

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **STREATLEY C OF E (VC) SCHOOL**

Reading

LEA area: West Berkshire

Unique reference number: 109979

Headteacher: Mrs J Hopgood

Lead inspector: Mrs Elisabeth de Lancey

Dates of inspection: 24-26 March 2004

Inspection number: 258053

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:	102
School address:	The Coombe Streatley Reading Berkshire
Postcode:	RG8 9RD
Telephone number:	01491 872399
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs A Mackney
Date of previous inspection:	27/4/1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Streatley CE (VC) Primary School is a small village school for pupils from the ages of four to eleven. One hundred and six pupils were on roll at the time of the inspection. Sixteen children are in the Foundation Stage (reception class), seven of whom attend on a part-time basis. The rest of the pupils are taught in three mixed-aged classes. The school serves the village of Streatley 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 from year to year. Overall, it is above average. Very 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, for a variety of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, and three have statements of special educational need which is above average. Few pupils join or leave the school at non-standard times. The school gained a DfES achievement award in 2003. At the time of the inspection the head teacher had been in post for two terms. 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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9520	J Leigh	Lay inspector	
21100	A Morgan	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communications technology Design and technology Physical education Special educational needs
12394	C May	Team inspector	Art and design Geography History English as an additional language

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

The quality of education in Years 3 to 6 is very good and the school provides an adequate education for other pupils. However, there are serious weaknesses in the provision for children in the Foundation Stage (the reception class) and the quality of education for pupils in Years 1 and 2. Achievement is good in Years 3 to 6 and the pupils make very good progress in relation to their prior attainment. More able pupils are well challenged. In the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, achievement is unsatisfactory. The new headteacher is providing positive leadership but this is yet to have an impact on the quality of education provided in the infants. Teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 are good and often very good, but for the younger pupils they are unsatisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported. The school gives unsatisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- High standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6 have been sustained over many years.
- Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is consistently good and there are examples of very good teaching.
- Teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 are unsatisfactory; more able pupils are not challenged sufficiently and they underachieve.
- Standards in writing at the end of Year 2 are too low, and have been for three years.
- The provision for children in the reception class is unsatisfactory.
- There are good opportunities for enrichment.
- The headteacher has a clear sense of direction for the school.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- The role of the co-ordinators in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 is unsatisfactory.

Since the school was last inspected in April 1998, some of the issues identified in the last report have not been addressed adequately and some aspects of the school's provision have declined. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. Whilst the governing body is more actively involved in the school than previously, governors are still not fulfilling statutory requirements. Relationships with parents and the community have recently improved and parents report that they are more fully involved in the life of the school. Standards in Year 2 have fallen and teaching and learning are of a lower quality than reported previously.

### 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*	A*	A*	A*
mathematics	A*	A*	A*	A*
science	A*	A	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.

**By the end of Year 6 pupils attain standards that are well above those of similar schools in English, mathematics and science.** These very high results have been maintained over the past four years. A very high proportion of pupils attained the higher levels in the 2003 tests and the work seen during the inspection showed that in English, mathematics and science standards are above average and more able pupils are challenged well. Over the last five years the school's rise in standards by the end of Year 6, is above the national trend. By the end of Year 2, in comparison

with similar schools, pupils' standards in reading are above average; in writing and mathematics standards are below average. The proportion of pupils who achieve the higher level is above average in reading but well below average in mathematics and science. This reflects the lack of challenge in much of the work seen during the inspection. Over the last five years, by the end of Year 2, the school's trend of improvement is below the national trend. Even though almost all pupils reach the nationally expected goals for learning by the end of the reception class and many exceed them, the work seen during the inspection showed that there has been insufficient challenge, and achievement is unsatisfactory. When they have additional support, pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their targets. The school has a strong Christian ethos. **Pupils' personal development and their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development are good.** Pupils have positive attitudes to school. In lessons and at playtimes behaviour is generally good. Attendance is well above average. Pupils arrive punctually and are keen to learn.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The overall quality of education is satisfactory with very significant strengths in Years 3 to 6.**

Teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 are good because teachers have high expectations of pupils' work, effort and behaviour. There is a high level of challenge and pupils take a pride in striving to achieve their best. In the reception class and Years 1 and 2, teaching and learning are unsatisfactory because teaching does not make sufficient demands on pupils and tasks are not well matched to what pupils are capable of doing. As a result many pupils, particularly the more able, work too slowly and do not achieve as well as they should. The curriculum is broad and balanced. A very good range of additional activities enhances the curriculum and develops pupils' personal skills effectively. All subjects are taught regularly but activities for the younger pupils are too teacher directed and there are too few practical activities.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership of the school is good and management is satisfactory.** During her two terms in post the headteacher has identified the strengths and weaknesses of the school and is providing a clear direction for improvement. The current system for performance management provides a good structure for the monitoring of teaching and professional development. The role of the subject leaders has been reviewed and they are now responsible for the development of their subjects across the school. The school now has clear procedures for evaluating its success and identifying areas for improvement through analysing the pupils' performance in national tests. There are good links with governors who are very supportive of the work of the school however, they do not fulfil their statutory obligations.

