approach. However, some individual or small groups of pupils would reach higher levels of attainment if the school implemented assessment procedures for all subjects as well as they do in English and mathematics. Progress and learning by pupils with special educational needs is carefully monitored; their individual education plans include clear targets and progress towards these is regularly reviewed.

22. The curriculum is inclusive and all pupils benefit from what is provided. None are disapplied for any element and the school works effectively to ensure those with physical or emotional disabilities are able to access all activities and experiences. Pupils with special educational needs are provided with well-planned activities matched to their next level of learning in most subjects. In English and mathematics, activities are designed to meet the needs of average and high-attaining pupils, as well as those with special educational needs. Sometimes, the activities in other subjects, for example, Religious education (RE), are not sufficiently challenging for more able pupils and they do not achieve as well as they might. Pupils are encouraged to develop skills of collaborative and independent learning, for example, through regular homework, which prepares them well for secondary education. There are sound links with parents and the local community in developing the curriculum. The minister of religion is a regular visitor, supporting the development of RE and personal, social and spiritual education.
23. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities and a high percentage of pupils participate in these. Pupils enjoy participating in sports, including football, netball and badminton, as well as other clubs, such as puzzles and games, chess and newspaper club. These all provide a protective and relaxed setting and enable pupils to develop communication and literacy skills, as well as personal and social skills.
24. The school's accommodation and resources are sound. There are sufficient teachers with suitable qualifications and subject expertise to meet the demands of the curriculum. There is very good provision of support staff, which enhances the quality of teaching and learning. The accommodation is clean, safe and well maintained, and allows the curriculum to be taught effectively. Areas originally designated as cloakrooms have over time been refurbished and now offer enhanced learning environments. The very recently built new staffroom and refurbished reprographic room and headteacher's office, all improve the overall working environment for staff. There are sufficient resources to meet the needs of the pupils and the curriculum, and these are generally well organised and accessible. The school provides appropriate specific resources to meet the learning needs of a visually impaired pupil. The school is on a large site and there are ample grassed areas, an overgrown wild area and expanses of tarmac. Much of this extensive outside area is under-developed in terms of contributing to the curriculum. The school has rightly identified this as a priority in its development plan for the current year.

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

The school makes **good** provision for the care, welfare, health and safety of pupils and provides them with **very good** support, advice and guidance. It involves them in its day-to-day work and the ongoing development of its educational provision in an **effective** manner.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are effective procedures for ensuring pupils are safe and well cared for.
- There are good links to ensure a very smooth transition for pupils coming from the adjacent infant school.
- The school involves its pupils well in helping shape the future of the school.

- Pupils are fully involved in setting and reviewing their own curriculum targets and evaluating their progress towards achieving them.

## Commentary

25. The school has good procedures for ensuring the health and safety of pupils and adults at all times, and that child protection procedures are fully understood and implemented. Members of staff and governors are trained and conduct regular careful audits of the premises and working practices; issues are addressed promptly and effectively.
26. The school has close links with the adjacent infant school. The headteacher and Year 3 teachers visit the Year 2 pupils in their classes and, in return, these pupils spend one day in the school with their infant teacher, followed by an afternoon with their new junior teacher. The headteacher ensures all the personal and academic information for each child is transferred so that teachers know all about the new pupils and plan their induction into their new school accordingly. Meanwhile, their parents attend a meeting in the summer term to meet the teachers and be shown round the school and are invited back early in the autumn term to see their children at work and discuss any areas of concern. Parents are particularly appreciative of the arrangements for pupils joining the school. An individualised and extensive induction programme is implemented for the autistic pupils, involving staff from both schools and the parents.
27. The school carries out a detailed survey of pupils' views approximately every four years, with one having been completed fairly recently. A detailed analysis of the answers has been carried out, which identified areas of concern, such as behaviour in lessons, which the school has set out to address. Pupils' involvement on a more regular basis is mainly through the school council. Here, representatives of each class meet to discuss aspects of the school having previously discovered the views of their classmates. In a meeting they were very enthusiastic about what they were allowed to do, and really felt that their opinions were valued and that they were able to influence the development of the school.
28. Care, guidance and support for pupils with special educational needs is good. The special educational needs code of practice is fully implemented; pupils with special needs are identified early against clear criteria understood by all concerned; a register of these pupils and their needs is maintained; and provision for these pupils is carefully matched to their precise needs and reviewed regularly. The school makes effective use of specialist expertise from outside agencies, for example, the Local Education Authority autistic outreach team, in planning its provision and guidance for specific pupils.
29. All pupils agree their individual targets in mathematics and English at the beginning of the school year and then regularly review performance against them through the year with their teachers. Each topic they undertake has a self-evaluation form, which pupils complete at the end of the unit of work. This allows them to identify areas for development, which are then carried forward to the next topic. Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs have academic and behavioural targets, which are also shared with the pupils. At a meeting with school councillors, representing all age groups, all agreed they were fully involved in the process, knew how well they were achieving in relation to their targets and were happy with the feedback they received from teachers.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has developed a **good** partnership with its pupils' parents and carers. Links with the community and with other schools and colleges are **satisfactory**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school works well with parents in ensuring they make a positive contribution to their children's learning in school.
- Parents are provided with a high standard of information about the school and the standards achieved, and progress made by their children.
- There are good transitional arrangements with the secondary school to which most pupils transfer.
- The school has not fully exploited the opportunities offered by the wider community to broaden its pupils' experiences.

