

INSPECTION REPORT

ST SWITHUN'S C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Kennington, Oxford

LEA area: Oxfordshire

Unique reference number: 123177

Headteacher: Mrs J Evans

Lead inspector: Mr G.R. Logan

Dates of inspection: 29 – 31 March 2004

Inspection number: 257963

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	280
School address:	Grundy Crescent Kennington Oxford Oxfordshire
Postcode:	OX1 5PS
Telephone number:	01865 438 933
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P Brooks
Date of previous inspection:	21 September 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Swithun's CE Primary School serves the village of Kennington, between Abingdon and Oxford. Eighty per cent of pupils live in the village. Much of the housing is privately-owned. A small number of pupils live in social housing. The school is of similar size to many primary schools. A very high proportion of the 280 pupils are from White European backgrounds, with around five per cent of pupils of mixed-race or other background. No pupils are learning to speak English as an additional language in the main school. There is one child with English as an additional language in Reception. A well below average proportion of pupils (seven per cent) have special educational needs, for mainly moderate learning difficulties. Two of these have statements. This is a very stable community - only around five per cent of pupils left or joined the school during the last school year. The proportion of pupils receiving free school meals (two per cent) is well below the national average (19 per cent). The profile of pupils' attainment when they enter the school is average in most years. Nursery and Reception children spend one half day per week off-site at a Forest School project. The school is a partner in an Integration Project with the Kingfisher Special School, whereby a small number of children from Kingfisher are fully integrated in the Nursery class. In Reception and in the main school, they are integrated with mainstream pupils for some activities.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
11810	Mr G. R. Logan	Lead inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Physical education English as an additional language
9334	Mrs J Mynett	Lay inspector	
11901	Dr P Lowe	Team inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Religious education Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage
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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	12
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	17
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	19
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	32

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an **effective school**, with some very good features, which has shown good improvement since it was last inspected. It has a very supportive, caring ethos and successfully includes all pupils in its activities. Pupils' achievement is good. Teaching is good overall, with significant strengths in the lower school. Currently, standards are above the national average overall. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and works effectively with governors. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are above average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6.
- Provision for Foundation Stage children is very good. Standards are above average. The Forest School provides an enriching opportunity for Nursery and Reception children.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good; they make good progress.
- Teaching is very good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2.
- Pupils have very good attitudes and behaviour. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. The ethos of the school is very good.
- The integration of mainstream and special school pupils significantly enriches the experience of all pupils. Inclusion is a strength.
- Pupils are cared for very well.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership. Governors are well-informed and effective. The management of teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 is not strong enough.
- Pupils' achievement, particularly of the higher attainers, is inconsistent in Years 3 to 6.
- Opportunities for older pupils to develop writing skills across the curriculum are limited.
- The school is currently in deficit but has a clear plan of action to retrieve this situation.

The school has made good progress since the last inspection. Most issues have been successfully tackled. Standards have risen and pupils' achievement is now better, although provision for the older higher attaining pupils is not as effective as the school would like. Curricular planning is thorough. The quality of teaching has improved significantly, although it is better overall in the Foundation Stage and infants than in the juniors. The school now has a long-term strategic plan.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Pupils achieve well overall. Achievement is good for younger pupils. Children in Reception are on the way to achieving the goals set for them. Many will exceed the expected level by the end of the Foundation Stage. Standards in Year 2 are well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science. However, though standards in Year 6 are above average in English, mathematics and science, staffing has been very unstable recently and achievement is satisfactory at present. Allowing for age, standards are higher overall in Year 2 than in Year 6. Although Year 6 pupils in 2003 appear to have made below average improvement from Year 2, the school's performance was negatively affected by an influx of pupils in Year 4 with relatively low prior attainment. Pupils who had been in this school since Reception made above average improvement.

Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the good support they receive from learning support staff. Children with English as an additional language in Reception achieve well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are very good. These factors contribute significantly to their learning. Their **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.** Relationships and behaviour are very good. Attendance and punctuality are good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided is **good**.

Teaching is good overall, but best in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. Teaching in the infants is more effective than in the juniors, where several staff are new to the school. Planning for two year groups with a wide range of maturity and need is particularly challenging. Overall, pupils make good progress, but this is best in the lower school. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils. Expectations are particularly high in the infants. Assessment procedures are good and are used with increasing effectiveness. Pupils learn to evaluate their work accurately. They have a mature approach and work well, both independently and with others. Planning to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs, or with English as an additional language, is effective. Learning support staff are effective. The curriculum is satisfactory. Extra-curricular opportunities are good. Pupils receive very good care and support. Very good induction procedures help new children to settle quickly. Child protection procedures are good. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good. The school has a good partnership with parents. Links with other schools are very good. Community links are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good.

The headteacher is very effective in giving the school a clear direction and is very well-regarded by parents. However, while the Foundation Stage and infants benefit from very effective management, a high level of staff turnover in the juniors, together with the reorganisation of classes, has made it difficult recently to sustain consistency of provision. This phase does not at present have sufficient senior management direction. Several key co-ordinators are very new to the school and are not yet fully effective. The school evaluates its work diligently and makes good use of available data. Governors manage the school efficiently. The school has experienced funding difficulties over several years and remains in deficit. Statutory requirements are met. School administration is very efficient.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are happy with the school. They are happy with the standards achieved and feel that the school is well led, although generally unhappy with the large classes in the juniors. The level of parental involvement is good. **Pupils enjoy school.** They enjoy lessons, appreciate the care shown towards them and feel that adults are readily available to help them if things go wrong.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Strengthen the management of Years 3 to 6, with a view to achieving greater consistency in teaching and overall provision.
- Ensure that the needs of the older higher attaining pupils are met more fully.
- Increase opportunities for junior age pupils to write in different contexts across the curriculum.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Pupils' achievement is **good** overall. Currently, standards are above average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Foundation Stage provision is very good. Standards are above those expected in all areas of learning.
- Standards are above those normally found in the majority of subjects in Year 2.
- Support for pupils with special educational needs is good; they make good progress.
- Pupils achieve well overall, though achievement is better in the infants than the juniors.

Commentary

- 1 Attainment on entry to the school is average for most year groups, but with some variation within year groups, and always a healthy proportion of potentially able pupils. A well below average proportion of pupils have significant levels of special educational need; very few have English as an additional language.
- 2 In the national tests in 2003, standards in Year 2 were well above average in reading and writing, above average in mathematics and average in science in relation to all schools nationally. Standards were above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics in relation to similar schools. Standards in Year 6 were above average in English, mathematics and science in relation to all schools nationally. Standards were average in mathematics and science and below average in English in relation to similar schools. The level of improvement made between the end of Year 2 and Year 6 was below average overall in 2003. However, the 2003 figures were distorted by the arrival in Year 4 of a large group of new pupils, with significantly lower overall prior attainment. If this group is discounted, then pupils who had all or most of their education in this school made an above average level of progress over the four year period.
- 3 Over time, performance at Year 2 has tended to be slightly better than at Year 6, reflecting the greater stability of staffing in that phase. However, able pupils in Year 6 did well in 2003, with an average proportion of the cohort achieving the challenging Level 5 in English, above average in mathematics and well above average in science. Nonetheless, the school recognizes that its provision for able pupils remains an important area for development.
- 4 The school's tracking systems indicate that the current Year 2 cohort, which includes pupils with a very wide range of prior attainment, are likely to perform less well overall than in 2003. Outcomes in Year 6 are likely to be similar to 2003, given the make-up of the group. Value-added figures are likely to be at least satisfactory.
- 5 Overall, pupils are achieving well. However, changes in staffing and variations in teaching quality in Years 3 to 6 mean that younger pupils are achieving more consistently than the older. Progress is best in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2, where the teaching is strongest, but more variable in the older year groups. Planning for the diverse needs of larger, mixed-year classes is an additional challenge in the juniors and the needs of the more able pupils are not always met fully.
- 6 Although boys have typically performed well over time in national testing, the inspection found no evidence of any gender issues. Boys and girls make similar rates of progress. On the evidence available, pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve no less well than the others. In almost all cases, pupils who have been in the school throughout their education do better

than those who have joined part way through. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good, because of the good support they receive and work that is well-planned to meet their needs. Overall, these pupils reach the targets set for them.

