

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **STILTON C OF E VC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Stilton, Peterborough

LEA area: Cambridgeshire

Unique reference number: 110821

Headteacher: Mrs R Rendle

Lead inspector: Mrs J Morley

Dates of inspection: 8<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> December 2003

Inspection number: 258031

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 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	232
School address:	Church Street Stilton Cambridgeshire
Postcode:	PE7 3RF
Telephone number:	(01733) 240 480
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr K Whiston
Date of previous inspection:	6 <sup>th</sup> July 1998

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

- There are 232 pupils on roll: almost all are White British.
- English is the first language for all pupils.
- Socio-economic factors are favourable in comparison with those nationally.
- Attainment on entry to the school meets expectations.
- Ten per cent of pupils have special educational needs, a figure well below the national average. Of these, 16 are receiving funded support: their needs include dyslexia, moderate learning difficulties, social and emotional difficulties, physical disability and autism.
- Pupil mobility is low.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
25470	J Morley	Lead inspector	English Art and design Personal, social and health education Design and technology Religious education
19443	N Walker	Lay inspector	
33061	H Todd	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Music The Foundation Stage
22657	M Madeley	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Physical education Special educational needs

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This school provides a satisfactory quality of education but is underachieving.** There are two aspects to the underachievement. Firstly, underachievement is evident across several subjects in Year 2 and relates mainly to the more capable pupils. Secondly, it pertains in writing and listening in several other classes. Mathematics and science standards on the other hand are above average by Year 6. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory but the one-third that is good or better is too small a proportion. Teaching is consistently good in three of the eight classes and pupils achieve well. While leadership and management are satisfactory overall, elements of leadership are unsatisfactory: most crucially, the monitoring of teaching and learning is neither rigorous nor frequent enough. As a result of all of these features, value for money is unsatisfactory.

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

- In Year 2, attainment in writing, listening, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) is too low – as are writing and listening standards by Year 6.
- Mathematics and science standards are above average by Year 6.
- A minority of teaching is good but this proportion is too small. In the majority of classes there is often too little challenge for pupils, particularly in their written work.
- The headteacher is insufficiently pro-active in improving the quality of teaching and learning: monitoring lacks rigour and is too infrequent.
- The work of classroom support assistants is good.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to develop independence and show initiative.
- Lunchtime playground activities are innovative, fun, and benefit pupils' social development.
- Parents are provided with too little curriculum information to help their child to learn.
- Attendance is good.

Since the appointment of the headteacher in 2000 improvement has been satisfactory. However, there is convincing evidence to show that the current headteacher, appointed in September 2000, took over a school performing significantly less well than it was doing in 1998. Hence, she had that 'backslide' to make up and is still working on some aspects of it – pupils' behaviour, for example. There have been improvements, particularly in science and ICT standards in Year 6. Key issues relating to parental concerns and child protection have been adequately dealt with, as have some of the points linked to leadership and management and to pupils' progress. However, some elements of both of these issues are still outstanding and progress has been slow. There has been no overall improvement in the quality of teaching and pupils' personal development is not as good as it was.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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 underachieve:** they could and should do better. Children enter the Reception class with attainment close to that expected. By the end of the Reception Year almost all children attain above expected standards in relation to the goals they are expected to reach. The 2003 Year 2 test results showed standards in reading and mathematics to be below the national average and those in writing to be well below. When compared with similar schools standards in all three were well below average. Inspectors find that standards are currently below expectations. In Year 6, mathematics and science standards are currently above expectations. In English, speaking and reading

standards meet expectations while listening and writing standards fall short of them. **Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory**, as it was at the time of the last inspection. Pupils behave in a satisfactory way but show little initiative or evidence of being independent learners. Attendance is good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is satisfactory.** Overall, **the quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory.** However, there is not enough teaching that is good or better and too much that is unsatisfactory. Where teaching is good, lessons offer challenge and fun. Where it is less than good it is either too structured and dictatorial to offer opportunities for independent learning or too lax on discipline, leading to misbehaviour. In both cases, pupils are insufficiently challenged. Too much written work is copied, heavily supported by worksheets or takes the form of handwriting practice or spelling lists. The curriculum is sound and the school provides an adequate level of care. Most pupils have a clear understanding of how well they are doing academically, and of what they need to do to improve but their parents are provided with too little curriculum information for them to support their children as well as they could. The school achieves a satisfactory level of inclusion but fails to offer, consistently, the same opportunities and level of challenge to all.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are satisfactory** overall but there are some weaknesses in the headteacher's leadership and management because she is insufficiently pro-active in improving the quality of teaching and learning. In this respect her delegation to some senior staff is ill advised because those charged with monitoring teaching quality do not have the skills to do it adequately. Support from the deputy headteacher is good. Governance is sound. Governors are knowledgeable about the strengths of the school but do not hold it sufficiently to account for the standards it achieves.

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

Parents generally think well of the school but would like more information about what their child is being taught. Inspectors agree. Pupils are happy in school. They enjoy good relationships with their peers and with most adults. The relationships with other adults are satisfactory.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Improve standards in mathematics, science and ICT in Year 2; and in writing and listening throughout the school.
- Improve teaching quality by providing significantly more challenge for pupils, particularly in the quality, quantity and demand of writing activities.
- Significantly increase the rigour of the headteacher's work in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. Ensure that anyone else involved in this work has the skills to do it well.
- Provide pupils, particularly those in Years 3 to 6, with more opportunities to use their initiative and take responsibility.
- Provide parents with the curriculum information they need to help their children to learn.

**and to meet statutory requirements:**

- Ensure that all pupils attend a daily act of collective worship.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Children join the Reception class with expected attainment and leave it **above average**. They continue to progress well through Year 1 but leave Year 2 below average. By Year 6, standards are above average in mathematics and science, but below average in the writing and listening elements of English. Although achievement is good in some classes, it is unsatisfactory overall and this is, therefore, an underachieving school.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Throughout the school, writing and listening standards are below expectations. So, too are mathematics and ICT standards in Year 2.
- Standards in mathematics and science are good by the end of Year 6.
- Achievement is variable but unsatisfactory overall.
- Pupils are taught key writing skills well, but the way these are then used across the curriculum is underdeveloped.