### Commentary

30. Parents are welcome to become involved in the life of the school, and several take the opportunity to do so by listening to readers and helping in the classroom, and with sporting activities. They are also very keen supporters of school functions and events. A sizeable crowd attended a netball match held during the inspection. The friends association, run by a dedicated band of volunteers, runs several social and fund-raising events throughout the year, and recently raised around £9,000 in under three years to purchase computer equipment for the new computer suite. The reading diary is a useful means of contact between home and school and parents are generally supportive of the homework that is given. The school could do more, however, to give parents practical advice on how to support their children's learning outside school. While it has run workshops in the past, these have been poorly supported, so it needs to find alternative ways to do this successfully.
31. All the written communications with parents are very informative. The prospectus provides parents with, among other things, a detailed description of how the school is organised, what is taught in each subject and an analysis of the previous year's SAT results. In addition, it provides a very clear breakdown of the weekly homework programme for each year in the school and a strong statement describing the adverse effect on a child's education of taking a holiday during term-time. The regular newsletters are equally as informative, providing details of forthcoming events, celebrations of individual, group and whole school achievements, and any important announcements. Most of the pupils' annual progress reports describe how they are performing against expectations in English and mathematics, identify areas for development and set specific targets for the following year. However, there is some inconsistency in the content of reports across the school, with not all containing clear judgements on standards; this is a weakness.
32. The Year 7 co-ordinator of the main receiving secondary school has meetings with Year 6 teachers and receives detailed information on each pupil's academic and social progress. The pupils go to an open evening in the autumn term and, later in the school year, attend a three-day course at the school, where they get to meet their new teachers and classmates, and experience what their new school life will be like. Links continue after the children have left, with the headteacher and the Year 6 teachers meeting the Year 7 tutors to discuss any problems the pupils may be having on a personal or academic basis. The whole process shows how concerned the school is with the welfare and development of its pupils, even when they have left the school.
33. The school has established relatively few links with other schools and the local community which have benefited the learning of its pupils, although the local environment is used well as a good learning resource. For example, there is little evidence of visitors from the local community coming into the school to talk about their jobs or lifetime experiences, or of involvement in events run by community organisations within Cricklade or further afield. Also, there is limited contact with organisations such as the police and the fire service, which has a station opposite the school. Meanwhile, there has been no planned approach to involve commercial organisations in the life of the school, with the result that few do.



## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are both **good**. Leadership by the headteacher and other senior post holders is **good**. The school is **well managed**. The overall governance of the school is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides a clear vision and sets high expectations of staff and pupils.
  - The headteacher demonstrates a commitment to inclusion for all pupils and this effectively permeates the ethos of the school.
  - There is very good analysis of performance data and tracking of pupils' progress over time.
  - Senior managers fulfil their roles effectively and operate well individually and in teams, as do subject leaders.
  - The school has good routines and procedures, which are understood and applied by all.
  - Financial management is good and the principles of best value are applied rigorously.
  - There is no longer-term whole school strategic plan and the current annual development plan has only draft status.
34. The very experienced headteacher is firmly established as the leader of the school. He demonstrates a clear vision of what makes an effective learning experience for pupils. He ensures that national educational initiatives are carefully evaluated for their benefits to the pupils of St Sampson's before embracing them and ensures the staff has involvement in the discussion before changes are implemented across the school. He has established a commitment to high academic standards for the pupils and personal conduct for all: staff and pupils. He has a very good grasp of standards in the three core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and analyses performance data most effectively to identify patterns in the strengths and relative weaknesses of groups of pupils. This analysis is used effectively to target support for specific groups within year groups and subjects. There are appropriately high expectations of all pupils, no matter at what level they are currently performing, nor what individual specific needs they may have. The leadership team ensures that vulnerable pupils with complex needs are carefully supported and equally valued. The provision for pupils with special needs is good across the school, and those with particular gifts and talents, including music, drama and sport, are challenged and encouraged to perform at a high level.
35. The headteacher, together with the relatively recently appointed deputy headteacher, provide effective guidance on curriculum development, and have been especially successful in promoting a rich, broad and balanced curriculum through an integrated studies approach. The deputy head provides a very good model of classroom practice for colleagues and as a subject leader. She is well placed to take on a greater strategic leadership role. Subject leadership across the school is now good. This is a considerable improvement from the time of the previous inspection, when it was under-developed. Special educational needs is well led and managed by the Special Educational Needs co-ordinator; she is well supported by the headteacher's commitment and aims of the school, ensuring education inclusion is achieved and managed well.
36. Whilst there is a clear sense of purpose and overall aims within the school, and these are being achieved, there is no long-term strategic plan formally setting out long-term goals and how they are to be achieved, and this is a weakness. There is a clearly structured annual development planning process, which includes a useful review of progress the previous year against agreed priorities. However, the current annual plan is in draft form only and is rather narrow in the scope of development items included. Subject leaders have good action plans with clearly structured objectives and means of achieving them. The school systematically implemented its action plan following the previous inspection and this was reported on by governors to parents. Inspection evidence shows the school has made good progress in

addressing the previous weaknesses and its reflective culture makes it well placed to overcome any barriers or issues in the future.