Foundation Stage

- 7 Foundation Stage provision is very good. Children benefit from very good induction procedures and settle well into school routines. Very good teaching, planning and assessment procedures ensure that children make good progress and achieve well. Almost all children in the current group are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals in all areas, with a significant proportion exceeding them. Provision in all areas of the curriculum is very good. By the end of the Reception year, children are very well-prepared for the work in the main school.

Years 1 and 2

- 8 Standards by the end of Year 2 in 2004 are likely to be well above average in reading, and above average in writing, mathematics and science. This is a similar picture to 2003. Standards are above average in several of the other subjects where evidence was available. Underlying literacy and numeracy skills are good and these are used well in subjects across the curriculum. Pupils' speaking skills are developed effectively. Pupils have particularly good skills in information and communication technology (ICT) by the end of Year 2. These skills are used well in other subjects.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	17.5 (15.1)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	16.1 (14.6)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	17.1 (17.0)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 40 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Years 3 - 6

- 9 Currently, attainment in Year 6 is above average in English, mathematics and science. This indicates a similar picture to 2003, reflecting an able cohort of pupils. Standards are average in most of the other subjects where a judgement is possible. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT), though above those normally found, are not as strong as in the infants, because of the widely-varying skill base of the pupils on entry and the time needed to achieve consistency of attainment. Pupils achieve satisfactorily across the curriculum, although a high level of staff change means that progress has been more erratic than elsewhere in the school. The school exceeded its targets at Level 4 (though not at Level 5) in 2003. It is likely to achieve its targets at Level 4 in the current year.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.5 (27.8)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	28.2 (27.2)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	29.8 (28.8)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 49 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- 10 Pupils' literacy skills are good, but these are not promoted well across the curriculum in Years 3 to 6. Numeracy skills are good. In science, practical and investigative activities are increasingly strong and this is helping to raise standards. Pupils' skills in ICT are improving

rapidly. Staff are very competent users of ICT and this underpins the good progress. There is good planned cross-curricular use of ICT.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The **very good** provision for promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social, cultural and personal development is reflected in their **very good** attitudes, behaviour, relationships, and willingness to take responsibility. Pupils are happy and enjoy coming to school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour enable them to make good progress because they are highly motivated and eager to learn.
- The very good relationships between staff and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves promote a positive learning environment.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and contributes very effectively to their personal development.
- Attendance is higher than at many other schools and punctuality is good.

Commentary

- 11 Both pupils and parents have positive views about the school. Parents are particularly pleased that their children are happy and enjoy school. They feel that the teachers' high expectations encourage their children to work hard and achieve their best. As a result they are developing confidence and making good progress. Pupils are very enthusiastic and *'like everything'* about their school. The youngest children in the nursery and Reception class are developing very positive attitudes to their work and learning. They are quickly learning independence; willingly share their toys and resources, and concentrate well on their different activities and lessons. The behaviour of the majority of pupils is very good both in lessons and around the school. Pupils respond well to the reward programme and 'golden time'. They feel it motivates them to work hard and behave well. Harmony is a strong feature of the school and there is little evidence of bullying or oppressive behaviour. Pupils feel that bullying is not an issue in the school and are keen to stress that, if they did have a problem, they would know who to go to and feel certain it will be sorted out.
- 12 The provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good and reflects the school's Christian ethos. Pupils gain a good understanding of their own and other religions through the sensitive delivery of religious education lessons. In addition the approach to 'values education' is firmly embedded into the school's culture and helps to develop pupils' self-knowledge and spiritual awareness. This is consistently promoted each week, especially during assemblies and in the personal, social and health education lessons. Pupils show great respect for the values and beliefs of others.
- 13 Moral development is very good. Pupils respect the code of conduct which they have helped to devise. They know right from wrong and are fully aware of how their actions affect others. The weekly award assembly encourages pupils to recognise and celebrate others' achievements. Pupils gain an awareness of others less fortunate than themselves through their support of charities, both at home and overseas. They are currently enthusiastically raising funds to provide animals for farms in Africa. The very good behaviour of pupils in and around the school is a result of their developing self-discipline, and is reflected in only one boy being excluded for a short period last year.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	220	1	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	4	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	10	0	0

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

- 14 Social development is particularly well promoted and results in constructive relationships being forged both between staff and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves. This underpins a good working environment and has a positive effect on achievement. Pupils are very supportive and encouraging of the Kingfisher pupils, who are fully integrated into some lessons and take part in their games at playtime. Pupils accept responsibility readily and complete tasks conscientiously. The school council engenders a good awareness of others and provides members with an opportunity to meet the needs of other pupils. Older pupils are very caring of the younger ones when they play together on the field at lunchtime.
- 15 Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. Curricular provision is rich and pupils are involved in various local festivals and competitions. The school also very effectively fosters pupils' awareness of other cultures through a range of curriculum developments, projects and visitors. The recent *Africa Week* enabled pupils to explore different aspects of another culture, such as drumming, story telling and craft work. This resulted in colourful displays of art, textiles, pottery and masks around the school.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.0	School data	0.4
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

- 16 Pupils are happy to come to school and are eager to learn. Attendance is good and above the national average. The number of unauthorised absences is similar to that of other schools but this figure is principally due to the fact that the school will not authorise absences during the first half-term. The school rightly feels that this is a vital time in establishing new systems and relationships between pupils and their new class teacher. The school monitors attendance rigorously and has very good systems to follow up absences. Most parents are conscientious in contacting the school when their children are away and bring their children to school punctually in the mornings.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good**. The curriculum is **satisfactory**, with good extra-curricular provision. There are some notable strengths in aspects 6 and 7.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is **good** overall. It is very good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2, and good, with some areas for improvement, in Years 3 to 6. In the most effective lessons, expectations are high, pupils are challenged well and learning proceeds at a brisk pace.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' very good attitudes contribute strongly to the good learning seen.
- Teachers' use of assessment information to plan future work is good overall. Lessons are generally planned effectively to meet pupils' needs. However, higher attainers are not always fully challenged in Years 3 to 6.
- Teaching assistants support pupils with special educational needs well.