#### Commentary

1. Children join the Reception class with attainment that comfortably meets what is expected nationally. They achieve well across all areas of learning so that by the time they join Year 1, standards are above those expected, and they are off to a good start at the beginning of their statutory education. This good progress continues through Year 1 because pupils are consistently taught well. However, Year 2 test results for 2003 (see the table below) indicated that pupils attained standards that were below those nationally in reading and in mathematics, and well below them in writing. When compared with similar schools, pupils' attainment placed them in the lowest quarter in all three aspects. The trend over recent years is below that nationally. Inspectors find that standards are improving a little but that they remain below average. This is the result of expectations that are too low and of inadequate challenge.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.0 (15.8)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	13.5 (13.7)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.7 (17.1)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 43 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

2. Mathematics and science standards at the end of Year 6 improved significantly from 2002 to 2003, to above average in mathematics and to well above average in science (see the table below). Inspectors agree that current Year 6 standards in mathematics are above average. However, when this cohort of pupils took their Year 2 tests in 2000, they achieved well above average standards. Inspectors find that standards in science are above average, rather than well above as they were in the most recent tests. This is because weaknesses in pupils' written work prevent science being well recorded. These improvements have moved the trend in the school's Year 6 results from below that nationally (as it was in 2002) to being in line with it this year.
3. Year 6 English standards also improved in 2003, albeit more modestly. They met national expectations but fell short of those attained in similar schools. Inspectors find current standards to be below average overall. This judgement takes account of two aspects of the subject that clearly cannot be assessed through testing; pupils' speaking and listening skills.



The school recognises – and inspectors agree – that listening skills are unsatisfactory. Speaking and reading standards meet expectations but writing standards (despite invariably good teaching of basic skills) are not good enough and the arrangements for developing them need to be reviewed. (This issue is dealt with fully in the English section of the report.)

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.0 (26.1)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	28.8 (27.6)	26.8 (26.7)
science	30.7 (28.4)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 36 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

4. At the time of the last inspection the school was charged with improving the unsatisfactory ICT standards at the end of Year 2. This it has done. However, although standards now meet expectations they could be better. Standards by Year 6 exceed expectations. Available evidence indicates that standards in religious education meet expectations, but with pupils learning more *about* religions than *from* them.
5. Good achievement results in Reception class children meeting and often exceeding expectations in all six areas of learning. Pupils in some other classes also achieve well. Throughout the school pupils with special educational needs make at least satisfactory (and sometimes good) progress because of the quality of the help they receive from classroom support staff. These staff are adept - and successful - at encouraging the pupils in their group to stay on task and to work hard. In some classes, however, achievement for some pupils is not satisfactory.
6. In relation to achievement, there are two crucial questions to answer. These answers will underpin what follows in this report. Firstly, why do pupils underachieve?
  - Too little teaching is of good or better quality, either because expectations are too low or because it is too prescriptive and limiting. (These issues are dealt with fully in the Teaching and Learning section of this report.)
  - The way that the teaching and learning are monitored in order to bring about improvement lacks rigour and is too infrequent. (These issues are dealt with fully in the Leadership and Management section of this report.)

Secondly, what are the nature, extent and impact of the underachievement?

- There is underachievement by the end of Year 2, particularly by the more capable pupils. This happens because too little is expected of them and results in low standards.
- There is underachievement in writing in several classes. This is because the balance of writing opportunities is inappropriate and too many teachers expect too little in terms of quantity, quality and presentation. These low expectations and lack of challenge limit the development of truly independent writing skills, particularly for the oldest pupils in the school. (See the English section in Part C.)
- There is underachievement in listening. Pupils do not listen well enough, and this includes whole school occasions such as collective worship. Again, though, it is because expectations are too low. It has a knock on effect to pupils' personal development in that they are not good at listening to what others have to say.

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

Standards in pupils' attitudes, values and personal qualities are **satisfactory** in general but have declined since the last inspection when they were found to be good. A number of parents are concerned about the behaviour of pupils but inspectors judge this to be satisfactory overall. One

pupil who has since left the school was temporarily excluded last year. Other than this, there have been no exclusions over the past three years.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Attendance and punctuality are good.
- Pupils respond well to good quality teaching, but often they are reluctant to play a full and active part in lessons and assemblies.
- Pupils are polite and well spoken when conversing one-to-one but they often lack the common courtesy of listening when others are speaking.
- Lunchtime is a valuable and enjoyable time that truly benefits pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral and social development.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is promoted less well by teachers.

**Commentary**

7. Parents confirm their children are very happy to come to school. Parents adhere to the school's high expectations of regular and prompt attendance and so attendance and punctuality are consistently good and above the national average.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.7	School data	0.3
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.*

8. In lessons where teaching is good, pupils rise to the challenge and display good attitudes. For example, in a lesson taught by a teaching assistant, a group of Year 3 pupils were keen to ask and answer questions, they concentrated hard and achieved well when making attractive Roman-style plasticine jewellery. They were proud to show their work, and so others were also motivated to work hard. However, in lessons where teaching is satisfactory or worse, and where teachers have a dictatorial or negative approach, pupils are less active learners, preferring to keep their heads down rather than engage in asking and answering questions. Even when tasks are boring, they complete their work uncomplainingly.
9. The majority of pupils speak clearly and politely when spoken to on a one-to-one basis. However, in lessons and even more so in assemblies, pupils do not listen attentively but chatter quietly amongst themselves. This is because there is no whole-school approach to behaviour management and so pupils do not know what is expected of them. A number of teachers simply do not expect enough of their pupils and accept a constant muttering in lessons.
10. Lunchtime is a truly uplifting experience for all pupils who stay for lunch and many pupils say this is what they like best about their school. It is very well organised and run by the senior midday supervisor who leads by very good example. Every opportunity is taken to promote pupils' personal development. For example, very high standards of behaviour are expected, praise is used to reinforce and recognise good behaviour, independence is promoted and yet help is at hand when it is needed. Table manners are a high priority and pupils achieve high standards in this social skill. Pupils are liked and listened to; indeed they have been consulted about what they like and dislike on the menu and adjustments have been made accordingly. Meals are of a high quality and pupils regularly voice polite and respectful appreciation to the kitchen staff for what they do for them. Outside, a very good range of equipment is available and well set out and supervisors instigate games and activities and join in well with pupils. Sadly, many aspects of this very valuable contribution to pupils' personal development are not emulated throughout the rest of the school. Opportunities to help pupils to develop as individuals, including to grow in self-esteem, to appreciate their own self-worth and that of

others, to become confident and independent learners capable of using their own initiative are often missed. In addition, teachers' approaches vary significantly with the result that pupils are not guaranteed a consistent approach to their personal development.