37. The school is well managed. Routines and practices throughout the school day are well established, and operate smoothly and efficiently, enabling the main focus of teaching and learning to progress effectively. All members of staff are clear about their particular roles and responsibilities, and there is an effective commitment to professional development. Performance management procedures are effectively implemented. Individual members of the teaching and support staff are clear about their objectives and the support available to help them achieve them. There is a good balance of experienced and relatively inexperienced staff. They are deployed well and some imaginative recent appointments, for example, a specialist teaching assistant in the information and communication technology suite for all lessons, and an accounts technician, make a significant contribution to the overall effectiveness of the school. Recent appointments to key posts have been most effective with clear evidence of the quality and impact such post holders have had; there are good procedures for supporting the induction of newly appointed staff, including the newly qualified teacher. The principles of best value are strongly embedded in the practice; the school compares the academic performance of its pupils with those from other schools, there are good procedures for consulting parents, pupils and staff, with thoughtful analysis of the findings; the school council values the ideas of pupils; and the school carefully weighs the merits of all contracts to ensure value for money is achieved, and carefully evaluates the need before introducing any new provision.
38. The school has a range of self-evaluation procedures securely in place. In addition to the rigorous monitoring of performance data in the core subjects, there is systematic monitoring of curriculum plans with helpful feedback, analysis of pupils' work in staff teams to strengthen overall moderation and ensure consistently high expectations, and a programme of observation of teaching and learning in classrooms. Currently, the headteacher takes the lead on this monitoring of observations for performance management; he rightly plans to extend this to the deputy headteacher and subject leaders. The headteacher commendably teaches daily and other members of staff regularly teach in classrooms across the school, giving them an over-view of practice. A high proportion of staff meetings are given to self-evaluation practices in order to support new members of the team and to improve further the overall provision. Whilst all these practices do enable the school to know its own strengths and weaknesses, the overall process would be further strengthened by a formalised schedule within the strategic school development plan, describing how and when each part of the school's performance is evaluated.
39. The overall governance of the school has improved since the time of the last inspection. Governors are committed to the school and very supportive of its work. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities in terms of their meetings, policy setting and monitoring the work of the school. The full governing body is well informed by the head teacher and other senior managers about the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and has a good understanding of standards at St Sampson's year on year and in comparison with other schools. The chairman has regular meetings with the headteacher to discuss policy and practice in more detail and has worked effectively to strengthen the governors' overall role. Other governors meet with specific members of staff related to their own area of responsibility. Minutes of formal governors' meetings indicate useful discussions are held around the effectiveness of the school and proposals for changes to policy. Governors are involved in reviewing the annual development plan and drafting priorities for the future, but in the absence of a strategic long-term plan, their involvement in helping shape future priorities is somewhat limited.

## **Financial information**

Financial management is good, with prudent planning against overall school priorities. The day-to-day finances are administered efficiently. The most recent LEA audit identified good practice, with only a few minor recommendations, which have been addressed.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	438,836
Total expenditure	439,982
Expenditure per pupil	2,075

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	31,164
Balance carried forward to the next	30,018

## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**.

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

- Standards of attainment in speaking and listening, and reading, are very good.
- Standards in writing for many pupils are above the national average, especially girls.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good, and most pupils achieve well.
- Teachers create a wide range of interesting and relevant purposes for speaking and listening, and writing.
- English is very well led and managed.
- Teachers assess pupils' work thoroughly and provide appropriate targets and support.
- A small minority of boys have negative attitudes towards writing.
- Standards in writing for boys at the end of Year 6 are below those in similar schools.

#### **Commentary**

40. Above average standards have been maintained because of the school's continuing high expectations of its pupils. The pupils' speaking and listening skills are very good and well above the national average. There are well-planned opportunities for them to talk to others when working in pairs or in small groups, and also to speak for a wide range of purposes. They are encouraged through the positive ethos of the school to take turns and listen to one another. Pupils are offered lots of opportunity to share work with each other, developing their listening and speaking skills as they offer ideas, answer questions and justify opinions.
41. Standards in reading are above average on entry and continue to improve so that attainment is very good at the end of Year 6 and standards are well above average. Pupils in Year 3 read with confidence and enjoyment. Reading lessons are well planned and structured throughout the school and teachers use a good range of strategies to ensure that pupils of all abilities achieve well in lessons. There is a good mixture of whole class teaching and group work; this enables the more able pupils to develop independence and progress at a good pace. Teaching assistants play a crucial role in supporting the learning of pupils with special educational needs or working alongside small groups of less able pupils to keep them focused on tasks. By the age of 11, pupils of all abilities read well. The proportion of pupils reading well above national expectations is high, and those pupils with special educational needs achieve well compared to prior attainment. Teachers ensure that pupils read a good range of material, including play scripts, poetry, novels and information books and articles. Pupils enjoy discussing their reading and most pupils enjoy reading for pleasure in their own time.
42. Standards in writing, as shown in test results at the end of Year 6, have declined over recent years, especially for boys, although overall they were still broadly in line with national averages, and for girls they were above average. Observation of Year 3 pupils' writing in lessons and scrutiny of the work in pupils' books during the inspection showed that, on entry to the school at the beginning of this school year, standards in writing were broadly in line with national expectations, even though recent test results show attainment on entry to be above national expectations. Observations of pupils' writing in lessons and in their books across the school show that most pupils make good progress in writing, but a small yet significant group do not do so well and fail to reach the target set for them. The less able pupils and those with special educational needs, whilst below national expectations, achieve well in relation to their previous attainment. Those pupils for whom English is an additional language have made very good progress since joining the school; their English work is now in line with and above national

averages for their age. The overall proportion of pupils attaining above national expectations in writing is high. However, during the inspection, a small minority of pupils, mainly boys, were observed to demonstrate reluctance to write, and did not sustain effort and concentration in lessons as well as did the majority of pupils. Consequently, by the end of the lesson, they had not achieved as well as the rest of the class. This contributes to the recent disappointing national test results in writing. This negative attitude towards writing does not apply to the more able pupils. Boys and girls of above average ability show enthusiasm and commitment to honing their writing skills and all pupils are aware of their personal targets.

