

INSPECTION REPORT

STOKE BRUERNE CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Towcester

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 121992

Headteacher: Mrs J Du Cros

Lead inspector: Elisabeth de Lancey

Dates of inspection: 1 - 3 March 2004

Inspection number: 258039

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:	62
School address:	Bridge Road Stoke Bruerne Towcester Northamptonshire
Postcode:	NN12 7SD
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr S Moxon
Date of previous inspection:	29 June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Stoke Bruerne CE (VC) Primary School is a small rural school for pupils from the ages of four to eleven. There were 62 pupils on roll at the time of the inspection. They are taught in three mixed-aged classes. The school serves the villages of Stoke Bruerne and Shutlanger but some pupils come from further afield. The school draws on an area where the socio-economic circumstances are relatively favourable and pupils' attainment on entry varies considerably from year to year. Overall, it is above average. Few pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. Almost all pupils are from white English speaking families. There are a few pupils from minority ethnic groups and none is at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. A lower than average proportion of pupils have special educational needs, mostly for moderate learning difficulties, and none have a statement of special educational need. Few pupils join or leave the school at non-standard times. The school gained a DfES achievement award in 2001 and 2002. . After a period of relative instability, a new headteacher and Year 5/6 teacher were appointed in September 2003. An inspection of collective worship was carried out at the same time by the diocesan authorities.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an effective school which is held in high regard by the community. The school provides a good standard of education for its pupils. Pupils make a good start in the reception class and good progress through the school. By the time they leave they reach standards which are better than those expected for their age. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good and pupils achieve well. The leadership of the headteacher and governors is good. Although, in common with most small schools, costs are relatively high, the school offers good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- By the end of Year 6, standards in reading, mathematics and science are good.
- Under the effective leadership of the headteacher, the school has set a clear programme for improvement.
- Teaching and learning in Years 5 and 6 are consistently very good.
- The school has a very good ethos, relationships are excellent, and attitudes and behaviour are very good.
- Staff care sensitively for pupils and understand their personal development needs very well.
- Very good links with parents and the community make a significant impact on pupils' learning.
- Not enough pupils reach a higher than average level of attainment in writing.
- The role of the subject co-ordinators needs to be developed further.
- Assessment findings are not used adequately in some subjects to plan for pupils of different abilities and ages.
- The school does much to engage pupils in its organisation but there is scope for more formal procedures to be developed.

Since the school was last inspected in July 1998, improvement has been good. Provision and progress in information and communication technology (ICT) are much better than they were. The adoption of national guidance in almost all subjects, particularly in the Foundation Stage and in literacy and numeracy, has brought greater coherence and continuity to pupils' academic development. The management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school's policy for homework has been implemented and is fully understood by pupils and parents. Parents are very satisfied with the information they receive from the school about their children's work.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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.

In the table above A refers to the highest five percent compared with all or similar schools.*

Care should be taken when interpreting the information in the tables because year groups are small and comparisons with similar schools and from year to year are unreliable. **Current pupils' achievement is good.** Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well and are likely to exceed the goals in all areas of learning. By the end of Year 2, pupils' results in the national tests in reading, writing and mathematics have been almost consistently well above average over the past few years.

Until 2003, when standards in English, mathematics and science fell, pupils' results at the end of Year 6 have been well above average in mathematics and science and at least above average in English. The dip in standards in 2003 reflects the high staff turnover during the previous two years. Currently, throughout the school, most pupils are working at above average standards in reading, mathematics and science, and make good progress. In writing, most pupils achieve soundly and reach average standards. Standards in ICT are average. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well because they receive good support.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development are good. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and form excellent relationships. Their behaviour is very good. Attendance is above average. Pupils develop a strong sense of community but do not have sufficient opportunities to make a positive contribution to school improvement.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. This is because **teaching overall is good** and pupils learn well. Teaching and learning in Years 5 and 6 are consistently very good. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the good support offered to them. All staff foster excellent relationships with their pupils, and those who are new to the school settle in very quickly. Pupils practise their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills well in other subjects. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' achievement. Assessment findings are not used adequately in some subjects to plan for pupils of different abilities and ages and to set targets for improvement. The school plans a broad curriculum, and a good programme of additional activities extends pupils' learning opportunities. The accommodation is restricted in some areas, but the teachers and pupils make the best possible use of it. Resources are good. The school cares very well for its pupils and monitors their progress satisfactorily.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has made a significant contribution to the school in the short time she has been in post and her leadership is good. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is managed well. The governors fulfil their statutory duties and their governance is good. The role of the curriculum co-ordinators needs to be developed further in the subjects they lead.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are highly satisfied with the school and are pleased with the range of learning opportunities offered. Most pupils enjoy school, feel secure in the care it affords them, and like the way teachers help them with their work. They would appreciate having a voice in school affairs through a school council.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- raise standards in writing
- develop the role of the subject co-ordinators further in the formal monitoring and evaluating of subjects they lead
- improve the use of assessment to inform the planning of pupils' work
- give children greater responsibility by involving them more in school decision making.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Early assessments of children's learning when they start school show that overall their attainment is above average. Most are likely to exceed the early learning goals in all areas of learning by the beginning of Year 1. Throughout the school pupils achieve well and by Years 2 and 6, most pupils reach at least average standards in most subjects reported. The more able pupils reach standards which are higher than expected in reading, mathematics and science. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their individual targets.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well in all areas of learning because the staff plan an interesting curriculum and give good support.
- Standards in speaking and listening, reading, handwriting, mathematics and science are above average and pupils achieve well.
- Standards in ICT are now improving at a faster pace.
- The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good because staff give pupils sensitive support and guidance.
- Currently the school is making good progress towards its appropriately demanding targets in reading and mathematics.
- Standards in writing are not high enough.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	18.3 (18.3)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	16.0 (16.3)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	19.0 (19.0)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 6 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.0 (27.8)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	28.4 (29.0)	26.8 (26.7)
science	30.2 (30.2)	28.6 (28.2)

There were 13 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Commentary

1. Children's attainment on entry to the reception class is above average. Teaching and learning are consistently good. The good ratio of children to adults ensures that the needs of all children are met. Consequently, the children achieve well in all areas of learning, particularly in their personal and social development where children's achievement is very good. By the end of the reception year, most children are likely to exceed the early learning goals in all areas of learning.