Commentary

17 The school has experienced a relatively high level of staff mobility in recent terms, particularly in the juniors. Four of the five staff in Years 3 to 6 are new in the current school year, two having joined in the present term, one as a recently-qualified teacher. Two of the others, though very experienced teachers, are still familiarizing themselves with the breadth of the primary curriculum. While the overall quality of teaching is good at present, the strength lies in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2. In Years 1 and 2, teaching is very good overall, with a significant number of excellent lessons in one Year 2 class. In Years 3 to 6, the bulk of lessons were good, with around one-third being satisfactory. Around one in five lessons in that phase was very good.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 44 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6 (14%)	13 (29%)	15 (34%)	10 (23%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

18 Foundation Stage staff have a very good understanding of the areas of learning and work well in partnership with parents to enable children to learn well. The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good, with one excellent lesson observed. Other adults provide very good support. A very good and enriching partnership has developed with the Kingfisher staff. The learning environment is stimulating. Lessons are very well prepared and planning is very good, taking very good account of individual needs. Staff have worked hard to achieve a good balance between activities selected by the children and those which are adult-directed. Relationships are very good. Children's progress is carefully assessed and recorded. Assessment systems are thorough.

19 The strongest teaching and the best achievement were seen in one Year 2 class. Here, pupils are challenged very well, and respond very positively to this approach. The teaching is very rigorous and thorough and motivates pupils particularly well. Several excellent lessons were observed, including a very impressive, moving and motivating lesson in religious

education. The level of challenge is less consistent in Years 3 to 6 and this affects the quality of pupils' learning in a minority of lessons. To an extent this arises because many staff are new. It also underlines the lack of a strong role model at that level, willing to set a standard for others, and reflects the challenge of providing adequately for the diversity of age, aptitude, maturity and prior experience where each class contains two year groups. Pace is a weakness in some lessons and this affects pupils' learning. Higher attainers are not provided for as effectively as they might be towards the top of the school. Although standards are still above average for the pupils in Year 6 because of their good prior attainment, not all pupils in the juniors are making the same level of progress as those in the infants.

- 20 Teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy are good overall, though very good in the infants. Overall, pupils achieve well. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 sometimes lacks pace and this has an affect on learning. Speaking and listening skills are developed well. Writing skills are developed less effectively in the juniors than the infants. ICT skills are taught well across the school and this is reflected in the confident approach to ICT and the good achievement shown by most pupils.
- 21 The school encourages pupils to be self-sufficient in their learning and to develop independence. Teachers question pupils well and, in the best lessons, encourage them to think strategically, to devise ways of approaching a problem which can be applied, or creatively adapted, on other occasions. Planning is generally thorough and, up to Year 3, is well-focused on individual needs. This is less secure in the final three years.
- 22 Pupils with special educational needs are well taught both in lessons and when they are withdrawn. Assessment structures are good and detailed individual education plans are drawn up, outlining the intervention needed. Work is well matched to pupils' needs and basic skills are taught effectively. Classroom assistants are deployed well and give good support throughout the school. They are well briefed and know the pupils well. The school has developed good links with outside agencies for support and advice.
- 23 Gifted and talented pupils are identified across the school and a register maintained. However, too little specific provision is made to meet the needs identified, other than in music and sport, and the school recognizes this as a crucial next step towards meeting the needs of these pupils.
- 24 Teachers manage pupils well and have high expectations of their positive attitudes and good behaviour. Teachers' methods are chosen well to assist pupils in gaining knowledge and developing understanding. There is, for example, a high level of first-hand learning in music, and also in history and geography, where this learning is well-supported by visits and visitors. Resources are used well. This is frequently seen in Foundation Stage, where considerable use is made of the outdoor environment and the school's links with the Forest School. Teachers make effective use of ICT in planning and presenting their lessons and this provides a good example for pupils. They are working to strengthen links between subjects. Good links have been made, for example, between ICT and other subjects.
- 25 Clear objectives are set for learning. These are frequently referred to in lessons. Good use overall is made of assessment to support the planning of work which is appropriately matched to pupils' needs and capabilities. This is very good in the Foundation Stage, but weaker in Years 4, 5 and 6. Pupils are often given helpful comments when their work is marked, to help them improve their future work, although the quality of comments and the rigour of marking vary across the school. Pupils are increasingly encouraged to evaluate their own work and that of others. This was evident in several lessons in art and design, physical education and ICT. Teachers make increasing use of data to track pupils' progress and identify areas of weakness. Good assessment procedures have been implemented in English, mathematics and science and several other subjects. Progress is effectively tracked in writing and numeracy and this helps with group target-setting. Individual targets

are set in English, but not in mathematics. The use of homework to support pupils' achievement is good, with some very good practice in Year 6.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **satisfactory**. Opportunities for enrichment are **good**. Accommodation and resources are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for personal, social, health education and citizenship (PSHCE) is very good and influences all aspects of school life.
- Curricular development in the Foundation Stage is very good.
- Preparation of pupils for the later stages of their education is very good.

Commentary

- 26 The curriculum, overall, is broad and balanced, meets statutory requirements and includes religious education and collective worship. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is innovative and is enriched by links with the Forest Schools Project, Kingfisher Nursery and the on-site playgroup. In the Foundation Stage, play and active learning are an essential part of the learning process. In the main school, the quality and range of opportunities provided are good. Planning in two-yearly cycles ensures that pupils in mixed-age classes do not repeat work. The school plans to develop links between subjects further, in order to make learning more coherent. Some good practice, such as the integration of ICT into a range of subjects, is already emerging. However, opportunities for extended writing across the curriculum are limited in the juniors.
- 27 Provision for pupils' personal, social, health education and citizenship is very good and is incorporated into many subjects. Equality of access and opportunity is good overall, but weaker for the more able pupils. Individual differences in terms of race, class, disability, background and gender are positively acknowledged and reflected in the curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to make choices, express opinions and respect other people.
- 28 Preparation for pupils' transfer from the playgroup to the nursery, and from one year group to the next is very good. The transfer of pupils in Year 6 to secondary school is also very good. There are very good links between staff, an effective programme of visits and linked work and activities involving staff, parents and pupils.
- 29 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. They are well supported by learning support staff and this enables them to make good progress.
- 30 Opportunities for curricular enrichment are good. Educational visits, visitors and themed weeks, linked to pupils' learning needs, enhance the breadth and quality of their experiences. Good support for learning outside the school day includes opportunities for participation in sport. Participation in the arts, including the choir, orchestra, instrumental music and the art club, is good. Participation in other after-school activities is good.
- 31 The match of teachers and support staff to the curriculum is very good in the Foundation Stage and good in the rest of the school. Accommodation, including the extensive school grounds, is good overall. It is used imaginatively and staff have created a stimulating learning environment. Resources are very good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory, overall, in the main school. Computer facilities are very good and have contributed significantly to improved standards in ICT.
- 32 Curriculum issues identified in the last inspection report have been dealt with fully. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Current priorities include the need to

improve further provision for higher attaining pupils in the juniors and more planned opportunities for older pupils to develop their writing skills in subjects across the school. In addition, the school might well consider more effective use of time at the start of the school day.

Care, guidance and support

Systems to ensure pupils' health, safety and welfare are **very good** and pupils are well supported during their time at school. Procedures to monitor and promote pupils' personal and academic development are also **very good**. Pupils feel it is a safe and happy school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a safe, caring and supportive environment where pupils can grow into happy confident individuals.
- The provision to enable pupils from Kingfisher special school to be successfully integrated into the school is very good.
- Procedures to monitor and promote pupils' personal development are very well developed.
- Very good induction arrangements ensure pupils settle quickly into school.
- Pupils feel they are consulted and there is always somebody they can talk to.