43. Lessons are well planned with good direct teaching, such as the use of speech marks in writing dialogue in a Year 6 class, the conventions of writing a play script in Year 5 and the teaching of word endings such as ‘ng’ in Year 3. In good or very good lessons seen, the teachers ensured that activities engaged the pupils’ attention and they insisted on high standards of behaviour and effort from every pupil. Pupils were reminded of their targets and used strategies such as “123 Check” cards to achieve high standards of writing. There is careful adaptation of materials to support a visually impaired pupil, enabling effective learning. Teaching assistants work effectively with a range of pupils with specific difficulties, sometimes in the class and sometimes withdrawn for parts of lessons, providing good quality learning experiences adapted to their needs. Teaching and learning for the autistic pupils is good; it has been strengthened by specialist training for the teacher and teaching assistant, and advice taken from the Local Education Authority outreach team.
44. Handwriting is taught consistently across the school. By Year 6, the most able and average pupils attain high standards in hand writing, becoming confident in using a neat, legible cursive script and developing a personal style.
45. Homework is very well used to support the development of writing skills. When marking work teachers offer helpful comments so that pupils know how they can improve. Assessment is used very well by teachers to inform the next step in learning for individuals and groups of pupils.
46. Leadership and management in English are very good. Senior teachers have collected and analysed data about pupils’ performance and progress in English, and have a very clear understanding of the priorities for development and a detailed action plan for this. The Literacy co-ordinator has led staff in understanding the importance of motivating pupils, particularly boys, to write for a relevant purpose, and has worked alongside colleagues to support the development of a range of writing across the curriculum.

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

47. The integrated studies approach provides pupils with purposeful opportunities to develop their skills in reading, writing, and speaking and listening. For example, in a Year 4 lesson, pupils were encouraged to discuss with each other what may have been experienced through the senses in a Tudor kitchen. The pupils then used these ideas in a piece of extended writing in the first person. The use of vocabulary cards and word banks supported spelling. Drama linked to cross-curricular studies offers good opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills, helps with creating ideas for writing and also reinforces learning in other subjects, such as history. Word processing is used to enable pupils to publish work such as poetry and stories, or to write book reviews.

## **MATHEMATICS**

The provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in mathematics in the national tests in the summer of 2003 were well above average, with higher than average proportions of the pupils reaching and exceeding the expected levels for 11 year olds.
- Boys and girls of all abilities achieve well in mathematics during their time in the school and make good progress.
- There are very good systems for assessing, recording and tracking pupils' performance in mathematics throughout their time in the school.
- Standards of work seen during the inspection indicate above average standards are being maintained.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- The school is yet to make best use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support pupils' learning in mathematics.
- There is very little mathematics work displayed around the school and classroom displays do not fully promote teaching and learning in the subject.

### **Commentary**

43. Mathematics is a strength of the school in terms of pupils' standards and achievement, and the quality of provision. This is a direct consequence of the clear commitment and high expectations of the headteacher and senior management team. Pupils have a good understanding of numbers and are competent in completing complex written calculations accurately. Their understanding of data, shape and measures is secure. They are less secure in deciding which operation is needed within a given context, in problem solving and in using precise mathematical language when describing a method used, or to be used, to solve a problem. The very good analysis of performance data enables the school to set targets for each pupil, which are shared with the pupils, helping them to strive for success. Targets set for the end of Year 6 were exceeded last summer as a result of very good progress made by the pupils. Some pupils with special educational needs appropriately have mathematics targets within their individual education plans.
44. Teachers have good subject knowledge and high expectations of their pupils; pupils show positive attitudes to the subject and respond well to their teachers' expectations. Lessons are well planned and many teachers use imaginative ways of presenting activities, with the aid of resources and within real life contexts, to motivate the pupils. Work set is matched to different pupils' levels of understanding, challenging the most and least able appropriately. Teachers mark their work constructively, helping pupils to extend their knowledge and understanding. They use mini-whiteboards effectively during lessons to check on prior knowledge or gains during the lessons by all pupils individually. Mathematics homework is frequently set and responded to. Almost all pupils complete their homework and bring it back to school on schedule. There is very little mathematics work displayed in classrooms or around the school and, in some classrooms, there are insufficient displays supporting teaching and learning of the subject.
45. The subject is well led; the new subject leader is well supported by the headteacher who continues to have a strong personal interest in the subject. The subject leader has an effective action plan for the current year with well-defined and relevant priorities. There is good deployment of additional staff to support the needs of those pupils with mathematical learning difficulties; this provision has successfully enabled most pupils who are a little behind in their standards to catch up by the end of their time in the school. As the new subject leader

becomes established in her post, she will need to become more involved in the formal monitoring of standards, teaching and learning, which are currently led by the headteacher.