2. The number of children taking the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is too small for valid comparisons to be made with other schools. It is similarly difficult to interpret data about trends, which are affected by the small numbers of pupils and the composition of each year group. Consequently, care should be taken when examining trends in attainment over time. However, in 2003 the results for seven-year olds showed that, compared with similar schools, pupils' results in reading and mathematics are well above average at both the expected and higher than expected level and in the highest five per cent in mathematics. Results in writing are above average at the expected level and well above average at the higher than expected level.
3. When compared with those of similar schools, the results of the 2003 National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds are much lower than those reported in previous years. They are average in mathematics and science and well below average in English. At the higher than expected level, results were above average in mathematics and science and in the lowest five per cent of similar schools in English. Although standards in reading are very good, results in English are very low because standards in writing are below average and not enough pupils attain the higher than expected level. The school has already identified this factor in its school improvement plan and has planned ways to effect improvement, one of these being to raise the standard of teaching in English. Inspection evidence indicates that this is already having a positive impact. The teaching of English is very good in Years 5 and 6 and pupils are performing at a higher level this year.
4. Pupils currently in Year 2 and Year 6 achieve well and standards in speaking listening, reading and mathematics are above average. Most pupils attain average standards in writing and some are working at a higher level in both years. Achievement in writing is satisfactory. Throughout the school, standards in science are above average. In ICT, standards are satisfactory. Boys and girls do equally well.
5. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the appropriate targets set for them. They receive good support and reach standards consistent with their capabilities. They achieve well.
6. There is not enough evidence to report on standards in religious education, art and design, design and technology, geography and history, music and physical education.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to school are very good and they behave very well in lessons and around the school. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. Attendance is good. Pupils are punctual and lessons start on time.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a strong emphasis on children's personal, social and emotional development in the Foundation Stage.
- Pupils have excellent relationships with staff and one another.
- Behaviour is very good both in class and around the school.
- Pupils' personal development is promoted well through involvement in assemblies, raising money for local and overseas charities and extra-curricular activities.

Commentary

7. Pupils' very positive attitudes towards their work are evident from the earliest age. The youngest children in the reception class have settled into school very well, they are happy and respond enthusiastically to the wide range of activities provided. Staff help them to feel secure, proud of themselves and aware of others. Their enthusiasm for learning is developed well and they become increasingly independent as they move through the school.

8. Children and parents agree that pupils are keen to come to school, and talk with enthusiasm about their friends, the activities and their teachers, in whom they confidently put their trust. They enjoy the after-school clubs and working on the computers, and report that most lessons are interesting and fun. Pupils throughout the school report that they are expected to work hard and are trusted to do things on their own. They are willing to take responsibility and deal with it in a mature and sensible way. For example, the oldest pupils prepare their classroom for assemblies or look after the youngest children at lunchtimes. Most pupils concentrate well, take a pride in their work and do their best. They respond well to all that the school offers, and all pupils feel equally valued and included, irrespective of their differences. There was no evidence of bullying and parents agree, that should any incidents arise, they would be dealt with quickly and effectively by staff.
9. Pupils with special educational needs have very good attitudes to their work and behave well. When working in small groups with a member of staff, they demonstrate a high level of motivation and concentration. In larger class groups, they co-operate well with other pupils, who are ready to support them in settling to their tasks.
10. Pupils' personal development is good. Assemblies are thoroughly planned and make a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual development. They provide formal occasions for reflection and celebration. Their social development is effectively promoted through personal, social, health and citizenship education. Circle time, when teachers encourage pupils to discuss their thoughts and feelings, helps them to see things from other points of view. They discuss a variety of issues that help them understand how people should behave towards one another, and how they can take care of their environment. Pupils are also involved in community activities. Charity work, such as fundraising for Children in Need and Night Shelter, is an important feature of school life. The school is very effective in promoting mutual respect and concern for others.
11. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. The staff are good role models who show respect and concern for the individual needs of pupils. The pupils develop a good sense of right and wrong. They are polite and friendly to one another and adults, including visitors to school. Teachers help pupils to work together. This begins in the reception class, where children are encouraged to work in pairs or small groups, to share equipment and take turns. Pupils attend the parish church to celebrate Christian traditions such as Christmas and Easter. They learn about some of the celebrations and beliefs of other faiths in religious education. The school works hard to provide pupils with a wide variety of opportunities to develop their understanding of their own culture and to appreciate that of others. In art and design, English, music, history and geography, pupils are helped to develop an awareness of the diversity of other cultures. The school is seeking to increase this awareness and prepare them for living in a multi-cultural society.

Attendance

Attendance is better than that normally found in primary schools. The school follows up all unexplained absences with telephone calls home on the first day of non-attendance where necessary. Unauthorised absence is low.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	4.3
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.4

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

There were no exclusions in the last school year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a very good standard of education for its pupils. Teaching is good overall, with some substantial strengths. The curriculum is good and is considerably enriched by a very good range of extra activities and the use of the outdoor environment. The school provides well for pupils with special educational needs and for pupils' personal, social and health education.

Teaching and learning

With a higher proportion of very good teaching and learning, this area has improved since the last inspection. Overall, the quality of teaching is good and pupils learn well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The consistently high quality of teaching in Years 5 and 6 is accelerating the learning of all pupils.
- The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and they learn well.
- Teachers use ICT effectively to support pupils' learning in many subjects, in particular, English and mathematics.
- Teachers use marking well to inform pupils how well they are doing.
- In a few lessons, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to develop their own ideas or reflect on their work.

Commentary

12. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is consistently good. The staff have a good understanding of the needs of young children. They build excellent relationships with children and their parents, and focus very effectively on children's personal, social and emotional development. Routines are well established and help the children to become confident and develop their self-esteem. Staff use a wide range of strategies to involve children, capture their interest and stimulate their learning. Early literacy and numeracy skills are taught well and resources are used effectively to support learning. Children are encouraged to develop their language through role play, and their mathematical skills are effectively developed through practical activities and computer programs. The small outside area and the playground provide sound opportunities for the development of physical skills.
13. All staff have established excellent relationships with their pupils, through which they have fostered high standards of pupil behaviour and shaped pupils' positive attitudes to their work. This has developed pupils' enthusiasm for learning and increased their confidence in facing new challenges. Pupils recognise that their views are welcomed and that they are expected to participate fully in class activities. They display high levels of enjoyment and pride in the work they do. Staff use their good subject knowledge well to engage all their pupils, and to assess their understanding through the responses they make. The teachers insist on the use of appropriate terms and relevant vocabulary, and these are features of this assessment. All staff prepare their lessons well, with clear learning objectives which they carefully explain to the class. As a result, pupils know what they will be doing and are certain of what is expected of them. Teachers use ICT effectively to demonstrate and explain work to pupils. Work is well matched to pupils' abilities and homework arrangements make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. In some measure these are important features of most lessons throughout the school.
14. High quality teaching is characterised by the high expectations placed on pupils' contributions to lesson development. Teachers expect pupils to explore their initial ideas with a partner and then develop their thinking in a larger group before raising their ideas in the class. This provides pupils with opportunities to probe ideas at a greater depth and to recognise the responsibilities they have in responding to those of other pupils. This process of pupil engagement is reflected,

too, in the high quality marking of the pupils' work. Marking refers to the learning objective set and identifies the next steps to be taken. This helps pupils evaluate their own achievements and to recognise what they must do to improve further. Teachers use ICT imaginatively to model its potential and demonstrate its limitations, and also to stimulate questions and discussion to extend pupils' learning. At the end of lessons sufficient time is given to reflect on the lesson content and draw together the assessments made of pupils' responses. The conclusions are then used to modify subsequent lessons so that identified needs can be tackled or work can be accelerated.