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

Parents are highly satisfied with most aspects of the school's work. They would, however, like more information about the work their children will be doing each term and how well their children are doing. They would appreciate greater consultation about their views. A few parents of younger pupils mentioned their concerns about the school's approach to reading; this is justified. Even though most pupils like school and report that the other children are friendly, only half report that lessons are interesting and fun.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Raise standards in writing by the end of Year 2.
- Improve the quality of education in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2.
- Improve the quality of teaching by raising teachers' expectations in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2.
- Review the role of the co-ordinators in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2.





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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

**The achievement of pupils in Years 3 to 6 is good.** For children in the Foundation Stage and pupils in Years 1 and 2, it is unsatisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well when they are given additional support. Standards in English, mathematics and science are above average by the end of Year 6.

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

- There has been an increase in the proportion of pupils attaining the higher level in the tests at the end of Year 6.
- Reading results are above average at the end of Year 2 but could be better.
- Throughout the school speaking and listening skills are above average.
- Standards in design and technology are above average by the end of Year 6.
- Children in the Foundation Stage do not achieve as well as they should.
- Standards in writing and mathematics are too low at the end of Year 2 and not enough pupils reach the higher levels.
- There are not enough opportunities for the pupils in Years 1 and 2 to use and apply their independent writing skills across other subjects.

#### **Commentary**

1. Teachers' assessments show that children's attainment when they start school is above average. Most children reach the early learning goals but too few exceed them because teaching in the Foundation Stage does not make sufficient demands upon them, in particular, the more able who do not achieve as well as they should.
2. In the 2003 tests, results for pupils at the end of Year 2 were above average in reading, and well below average in writing and mathematics. Over time there has been a steady downward trend. Although half the pupils reach the higher standard in reading, few pupils reach this standard in writing or mathematics. This is because lessons are organised so that all pupils work on the same tasks and too little use is made of the information gained from assessments to set work that meets their different needs.
3. Even though the school's results in reading at the end of Year 2 are higher than most similar schools, these standards were not seen during the inspection. This was particularly evident for the average and more able pupils who spend too much time reading very short passages aloud from a narrow range of books which do not develop their comprehension skills or improve their knowledge of books and authors. In mathematics almost all the pupils are working confidently at the average level but there was no evidence of pupils working at the higher level. In science, pupils are taught by the subject co-ordinator and standards are good. Standards in other subjects were not judged on this inspection. The analysis of pupils' books in history, geography and religious education shows that pupils usually copy text or complete worksheets. This limits the opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills and express their ideas in their own ways.
4. In the 2003 tests for pupils at the end of Year 6, results were well above average in English, mathematics and science and in the highest five per cent of similar schools. The school's trend of improvement is above the national trend. This is mainly because there has been an increase in the proportion of pupils attaining the higher level. The standards seen during the inspection were similar to those indicated by the test results. High standards in design and technology have been maintained. Above average standards were seen in pupils' work in

geography. Because of timetable restrictions, it was not possible to make a judgement about standards in other subjects on this inspection.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.8 (18.3)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.0 (15.0)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.8 (18.4)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 10 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	31.5 (31.8)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	31.9 (31.4)	26.8 (26.7)
science	32.6 (31.0)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 16 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

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

**Pupils have good attitudes to learning and overall their behaviour is good.** The school promotes pupils’ personal development well. Provision for pupils’ spiritual, moral and social and cultural development remains good. Pupils arrive punctually at school and their attendance is very good.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- In Years 3 to 6, pupils do their best and take a pride in their work.
- Pupils have good relationships with staff and one another.
- Pupils’ personal development is promoted well through assemblies, attendance at school clubs and other extra-curricular activities.
- A few pupils behave unsatisfactorily, and this slows the pace at which they work.
- Children’s personal development is not sufficiently well promoted in the reception class.