#### ***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	214	1	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	3	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	9	0	0

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

11. Pupils have sound social skills. They are articulate and generally polite, and the influence of some teachers and of the support staff as a whole is creditable in helping to develop these. Not all staff, however, are good role models. Some speak disrespectfully to pupils – shouting at them across the classroom and making them feel small in front of their peers. Pupils develop some understanding of cultures other than their own and say that every person has an equal right to respect. They have a sound understanding of what is right or wrong but these and other values are reinforced differently by different adults in school; there is no cohesion. Their spiritual development is barely satisfactory; pupils are not sufficiently respectful when they meet for collective worship. In addition, the withdrawal of six pupils from collective worship (twice weekly and for ten weeks of the year for extra tuition) sends the wrong messages to pupils about this important school occasion. They learn about religion but learn little from it, and although there is some real excitement engendered through the best teaching, too much is uninspiring.

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

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education but there is some underachievement in the majority of classes. Teaching and learning are sound but improvement is needed. The curriculum, the care and support pupils receive and the school's partnership with parents are all sound.

#### **Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching and learning are **satisfactory**. Assessment is satisfactory overall but good – and used well - in English and mathematics.

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

- Teaching is consistently good in some classrooms.
- The work of support staff is consistently good.
- Some teachers have low expectations and offer pupils too little challenge. This leads to underachievement.
- Whole-school assessment systems for English and mathematics are good but teachers' marking is not.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 39 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	1 (3%)	12 (31%)	22 (56%)	4 (10%)	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.*

12. The work of some teachers is consistently good and in these classrooms pupils make good progress. The key strengths are:
- Relationships are warm and encouraging, enabling pupils to be relaxed and responsive to teaching.
  - Teachers generate interest and excitement and there is an air of fun in the classroom.
  - Pupils are expected to sit still and to be attentive when their teacher is talking to them.
  - The work set is challenging but pupils cope with it because they are well motivated and enjoy the challenge.
13. The work of support staff is also consistently good and they have a clear and positive impact on learning. All pupils benefit, in particular the least able and those with special educational needs. They make an invaluable contribution to pupils' achievement because they establish warm and trusting relationships with them.
14. While the overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, there are weaknesses in key aspects in a number of classrooms and these lead to underachievement. The weaknesses vary from class to class but all relate in some way to expectations that are too low or to challenge that is insufficient. The crucial point is that, at the moment, too many teachers fail to recognise – as weak features in their own practice – which of the items bulleted below relate to them. This is because, over time, these have become embedded as the norm. Inadequate rigour in monitoring teaching quality has allowed this to happen. A willingness to take a fresh and objective look at teaching quality against rigorous criteria is needed if the school is to move forwards. In some classrooms:
- Pupils are often restless and fidgety and, since teachers accept this and teach over it, it leads to poor listening skills. This is also evident when the whole school gathers together: for collective worship, for example.
  - When pupils are working independently of their teacher, the noise level in some classes is high, and chatter leads to loss of concentration and a slow work-rate. In others, no talk at all is accepted with the result that pupils have little chance to benefit from the advantages that productive talk can offer.
  - Some teachers accept the quantity of work that pupils produce, rather than stipulating what they expect. The outcome is that a 20-minute session can result in little work being done. In addition, there is rarely a clearly stated expectation about the quality of presentation of written work. Teachers are too ready to accept what pupils offer. There is no comparison, for example, between the neat writing in their handwriting books and that in their subject books. Neither is there an expectation that pupils will use a cursive script rather than printing, even though they know how to do so.
  - Too many writing activities are very heavily supported (see the English section for full details) and, as a result, writing skills do not develop as well as they should. In some classes, far too much work is copied.
  - All teachers – rightly - set work that is easier for less capable pupils and harder for those who are more capable. However, too often, it all fails to challenge sufficiently because it is still not hard enough: for the most able in particular, it does not push learning forward at the rate that they could cope with.
  - In some classrooms stern language from teachers is excessive and this damages pupils' self esteem.

- Pupils, particularly the oldest in the school, do not develop as independent learners because they have scant opportunity to do so. Lessons are formal and focused on attaining good standards in national tests.
15. From this summary of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching, it is evident that it is not only the quality of teaching that varies from one classroom to another. The 'style' does too. In some classrooms, relationships are warm and pupils are praised (when they deserve it). In others, relationships are more distant, and criticism is more prevalent. The crucial point is the experience that pupils have on their 'journey' through the classes. It is an uneven one. It lacks consistency and cohesion. These 'mixed messages' do little positive for pupils' personal development.
  16. Assessment is satisfactory. Systems in English and mathematics are good and data is being used well to raise standards. For example, at whole-school level 'value added' is calculated in terms of points scores and targets are set on this basis. As an example of its high aspirations for attainment, the school aims for a four point improvement over the year as opposed to the national average of three points. At individual level, pupils have a good idea of how well they are doing. They have targets in English and mathematics and most pupils know what they are. However, there is still much to be done in foundation subjects. Furthermore, teachers' marking does not do all it should to help pupils move forward. Work is sometimes simply given a cursory tick and sometimes a 'well done' or similar comment. Advice is infrequent.

### **The curriculum**

The curriculum is **satisfactory**. The good enrichment activities enhance the curriculum. Accommodation and resources are good and used well to help children learn.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school teaches the National Curriculum and religious education.
- Some pupils do not have a daily act of collective worship.
- Some pupils duplicate work.
- The curriculum is enriched by a good range of visits and visitors.
- Teaching assistants, accommodation and resources support teaching well.

### **Commentary**

17. The school teaches the required subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education in a satisfactory way. The recent increased emphasis on phonics has enhanced the curriculum for the younger pupils in the school and this is beginning to have an impact on reading standards. There is a timetabled act of collective worship for every class each day. However, a few pupils are withdrawn from these sessions on a regular basis to receive additional lessons of mathematics and other support. This is unsatisfactory.
18. It is unsatisfactory that some pupils duplicate work done early in their school career. For instance, some Year 5 pupils in the Year 4 and Year 5 class are repeating a history project on 'Romans'.
19. The school's provision for special educational needs is satisfactory. Teaching assistants support individuals and small groups well because they are well trained, well prepared and have a positive relationship with their pupils. They encourage pupils to be self reliant rather than giving them the answers, and use praise well. Pupils' individual needs and targets are rarely referred to in teachers' lesson planning so pupils do not always make the progress they are capable of because tasks are not set at their level.