15. In a few lessons, where teaching is less successful, overlong introductions, little time for pupils to reflect on their work, and lack of opportunities for pupils to develop their ideas slow lesson pace and pupils are not as engaged as they should be. In these instances, learning opportunities are lost as teachers' direction of the lesson does not draw effectively on pupils' own work, and the work provided does not always reflect the ability range of the class. There are high expectations of pupils' behaviour, productivity and attainment, but not of contributions to help refine their thinking and develop their understanding.
16. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well. Teaching assistants work in close partnership with the teachers to secure a consistent approach in their teaching and an effective exchange of information. Staff offer pupils with special educational needs good individual support and ensure they have access to all areas of the curriculum. Throughout the school, these pupils make good progress towards the appropriate targets set for them in their individual education plans. The special educational needs teaching assistant makes a significant contribution through her work with the pupils, and by maintaining detailed records of the pupils' performance in the tasks specifically designed to further their learning.
17. Overall, assessment is satisfactory. Assessment and recording procedures in the Foundation Stage are good. They are effectively linked to the national profile guidance. The school tracks children's progress and records their achievements in an individual portfolio. This helps children and their parents understand what they have achieved and informs the next steps for learning. Elsewhere in the school, teacher assessment has been used satisfactorily to identify group targets in English, mathematics and ICT to shape pupils' studies. Formal assessment procedures and data analysis of statutory and non-statutory test results for English, mathematics and science are good. However, the school does not have established systems for collating the results of these assessments to help inform the planning of pupils' work and the setting of individual targets. Recognising this, the staff made assessment a key priority in their improvement plan and new systems for all subjects are currently being implemented. However, it is too early to judge the effectiveness of each of these new initiatives.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 23 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	7	10	6	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.

The curriculum

The school provides a broad curriculum that meets the needs of pupils well. It is enhanced by visits, and by visitors who are invited into school. The provision for ICT has improved considerably and pupils are given good opportunities to use their skills to support their learning in other subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum for pupils in the Foundation Stage is good.
- A wide range of well-planned curricular activities is accessible to all pupils.

- The school makes very good links between subjects.

Commentary

18. The curriculum for pupils in the Foundation Stage is good and meets the needs of the children well. It is based securely on the early learning goals that children are expected to reach in all areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1. It enables the children to make good progress in their development and ensures that they make a smooth transition to the National Curriculum. A strong focus on developing children's personal, social and emotional skills through a challenging curriculum includes good opportunities for learning through play. The daily programme of purposeful activities is well planned to develop children's enthusiasm for school and to promote their growing independence.
19. In Years 1 to 6, all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are taught, and the school provides a broad and well-structured curriculum which builds effectively on the early learning goals. The curriculum includes sex and relationships education, which is taught as part of the school's good programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education, and also drugs education, which is taught as part of the science curriculum and supported by the local police force. Pupils are well prepared for transfer to secondary school.
20. Good improvements in the planning of the curriculum since the last inspection have brought greater continuity to the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. This is because the school has implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies successfully and is developing effective ways of using both subjects within the wider curriculum. It follows the guidance for children in the Foundation Stage, the locally agreed syllabus for religious education and national guidance for all other subjects. The improved provision for ICT and the very good management of the subject gives all pupils frequent access to computers to enrich their learning.
21. The school has devised a suitable two-year rolling programme of topics. The planning and content of these topics take appropriate account of the needs of pupils of different ages and backgrounds, and of their ethnicity and gender. It has been particularly successful at making links between subjects so that pupils can apply the knowledge and skills learnt in one subject to others. This helps to bring coherence to pupils' learning. For example, work in history, when pupils study the Tudor period, is complemented well in art and design, dance and writing, and ICT is used as an effective tool to extend pupils' learning.
22. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Detailed individual education plans, which describe the school's strategies for supporting pupils' progress towards clearly stated targets, are drawn up for all pupils requiring them. Targets are precisely expressed in assessable terms and very carefully monitored. For the majority of the time pupils are helped within their classrooms; on occasion they are appropriately withdrawn for additional activities by the teaching assistant for special educational needs. Where necessary, they are effectively supported by outside agencies, with which the school maintains very good relations. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their musical skills, and those who are talented in the use of ICT are given good support to develop their skills further. Pupils who are mathematically able are challenged by working at much higher levels than are usually expected of pupils of their age.
23. The school's provision for extra-curricular activities and out-of-school learning is good. Extra-curricular clubs include French, gardening, sports and music. Pupils from Years 3 to 6 have opportunities to swim at the local secondary school. Educational and residential visits contribute to pupils' knowledge and understanding of the curriculum as well as developing their social skills and independence. Qualified coaches are used on occasion and older pupils have a good opportunity to undertake outdoor and adventurous activities during a biennial residential visit. The school ensures that all pupils are fully involved in school activities.

24. The school has invested well in its staffing provision. Each class has a full-time teaching assistant who makes a significant contribution to the pupils' achievement. Younger pupils also benefit from additional support from the special needs assistant. Accommodation is cramped and access to the individual classrooms is restricted, but both staff and pupils make the best use of the facilities. It enables all the National Curriculum subjects to be taught with the exception of some aspects of gymnastics, for which pupils go to the village hall. There is no school hall and pupils in the oldest class must move the classroom furniture to create a space for assemblies. The good level of resources for ICT provides well for curricular enrichment. For pupils with special educational needs, a variety of resources covers a wide range of needs. Overall, resources in other subjects are satisfactory.

Care, guidance and support

The school makes very good provision for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. It provides pupils with good support and guidance, including those with special educational needs. It is in the early stages of involving pupils in the work of the school and its development. Staff know the pupils and their families well and relationships are excellent.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils feel secure and work in a healthy and safe environment.
- Special educational needs pupils are well supported.
- Induction and transition arrangements are very well organised.
- Staff know the pupils well and pastoral care is good.
- Pupils are consulted about their views but there is scope for more formal procedures to be developed.