Commentary

- 33 The positive features identified at the last inspection have been sustained. St Swithun's is a very caring school that has achieved 'Healthy School' status. Overall provision for pupils' health, welfare and protection is very good and parents are very pleased that their children are well nurtured and supported. Arrangements for child protection and procedures relating to health and safety are well thought through, and governors take their responsibility for health and safety issues conscientiously. The induction process into the school is effectively implemented, with very good links established with the pre-school playgroup. Nursery children settle in happily because of the kind and caring way they are introduced to the school. The integration of pupils from the special school is very well developed, enabling these pupils to access as much of the curriculum as they are able. The transition to secondary schools is very well managed through regular visits and joint projects with secondary school staff. This ensures pupils' progression to the next stage of education is as smooth as possible.
- 34 Procedures to monitor and support pupils' personal and academic development and progress are very good. A comprehensive tracking system establishes a personal profile of pupils as they move through the school. Pupils receive feedback from assessments and are involved in target setting. This helps to highlight areas where they need to improve. The school has good systems of support and guidance for pupils with special education needs. Parents feel the school treats pupils fairly.
- 35 Pupils feel this is a very safe and secure school, that staff know them well, and talk of having forged a trusting relationship with an adult. They are confident that they can turn to a member of staff if they have a problem. Opportunities to consult with pupils and to take their views into consideration are very effectively developed. Pupils take turns to be school council representatives, meeting regularly with senior staff and the school governors. They spoke enthusiastically about changes made following their discussions. They feel this has encouraged them to be more responsible and has given them a greater voice in the school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Parents have positive views about the school. The partnerships with parents and the local community are **good**. The links with partner institutions, Kingfisher Special School in particular, are **very good** and help enrich pupils' learning opportunities.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has a supportive parent body; most parents hold the school in high regard.
- The school is a focal point for the village and has good links with the local community, the Forest School and St Swithun's church.
- Very good links with partner institutions promote curriculum development and enrich learning opportunities for pupils.

Commentary

- 36 The school's close liaison with parents keeps them regularly informed and provides them with many opportunities to become involved in their child's education. This has a very positive effect on pupils' learning and their achievement. Most parents expressed a high level of satisfaction with the school. A significant number live outside the catchment area. Parents feel the school is well managed and find the headteacher and staff highly approachable. However, a small number of parents expressed concerns about the extent to which they were consulted by the school or kept informed about their child's progress. The inspection team feels that the school generally has good systems to keep parents informed and appropriately seeks their views through questionnaires. However, the use of 'pupil post' may have resulted in parents not receiving feedback on the results.
- 37 General information for parents is good. Regular newsletters and the attractive web site keep parents well informed on school events. Curricular information is circulated at the start of each term, to enable parents to see what their children are learning at school and help them at home. Consultation meetings are well attended and workshops keep parents updated on developments. Annual reports to parents are good and clearly state what pupils know, can do and understand. They also indicate the level that pupils are working at in core subject areas and identify targets for improvement. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept fully informed of their child's progress and are involved in the review processes.
- 38 Links with the local community are good. Many local people are involved in school events. Pupils take part in local festivals and the Forest School provides a unique learning opportunity for the nursery and Reception children. Strong links have been fostered with St Swithun's church. Parents are invited to help in the school and a number volunteer their support. The parent teacher association organizes regular social events that raise significant funds. This money has been well used to enhance resources and facilities.
- 39 Links with other schools are very good. The use of the old school building by the local playgroup ensures the move into the nursery is very smooth. The partnership with Kingfisher Special School is particularly strong, enabling a number of children to access elements of mainstream education. Very effective liaison between neighbouring primary schools facilitates a sports programme, joint staff development and the sharing of resources. Links with local secondary schools are very well developed and this is clearly impacting on pupils' achievement. Opportunities include visits to Matthew Arnold School in connection with sports, science, English and mathematics. Curricular links across the cluster are well developed.
- 40 Overall, the strengths identified at the last inspection have been sustained well.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher is **very good**. Management and governance are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides very good leadership, with a clear vision for the school.
- Governors are fully involved and informed, and have a good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- All key co-ordinators are new to their posts and are not yet fully effective.
- The junior section of the school lacks effective leadership.
- Although routine financial planning is secure, the school continues to be in deficit.

Commentary

- 41 The leadership of the headteacher is very good. She has a clear vision for the school and has worked to maintain high standards through a period of considerable staff change. The headteacher leads the school with the full confidence of the governors. The school is inclusive and good policies ensure that the needs of most pupils, other than those with particular academic talents, are fully met. All statutory requirements are met.
- 42 The very good leadership of the headteacher has led to the successful establishment of a staff team who are committed to making good provision for the all-round development of pupils. However, stability of staffing has been significantly greater in the lower school than in Years 3 to 6, where there is less consistency in the provision at present. All key co-ordinators took up their posts in the current year. As a result they are not yet fully effective in their roles. There are good procedures for monitoring the work of the school. These are clearly linked to setting targets for staff that are related to performance management. There are very successful systems to support staff new to the school.
- 43 Leadership of the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 is very good. The deputy headteacher, based in the upper school, provides good support in pastoral care and manages ICT provision very well. However, if the school's current needs are to be met, the role of the deputy headteacher requires urgent review and development. The school needs more effective leadership of teaching and learning at senior management level and a greater commitment to the raising of teachers' expectations and to ensuring consistency of quality in the juniors than is currently the case. The physical separation of the junior and infant sections means that junior staff do not necessarily pick up on and benefit from the very good practice and the cohesive approach which underpin the success of the Foundation Stage and the infants.
- 44 The leadership of the work for pupils with special educational needs is very good, ensuring that these pupils are well supported through the very good work of the support staff.
- 45 The management of the school is good. Effective procedures enable the school to run smoothly on a day-to-day basis. There are successful strategies for evaluating how well the school is doing in order to plan for the future. The secretaries provide very effective administrative and financial support.
- 46 The governance of the school is good. The Chair of Governors gives a good direction to the work of the governing body. Governors are well aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and act as a critical friend. They are fully involved in the development of the School Improvement Plan, and have a very good understanding of the work of the school through regular reports by the headteacher and co-ordinators, and also through personal visits to see at first hand what is going on in their subject areas.
- 47 The teaching assistants support teachers well. There is a good team spirit amongst the staff, particularly in the Foundation Stage and the infants. Staff make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning and there is a shared commitment to ensure that the pupils succeed. Provision for the professional development of staff is good.

Financial information for the period September 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	588,124
Total expenditure	598,760
Expenditure per pupil	2,003

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	(1,927)
Balance carried forward to the next	(12,563)

- 48 The governing body manages school funds satisfactorily. Governors are rigorous in evaluating the effectiveness of spending decisions. However, the school is in deficit and has been for some years. High costs arising from the need to maintain two large buildings and associated, duplicated overheads are not reflected in the funding received. Falling numbers and financial constraints have compromised efforts to return the budget to a more secure position. However, principles of best value are well understood and applied and efficient systems are in place to ensure that the school gains value for money. Financial and general administration in the school is currently very efficient. The school meets the needs of its pupils well overall and currently provides **good** value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **very good**.