20. The school aims to be inclusive but not all pupils benefit equally from what it provides. For example, the insufficient challenge affects the most able pupils in school more than the least able. The least able benefit more from the help of support staff.
21. The school provides pupils with a good range of extra activities. These help to bring the curriculum alive, extend learning and maintain interest. Artists, musicians and theatre groups are regular visitors. Older pupils work regularly with an artist and their landscape painting shows good maturity because of this. The pupils enjoy and benefit from a good range of extra curricular clubs run by staff and parents. The school takes full part in inter-school sports. Visits to places of educational interest support lessons, for instance in history. The two residential visits help pupils' confidence and independence as well as extending the physical education programme by offering good opportunities to take part in outdoor and adventurous activities.
22. Support staff, like teaching assistants and midday supervisors, are well trained and have good relationships with the pupils. In class they promote learning by helping, explaining and questioning pupils. At lunchtime they interact well with pupils using the games equipment to maintain pupils' interest. Accommodation is spacious, with large classrooms. Disabled access is well thought out and includes ramps and extra wide doors to some classrooms. Some parts of the school can be cold in winter and this makes it difficult for pupils to concentrate on their lessons. Resources are plentiful in music, physical education and other subjects. The computer suite is well equipped and there are additional laptop computers to aid pupils' learning.

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

The standards of care, guidance and support for pupils have largely been maintained since the last inspection and remain **satisfactory** overall. Parents are very pleased that their children are happy here and most parents are pleased with how their children are cared for.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are good arrangements for settling pupils into school life, particularly when they join the Reception class.
- Support staff provide good help and care for pupils around the school and in lessons.
- Most pupils feel they have a good and trusting relationship with one or more adults in school.
- There is good involvement of pupils in improving some aspects of school life.
- There is a lack of rigour in ensuring policies and procedures are known and followed by all staff so that pupils are as safe as possible at all times.

### **Commentary**

23. Arrangements to help pupils to settle into school life when they join the Reception class are good and include a planned programme of classroom visits as well as visits to each pupil's home by the class teacher and assistants. Consequently, pupils make the transition from home or play-school to full-time education with little trauma. Nearly all parents are particularly pleased with this aspect of school.
24. Teaching assistants and those who support pupils with a special educational need provide a high quality service. They are knowledgeable and form good relationships with pupils. As a result pupils happily turn to them for help. Pupils have an adequate idea of how well they are doing in English and mathematics - and of what they might do to improve - because of the targets their teachers give them.
25. A school council operates with representatives democratically elected from each year group. They meet regularly and make sensible suggestions as to improvements they would like to see. They have been able to raise the funds to buy some of the playground equipment and recently they have been involved, with a governor, in improving the school gardens. Pupils

who have school dinners have been able to state their likes and dislikes. As a result the menu has been adapted and pupils are very happy with what is on offer.

26. The school meets its statutory requirements regarding health and safety. There are regular site inspections and risk assessments exist for activities both in and out of school. The majority of staff have been given guidance from the headteacher in child protection issues and several members of staff have first aid knowledge. Nevertheless, there is a lack of thoroughness about some of the school's policies and procedures and there is a lack of vigilance in the practice of them. For example, two pupils had nasty falls because icy walkways had not been gritted and parents are not always informed of bumps to the head. Individual pupils were insufficiently cared for during two separate physical education lessons: in one instance this meant standing, inactive, outside in wintry conditions for nearly 30 minutes wearing shorts and shirt.

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

A **satisfactory** partnership with parents and other schools now exists and there are good links with the community. Since the last inspection, improvements have been made in how the school communicates with parents and how concerns and complaints are dealt with. Most parents are generally content with what the school provides for their children, although some are not pleased with behaviour, information about their children's progress, and how the school takes account of parents' suggestions or concerns. Inspectors agree there is some justification to these views.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are willing to help wherever they can, practically and financially.
- Staff are welcoming and approachable to parents and good relationships exist.
- The school gives too little information to parents on how to help their children to learn.
- There are good links with the local community, especially with the Church.

### **Commentary**

27. Parents support the school well in many ways. They adhere to the school routines and expectations including attendance, punctuality, and uniform and so there are good standards in all of these. Parents provide practical help whenever they are asked, for example in helping to redecorate parts of the school. Many parents provide valuable help in lessons on a regular basis, others run a number of after-school clubs and activities. There is a very active 'friends' association that raises large sums of money to provide equipment and parents' contributions enable pupils to enjoy a number of enriching experiences.
28. The school welcomes parents and values the contribution they make. Parents feel comfortable in approaching staff with concerns or simply to exchange information. This is particularly evident in the Reception and Year 1 classes at the start and end of the day, and with staff who support pupils with a special need.
29. The school communicates with parents in a number of ways, for example, through regular newsletters, home/school and homework books. However, it rarely makes suggestions as to the methods that parents might use to further their child's understanding. End of year reports are satisfactory overall but often use educational language that is difficult to understand. Even though, through the school's own survey, parents have indicated that they would like more information on what is being taught in lessons, the school has done little to fully act upon this and continues to place the onus on parents to specifically request such information. Consequently, parents are unable to be as involved in pupils' learning as much as they would like and are able.
30. The school is involved in a range of village activities, including May Day celebrations and the Cheese Roll. There are strong links with the church. The rector visits regularly to lead

assemblies and parishioners give of their time generously to help in assemblies as well as in lessons. They present good role models for pupils to admire and respect.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The **governance** of the school is **satisfactory**. **Leadership and management** are **satisfactory** overall. The leadership and management of the headteacher are satisfactory but there are some weaknesses to address.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher is insufficiently pro-active in driving up standards through rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning.
- Performance management is in place for all staff and relates to the school improvement plan, but the headteacher's involvement in the process is limited.
- The deputy headteacher provides good support to the headteacher.
- Devolving responsibilities to subject co-ordinators is uneven.
- Although the school improvement plan establishes 'success criteria' for planned action, lines of communication for monitoring and evaluating its impact are unclear.
- Governors support the school well but do too little to hold it to account.
- Financial management is satisfactory.

### Commentary

31. The headteacher has had a positive influence on the school since her appointment three years ago but improvement has been slow. She works well with the deputy headteacher, whose skill in assessment has been utilised well. However, the headteacher's leadership lacks rigour. In particular, she is insufficiently pro-active in the drive to improve standards through ensuring high quality teaching and has devolved too much of the responsibility for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning to other staff - whose work is not proving effective. In this well-intentioned attempt to distribute the monitoring task, the headteacher has lost sight of the bigger picture. Currently, observation of lessons falls short on several counts, all of which require attention:

- Frequency.
- Rigorous and objective assessment of teaching quality against national criteria.
- Feedback to teachers that is challenging where necessary, frank and likely to improve practice.
- Follow-up observation to check that advice has been implemented.

In addition, the headteacher does too little about other ways of monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, through looking regularly, meaningfully and rigorously at the quality of pupils' recorded work, for example by asking:

- Does the presentation of work in pupils' books match their handwriting skills? If not, why not - and what will be done about it?
- Through looking at the end product in pupils' books, is the range of writing opportunities the best the school can offer? If not, what action is needed?
- Does teachers' marking predominantly acknowledge / praise work or does it help pupils to understand what they could do to improve? If the former, why is it not challenged?