46. There has been good overall improvement in mathematics since the time of the last inspection whilst all the previous strengths have been maintained. Standards have improved further, the good quality of teaching has been maintained and leadership has been strengthened. The previously reported sound progress by pupils has further increased and is now good.
47. The National Numeracy Strategy principles have been embedded into the school's own approach to teaching and learning mathematics; for example, the use of oral and mental sessions at the beginning of lessons to practise and reinforce known number facts, involving all the pupils in quick fire responses. There is a clear structure for the teaching of formal recording of calculations from Year 3 to Year 6, and Unit Plans produced by the National Centre for Numeracy are being used effectively by some teachers.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

48. Pupils' good numeracy skills effectively support their work in other subjects; examples of this include negative numbers in work on temperatures, time lines in history, and understanding scale and co-ordinates in geography. The use of ICT remains limited within the mathematics curriculum itself, and is an area for further development.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

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

- Pupils achieve well in the national tests at the end of Year 6.
- Pupils' scientific knowledge and understanding is good.
- The subject is well led and managed by an effective and knowledgeable co-ordinator.
- Pupils do not achieve as well as they could in developing their abilities to plan and conduct investigations.

#### **Commentary**

49. Results in the national tests for Year 6 pupils in 2002 were well above the national average. The proportion of pupils achieving the nationally expected Level 4 was above average and the percentage of pupils achieving Level 5 was well above average. Test results for 2003 show a further rise in the proportion of pupils achieving Level 4, with nearly all pupils achieving at least the expected level, although there has been a fall in the percentage of pupils achieving Level 5. Overall national test results at the end of Year 6 have risen at a better rate than the national trend of improvement since the last inspection. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.
50. Overall standards of attainment are above average (as they were at the time of the last inspection). However, the standards of work seen during the inspection are not as high as might be expected from the very good test results, especially in investigative skills. Whilst pupils' knowledge and understanding are above average, their skills are broadly in line with those normally found nationally. Pupils demonstrate secure knowledge across a wide range of topics, particularly those related to life and living processes. In Year 6, they produce work of a high standard on seashore habitats during their residential visit to the Isle of Wight. Their research skills are good and Year 6 pupils show good levels of independence when searching for information from a variety of resources, including the Internet. In Year 3, pupils are learning how to make tests 'fair' and by Year 5, pupils have a sound understanding of the principles of fair testing. However, by Year 6, pupils' skills in planning and conducting investigations are not

as well developed as they could be and are relatively weak compared with other aspects of the subject. Pupils' work is well presented.

51. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers are confident and plan lessons well, focusing well on what they want pupils to learn. These learning objectives are carefully shared with pupils who, in turn, have a clear idea of what they need to learn. Pupils make good gains in their knowledge and understanding. However, they have insufficient opportunities to decide for themselves how to plan and tackle investigations. Improving pupils' science skills is a school priority and there is evidence that this is being addressed satisfactorily. For example, in a good lesson in Year 3, the teacher demonstrates effectively the need to plan tests that are 'fair'. However, in a Year 5 lesson on designing an investigation, the pupils completed planning sheets, but left the lesson unclear as to when they will complete the experiment. Teachers make good links with other subjects, particularly English, history and geography. However, there is insufficient use of ICT to support pupils' learning and there are missed opportunities to develop pupils' data handling skills.
52. Despite a lack of continuity in the management of the subject, with the current co-ordinator being the third in four years, the subject is well led and managed. Although appointed relatively recently, the co-ordinator is proving effective in coming to grips with the management issues and has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school's provision. A well-structured scheme of work provides effective guidance for lesson planning and helps ensure that pupils gain a good range of scientific knowledge and understanding. In addition, the co-ordinator has produced clear guidance to assist in the planning and teaching of investigational skills, and has led in-service training on teaching and assessing these skills. Assessment procedures are satisfactory.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There has been significant improvement in the provision for ICT in recent times.
- Pupils are now making good progress, but achievement until recently has not been good enough.
- Standards are broadly in line with national expectations for the subject.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- There is good leadership and management.
- Assessment and recording of pupils' progress is not formally established.
- Whilst there are good examples of using ICT in a cross-curricular way to support other subjects, this aspect remains under-developed overall.

### **Commentary**

53. Standards are much improved from the time of the previous inspection and are now broadly in line with national expectations, although some aspects remain below expectations. The majority of the pupils use computers confidently and with real interest and enthusiasm; many of these pupils have regular access to a computer at home. Standards in communicating information are strong. Many pupils confidently use word processing and spreadsheet packages. In Year 3, pupils are able to change font, colour and size of text, cut and paste and save their writing. The oldest pupils are now learning to make multimedia presentations, using the school's digital camera and a slide show package. Pupils confidently access the Internet to obtain information to support their research in other subjects. However, pupils have had limited experience of sending and receiving emails, and many lack the keyboard skills expected of pupils of their age, with even the older and more able pupils using no more than one finger on each hand to insert text. There is little current evidence of work in control, modelling and



monitoring; however, these strands are clearly represented in curriculum plans to be taught later this academic year, and pupils in some classes used robotic toys during the last academic year. Teaching and learning within the ICT suite is good, and sometimes very good. Teachers plan well and move effectively between pupils whilst they are at their work stations, supporting and extending their learning. The teachers are supported by a designated teaching assistant, who prepares the hardware ready for each lesson, frequently demonstrates software procedures to the class and ensures that the suite is purposefully presented for each lesson. This teaching assistant's contribution is a major factor in the improved provision, standards, and quality of teaching and learning. Nearly all the girls and boys respond very well to ICT lessons; they collaborate well together, show independence and sustain their interest in their work; and in some lessons they make very good progress. Many of the Year 6 pupils preparing multimedia presentations for the first time were particularly enthralled with the possibilities of the new technology.