Commentary

25. The school's ethos is very good. It provides a happy and friendly environment that is conducive to learning. Close attention is paid to health and safety issues and risk assessments, particularly when using the nearby village hall and playing fields. Pupils' healthy and safe living is well promoted through the personal, social and health education programme, which is enhanced by talks from various guest speakers. First aid assistance is by qualified staff and arrangements for caring for sick children are good. Child protection procedures are effective and the school exercises its responsibilities with vigilance and care.
26. Induction arrangements are very good and ensure that children settle happily into school life. These include home visits, several opportunities to visit the school and an informative booklet. These arrangements help to develop good and trusting relationships between the staff and parents and their children. As a result pupils are confident to seek support and guidance, knowing they will be dealt with sympathetically. All pupils report that they have a very good and trusting relationship with at least one adult member of staff in the school. Pupils are well prepared for transfer to secondary education.
27. Staff know their pupils well and their monitoring of pupils' personal development is informal but effective. The progress of pupils in English, mathematics and science is monitored well and pupils are beginning to understand the steps they need to take to improve their learning.
28. For pupils with special educational needs, carefully constructed programmes to support their learning are put in place after a thorough review of assessment findings. The school is helped in this by the work of the teaching assistant for special educational needs and, when necessary, that of specialist outside agencies.
29. Most pupils feel that teachers listen to their views and that they are trusted to do things on their own. The school has recognised that it needs to do more to seek pupils' views. It has already enlisted their help in designing an Ofsted style questionnaire and helping with the proposed

improvements to the nearby playing fields. Pupils clearly take their responsibilities very seriously and eagerly await participating in the school council.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Very good relations exist with the parents. There are good links with other schools and the school is well regarded within the local and wider community. The Parent, Teacher and Friends' Association provides very good support.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are kept very well informed.
- The school works effectively with parents, seeks their views and responds well to their concerns.
- The achievement of their children is greatly enhanced by the very good contribution of parents.
- The very good community links help to enrich the curriculum.
- The good links with other schools ensure that pupils happily transfer to the next stage of their education.

Commentary

30. Parents are very satisfied with the school. They say that they feel comfortable in approaching the school with any concerns. They feel that their children are encouraged to be mature and responsible, and they appreciate the wide range of extra-curricular activities the school offers. They report that they are well informed about the school through regular newsletters and other correspondence. They are also well informed about their children's progress through consultation evenings, open days and detailed annual reports. Parents are also welcome to discuss concerns at the beginning or end of the school day. The draft prospectus and the annual governors' report are informative and well written. Parents of children entering reception class receive very good advice on how to help their children to cope with school life. They are kept well informed about the school's policies, what their children are learning and how they can help them at home. Parents of children with special educational needs are regularly consulted and they are encouraged to work in close partnership with the school to address their children's needs. The children's individual education plans identify support that parents can give to help their children out of school.
31. Parents' views are sought and they are consulted in the drawing up of the school improvement plan. They make a very good contribution to the school's work. For instance, they help in the classroom, with clubs and on trips and visits. They encourage their children to take part in out-of-school activities and support them at events such as drama productions and church celebrations. The Parent, Teacher and Friends' Association organises social events and raises significant funds for the school. For example, a substantial sum has been raised towards the cost of computer equipment and transport for school trips. Home-School reading diaries are used well and many parents give valuable support to their children with their homework.
32. The school makes very good use of its links with the community. Many local visits and visitors enrich the curriculum. For instance, visitors read their favourite stories to the pupils on World Book Day. There are good links with the parish church and the local canal museum. The school works closely with the local nursery school to ensure children's smooth transfer into school. Good working relationships exist with the local cluster of schools, and the collaboration of staff and the sharing of resources enhance the teaching and learning of all pupils. Pupils take part in musical events, sporting activities and charity fund-raising. They give performances in the village hall to which all members of the community are invited. Pupils who have made the most significant progress during the school year are presented with trophies by the local Women's Institute. Church representatives and speakers from several charitable organisations and professional sports clubs give talks at the school and work with pupils to

improve their skills. The school provides work experience for students from the local college. All these initiatives contribute positively to the progress and achievements of the pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher provides good leadership and management. She has worked successfully with staff and governors to forge effective teams to sustain the school's very good ethos.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Under the strong leadership of the headteacher the staff have set a clear course for improvement.
- The school has established effective self-evaluation procedures.
- The governance of the school is good.
- The role of the curriculum co-ordinators needs to be developed further in the formal monitoring and evaluation of the subjects they lead.

Commentary

33. During her first few months in post, the headteacher, has made a significant contribution to the school's development. This is acknowledged by staff, governors and parents. In part, this is due to the headteacher's fostering of effective teamwork amongst and between all staff and governors who are providing good support to bring about improvement. This is complemented by the good management structures being established, the most important of which is the school's effective self-evaluation procedures. The full participation of staff and governors, and the canvassing of parents' opinions have enabled a clear and objective assessment of the school to emerge. From this, staff and governors have drawn up a good strategic plan to promote the school's development. It has relevant priorities with useful criteria against which to judge their effectiveness, and appropriate implementation and monitoring systems. This well-structured management is reflected in the first phase of development planning. It covers the first two terms of the headteacher's appointment to bring the planning cycle into line with the financial year.
34. The strengthening of the role of the curriculum co-ordinators is part of the restructuring of the school's management. This includes their having a formal responsibility for the monitoring and evaluation of the subjects they lead. Although this is not yet implemented, monitoring is part of the school's improvement plan. Curriculum co-ordinators offer support and guidance to colleagues, promote curriculum development and training, and advise on planning. Each has identified appropriate priorities for their subject's development. The co-ordinators for mathematics and ICT have undertaken monitoring of teaching and those for English, mathematics, science, ICT and religious education have scrutinised pupils' work. However, none of this has yet taken place within a structured programme; this, too, is planned.
35. Since the last inspection, there has been a significant improvement in the management of special educational needs. The leadership and management of the headteacher, as special educational needs co-ordinator, offer a clear focus for the school's provision in this area. She ensures all systems and procedures are in place and that they conform to the national Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs. Through their thorough understanding of the pupils, the staff ensure the early identification of special needs. In turn, the headteacher secures the conscientious implementation of well-targeted support for each pupil through the school's effective relationships with appropriate outside agencies. She organises well the writing, implementation and monitoring of pupils' individual education plans. Regular reviews of these plans involve both parents and pupils. The school is compiling a record of gifted and talented pupils and has included provision for such pupils as a priority in the improvement plan.
36. This reconstituted governing body makes good use of training opportunities to develop the competence of its members. This follows from their successful self-review and skills audit. A