And, on a more general note:

- If pupils listening skills are not good enough, what needs to be done and how will she lead the change needed?



32. Linked to this issue is performance management. Procedures and professional development have been put in place for all management, teaching and support staff. However, the process lacks rigour and has too little impact on the quality of teaching and learning.
33. The School Improvement Plan is central to the running of the school. It sets out areas for development over the next three years including a very detailed action plan for the current year. However, lines of communication for monitoring and evaluating its impact are unclear in relation to raising overall standards of teaching and learning.
34. Areas of responsibility for curriculum development have been delegated to staff but the distribution is uneven. Several teachers have too many areas to cover whilst others have comparatively few. Their work is generally satisfactory.
35. Governors give their time and expertise and some become involved during the school day. They know what the school does well but are less well informed on what it needs to do better. Lack of precise knowledge on these issues prevents them from asking pertinent questions and holding the school to account for the standards it achieves.
36. Sound procedures for managing the school's finances are in place. Budgetary decisions are based on pre-determined priorities and the School Improvement Plan shows how this money will be spent. Expenditure is not evaluated, however, in terms of its impact on raising standards of teaching and learning.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	466,481
Total expenditure	453,155
Expenditure per pupil	2,032

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	17,388
Balance carried forward to the next	13,326

37. The school is fortunate in receiving a substantial sum of additional funding from The Friends of Stilton School and various curricular activities that are supported by parents' voluntary contributions.

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

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

38. Provision is **good**. The quality of teaching is mostly good. The curriculum is appropriate and based on the nationally recommended Early Learning Goals (the expectations of children as they embark on statutory education). Children are given opportunities to learn through a balance of adult-led activities and play. On-going assessment to gauge progress against the national framework is carried out termly (in the Foundation Stage Profile). It shows children make the greatest gains in number and reading.
39. Accommodation is good. The teaching space is large and bright with a good range of equipment and resources. The outside learning area has improved since the last inspection. It is secure and provides a space for children to experience rides on toys and play houses with appropriately limited adult supervision. It does not contain equipment for climbing but children have access to this in the main playground when the older children have returned to their lessons.
40. Leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and knowledgeable about provision. She has a good grasp of what needs to be developed by carefully analysing information, advice and data and responding well. The teamwork of all supporting adults is a strength. The teacher and teaching assistants work very well together, the latter being particularly skilled in promoting focus and learning in small group work and support for individual children with specific needs. This leads to children making good progress. Work is planned thoroughly, making sure that individual needs of children are met. Older, more mature and more able children spend a significant amount of lesson time with the Year 1 class. Work is appropriately adapted to meet their needs here and enough time is spent with the rest of the Reception class to establish their belonging. Children with special educational needs are identified early and appropriate support enables them to use their time in school well and make satisfactory progress.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Routines are well established, enabling children to make good use of their time in school.
- The start of each day is excellent, ensuring that children are happy and settle quickly.
- Relationships are good.
- Children are confident and self-assured, but capable of higher levels of independence.

### **Commentary**

41. Good teaching and consistent role models by adults help children progress well. Guidance and direction by adults create an atmosphere in which children see themselves as learners and apply themselves well. However, although opportunities are planned for children to choose activities and work independently, some activities, particularly in communication, language and literacy work and mathematical development are too adult-led. There are not enough structures and routines for encouraging greater independence, which would build on the success of children's confidence in group work and provide a more focused approach to developing listening skills.
42. Routines for lining up, working in groups and snack time are well established. On arrival in school in the morning children are accompanied by their parents/carers/brothers/sisters who

add much to the speed with which Reception children settle to learn. Children register themselves independently, indicating their chosen lunch arrangements. Satisfactory induction procedures are in place. An activity booklet 'What will it be like at Stilton School?' completed by parents and children together during their first term, helps them to understand procedures and the Reception curriculum.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

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

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

- Phonics and writing skills are taught well.
- Children have positive attitudes to reading and writing.
- Listening skills are not well developed.
- Role-play is under-used as a way of developing speaking and listening.

#### **Commentary**

43. Rightly, a great focus is placed on the acquisition of reading and writing skills. On-going assessment shows children make rapid progress in reading. The introduction of the scheme 'Jolly Phonics' routinely helps children to make sense of sounds and letters. During the inspection they were observed sounding out 'ou' to make "out" and 'ue' as in "barbecue". They remember the sounds of frequently used consonants such as 't' and 's'. Regular structured practice - and links planned to writing activities - reinforce this skill. Writing activities are planned well. Children see themselves as writers and most are able to write decipherable letters and some write words. They achieve well. Good support from teaching staff guides children to trace or copy modelled words if they ask. During a lesson seen, children used lists of presents composed on one day to assist with writing a 'polite' letter to Santa the next.
44. Children work very well in small groups at tables. They converse confidently with adults and each other. However, during whole class sessions and group work in the book corner they do not listen well. A significant number of children get up, move about, continue to talk or are easily distracted by toys, books or each other, unable to concentrate on the adult leading the session. Listening routines are not yet established. The youngest children are not getting the appropriate role model from older pupils in the school. It was noted during the inspection that the poor listening skills are a feature of the whole school and were also seen in assemblies and several lessons.
45. Sometimes noise levels at the end of sessions increase, disturbing the neighbouring class and quieter workers. Appropriate levels of noise, however, are more frequent.
46. The role-play area is under-used. Throughout all lessons observed two girls used it only once. This half-term it is set up as 'Santa's Workshop' equipped with Christmas tree, wrapping paper, presents and sellotape but resources are shabby and tired. The outdoor playhouses are of a much higher standard.
47. Assessment and provision indicate that children are on line to achieve expectations by the end of the year. Some will exceed them.

### **Mathematical development**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

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

- Children make good progress in counting, shape and measurement.

- Teaching is good with variable support from teaching assistants.
- Children's workbooks celebrate achievement well.

### Commentary

48. Assessment is used well to gauge children's progress and is measured against the Early Learning Goals. This term's assessment shows all children are making very good progress and most will reach and many exceed the goals by the end of Reception, especially in counting, shape and measurement. Already many of the pupils can count up to and some beyond ten.
49. Workbooks contain completed worksheets that are adapted for individual needs and are good records of how well children are learning. Photographs of children completing practical tasks celebrate good achievement. Clear comments show how the work was completed and links to the 'Early Learning Goals'.
50. One lesson began with a whole class explanation of words to do with time followed by focused group work with teaching assistants. The content was good and all of the children in each of the two groups showed an understanding of the passing of time using appropriate vocabulary such as day, morning, afternoon, evening and night. However, children have difficulty remaining focused as listening skills are poor.