Standards on entry to the nursery match expectations for children of this age. Children make good progress and achieve well in the six areas of learning. There is very good support for the small number of pupils with special educational needs and for children from the Kingfisher Nursery who are integrated into the school nursery. The few children for whom English is an additional language achieve well. Standards at the end of the Reception year are above those expected for children of this age in the six areas of learning. The majority of children achieve the early learning goals in all areas of learning and a significant number of children, about 40 per cent, exceed them. Standards are particularly good in creative development.

Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very good. The co-ordinator has created a very effective team. An enriched curriculum is in place. Very good teaching in all of the areas of learning in both nursery and Reception leads to very good learning. Strengths of teaching are the very good planning, the encouragement of independence, and the very good contribution of teaching assistants and nursery nurses. Expectations are high. The level of care and the quality of support are very good. Thorough assessment procedures enable staff to respond to children's individual needs. The outdoor area is used very well and is to be further developed, to complement fully the indoor classroom. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good induction procedures enable children to settle quickly into routines.

Commentary

- 49 Nursery children make a very good start to their learning. Carefully planned and well-focused activities ensure equality of access to the curriculum for all children. They are encouraged to initiate ideas and manage appropriate tasks. Adults model how to work in the baker's shop, the farmyard and the garden centre. Children respond very well to what is provided and become independent users of the classroom and the outdoor area. Joint planning by nursery and Reception staff ensures a smooth transition of children to the Reception class.
- 50 Children in Reception are encouraged to manage their own time and select and use resources independently. As they take part in group discussions and activities, they become more sensitive to the needs of others. They develop an understanding of right and wrong and accept the need for a common code of behaviour. In talking about themselves, their families and friends, they learn about their feelings, the people who are special to them and those who keep them safe.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Speaking, listening, reading and writing skills are taught very well.

Commentary

- 51 Children in the nursery have well-planned opportunities to develop language skills, with an emphasis on sounds and word-building skills. They respond to questions and learn to speak in extended sentences. They re-enact the story of 'Daisy and the Egg', and develop their imaginations and language through role-play in the baker's shop. They talk confidently about an Easter egg hunt and the differences between real and artificial flowers in the flower shop. Sessions are structured to provide time for sustained concentration, individual choice and decision-making. Children learn to write their names and label objects.
- 52 The National Literacy Strategy is introduced gradually in Reception. The development of speaking and listening skills is a priority. Children extend their vocabulary and use an increasing range of words to express their ideas. They develop their reading skills through listening to traditional stories and poems and reading individually to adults. They learn to sequence instructions. Children develop good letter formation and have many opportunities to apply their writing skills when making lists, signs, directions and sentences.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's mathematical skills are developed well through carefully-planned practical activities.

Commentary

- 53 Children in the nursery develop mathematical language through focused play. They show an interest in counting. Most children have some idea of 'more' or 'less' when dealing with small numbers. They sort objects by colour and shape, and make repeating patterns. Many children can describe the properties of simple shapes. Through sand and water play, they develop an understanding of quantity and measurement. Computer programs extend and consolidate their learning.
- 54 The National Numeracy Strategy is introduced gradually in Reception. Oral work is reinforced through practical activities. Children learn the days of the week and begin to understand the meaning of 'yesterday' and 'tomorrow'. Most children count reliably to 10 and beyond. They compare two groups of objects, saying whether they have the same number, or 'more than' or 'less than'. They develop an understanding of capacity and weight, as they fill containers with water or sand, using words such as 'heavier' and 'lighter'. They carry out simple addition and subtraction. Opportunities for mathematical development are developed well across the curriculum.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A range of activities develops children's understanding and use of the senses.

Commentary

- 55 Children in the nursery explore the school grounds at different seasons. They plant seeds in the garden and monitor their growth. Their knowledge of why things happen and how things work is successfully developed. They consolidate their understanding of the weather and the environment through visits to the Forest School. They notice changes in the woods from the previous week and make cavemen instruments and stick robots, using sticks and string. They listen to the birds, and collect examples of Spring colours. They have a developing knowledge of special times, such as Christmas, Easter and Harvest.
- 56 In Reception, children show a developing understanding of the past. During their weekly visits to the Forest School, they learn to find items from positional and directional clues, describe a route and identify landmarks and natural features. They use maps, with positions marked on them, to find 10 hidden pictures of Easter eggs. Children use binoculars and magnifying glasses to observe mini beasts. They map the position of the daffodils in the school grounds and look for signs of spring and changes in the pond. Children develop their knowledge of different religions and cultures, as they learn about Divali and Hanukkah. They use a range of software to support the development of their skills in reading, phonics, writing, number, sorting, matching and word processing.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are given many opportunities to respond to rhythm and music.

Commentary

- 57 Children in the nursery learn to respond to rhythm, music and stories through movement, and learn to start and stop on request. They negotiate space successfully, adjusting speed and changing direction in the well-equipped outdoor area. In the woods, they move with confidence, imagination and safety in vigorous activity, creative contexts and play. With support, they engage in activities requiring hand/eye co-ordination and use one-handed tools and equipment safely.
- 58 Children in Reception demonstrate their ability to move with developing confidence, imagination, control and co-ordination, and an awareness of others, both in the hall and outside. Climbing equipment is used safely. Children use a range of body parts, as they travel along, over and under a range of equipment. Their throwing and catching skills develop, and they learn to roll, kick and strike balls. They learn traditional dances. Their awareness of the importance of exercise develops and they recognise changes that happen to their bodies when they are active. Physical skills in the classroom are taught well and children show increasing skill and control in handling tools and objects safely.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for creative development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are many opportunities for imaginative and creative development.

Commentary

- 59 Children's creativity in the nursery is developed within stimulating, well-resourced learning areas. They learn to use primary colours and to mix colours. They make models of buildings and work together on collages of owls, jungles, caves, dinosaurs and volcanoes. With guidance and support, they develop the ability to cut and join a variety of materials. Adults encourage them to talk about their work, thereby developing appropriate vocabulary. Children respond to music in an imaginative way.
- 60 Children in Reception extend their competence in drawing, painting, printing and marbling. They work well together in groups as they make sculptures, models of dinosaurs and a garden centre. They study the work of Bridget Riley and Eric Carle. There is a clear focus for each activity. Children express their ideas in dance and accompany music with their bodies, voices and percussion instruments. They explore loud and quiet sounds and sing simple songs from memory.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is consistently very good and as a result pupils achieve standards that are well above the average.
- ICT is effectively used to enhance learning.
- Pupils are well motivated because of the strong relationships established by the teachers.
- Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have too few opportunities to use their reading and writing skills across the curriculum.
- Higher attaining pupils lack a sufficiently interesting curriculum.

Commentary

- 61 Standards in reading and writing are well above average in Years 1 and 2 because of the very effective teaching and learning. Standards in English are above average in Year 6. However, pupils have too few opportunities to practise their writing in Years 3 to 6. Whilst higher attaining pupils in Years 3 to 6 reach the higher levels in the national tests, their curriculum lacks breadth and interest. The improvement in standards since the last inspection is good.
- 62 Teaching and learning are good overall. Teaching is very good and occasionally excellent in Years 1 and 2. It is good and occasionally satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. The improvement in teaching since the last inspection has been good. Where teaching is best, pupils are engaged and motivated in every moment of the lesson. Speaking and listening skills are developed alongside writing so that pupils are able to use an increasingly varied and interesting vocabulary. Teachers provide models of correct handwriting and punctuation so that pupils can self-correct mistakes, thus increasing their self-confidence. Teaching in Years 3 to 6, however, tends to lack pace and pupils are motivated less effectively than in Years 1 and 2. The wide range of age and ability in each class is not fully reflected in the planning.
- 63 In a Year 3 and 4 lesson, pupils followed a descriptive text on the electronic whiteboard. During the analysis of effective adjectives and similes, images to support the descriptions appeared so that pupils could more clearly see the power of the descriptions. This promoted their learning well.