54. There is no formally established whole school system for assessing and recording pupils' progress in the various strands of ICT; the school does not yet assess pupils against nationally agreed criteria and so teachers are unable to gain a clear view of how well their pupils are doing compared with standards expected nationally. Annual reports to parents are informative about the nature of ICT activities pupils have experienced and their attitudes to the subject, but do not consistently give a judgement about their overall standards.
55. The subject is well led and managed by a knowledgeable co-ordinator. There is a detailed action plan developed from an audit of need within the school, which sets out the main priorities for the year. There is a clearly structured list showing the software available to support the progression in ICT skills from Year 3 to Year 6 and there is also a helpful ICT staff manual. The ICT suite is well presented and organised, and provides a good resource for teaching and learning.
56. At the time of the last inspection, standards were below national expectations, teaching was unsatisfactory and the national curriculum was not covered. Standards are now in line with national expectations, teaching is good and curriculum plans for the year cover all strands of the National Curriculum. This represents very good progress since the time of the last inspection.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

57. This aspect is rightly identified by the school as a priority within its draft school development plan for the year. There is a commitment to develop this as a strength and currently there is already some good practice; for example, between history, geography and ICT, with pupils using the Internet for research purposes, and learning such skills as cutting and pasting. Pupils frequently use word processing for their writing, but more often for presentation, rather than at the initial writing and editing stages. There is only limited use of ICT within mathematics and science; however, as an extension of some science work on bird flight, during the inspection, some Year 6 pupils were using the digital camera for the first time and others were inserting pictures from the camera into a slide show, using presentation software. During the inspection, there was very little evidence of the use of ICT in lessons in the classroom, despite the availability of machines in each room. The ICT suite is timetabled for each class for a discrete ICT lesson each week. This takes up around half the school day. The suite is under-used during other parts of the week. A visually impaired pupil appropriately has access to a laptop in the classroom to support his learning in all curriculum areas.

### **HUMANITIES**

A total of two lessons were observed in this curriculum area: one in religious education, one in history and none in geography. In addition, two school assemblies were observed, which contributed to religious education. Further substantial evidence was gained from discussions with pupils and subject leaders, analysis of teachers' records and curriculum plans for each subject, the analysis of

pupils' work for this term and, for history and geography, work completed by the end of the last academic year. This evidence base enables a judgement on standards in each subject, but not on the quality of teaching and learning.

## **Geography**

Provision in geography is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well and attain standards above national expectations.
- Very good cross-curricular links are made within the school's "Studies" approach.
- Pupils are positive about their experiences.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- Not all annual reports to parents provide a judgement and comment specifically about geography.

### **Commentary**

- 58 Standards in geography have improved since the time of the previous inspection and are now above national expectations. Pupils are able to recall accurately and with enthusiasm their work from the previous year, including topics on world rivers, the rain forest, conservation and the environment, and local studies. They have a good understanding of location and are able to use maps well. Evidence from work at the end of Year 6 completed during a residential visit to the Isle of Wight indicates high levels of understanding on such issues as the geology of the island and interpreting maps.
59. The quality of the work and the pupils' experiences are enriched by the carefully planned integrated "Studies" approach long established within the school. There are many good examples of cross-curricular ways of working. For example, the geography work includes very good planned opportunities for pupils to write in a range of contexts supporting their English work, and also some good examples of using information and communication technology skills, including the digital camera and word processing packages. The topic on rivers led to design and technology work on designing and building boats with waterproof sails. Geography is further strengthened by the programme of visits during the course of the year, be it to the local high street, the banks of the Thames or the Isle of Wight.
60. Whilst it is not possible to provide a firm judgement on the quality of teaching, inspection evidence indicates a number of strong features. Some teachers have specialist subject knowledge. There is a clear programme to ensure National Curriculum requirements are met, although the school is making little use of more recently published national guidance materials. The teachers and pupils systematically review the progress at the end of each unit of geography work and the pupils then produce an evaluation of their own learning, and identify, with the teacher, targets for their next geography topic. Some, but not all, of these targets are specifically related to geography. Others are more to do with presentation or the quality of English skills.

## **History**

Provision in history is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well and attain standards above national expectations.
- Very good cross-curricular links are made within the school's "Studies" approach.
- Pupils are very positive about their experiences.