### Knowledge and understanding of the world

51. No dedicated lessons were seen during the inspection therefore there is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on provision. A small sample of work seen in books shows children's responses in collage, colouring and drawing to activities based on making jelly, designing a ball gown and a 'Marvellous Meal.' Water play and sand play are provided constantly and are often chosen by the children as early morning activities when they arrive with their parents. Assessment shows children attain the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception Year.

### Physical development

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Independent and group play experiences in the outdoor secure area.
- Children enjoy playtime and lunchtime.
- A whole class lesson seen was unsatisfactory.

### Commentary

52. Children are on line to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of Reception. They play confidently together in the outdoor area. Boys especially enjoy the ride on toys and choose this activity regularly. When in the larger playground they enjoy the freedom of a large space, running and climbing with confidence. Supervision by adults is appropriate, allowing greater freedom in the secure space.
53. Children achieved expected outcomes at the end of a whole class lesson and were able to improve their jumping and climbing skills. However, underdeveloped listening skills resulted in the children not making the progress of which they were capable in a safe way. Given this shortfall, the group was too large for the activity to be a success.

## **Creative development**

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children enjoy a variety of well-planned activities.
- Achievement is good.
- Planning includes a balance of independent and adult-led activities.

### **Commentary**

54. Planning is good and children experience a rich variety of adult-led creative activities including painting, drawing, sewing, collage, music and computer work. They work well above the Early Learning Goals due to high levels of expectation and support.
55. During the inspection children made Christmas baubles by sewing together two circles of felt with prepared holes. They displayed remarkably good fine motor skills and tremendous amounts of concentration. However, the activity did not allow for children's own creativity of design or skill for which they are now ready. Children not engaged in sewing chose other activities independently.
56. On the other hand a group engaged in music activity showed superb skills with pitched percussion instruments, taking turns to make sounds to represent 'snow.' They paid attention to the conductor, either the teacher or another child. The sound they produced was beautiful and the children showed respect for each other and the instruments. They cleared up and tidied everything away independently knowing each instrument had a special place according to whether it was made of wood or metal.
57. Confidence in using computers is highly developed. A small group, under the expert tutelage of the ICT support assistant, used software to draw pictures that represented one of the four seasons. The standards they achieved were well above expectation, producing clear and imaginative pictures. Their independence grew throughout the session.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in listening and writing are below expectations.
- Speaking and reading standards meet expectations.
- Pupils do not achieve as well as they should because teachers' expect too little of them.
- The basic skills of writing are adequately taught but poorly developed.

### **Commentary**

58. Standards in all aspects of English at Year 2 and the listening and writing elements in Year 6 are less good than at the time of the last inspection. There are signs of improving standards but there is still more to be done.
59. Listening skills are unsatisfactory. Although there are variations from class to class, pupils are often restless and fidgety when their teachers are talking to them. In classrooms where this is not the case, strict routines ensure silent listening. Neither generates the best environment for

learning. Pupils do not always listen carefully enough to, or show interest in what their classmates have to say.

60. Speaking skills are satisfactory and some aspects are good. Most pupils are articulate on a one-to-one basis and capable of using a wide range of appropriate (including subject specific) vocabulary. When asked to speak in front of the class, however, they rarely project their voice sufficiently. This makes it difficult for pupils to hear what their classmates are saying and, therefore, makes the exercise unproductive. While teachers often remind pupils to 'speak up' the improvement is minimal. Until this is remedied the use of many of the plenary sessions at the end of lessons will continue to be a waste of valuable time.
61. Pupils get off to a good start with early reading skills in the Reception class and these generate above expected standards that continue to develop well in Year 1. Parents contribute to this good progress by hearing their child read on a regular basis. Thereafter progress is irregular and by the end of Year 6 attainment is close to expectations. Older pupils say that they sometimes read to their parents but they are more likely to read to themselves. The books pupils read are generally well matched to their ability – challenging yet not so difficult that they lose the meaning in trying to decipher the words.
62. The teaching of basic writing skills is adequate and sometimes good. It is a shame, therefore, that the writing standards that result from it are below average. These weak writing standards are largely the result of inappropriate, spoon-fed writing opportunities and of expectations that are far too low. Opportunities for writing need urgent review, not only in English but also across the full curriculum. The following are the key points:
  - The proportion of writing opportunities that take the form of handwriting practice, spelling list or practice, worksheets, copying text or completing 'exercises' far outweigh those where pupils write from scratch and have the opportunity to try out the skills and techniques they have been taught. These provide low levels of challenge and the balance needs redressing.
  - The role played by other subjects in affording opportunities for pupils to practise and consolidate writing skills is not strong enough. This is not only because too much writing takes place in English lessons and too little elsewhere, but also because copied text and worksheets predominate across the curriculum.

The work set for pupils in English lessons lacks challenge in a number of important ways:

- In some classes it simply demands too little of pupils.
- Sometimes writing 'builds' over several days where one day would be sufficient.
- Teachers accept the amount of work pupils complete in a lesson, rather than stipulating what they want.
- No adequate expectations are established for presentation with the result that writing is untidy and bears no resemblance to its quality in pupils' handwriting books.
- In some classes too much unproductive chatter is tolerated and this reduces the quality and quantity of work pupils produce.
- In others, particularly for the oldest pupils, work is too prescriptive and leaves little opportunity for developing independence.

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

63. As indicated above, subjects of the curriculum other than English do not act as well as they should as vehicles for pupils to practise and consolidate the writing skills they have learned in their literacy lessons. There is a need to review and amend these opportunities in order to raise standards. Emphasis on pupils' ability to talk to their class in a voice that can be heard and on attentive listening would enhance what pupils learn. Most pupils read well enough to enable them to read what they need to in other subjects.

## MATHEMATICS

The quality of provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below national expectations in Year 2 and pupils underachieve.
- Standards in Year 6 are above national expectations.
- Tasks do not always challenge pupils of different abilities.
- Teaching is not monitored closely enough.