- 64 Writing skills are promoted well in Years 1 and 2, but less well in Years 3 to 6. More consistent, planned opportunities for pupils to write in subjects across the curriculum are needed. In Years 1 and 2, good opportunities are afforded pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills. However, in Years 5 and 6 opportunities are less evident as teachers spend relatively long periods in presenting the lesson to pupils, who listen passively. Pupils are very well behaved because of the effective relationships established. This enables teachers to manage and interest their pupils in learning. Pupils are confident readers by Year 2 because they read regularly to adults, and because the teachers carefully monitor their progress. In Years 3 to 6 pupils do not review and evaluate their reading matter effectively and consistently. Thus the ability of pupils to infer and deduce from their reading is inconsistently developed. The choice of books for the more able pupils is limited and pupils in Years 6 have restricted personal choices in selecting fiction and non-fiction texts.
- 65 Leadership and management are satisfactory. The co-ordinator is new to the post and has yet to establish effective teamwork among the newly appointed staff in Years 3 to 6. Where staffing is more established, in Years 1 and 2, effective teamwork supports high standards of teaching and learning. The use of assessment is effective in raising standards of attainment.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

- 66 There are not enough planned opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills across the curriculum in Years 3 to 6. Writing is very well developed in Years 1 and 2. There is good evidence of extended writing in history in Years 4 and 5, where pupils write diaries, reports and narratives. In Years 5 and 6 pupils compile reports on mountain ranges in geography. However, the approach to writing across the curriculum and expectations of what can be achieved are inconsistent. There are insufficient texts, especially non-fiction, to extend the learning of the higher attainers.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are currently above average in both Years 2 and 6.
- Pupils achieve well overall, particularly in Years 1 and 2, where they are challenged effectively.
- Provision for the older higher attaining pupils is not as well developed as it might be.
- ICT is used well to support learning in mathematics. Teachers make good use of ICT in their teaching.
- Standards of presentation could be improved; teachers' expectations are not high enough, especially in Years 3 to 6.
- Mathematics has a low profile in display in the upper school; there is no systematic approach to organizing mathematics 'areas' in classrooms.

Commentary

- 67 Standards in mathematics are above average in Years 2 and 6. While staffing has been very stable in Years 1 and 2, significant changes in Years 3 to 6 in the current year, some very recently, have slowed pupils' progress to some extent. While pupils' achievement is very good in Years 1 and 2, it is satisfactory, overall, in the juniors, where the mixed-age classes, with their wide spread of age and prior attainment, provide an additional challenge for teachers. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to the others, but tend to make at least good progress when receiving specific support. In the 2003 tests, an above average proportion of pupils achieved the challenging Level 3 in Year 2, while a similar proportion of pupils achieved the higher Level 5 in Year 6. Within the Year 6 group, pupils who had been in the school for all, or most of, their education added value at an above average

rate. Pupils who had recently joined the school recorded a lower level of overall progress. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

- 68 There is a good focus on reinforcing basic numeracy skills. There are good opportunities for independent recording from an early stage. However, expectations of presentation, while good in the infants, are not as high as they might be in the juniors. This does not contribute well to the systematic raising of standards. In a Year 4 and 5 class, a significant amount of work from the period prior to the end of the autumn term is unmarked and ill-presented. Expectations, presentation and marking improved significantly following a change of staffing in that class. Currently, the level of challenge in lessons is variable. An exceptionally challenging lesson was observed in one Year 2 class, with highly-motivated pupils and excellent learning. These strengths were less evident in some lessons in Years 3 to 6, where the pace was less secure and achievement was satisfactory overall. That said, the oldest pupils have still produced a thorough body of work in the current year. Overall, the school makes satisfactory use of practical and investigative work to secure pupils' understanding of key mathematical concepts at present.
- 69 Teaching and learning are good overall. Planning is a strength across the school. However, support for the higher attainers is patchy in the juniors and the school acknowledges this as an area for development. Most lessons proceed at a good pace and the initial input is usually effective, showing good knowledge and understanding of the subject. Occasionally teachers talk for too long and do not allow pupils enough time to work independently. In the best lessons, teachers challenge pupils to think and to develop strategies to enable them to deal with mathematical problems. This was seen, for example, in an effective Years 5 and 6 lesson on percentage increase and decrease. Staff use ICT well in their presentation of topics and this motivates pupils successfully. The use of ICT by pupils in mathematics lessons is also good and several classes were observed in the ICT suite, or using the mobile laptops in Year 2. Teachers use mathematical language well and question pupils carefully to ensure that they understand. Across the school, pupils' learning is underpinned well by the positive attitudes which they bring to their work and by their ability to work co-operatively.
- 70 Teachers use assessment well to guide the planning of future work. The school has identified targets for each year group, but has not yet moved on to individual target-setting. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own understanding and this is an emerging strength. Marking is broadly satisfactory in most classes, with some guidance as to how pupils can improve their performance. However, the quality and usefulness of the guidance varies across the school. Homework arrangements are good. This is particularly well-developed in Year 6.
- 71 The leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator is new but, although there has been limited time for monitoring, has a secure grasp of the subject's strengths and areas for development. Mathematics has, at present, a low profile in display and the approach to establishing mathematics 'areas' in classrooms is inconsistent, particularly in the junior classes.
- Mathematics across the curriculum**
- 72 Pupils use mathematics well to support their work in other subjects, primarily in science, geography and design and technology. They use graphs and tables to record data in science and practise their skills in measuring when they undertake practical tasks in design and technology. There are very good links with ICT.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Emphasis on investigative skills and a consistent approach to recording results have a positive effect on pupils' achievement.
- Good use is made of visits to support and extend pupils' learning in science.
- Staff use assessment well to support planning in science.