- The subject is well led and managed.
- Not all annual reports to parents provide a judgement and comment specifically about history.  
*Note: these strengths and weaknesses are consistent with those for geography as the two subjects form part of a whole school integrated “Studies” approach.*

## Commentary

61. Standards in history have improved since the time of the last inspection and are now above national expectations. Almost all pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of Tudor times and ancient Egypt, the two periods being studied at the time of the inspection. They are clear about chronology and are learning to interpret artefacts and other sources of evidence. For example, pupils in Year 4 are able to use their knowledge of Tudor England to help them perceptively interpret the significance of artefacts shown in portraits of monarchs.
62. As in geography, the quality of the history work and pupils’ understanding is enriched and strengthened by the carefully planned and presented integrated “Studies” approach adopted by the school. Pupils are able to recall visits to museums and other historical sites, to talk with feeling about life for various groups of society in different times, and Year 6 pupils are keen to anticipate the historical work during their residential visit to the Isle of Wight later in the school year. There are very good opportunities to write for a range of audiences and in a range of contexts, and some high quality writing is included in pupils’ history folders. Photographs in school show pupils experiencing Roman and Victorian days in role and costume for the day. Pupils are able to use their ICT skills to obtain information from the Internet and to provide imaginative artistic supplements to their work.
63. Inspection evidence indicates that the quality of teaching and learning in history is at least good, although it is not possible to make a definitive judgement. The one history lesson observed was very well planned and prepared. The pupils were interpreting evidence and working most enthusiastically to identify issues from well-presented materials. This activity enabled them to use their good knowledge of Tudor England and to apply it to historical enquiry. Teachers’ curriculum plans for history indicate a clear progression across the Key Stage and coverage of the National Curriculum units of study. Some use is made of recently published guidance materials to enhance the national curriculum materials. Teachers mark history work carefully, related to the historical issues, and encourage the pupils to evaluate their own work at the end of topics against the historical objectives. Commendably, the pupils’ work shows a focus on historical skills and not just knowledge. History has a high profile in classrooms, with some good displays, including a balance of pupils’ work, historical information and artefacts, links to other curriculum areas and questions for the pupils to consider, as seen in a Year 5 display on ancient Egypt. Timelines are used prominently to help reinforce an understanding of chronology.
64. The subject leader for history and geography has good subject knowledge and clear leadership qualities, maintaining a whole school focus on these curriculum areas and effectively strengthening the overall provision.
65. As in geography, not all pupils’ annual reports for parents include specific and discrete comments for history and geography.

## Religious education

Provision in Religious Education is **sound**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The agreed syllabus provides for satisfactory coverage of the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum.

- Assessment procedures are weak and do not provide information on the achievement of individuals or groups against learning objectives.

### **Commentary**

66. During this inspection, little religious education (RE) was being taught. Judgements are based on observation of an assembly, scrutiny of pupils' books, discussion with the RE co-ordinator and the observation of one lesson. Since the last inspection, the standards in RE have been maintained. At the age of seven almost all pupils' knowledge and understanding of RE is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. By the time the pupils are aged 11, their attainment is still in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.
67. Some RE is taught in assembly as well as in the planned RE lessons in every class. For example, the local minister of religion led an assembly during the inspection, which included teaching about the use of incense in church. Pupils listened with respect and interest as he told them how the incense grains are lit and used. Resources for teaching about Christianity, Islam and Judaism are sound. The work in pupils' books demonstrates sound teaching about the Bible as a holy book. In Year 3, pupils learn about the Ten Commandments through appropriate activities, which ensure their understanding. For example, pupils of different abilities could all identify the commandment that they considered the most important and they also knew that a psalm is a form of poem. In Year 6, pupils could explain the authority of the Bible in relation to a letter from a parent or guardian and connecting this to the authority of the Bible.
68. In the pupils' work books, the teachers' marking acknowledges effort, but does not offer comments on how pupils can raise their standard of religious knowledge or skill, limiting their overall progress in RE itself. In lessons, the pupils with special educational needs are well supported by teaching assistants, and also have activities specially designed, enabling them to learn at their level. However, the more able pupils are not generally offered different or more challenging activities and, therefore, do not attain as well as they could. Assessment is informal and does not help teachers identify the next step in learning for groups or individuals.
69. Subject co-ordination is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has ensured that planning corresponds to the locally agreed syllabus and that sufficient time is allocated to RE in every class. The teachers make good use of the proximity of the school to the local church.

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

It is not possible to report in detail on all subjects within this curriculum area. A total of six lessons were observed in across the curriculum area: two in art and design, two in music, and one in physical education and in design and technology. Further evidence was gained from teachers' records and planning, and from discussions with pupils and subject leaders. The analysis of pupils' work in the current year and of photographic evidence from the previous year provides additional evidence of standards in design and technology, and art and design. Additional evidence from assemblies, instrumental teaching and recordings enables a judgement on standards in music to be made. In physical education, there was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on standards.

#### **Music**

Provision in music is **very good**.

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

- Pupils achieve well and reach good standards.
- An extensive range of extra-curricular opportunities for pupils greatly enhances provision.
- The quality teaching and learning is good.
- The senior management team ensures that the subject continues to be well led.