### Commentary

64. In Year 2 standards are below national expectations. They have been rising slowly since 1999 but it is more of a 'roller coaster' effect with one year up and the next down than a straight line of improvement. Results in the 2003 tests showed a sharp downturn mainly because too few pupils achieved the higher standard (Level 3). Pupils underachieve in Year 2 because the pace of learning is too slow and their work often lacks challenge. Boys and girls achieve similarly. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress because the teaching assistants support them well. Teachers do not always set tasks at the correct levels to challenge pupils of different abilities.
65. In Year 6 standards are above the national expectations and have been rising over the last 5 years. Last year's test scores were well above average and pupils achieved very well between Year 3 and Year 6. This appears to be the product of intensive tuition on 'how to do the tests' and extra support rather than high quality general teaching through these years. There is a slight difference between the achievement of boys and girls, which is likely to be related to the pupils rather than the teaching. Work in arithmetic and geometry is covered well but too little work in data handling and using and applying their mathematics skills was seen in Year 6 books.
66. Whilst just over one-third of teaching was good or better, the school should be aiming for a higher proportion. Teachers' planning is closely linked to the government guidelines and this helps pupils build on previous learning. However, lesson planning, for instance in Year 6 and Year 4/5, does not always prepare tasks for different abilities in the class and so work is sometimes too hard or too easy for pupils. In Year 2 classes pupils are not controlled well enough to enable them to learn. Whilst pupils in Year 5 were challenged by their task of interpreting some algebra this is not always the case in every class. In Year 6 the least able pupils are not fully included in the lesson and this limits their progress. Pupils in Year 3 experienced a high quality mental warm up which prepared them well for the lesson. These pupils were keen and interested learners because they were told what they would learn at the beginning of the lesson. In all classes pupils' work is marked and praise is given but teachers give too few comments that will help pupils improve their work next time and this limits their progress.
67. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Test scores and data are analysed well. Target setting has been introduced. Teachers and pupils are beginning to use them to raise standards and motivate pupils. However, the quality of teaching has not been monitored closely enough and, because the proportion of teaching that is less than good has not been tackled, pupils are not making enough progress, especially in Year 2 classes.
68. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Standards in Year 6 are now above average and continue to rise. Government guidelines have been implemented which have improved the schemes of work with which teachers plan their lessons. Pupils' attitudes remain positive. Teaching, described as good last time however, is now only satisfactory.

## Mathematics across the curriculum

69. The use of mathematics across the curriculum is satisfactory but is not systematically planned. Incidental use is seen in many subjects and these help to extend pupils' understanding of how mathematics is a useful tool. For instance, pupils measure wood accurately for their picture frame and in geography they use their knowledge of scale when working with maps.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make sound progress in lessons.
- Pupils have good factual knowledge.
- Investigative work is improving.
- Work does not always challenge the more able pupils.
- Standards are high in tests at the end of Year 6.
- Good links are made with music and ICT.

### Commentary

70. National test results show that by the end of Year 2 standards are below the national average and by the end of Year 6 they are well above this standard. Inspection findings confirm that currently both Year 2 and Year 6 are working in line with national expectations. This shows improvement since the last inspection at the end of Year 6 but a drop in standards at the end of Year 2.
71. Pupils in Year 2 achieve satisfactorily in lessons. They are beginning to understand the meaning of a fair test and to enjoy practical experiments. They discovered that, when making a bag, sugar paper is stronger than crepe or wrapping paper, confirming their predictions.
72. Where teaching is satisfactory the pace of lessons is steady and tasks are completed, but more able pupils remain unchallenged and all pupils are too passive in whole class sessions. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, pace slows radically as management of behaviour detracts from the main purpose.
73. Year 6 pupils have spent a significant amount of time revising for their end of year tests and developing their investigative skills. Samples of work completed since the beginning of the year are mostly copied from the board with insufficient challenge for high achievers. A lesson revising electrical circuits was seen during the inspection in which no account was taken of the pupils who had previously proven that they were competent in this aspect in a test. In discussion with inspectors, pupils explained that investigative work in groups is preferable and they enjoy presenting their findings to the whole school in assembly. A helpful writing frame enables written work to be orderly with headings such as aim, prediction, variable, and conclusion. Some pupils now write unaided. The same format is used in Years 4 and 5 to help with progression and consistency.
74. Marking and feedback in books is mostly in the form of ticks and comments like 'Well tried' and 'Good work.' It does not help pupils to know what they need to do to improve. Year 6 pupils report that practice tests are marked thoroughly and feedback informs them at which National Curriculum level they are working and how they can improve to the next.
75. Leadership is satisfactory. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has begun to monitor and help colleagues in the classroom. Rightly, she has promoted investigative work knowing that pupils' factual knowledge is a strength. Displays in public areas help pupils with their understanding.



76. Resources, including the production of a laminated set of a published collection of work cards for practical activities, help with teachers' planning.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Resources are good and well used.
- National training has improved teaching and learning.
- Standards at the end of Year 2 are now satisfactory.
- A specialist support assistant gives very good support to pupils, staff and other adult helpers, including parents.
- Links with other subjects are developing well.
- Leadership is satisfactory.
- Assessment by pupils themselves is good but needs further development in monitoring.
- Pupils have good basic skills.
- The system for saving pupils' work is underdeveloped.

### **Commentary**

77. Standards are now in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2 and above them at the end of Year 6. All pupils seen using ICT during the inspection presented themselves as confident and competent users. Good progress has been made since the last inspection.
78. The quality of teaching overall is good. Teaching has improved as a direct result of the national training programme increasing confidence and competence for all members of staff. Planning is based on a national scheme. Teachers and support staff act as good role models. The specialist support assistant contributes significantly to the good quality teaching. She has considerable technical expertise and skill, teaching both pupils and adults well. Demonstrations at the beginning of lessons often require groups of pupils to gather around a single computer. This is not ideal as not everyone can see well enough.
79. Pupils make good progress. Completed work is kept in folders on the hard drive of the computer system but deleted at the end of the year to save hard drive space. Other work is kept on floppy disk and / or printed and stuck into books for other subjects. Pupils in Year 6 are skilled at retrieving their work electronically. A more cohesive system has not yet been developed to take advantage of this, by ensuring work is kept using an ICT solution.
80. Pupils' self-assessment systems are good. Each child keeps a log and tracks progress through the national curriculum levels. Teachers' monitoring is minimal at present. Resources are good and well used. As well as the computer suite being fully timetabled for groups of pupils from every class, mobile laptops are used well in the classroom. Stand-alone computers in every classroom were little used throughout the inspection. The ratio of computers to pupils is well above national recommendations.
81. Leadership is satisfactory. The subject co-ordinator is enthusiastic and plans to continue development in line with an action plan. The training of staff and the appointment of the specialist support assistant have been key factors in improvements that have taken place.

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

82. Planning for other subjects includes ICT making good links across the curriculum. As a result, pupils have good contexts in which to apply their skills. Year 6 pupils said that they were particularly interested in using a program called Smart Start Investigation / Discovery to test how temperature affects water in science. Year 4 use a 'Music Box' well to refine rhythm work

in music. The digital camera is used extensively to enhance the curriculum, recording events and pupils' participation.