good mix of experienced and new governors draws usefully on their broad personal and professional expertise to meet all their statutory obligations. They are appreciative of the advice and guidance they receive from the headteacher to help them carry out their duties effectively. Many are fully involved in the life of the school while others visit whenever they can. They make good use of their time in school, and after designated visits governors report back to the governing body to help in the development and review of policy and practice. As part of their own improvement programme, governors have identified further opportunities to visit the working classroom to broaden their own understanding of the school. This links with the extending of their information base through visits to their committees by the curriculum co-ordinators. In turn, this promotes the role of these co-ordinators and their own professional development. Governors see their responsibilities in overseeing standards and in being what they sensitively term 'questioning friend' as integral to these processes. Inspection scrutiny of governors' minutes suggests that they have useful procedures for the monitoring of standards in English, mathematics and science. However, they are not as successful in enabling governors to form a comprehensive overview of provision and standards in all other subjects. Records show that governors adhere to the principles of best value and use them successfully to shape their effective financial management and governance of the school. This is well illustrated through the work of the marketing committee, which has done much to sustain the pupil roll through a carefully-costed publicity drive which includes a range of informative and attractive leaflets about the school and a redesigned prospectus.

37. The school has made significant improvements since the last inspection. Through the successful leadership of the headteacher, staff and governors have developed effective self-evaluation procedures and identified relevant development priorities to move the school forward. The school makes good use of LEA support to foster its expertise. These elements confirm that the school has a clear capacity for sustained improvement.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	226,576
Total expenditure	204,346
Expenditure per pupil	3,350

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	18,830
Balance carried forward to the next	22,230

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Children start school at the beginning of the academic year in which they reach their fifth birthday. They attend part time for the first half term and full time thereafter. There are currently three children in the reception class. The majority of children attend the local nursery before starting school and, although attainment on entry varies from year to year, it is generally above average. Children in the reception year register, and sometimes work alongside, pupils in the infant class, but are often withdrawn into a small area alongside the classroom where they are taught by either the teacher or the Foundation Stage practitioner. The children continue to make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and their progress in mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world is better than reported at the last inspection.

All children achieve well during the Foundation Stage because:

- The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is good. Children are actively involved in their learning and tasks build carefully on what they know already.
- There are good assessment systems in place. Each child's progress is monitored and action is taken to support their learning, so that most children attain the expected standards and, by the time they leave the reception class, they are working in the early stages of the National Curriculum.
- Staff develop very trusting relationships with children and their parents, and daily routines are established quickly.
- Teaching and other provision for children of lower ability and those with special educational needs are good.
- Good working partnerships between adults enrich the curriculum and help meet the needs of all children.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good induction procedures and the partnership with parents is very effective.
- All staff provide very good role models and offer high levels of care.
- Staff place a high priority on this area of learning, and this has a very good impact on children's achievement.

Commentary

38. Children enter the Foundation Stage with personal, social and emotional skills that are often above those expected for their age. From this good start they continue to develop rapidly through the provision of a range of play, direct teaching and collaborative activity. Parents confirm that their children settle quickly into school, become familiar with the classroom routines, and are very contented in the reception class. For example, the children arrive at school eager to learn, and they greet their friends and adults warmly. They quickly settle to a range of activities that get the day off to a good start. They confidently select their own activities and persevere well with those that adults ask them to do. Children listen well and try to do their best in their tasks and activities. They co-operate well, share equipment fairly and behave sensibly. Teaching is very good. All adults value the contributions of children and use praise and encouragement sensitively to reward effort and to promote children's confidence and self-esteem. They work very well together under the direction of staff or when working

independently, for example in the 'post office' role-play area or on the computer. They respond well to the good range of activities they are offered, play happily together and become more aware of the needs of others; for example, in learning to take turns and to share equipment fairly. They show good independence in classroom routines such as dressing themselves and tidying up after lessons. Through their response to school assemblies, and in their lessons and activities, they learn respect for other people and for different ways of life. Almost all children are likely to exceed the expectations in this area of learning by the time they leave the reception class.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good use is made of role-play to develop children's speaking and listening skills.
- The teaching of letter sounds and early reading skills is good.
- There are good opportunities for children to develop their independent writing skills.

Commentary

39. Children generally start school with good communication skills. The staff are good at developing these skills because they are skilled at encouraging children to speak and to develop their vocabulary when they are involved in activities. The children respond well to the sensitive interventions by staff, who constantly encourage them to talk about their activities and help them to extend their language so that they can share their ideas, thoughts and feelings. The children love listening to stories and rhymes, joining in with the parts they know and predicting what will come next. They enjoy looking at books, handle them carefully and understand that books are made up of words and pictures. They are enthusiastic about reading and eagerly select their favourite books. They know the letters of the alphabet and use their knowledge of letter sounds to read simple words. More able children recognise a good number of words by sight and some read simple books. By reading with their children at home, parents help to develop this enjoyment. The children write their names accurately. They hold a pencil correctly, writing letters with care. The staff instruct the children well, showing them how letters should be correctly formed. There are good opportunities for children to write in the role-play areas. In the post office, for example, children are encouraged to address envelopes, write postcards, letters and messages and they are provided with a good range of writing materials. Teaching and learning are good and the children achieve well. Most pupils are likely to exceed the early learning goals in this area of learning by the end of the reception year.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good emphasis on developing children's understanding of mathematics through well-planned practical activities.
- Resources are well organised and used effectively to support learning.
- Basic skills and mathematical language are reinforced at every opportunity.

Commentary

40. Children make good progress in this area of learning, especially when tasks actively involve them and build on their ideas. Most children are confident in dealing with numbers from zero to

ten, and some work confidently with numbers to 20. The most able children know that there are a number of ways of making numbers up to twenty and beyond, and know that addition is combining two sets of numbers. They understand mathematical terms such as 'more than' and 'less than'. At snack time for example, they count pieces of fruit and know if they need one or two pieces more. They are beginning to develop a sound understanding of the vocabulary of time. For instance, they know that the postman will not collect their letters from the post box for three hours and that they will not be delivered until tomorrow morning. Children show good spatial awareness and use mathematical language confidently, for example, correctly naming a range of two-dimensional shapes. Staff create good opportunities to consolidate and extend children's knowledge of number, including counting games and songs. Teaching is good because the teacher and Foundation Stage practitioner work well together. They plan interesting activities and use resources well to develop children's mathematical skills. As a result, children show confidence and enthusiasm for their mathematical work and are likely to exceed expectations in this area of learning.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have good access to ICT and computer skills are promoted well.
- The environment is used effectively to support learning.
- Visitors to school enhance children's knowledge and understanding.