## Commentary

70. The school has maintained the good standards reported in the last inspection. Standards are above those typically found nationally. Younger pupils can clap and play rhythmic patterns accurately. They use tuned and un-tuned percussion instruments with control and confidence. They compose and perform tunes, devising their own notation. Standards in singing are good; pupils sing tunefully in unison and in parts with control of pitch and a sense of musical expression.
71. Teaching and learning are good and pupils achieve well. Lessons are well planned and structured. Teachers make effective use of the extensive range of resources and with good opportunities for pupils to practise and improve their skills, and this has a positive effect on pupils' achievement. Pupils enjoy their lessons, and are enthusiastic and respond well. Pupils build on their skills in assemblies and hymn practice, and in performances in concerts for their parents. Teachers link music effectively with other subjects, particularly English, drama and dance, but could make better use of ICT to support pupils' learning.
72. The school gives the subject very high priority and a significant strength of its provision is the range and quality of extra curricular opportunities. In addition, there are many opportunities for pupils to learn a range of musical instruments; the number of pupils who do so is impressive. The school has a long tradition of offering quality musical productions and events. Although there is no co-ordinator at present, this has not had an adverse effect on standards because the senior management team has taken appropriate measures to ensure these are maintained. For example, a consultant has provided support and guidance to teachers to ensure good quality learning.

## Design and technology

Provision in design and technology has improved and is now **satisfactory**.

## Commentary

73. Standards of work seen are in line with national expectations. The school has improved on the unsatisfactory standards reported in the last inspection. Pupils' skills at designing and making are satisfactory, although there is insufficient evidence to judge their skills at evaluating.
74. Teachers' planning has improved since the last inspection. Clear planning for each unit of work outlines clearly what pupils are expected to do and learn in such a way that pupils' skills can be systematically built upon. The lesson seen was good; it had a clear focus and appropriate activities. The teacher and learning support assistant supported pupils' learning well, enabling them to achieve success in meeting the learning objective of the lesson.
75. The school has improved its provision since the last inspection. The curriculum is better and appropriate assignments are designated for each year group for each term to ensure that pupils now have appropriate experiences of designing and making a range of products. At present, assessment is informal and procedures for monitoring pupils' progress are not formally established. The subject is managed satisfactorily.

## Art and design

Provision in art and design is **satisfactory**.

### Commentary

76. The school has maintained the sound standards reported in the last inspection. Standards of work seen are in line with national expectations. Year 6 pupils reach acceptable standards in using collage techniques to create effects with different materials. They produce observational drawings of a good standard, with good use of shading and colour. Year 4 pupils show sound drawing techniques, some producing Tudor style portraits of good quality. Standards in painting are satisfactory and pupils have a sound understanding of the work of a number of artists. Almost all pupils have a sound understanding of tone, texture and shade, and demonstrate this in their sketchbooks.
77. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Pupils experience an appropriate range of media to develop their skills. Teachers make sound use of sketchbooks to enable pupils to experiment and practise various techniques and record observations. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers link work in art effectively with other subjects. For example, a historical context gives relevance to pupils' work on portraits in Tudor style. A special 'Arts in Nature' Week in the summer term, involving the whole school, provided good opportunities for pupils to improve their art techniques, using a range of material and media. Teachers make insufficient use of ICT to support pupils' learning. There are many good displays around the school, but very few of pupils' artwork.
78. The subject is managed satisfactorily. Planning guidance is adequate, helping to ensure a reasonably broad and balanced curriculum. However, it needs updating to provide more effective support for teachers in planning sequences of lessons. Procedures for monitoring pupils' attainment and progress are not formally established. Although the co-ordinator has put together a useful portfolio of annotated pupils' work, there is a lack of any critical evaluation of overall standards.

## Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

### Commentary

79. Standards in swimming exceed those typically found nationally. Records show that nearly all pupils leave the school able to swim at least the nationally recommended distance of 25 metres. In the lesson seen in Year 3, standards in gymnastics were typical of those found nationally. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement on other aspects of the subject.
80. Although there is no co-ordinator at present, the school retains a strong commitment to providing a broad and balanced curriculum, and a clear focus on maintaining its good provision. It offers pupils a wide range of activities, making good use of the facilities at the local leisure centre. Provision is enhanced by good opportunities for pupils to be involved in extra-curricular activities, competitive matches and a residential experience for older pupils. There is adequate guidance to help teachers plan lessons, but this scheme needs updating because there are some inconsistencies in the quality of teachers' planning. At present, assessment is informal and procedures for monitoring pupils' progress are not formally established.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

It is not possible to report in detail on this subject as it was not possible to observe specific lessons in personal, social and health education (PSHE) during the course of the inspection. However,

evidence was gained from a scrutiny of curriculum plans, talking with the subject co-ordinator and headteacher, talking with groups of pupils, looking at their work and listening to the views of parents.

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Personal development is identified by the school as an important element of its work.
- Pupils have a good understanding of issues around personal development.
- The subject is well led.
- Teachers know their pupils well.
- There are good plans in place which support personal, social and health education.

### **Commentary**

81. The school carefully and successfully plans for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) using an LEA scheme with three main themes. This work is partially taught as a discrete timetabled subject and also within the integrated "Studies" philosophy of the school. All pupils are well known by their teachers; this was reflected in a recent survey where all pupils were able to name a member of staff who would support them at a time of need. The curriculum fully addresses such issues as sex education, drug awareness, anti-smoking and water safety, and this is carefully monitored by the subject leader, who provides a good lead and has a clear knowledge of the work across the school.
82. The school council successfully supports the PSHE programme with time given in all classes during the week to consider the points raised by the council and suggestions for future priorities. Participation within elections for the school council enables all pupils to gain some understanding of the democratic process. There are relatively few planned opportunities for older pupils to mentor younger ones; however, new arrivals during the school year are assigned a 'buddy' when they first arrive in the school.



## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3

<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3

<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	2
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	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	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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