## HUMANITIES

83. Very few lessons of **geography, history or religious education** were observed and so no firm judgements about provision could be made. However pupils' work was scrutinised and planning was reviewed.
84. A review of pupils' work and teachers' planning in **geography** indicates that the National Curriculum requirements are met, though there is an over-emphasis on topics about rivers and the curriculum for pupils in the mixed Year 4 and 5 class are not clearly spelled out. Pupils are taught about map work, land use, local study and other places inside and outside Britain. Standards in Year 6 are in line with national expectations and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. They have a sound knowledge of rivers and the technical vocabulary connected with their study. There is an over-reliance on worksheets, which restricts pupils' chances of extending their writing skills.
85. From a scrutiny of pupils' work in **history** in Years 2, 3 and 4 and a review of teachers' planning, it is clear that National Curriculum requirements are met. Pupils are taught a suitable range of topics, which cover both ancient civilisations and more modern periods of British history. They also cover the research and chronology skills pupils need. It is unsatisfactory that some pupils duplicate topics because the curriculum is not planned well enough for the class of mixed Year 4 and Year 5 pupils.
86. Standards in Year 2 are in line with national expectations and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils know about famous people in history, such as Guy Fawkes and Samuel Pepys, and some detail of events they are connected with. Many of the tasks involve pupils in discussion so very little work is recorded. The Year 3 and 4 topic on 'Romans' featured an exciting visit from a Roman soldier and pupils vividly recall much of what he said. In Years 2, 3 and 4 too much of the pupils' recorded work is in the form of worksheets. Pupils' opportunities to use and extend their writing skills are very limited.
87. In the one **religious education** lesson timetabled during the inspection the teacher provided sound support and Year 5 pupils produced satisfactory work; an empathetic report on the Christmas story from the viewpoint of one of those involved. Other work shows coverage of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Talking with pupils indicated adequate knowledge of Christianity and other major world religions but there was very little evidence that their lives or views had been influenced by it.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

88. Physical education was inspected individually and is reported on in full below. Limited evidence from observing teaching meant that firm judgements about provision in art and design, design and technology and music were not possible. However some lessons were observed and pupils' work was sampled.
89. No lessons were seen in **art and design** and the work on display and in pupils' sketchbooks represented part of the curriculum only. There was, for example, little evidence of two or three-dimensional art. Nevertheless, all the work on display was at least of the expected standard. There was evidence of the emphasis on the development of perspective skills and of a study of the work of Lowry in Year 6 sketchbooks. There was good work from Year 4 pupils in the style of Van Gogh.
90. Three lessons were seen in **design and technology**; in two of the three, pupils were involved in evaluation. Some teaching was satisfactory but most was good. The quality of some work met expectations and some exceeded it. There is clear evidence from lessons and from books that due emphasis is given to the designing, making and evaluation elements of the subject.

91. One **music** lesson was seen in which pupils from Year 3 were able to evaluate a piece of music they had composed, suggesting changes and improvements. With helpful clues from the teacher they wrote their findings, concentrating well. Poor presentations and handwriting skills hampered this process. Muddled explanations during the final part of the lesson slowed progress in improving the pupils' ability to retain a rhythm.
92. Group singing heard in a whole school assembly and a Christmas Production by the youngest pupils was tuneful with a sweet sound. Pupils from Years 1 to 3 have particularly good voices. Some older pupils were rather passive and did not join in the assembly wholeheartedly.
93. A collaborative musical experience involving Year 6 pupils was seen briefly. This was a very good example of pupils working together on an original composition. Pupils who receive individual instrumental tuition joined with percussionists and singers in groups. They performed poems set to music based on the geography topic 'Rivers.' High motivation combined with very good technical skill resulted in very good performances. A joy to hear!

## **Physical education**

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in swimming are good.
- The curriculum in Years 3 to 6 is good.
- The school has good facilities and resources for the subject.

### **Commentary**

94. Lessons of gymnastics and games were observed and swimming records and lesson planning were scrutinised. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with national expectations and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. In games, pupils in Year 2 throw and catch with sound accuracy whilst those in Year 6 control and move the hockey ball well but have little knowledge of tactics. Standards in swimming are strong with the vast majority of pupils being able to swim 25m and having an understanding of water safety. In gymnastics in Year 3, pupils improve their sequences and perform them well.
95. Teaching is satisfactory across the school. Teachers' planning is brief and so coaching points are not always made. Skilled and knowledgeable teaching of gymnastics in Year 3 helped pupils perfect their sequences. The innovative use of a digital camera allowed pupils to check their balance position and improve it. In both Year 1 and Year 3 pupils got the most out of their lesson because the teachers controlled their classes well. In Year 6 the teacher concentrated too much on the most able group whilst the least able did not improve their skills and became disinterested in the lesson. In Year 2 the teacher warmed up the pupils well but then gave the pupils very static practices. Some of them became cold and bored quickly.
96. The curriculum covers all six areas of the subject and has improved since the last inspection. The school offers pupils two residential visits where they can try new activities such as archery. Clubs and team sports make a positive contribution to pupils' personal development and allow talented pupils to compete against others of similar skills. The facilities for sport are good and the resources plentiful to help learning.

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

97. No lessons were seen during the inspection so no overall provision judgement can be made. However, the school's contribution to this aspect of the curriculum is evident in pupils' behaviour, general conduct and attitudes to work.

98. Relationships between pupils and their teachers vary although they are satisfactory overall. In some classes they are warm and there is fun in the air. In others there is a distance between teacher and pupils and a greater coolness. In a small minority there is occasional lack of respect from pupils to teacher and this manifests itself in bouts of unsatisfactory behaviour, which the teacher fails to control. This lack of consistency is replicated in the variable nature of pupils' behaviour and conduct.
99. In the common areas of the school pupils move around sensibly but when they gather for worship they are often restless. Insufficient is done on these occasions to restore the behaviour appropriate to the occasion. At lunchtime, however, behaviour is much better as pupils display good table manners and respond happily to the very good range of playground activities on offer. This and the support they receive in classrooms contribute to the more consistent quality of relationships that exist between all pupils in the school and the support staff.
100. The school is not yet skilled at fostering pupils' independence, encouraging them to use their initiative, engendering in them a love of learning and affording them the best opportunities to take responsibility. Although these attributes are more evident in some classes than others, they are not all at their height where they could be most expected, in Year 6. Lessons are 'tight' and strongly focused on achieving good test results so that there is little opportunity for, in particular, independent learning. However, the school council is democratically elected and their ideas are considered and often acted upon.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	5

<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	5

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

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

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	5

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