Commentary

41. Most children enter the reception class with good general knowledge of their environment. Staff plan a good range of experiences to extend their knowledge and to develop an understanding of the wider world. For example, they walk in the local woods and observe the features of the changing seasons. They plant bulbs in the school garden in autumn and watch them grow in the spring. They know that plants need light and water to live. They love using the computers; they manipulate the mouse and are developing a good understanding of its functions. They enjoy using a programmable toy and predict how far it will travel improving their commands as they identify the effect of their instructions. Visits and visitors to school enhance the children's understanding of the local area. Children are encouraged to explore how things work and why things happen. For example, when adding wheels to their post office van they can make it move. They explore and describe the properties of different materials, for example the difference between wet and dry sand and gravel. They show an interest in how things work and show one another how to do things. They use a range of construction kits and learn how to fit the parts together to make objects of their choice. Attractive displays of household artefacts through the ages help children to gain a good sense of the passage of time.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

42. It was not possible during the inspection to gather enough evidence to make a secure judgement about provision. The following points were noted, arising from observing children in their classroom and in the outdoor area and from discussions with the teacher and an examination of planning and assessments. Children's physical development on entry to the reception class is above average. A good range of practical activities develops children's manipulative skills and they handle pencils, scissors, construction toys and the computer mouse with good control and co-ordination. Children love to play in the outdoor area, and show a good awareness of space when using the wheeled toys. However, the school has no hall and some aspects of physical development are limited, but the school makes good use of the available accommodation.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

43. During the inspection it was not possible to gather sufficient evidence to make a judgement about provision in this area of learning. However, it is clear that the children are encouraged to paint and draw, make models and engage in role play. Children know the names of the colours and discover how colours mix to create new ones. For example, they learn that if they add red paint to white they will create pink. They make up imaginative stories in their 'small world' play and use the outdoor area creatively to extend their imaginative play. They enjoy singing and know a good number of rhymes and songs.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

- Marking is a strong feature, particularly in Years 5 and 6.
- Homework is used well to extend literacy skills and parents are fully involved.
- There is a strong focus on reading for understanding.
- Pupils use their ICT skills effectively to support their learning.
- Standards in writing are not as high as they should be.

Commentary

44. Standards in speaking and listening are better than those reported at the last inspection. Most pupils reach very good standards in speaking and listening by the end of Year 6 and their achievement is good. They make good progress as they move through the school. Pupils listen carefully and are articulate and confident in discussing their work or expressing their opinions. They use a wide range of vocabulary. This is largely because teachers model language specific to the subject and ensure that the pupils follow suit. Pupils are encouraged to reflect upon their own and other people's feelings and responses from an early age. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6, reading 'The Long Walk' by George Layton, explored the thoughts and actions of the characters. They empathised sensitively with the contrasting views of the old man and boy and contributed to the discussion using a good range of appropriate vocabulary, such as 'reminiscing', 'recollecting' and 'nostalgic'. Pupils are given good opportunities to practise their speaking skills to address a wider audience through assemblies and school performances. Teaching assistants help less able pupils by working with small groups and encouraging them to talk and listen to the opinions of others.
45. Standards in reading are above average and similar to those reported at the last inspection. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school, and their achievement is good. Younger pupils make good progress largely because the school has a systematic approach to the teaching of letter sounds, and pupils' knowledge of letter sounds (phonics) is good. Teachers model a good range of ways to help pupils read words that are new to them. Group reading sessions, when children of similar ability read and discuss the same book, are helping to improve pupils' comprehension skills. This is because these sessions are carefully planned, with books selected at the right level of difficulty, and because effective questions help develop pupils' understanding. By Year 6, pupils read fluently and expressively and have a good understanding of what they read. They confidently discuss what they read, explaining their preferences, and are gaining a good appreciation of different authors and genres. For example, one Year 6 pupil spoke confidently about her favourite authors, explaining that she preferred books by Jacqueline Wilson to those by JR Tolkien because she could relate better to the problems faced by the characters in her stories. Most pupils understand the difference between fiction and non-fiction and how to locate information using the contents and index.

Older pupils are developing good skills in collecting information from a variety of sources such as the Internet and non-fiction books, and a few more able pupils have a good understanding of the purpose of glossaries and bibliographies. The school has developed a small, attractive library area in the entrance hall which is adequately stocked but it was not possible for pupils to use it during the inspection.

46. Standards in writing are satisfactory overall, and there is evidence of improvement in Year 6 where a few pupils are working at the higher than expected level. This is because the teaching of literacy is now very good. The school has successfully set up a number of initiatives which are already having an impact on standards. These include the use of assessment to set targets which help pupils to know what they have to do to improve their work and the introduction of booster classes to raise attainment. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have studied a range of different texts and, after discussing the features of different types of writing, such as stories, newspaper articles, factual accounts and letters, pupils use these as models for their own writing. For example, after reading the book 'Dear Daddy', the pupils use their skills of inference well and successfully compose letters from father to child, gleaning the information from the pictures in the text. They use their knowledge of letter sounds successfully to make attempts at spelling unknown words. Their work is well presented but punctuation is not as developed as it should be and many pupils forget to use punctuation in their writing, and full stops and capital letters are often missed. The most able pupils write interesting stories, which engage the reader's attention, with good descriptions and an imaginative vocabulary.
47. By Year 6, pupils use a range of punctuation and organise their work into paragraphs. They write for different audiences and for a variety of purposes, and there are good examples of pupils writing autobiographies, biographies and persuasive texts. They use a wide range of appropriate vocabulary and often edit and re-draft their work. There are a few good examples of more able pupils using alliteration, metaphor and personification effectively to make their work more interesting. But not enough pupils are using complex sentence structures which would help them to achieve the higher levels. Throughout the school, standards of handwriting are very good and pupils' work is well presented.
48. Teaching and learning are good, and in Years 5 and 6 they are very good. Strengths include:
 - Imaginative teaching methods and a brisk pace to lessons, keep pupils motivated
 - Teachers' planning clearly identifies what they want pupils to learn, and well-organised groupings enable pupils to work at appropriate levels
 - Clear learning objectives are shared with pupils so that they know what is expected of them
 - Marking is thorough, encourages pupils in their efforts and gives them useful advice about how to improve their work
 - The effective use of ICT develops pupils' literacy skills.
49. Where teaching is less successful, lesson introductions are too long and pupils have to sit for too long listening to the teacher. This slows the pace of learning. On occasion, the work given to pupils is too difficult or too easy. This is because teachers do not always use carefully enough the results of assessments when they plan their lessons. In these situations pupils of all abilities do not achieve as well as they should.
50. The subject co-ordinator has analysed pupils' work and provides good support to staff. The school's subject audit has identified strengths and weaknesses in provision. As a result, the school has a clear overview of how the subject, in particular writing can be improved further.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

51. These skills are generally taught well across the curriculum and pupils have reasonable opportunities to apply and improve them, in geography, history and religious education for example. Role-play and drama are used effectively to encourage pupils to extend their language and to communicate with others. Writing skills are promoted well when pupils write

up the findings of their investigations, for example in science, or evaluate their designs in design and technology. There is however scope for improvement for instance, when pupils undertake geographical or historical research but just print the information instead of making notes to support their own writing.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved significantly since the last inspection.
- Pupils achieve well because there is good teaching throughout the school.
- Teachers use ICT effectively to extend pupils' learning.
- The curriculum co-ordinator offers good leadership and management.
- As recognised in the school's improvement plan, formal procedures for the monitoring of teaching are not yet established.