Commentary

- 73 Standards are above average in Year 2 and a significant number of pupils exceed the expectations for their age. This represents good progress in relation to pupils' attainment on entry. They achieve well as a result of the dynamic teaching. Standards in Year 6 are also above average and a significant number of pupils (45 per cent) exceed the expected level. This represents good progress in relation to pupils' prior attainment. Overall, they achieve well, although there are some variations from class to class.
- 74 Teaching and learning are good, overall. They are very good in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. Teaching ranged from satisfactory to excellent in the four lessons observed. The strengths of teaching are teachers' planning, the insistence on high standards of behaviour and the promotion of equality of opportunity for all pupils. There is a strong emphasis on practical activities. Pupils are encouraged to question, observe, predict, carry out scientific experiments and draw conclusions from the evidence. During the inspection, pupils in Year 2 successfully carried out a fair test to see how far a car, pushed down a ramp, would travel on different surfaces. They were encouraged to link cause and effect. More able pupils recorded their results on a spreadsheet. Pupils in Year 6, having already investigated the beneficial effects of micro-organisms, investigated their effects on causing disease. The use of drama enabled all pupils to increase their knowledge, skills and understanding.
- 75 Leadership and management are satisfactory. The recently appointed subject leader provides a good role model for staff and pupils and has created an effective team. She has a clear vision for the future development of the subject and is beginning to develop the environmental area and pond. Assessment is thorough and constructive and is used well to meet pupils' needs. An annual assessment of investigative skills identifies where skills need to be developed in planning, teaching and learning. The curriculum is enriched by science weeks and space weeks. Foundation Stage children participate in the Forest Schools Project, one afternoon each week. Visits by different year groups are made to Bagley Woods, Foxcombe Woods, Amersham Field Centre and Beale Park. Good resources have a positive effect on learning. The most able pupils in Years 5 and 6 attend a summer school at the local secondary Science College. Improvement since the last inspection has been good, particularly in the quality of teaching and in overall standards.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average overall and particularly good in Years 2, 3 and 4. Skills are developed well across the school. Pupils are achieving well.
- ICT is planned for well in subjects across the curriculum.
- The subject is very well-resourced. Pupils have good access to computers.
- Staff make good use of ICT in their teaching. They are, in this respect, good role models for pupils.
- The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and highly effective in her role. She supports colleagues very well, but has limited time to meet her responsibilities.

Commentary

- 76 Standards are well above those normally found at the end of Year 2. Standards are above average overall by the end of Year 6. Not all of the older pupils have benefited from the consistency of input and quality of resources enjoyed by younger pupils now coming through the school. However, pupils achieve well across the school, though achievement is best at present in the infants because of the high quality teaching in that phase. Pupils enjoy using computers and, in the lessons observed, made good progress. As a result they are proficient at logging on, accessing files and saving and storing information by Year 2. Pupils in Year 6 are able to use spreadsheets confidently, when given the opportunity. They can organise and adapt information to make it interesting and exciting. Year 4 and 5 pupils are skilled in preparing Powerpoint presentations. The well-planned development of ICT elements in subjects across the curriculum is a particular strength. Several examples were observed, with ICT often used to support learning in mathematics.
- 77 The quality of teaching and learning was good overall in the lessons seen, enabling pupils to achieve well. However, teaching is best, and often very good, in the infants. Pace is sometimes an issue in the juniors, when staff lack confidence in managing the suite and give too few opportunities to pupils to take responsibility and extend themselves. Good training has contributed towards the evident confidence of the majority of teaching and non-teaching staff when teaching skills to pupils. Highly effective support from the knowledgeable co-ordinator enables all staff to improve their knowledge and skills. The ICT suite is used efficiently and provides excellent opportunities for pupils. The wireless laptops in the infant school are used well, though these have been prone to technical problems that have restricted their use recently.
- 78 Teachers begin their lessons by revising previous work. They explain which new skills the pupils will learn, thereby providing a clear focus for the lesson. There is good support for those experiencing difficulties and for pupils with special educational needs. Classroom assistants, where available, are well deployed and greater support is given to the younger pupils to promote good achievement. All pupils have opportunities to consolidate and extend their knowledge and skills. Faster learning pupils are set higher challenges in the infants and in Years 3 and 4. This is a less strong feature in Years 5 and 6 and affects their achievement. Pupils are enthusiastic and enjoy the visual approach to learning. They use the internet for research and there is good evidence of the use of digital photography around the school. Staff set a good example for pupils with their skilled use of laptops and interactive whiteboards during lessons. This is an effective device in engaging pupils' attention and interest. Good examples were seen of staff using the Intel microscope in science.
- 79 Leadership of ICT is very good. Progress since the last inspection has been good. There is a clear action plan for the future development of the subject. Basic assessment procedures have been implemented and the co-ordinator has a good overview of work across the school. However, the co-ordinator also provides all the technical support within both buildings. Given the high level of resourcing and the considerable number of computers in the school, this is a time-consuming and ultimately unsustainable responsibility.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

- 80 ICT is used very well across other curriculum areas, and this continues to be a developing area. Current strengths are: a good range of word-processing across the year groups, spreadsheets to support investigative work in science and geography, data work from mathematics, as well as the wholly skills-based activities which are covered in specific ICT lessons. Digital cameras are used regularly.

HUMANITIES

History

No history lessons were observed during the inspection. The evidence from pupils' work from self-evaluation by the school indicates that the requirements of the National Curriculum are covered and that standards are likely to be around the level expected in relation to pupils' age. In Years 1 and 2, pupils can sequence the events in the rescue of sailors by Grace Darling. They understand the significance of Remembrance Sunday. Their learning is well supported by visits and by visitors to the school. However, there is insufficient development of evidence, chronology, knowledge and understanding and research in Years 3 to 6. In Years 4 and 5 there are good opportunities for using writing to expand pupils' skills and interest in the subject.

Geography

The provision for geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- ICT is used effectively in presentations.
- Planning does not take account of the needs of the highest attainers.

Commentary

- 81 Standards in geography are in line with those normally expected of pupils by Year 2 and Year 6. In Year 6 pupils compile reports on mountain ranges from information gathered from textbooks and the internet. Pupils present these reports in various ways some using printed and visual ICT. The planning and consistency of teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection.
- 82 In Year 2 pupils investigate the human and physical features of a western Scottish island. They can locate features on a simple map using squared co-ordinates.
- 83 In Year 4 pupils explore the implications of economic development on the tropical rain forests. They understand the competing interests of loggers, farmers and conservationists. They understand the significance of road building in those areas. In Year 6 pupils understand the initial classification of mountain types, Everest being a 'domed mountain'. They understand the ways in which moving earth plates created the mountain ranges. In their study of Snowdonia pupils explore the effects of tourism on the area. They investigate ways of managing this through a National Park.
- 84 The quality of teaching and learning observed in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory. Pupils respond well to their research projects and standards of presentation are high. Pupils are interested in their learning because of the good relationships established by the teachers; as a result pupils' achievement is good. Whilst teachers expect pupils to achieve well, too little planned guidance is given to the higher attaining pupils as to how the highest standards can be reached. This affects their achievement.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Year 6 have a good knowledge of Christianity and a developing knowledge of Judaism and Islam.
- Pupils' spiritual development is enhanced through the very good links with the parish church.

Commentary

- 85 Standards in Year 2 are above those expected in the Oxfordshire Agreed Syllabus. Pupils of all abilities make good progress and achieve well. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve satisfactorily and standards in Year 6 match those expected. Pupils in Year 2 have a developing awareness of the importance of key figures, sacred places and special books in Christianity and Judaism. Year 6 pupils have an understanding of the origin and role of the Christian Church and a developing knowledge of Judaism and Islam. All staff have received training in the use of drama in religious education.
- 86 During the inspection, pupils in Year 1 explored a church service through role play. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 discussed the question, 'Why is Easter important for Christians?'. In an excellent lesson in Year 2, the classroom became a theatre. Pupils took on the role of Jesus' friends, and expressed sadness, a sense of loss, anger and frustration, as they watched him die on the cross. Later, as they took on the role of the three women who discovered the empty tomb, they shook in fear as the earth trembled and an angel appeared. They listened in amazement to the words of the angel, and then saw the risen Jesus. When they carried the message of Jesus to his disciples, the disciples expressed a variety of feelings: awe, wonder, instant belief, joy, sadness and unbelief. One child described Jesus' approach to the disciples in the upper room. He said, 'Jesus would be kind and forgiving because he is God's son, who is loving and caring'. It was a privilege to be present at such a reverent and sincere expression of faith.
- 87 Teaching is good, overall, and leads to good learning for all pupils. It is very good in Years 1 and 2, where the strengths of teaching are teachers' sincerity, their very good subject knowledge and the effective teaching methods they use. Teaching is good overall in Years 3 to 6, but with some weaker aspects, such as pace, which tend to reduce the progress made. Overall, assessment is thorough and constructive and enables teachers to respond to pupils' individual needs. The curriculum builds upon pupils' own experiences and cultural identity, and helps them to understand the concepts specific to a faith tradition. Pupils' spiritual development is enhanced through daily assemblies and visits to the church. Their moral development is encouraged through stories relating to love, forgiveness and care and respect for all life. The study of major world religions enhances cultural development. Social development takes place through groupings, visits and visitors. Leadership is very good and the subject is managed well. Priorities for development are appropriate and good resources support pupils' learning. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