Commentary

52. In small schools with small numbers of pupils in each year group, considerable year-to-year variations in test results are not unusual. In the 2003 national tests for seven-year-olds, almost all the pupils attained above the expected standard with the remainder attaining below. A high performance has been sustained over the past three years in comparison to schools with a similar intake. Inspection evidence indicates that this year fewer pupils are likely to attain the higher standard at the end of Year 2, with the remainder expected to attain the expected standard. In the 2003 national tests for eleven-year-olds, about half the pupils attained above the expected standard with almost all the remainder attaining the expected standard and a very few pupils below that. In comparison with similar schools, these results are average. In the previous three years, results have been above those of such schools. Inspection evidence indicates that this year about half the pupils will attain above the expected standard, with almost all the remainder attaining the expected standard. Across the school pupils make good progress and achieve well. There is no difference in performance between girls and boys. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and they achieve well.
53. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the work set for them because they enjoy their mathematics lessons. By the age of seven, pupils speedily add and subtract small numbers mentally. They double small numbers accurately and use this skill in more complex calculations. Higher attaining pupils work confidently with larger numbers. They recognise two and three-dimensional shapes and describe their characteristics. They use ICT to tabulate and graph the results of their investigations. Pupils carefully compare their estimations of given lengths with the measurements they make. By the age of eleven, they use their understanding of the number system to solve complex problems. They work successfully with fractions and decimals, convert between the two and recognise those which are equivalent. They use computers efficiently to illustrate reflections and rotations across axes. Higher attaining pupils operate co-ordinates confidently, including those with negative numbers and draw angles to the nearest degree.
54. In the lessons seen, teaching and learning were very good in Years 5 and 6, where marking was of very high quality, and good in all other lessons. Strengths include:
 - teachers' creation of an ethos of security in which pupils are encouraged to 'have a try'
 - well-structured lessons with carefully-explained, learning outcomes
 - teachers' secure subject knowledge ensures they respond appropriately to pupils' learning needs
 - successful use of direct teaching to engage all pupils in questions and explanations

- time for pupils to reflect on and discuss their approaches to their work
 - well-planned use of ICT to both teach and provide tasks to extend pupils' learning
 - effective use of on-going assessment to amend lessons or revise subsequent work
 - good homework arrangements make a positive contribution to pupils' motivation and learning.
55. All pupils' work is marked regularly. However, there are examples of insufficient guidance given to pupils to help them recognise how well they are doing or what they must do to improve.
56. The curriculum co-ordinator has made a good start in her leadership of the subject. She manages the school's use of the numeracy strategy appropriately and ensures sufficient learning resources are available to support the staff's teaching requirements. Good use is made of a range of tests and half-termly assessments to gauge pupils' attainment against required standards. Monitoring of classroom practice has been introduced with an agreed pro-forma and feedback to staff. However, it is not yet established within a regular timetabled programme.

Mathematics across the curriculum

57. Teachers successfully promote the use of pupils' mathematical skills in other subjects. This includes measurement in science and design and technology. The interpretation of keys and compass points in geography and scales in science helps to reinforce pupils' competence. Reading time lines enables pupils to calculate the intervals between major events in history. The tabulation and graphing of survey findings give pupils further opportunities to practise their skills and recognise the extensive use of mathematics in their studies.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **good**. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved since the last inspection.
- Successful training and high quality support from the curriculum co-ordinator have given staff the confidence and competence to plan the use of ICT to support pupils' learning.
- Staff teach information technology skills effectively.
- Pupils use ICT appropriately to develop their learning in most subjects.
- The curriculum co-ordinator has made a very good start in leading and managing ICT.

Commentary

58. On the basis of inspection evidence, including discussions with pupils, scrutiny of their work and observation of their practice, pupils are likely to attain the expected standard by the ages of seven and eleven. This is a significant improvement in standards by older pupils. Through Years 1 to 4 pupils make satisfactory progress and their achievement is sound. During Years 5 and 6, pupils' progress is very good and their achievement satisfactory. This accelerated progress reflects the specialist teaching the pupils have received in recent months. There is no significant difference in performance between girls and boys. The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs; they make steady progress and their achievement is satisfactory.
59. All aspects of the subject are planned carefully with appropriate priorities determined by the needs of the pupils. Throughout the school, pupils speak enthusiastically about their work with computers. They are eager to explain what they have done and show what they have achieved. They confidently use a range of equipment to support their learning. This includes computers,

audio-tape recorders and programmable toys for younger pupils, and extends to calculators, CD player, video camera and a specialist microscope for older pupils. All pupils access the internet to support their studies and, on an individual basis, each pursues profitably a mathematics program to develop their basic skills.

60. Through Years 1 and 2, pupils handle a mouse confidently and operate a keyboard satisfactorily. They save, retrieve and print their own work appropriately. They use a variety of programs satisfactorily to generate and communicate their ideas in text and pictures. Through Years 3 to 6, pupils now build effectively on their skills. They develop attractive displays of repeating patterns based on William Morris designs. They compose text and import images which are suitable for those with whom they wish to communicate, for inclusion in a class magazine. They develop exciting, interactive multimedia presentations through reviewing their work and its quality with others, and identifying how it can be improved. They speak confidently about the use of ICT in the wider world and, in particular, how their families make use of it for business and leisure.
61. Overall, teaching and learning are good. Strengths include:
- teachers' competence in using a digital projector effectively to aid demonstration and explanation in many subjects
 - staff teach information technology skills well to promote pupils' efficient use of equipment
 - teaching assistants offer pupils valuable support when they use ICT to extend their learning
 - staff use ICT well to promote pupils' independence
 - teachers also plan co-operative activities for pupils carefully so they can evaluate one another's work or share ideas and collaborate on set tasks
 - staff make good use of questions to engage all pupils, assess their understanding, or take suggestions to improve procedures and extend the scope of given tasks.
62. The curriculum co-ordinator has made a very good start in post, and has made a very significant impact on standards in only a few months. This is acknowledged by pupils, staff, governors and parents. He has drawn up a carefully-focused subject improvement plan with clear, relevant priorities. This was developed following a comprehensive survey of pupils' skills, staff needs and learning resources. It is in the process of implementation and is already helping to raise the quality of provision. New assessment procedures are being trialled but it is too early to judge their effectiveness. Formal monitoring of teaching and learning has been introduced but is not yet part of a structured programme for the school. Resources are good.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

63. Extensive use is made of ICT to support teaching and learning effectively in most of the subjects of the curriculum. Pupils use word processing skills to write and amend a range of texts, in writing stories, poems and reports. Using appropriate programs, in science, they create illustrations of plants and label them correctly. They investigate closed and open circuits and consider *what happens if ...?* They access the internet and undertake research with CD-ROMs to investigate Hinduism in religious education, routes to India in geography and the Tudors in history. To illustrate this work in history, they drew down from the net portraits of the major figures they were studying. To aid their work in design and technology, they have explored product design on the internet, and enhanced product performance with appropriate ICT packages developed to control pupil-constructed machines.

SCIENCE

64. Because of timetabling arrangements, only two science lessons were observed. There are no judgements on provision, teaching and learning. The observations below are based on the scrutiny of pupils' work, discussions with pupils and staff and an examination of school documentation. Investigations are an important part of pupils' studies. In one of the lessons seen, pupils considered fair testing by investigating the most effective insulation for ice cubes. In the other lesson, pupils investigated friction by observing toy car travel down a slope covered

in different surfaces. With their teacher's support, they, too, considered fair tests. Staff use ICT effectively to extend pupils' learning. The curriculum co-ordinator, who is employed part-time, offers advice and support to colleagues. She scrutinises pupils' work and oversees the termly assessments, which are made to the nationally expected standards. She has not undertaken monitoring of teaching and learning. Resources are good and usefully supplemented by the school's pond, wildlife and environmental areas, and by its good links with the local, and nationally known, Canal Museum.

65. In 2003, the teacher assessment of seven-year-olds identified a half of the pupils attaining above the standard expected for their age, and half attaining the expected standard. This attainment is well above that of similar schools. In the 2003 national tests for eleven-year-olds, two-thirds of the pupils attained above the expected standard with almost all the remainder attaining the expected standard. These results were above those of similar schools. Inspection evidence suggests that similar standards may be attained this year. Pupils make good progress and achieve well. There is no difference in performance between boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.

HUMANITIES

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

It was possible during the inspection to observe only one lesson in both **religious education** and **history**. No lessons were observed in **geography**. Therefore, it is not possible to reach a secure judgement about the school's overall provision, standards of attainment or quality of teaching and learning in these subjects. The following points are based on the one history lesson observed, consideration of teachers' planning and talking with pupils.

Commentary

66. The school's curriculum for **religious education** is based on the locally agreed syllabus. In the one very good lesson observed, pupils were exploring the creation of the world and comparing their versions with the one described in the Bible. During this lesson, pupils used their literacy skills well. Selected pupils read the Bible story aloud whilst the others listened; there were very good opportunities for pupils' to discuss and debate in small groups, and less confident pupils were helped to express their opinions through the sensitive support of the teaching assistant. Throughout the school, pupils are developing an understanding of major world faiths and older pupils can discuss the similarities and differences between them. Pupils learn about the ways that families from different cultures and religions celebrate significant days. This makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
67. The school's curriculum for **geography** and **history** is based on the national guidance. In **history**, younger pupils are beginning to develop an understanding of chronology as they examine artefacts from the past and learn about famous characters such as Florence Nightingale, and important events such as the fire of London. In the one history lesson observed, teaching was satisfactory. The pupils were very enthusiastic about their work and showed a good understanding of the significant events during the reign of Henry VIII. Where possible, pupils are introduced to primary resources, through visits to places such as Sulgrave Manor, where they will soon take part in a Tudor Day. Able pupils show very good research skills and learn a great deal about different civilisations, such as Ancient Greece and other periods in history, for example The Tudors and the Victorians. This helps them to gain a good understanding of their cultural past. They demonstrate very good investigative skills and use CD Roms and the internet confidently to find out more about the period they are studying, and many continue to explore their topics at home. Displays of pupils' work show strong links with art and design. For example, they draw and paint portraits of Henry or his wives. Pupils apply their literacy skills well to this subject.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

ART AND DESIGN, DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY, MUSIC AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Because of timetabling arrangements, only one lesson was seen in each of: **art and design**, **design and technology** and **physical education**. No lessons were observed in **music**. Therefore, there are no judgements on provision, teaching and learning. The observations below are based on the lessons seen, the scrutiny of pupils' art and design work, discussions with pupils and staff and an examination of school documentation.

68. In the one **art and design** lesson seen in Years 1 and 2, a local artist had been invited into school to demonstrate barge painting. She demonstrated the techniques of painting flowers well and pupils were encouraged to experiment on paper and then to paint their flowers on to paper plates. The session was planned, resources were well prepared and all adults gave good support to all the pupils, who were delighted with their results. Work seen around the school shows effective links with other subjects. Some use is made of ICT to research the work of artists and to experiment with painting programs.
69. In the one **design and technology** lesson seen, pupils continued their work designing and constructing a model bus shelter using the principles of triangulation. This observation and discussion with pupils confirmed that pupils gain experience of a wide variety of materials, and develop the expected skills well by designing, making and evaluating a range of products. Staff use ICT effectively to support pupils' learning.
70. Although no **music** lessons were observed, it is clear from assemblies that pupils enjoy singing and they sing in tune, responding to the mood of the music with appropriate expression. All pupils benefit from opportunities to learn the recorder and a significant minority of pupils benefit from specialist teaching.
71. In the one lesson seen, in **physical education**, young pupils continued to develop satisfactorily their awareness of space and the control of their throwing and catching skills. Staff work hard to overcome the limitations imposed by the building and site and offer pupils a full physical education curriculum. They make good use of the village hall, the local playing field and coaching from local sports clubs to achieve this. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 benefit from regular swimming sessions at the local secondary school and, by the time they leave the school, most pupils swim at least 25 metres.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

72. This is a strong area of the school's work, which is underpinned by the school's caring ethos. Staff continually encourage pupils to respect others and to consider and value their contributions. 'Circle time' encourages pupils to express their own opinions and to reflect upon the views of others. As a result, relationships between pupils are very good. The programme for pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship is good and pupils are developing a good understanding of healthy living. Assemblies foster a strong sense of the school community. The school's strong links with the community are helping to develop pupils' understanding of citizenship.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

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

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	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	3

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