- 88 Only a small number of lessons were seen in **physical education**, none of these were in Year 5 or 6. It was not possible, therefore, to make a judgement on overall provision. However, from the work seen it is likely that standards are above average in Years 1 and 2. There is no indication as to likely overall standards in Years 3 to 6. That said, almost all pupils achieve the expected swimming standard (25 metres unaided) during their time in the juniors and the school football teams have a long record of success in local competitions.

- 89 In the lessons seen in Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching was very good. Teachers showed very good subject knowledge in both dance and gymnastics. Planning was concise and provided well for the range of need in the class. Very good support for pupils with profound learning needs was provided, enabling them to participate fully and productively. Pace was a significant strength in both lessons. There is a very positive emphasis, both here and in the juniors, on health and safety awareness. Pupils are taught awareness of the effects of exercise on health from an early age. Pupils begin to evaluate their work, with a view to improving their performance, from Year 1 on. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is significantly supported by two learning support staff members with specialist skills, one a qualified swimming coach. They provide very good support for teaching staff less experience in the subject.
- 90 The co-ordinator provides good support for her colleagues. While the school is well resourced in terms of hall space, outdoor areas and access to a high quality swimming pool, the subject budget is extremely limited and some small equipment needs replacing. There are no resource banks of planning for staff to draw on. There are several clubs and activities, but these are heavily dependent on the PE co-ordinator herself or outside providers. Other staff make little contribution to this much needed provision. There is no assessment system for PE.
- 91 **Design and technology** has a high profile and a consistent approach to planning, designing, making and evaluating products. One lesson was observed in Years 3 and 4. Pupils designed and made an Easter card, using levers and linkages. Teaching was good and pupils attained standards above those expected for their age. The rich display of work throughout the school suggests that standards are above expectations throughout the school. Playground structures in Year 1, and vehicles that move and lighthouses that light up in Year 2, are of a high quality. Work on control and electrical systems in Years 3 and 4, and on linkages and levers, is also good. Year 5 and 6 pupils have successfully worked on moving toys, monsters and fairground rides. Examples of work suggest that food technology is taught well. Last year, pupils came third in the Abingdon Rotary Technology Challenge. Skills are developed progressively and pupils undertake a broad range of designing and making activities. Their annotated designs, plans and evaluations are good. They use their literacy and mathematical skills well. Leadership and management are good.
- 92 A recently appointed specialist teacher of **music** is working to re-establish the school's musical tradition. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 develop their singing leading to three part rounds. They use tuned percussion effectively to accompany singers. They understand and use simple musical notation. In Years 3 and 4, pupils enjoy singing with actions. They begin to recognise "musical conversations", which begin and end on the same note, using tuned percussion. Pupils are very interested and involved in their lessons. A school orchestra has recently been formed so that those pupils taking extra instrumental tuition can come together to play.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy art and this contributes to their good achievement.
- Art skills are developed progressively.

Commentary

- 93 Standards are above those normally found in Year 2 and match those normally found in Year 6. Pupils make good progress and achieve well. Art and design has a high profile. It is seen

as a key channel for self-expression. Pupils successfully develop an understanding of line, colour, form, texture and pattern. They are encouraged to experiment with a variety of media and to refine their skills and techniques. They explore the work of artists, designers and sculptors.

- 94 During the inspection, tasks set in Year 2 made effective links with literacy. The teacher read the story of 'Mr Gumpy's motor car'. Pupils were fascinated by pictures of motor cars, past and present. They each did a close observational drawing of a motor car, applying skills that they have learnt this term. Many pupils applied shading very well. Pupils in each group decided which was the best drawing in their group. This was displayed to the class. Pupils showed maturity as they explained what they liked about each drawing, what skills had been applied and how the drawing could be improved. In a lesson observed in Year 6, pupils made links with religious education. They combined line-drawing and collage work with images of the crucifixion. In groups, they made close observational drawings of thorn branches, cut them out and displayed them on a large sheet of paper, together with a cross and draped red material. Each group evaluated their work and decided whether or not they could improve it. As a class, they decided upon the most dramatic picture and which gave the most Biblical image. Visual images are used to overcome learning or language difficulties.
- 95 Teaching is good, overall. It is very good in Years 1 and 2. The strengths of teaching are teachers' ability to harness pupils' interest and enthusiasm, and their encouragement of self-evaluation. Teaching assistants give valuable support, where needed. The curriculum is enriched by additional opportunities. A recent, high-quality display of pupils' framed paintings and drawings attracted a large number of parents and raised over £300 in sales. A display of clay pots and masks, produced when a potter from Uganda worked with every class, is of a high quality. The school was highly commended in the BBC Oxford *Art for Advent* competition in 2002. Leadership and management are good. The school has plans to develop further the use of art across the curriculum. Resources are good and are used well. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE) is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- PSHCE is an important component of the whole curriculum.
- Citizenship development is an integral part of PSHE.

Commentary

- 96 The arrangements for PSHCE are very good and are linked effectively to religious education. The school promotes pupils' learning in PSHCE well through its emphasis on inclusion and the way that the curriculum is planned and taught. A comprehensive scheme of work has been produced and weekly lessons are timetabled for each class. There is a well-planned programme of topics, many of which are dealt with progressively, for example friendship and values. Pupils frequently work together in pairs or in groups of different sizes, ability or gender, in all subjects. They discuss the school rules and draw up class rules to guide their behaviour.
- 97 All classes follow the SMILE framework for PSHE, drugs awareness and sex education. The school is involved in the Healthy Schools Initiative. Pupils learn about the importance of exercise and healthy eating. They discuss physical well-being in physical education lessons. A Healthy Week is held in the Autumn term. There are regular field trips and residential visits. Pupils benefit from the good role models provided by staff. They relate well to adults and to each other and show tolerance and respect for views different from their own. Pupils are

very supportive of each other when difficulties arise and whole-class discussions are very productive.

- 98 Citizenship is promoted well through the PSHCE programme and the annual visit of the Life Education Bus. The school council enables pupils to be involved in considering developments and making suggestions for improvement. Pupils feel that they have a voice and are listened to. Older pupils have a number of responsibilities as monitors, and pupils in each class carry out regular duties. Citizenship of the wider world is fostered through links with a number of charities, schools in France and Poland, the Forest School, the Church, themed weeks on Africa and other countries, world celebrations and religious festivals.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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