**Commentary**

5. Pupils’ attitudes to school are positive and similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection. Children, and parents agree, like coming to school because the other children are friendly and staff treat them fairly. Pupils report that they are expected to work hard and they are trusted to do things on their own. Most pupils take a pride in their work and do their best. They respond well to the good range of activities they are offered and all pupils feel equally valued and included, irrespective of their differences.
6. The children’s positive attitudes towards school are evident from the earliest age. Children in the reception class are happy and settle in quickly at the start of each session. Staff help them to feel secure and proud of themselves. Most behave appropriately but some become restless while sitting on the carpet, if their attention is not engaged. When they are enjoying a story, or joining in with a radio recording, they listen attentively and concentrate well.
7. Although pupils feel that their classmates do not always behave as well as they should, behaviour in and around the school is usually good and very good in the older classes. Adults

expect high standards of behaviour and most pupils respond positively. However, there are times when younger pupils do not behave well because lesson introductions are too long and follow-up activities are not clearly explained. At these times, pupils are restless and do not always co-operate well; this leads to a slower pace of learning and pupils not achieving as well as they could.

8. Pupils report that they do not always find lessons interesting and fun and this was confirmed in some of the lessons observed in the younger classes during the inspection. Pupils say they have to sit and listen for too long, and they have too little time to do their own work.
9. Pupils' personal development is good. Parents agree the school helps their children to become mature and responsible. The oldest pupils take responsibility and deal with it in a mature and sensible way; for example, when they organise charitable events, set up the hall for assemblies or look after the youngest children at lunchtimes. They concentrate well, take a pride in their work and do their best. There was no evidence of bullying and parents agree that should any incidents arise they would be dealt with quickly and effectively by staff.
10. Assemblies are well planned and make a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual development. They give pupils an opportunity to reflect on the experiences of others and gain an insight to the plight of others less fortunate than themselves. Pupils value the chance to talk about issues that are important to them in circle time and this, together with the charitable work which they undertake, helps them to see things from another point of view and develop a good understanding of social and moral issues. Pupils have a good sense of right and wrong, and are polite and friendly to one another and adults, including visitors to school. The school is effective in promoting mutual respect and concern for others. Pupils learn about some of the celebrations and beliefs of the Christian and other faiths in religious education, and the school has recently introduced a 'multi-cultural week' when artists, drama, music and dance groups visit the school. Pupils appreciate art in its various forms, and there are good examples of pupils responding to that of famous artists. Pupils' knowledge of their own and other cultures is further developed through visits to places of historical interest and the French club.

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

Authorised absence	
School data	3.9
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.1
National data	0.4

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

**Exclusions**

The school did not exclude any pupils during the last reporting year.

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

**The quality of education is satisfactory.** The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs and those of the more able pupils are met very well in Years 5 and 6. There is a good range of activities outside lessons that enhance the curriculum.

**Teaching and learning**

**Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory.** There is a clear distinction between the quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6, where it is good overall, and that provided in Years R to 2 where it is unsatisfactory overall. It is not possible to make direct comparisons with the previous inspection findings as no differentiation was drawn then between the age groups.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- In Years 3 to 6, the teachers challenge pupils consistently and their high expectations help pupils to do as well as they can.
- In Years 3 to 6, class teachers' thorough understanding of the wide variety of subjects they teach enables them to probe pupils' thinking confidently and develop the range of pupils' understanding.
- Throughout Years 3 to 6, the teachers' requirement that pupils share responsibility for their own learning has accelerated their rate of progress.
- In Years R to 2, teachers offer pupils insufficient stimulation and challenge, particularly the more able.

## Commentary

11. Over the last five years, in comparison with the national picture, the trend in the school's results in national tests for eleven-year-olds has been above the national trend. For seven-year-olds, over the same period, the comparative trend has been below that nationally. This significant difference is reflected in the quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 compared with that in Years R to 2.
12. Throughout the school, teachers relate well to their pupils and seek their contributions. During lesson introductions, they recap previous work effectively by engaging pupils with appropriate questions to test their recall and promote their comments. Teachers encourage pupils to participate and give them opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding. However, in Years 1 and 2, such opportunities are not exploited consistently and pupils' contributions are not developed as they could be to enrich the lesson. Staff work effectively to develop pupils' basic skills in language and mathematics. However, in Years 1 and 2, basic skills are not extended as they should be so that more able pupils are encouraged to tackle more complex texts or undertake challenging number investigations.
13. In Years 3 to 6, there is high quality teaching and learning; it is characterised by:
  - Consistent high expectations of pupil attainment, work rate and behaviour;
  - Teachers' subject understanding which helps them to extend pupils' learning by building effectively on their contributions;
  - Very good use of pupils' written work to demonstrate key learning points and develop pupils' understanding;
  - Lesson planning which is fully informed by the careful assessment of pupils' previous learning;
  - Pupils' understand what they have done well and what they must do to improve because of high quality teacher feedback;
  - Teachers expect pupils to explain their answers, justify their conclusions and, where appropriate, refine their observations through careful reflections with their colleagues;
  - The development of effective collaborative skills for productive group work.
14. The unsatisfactory teaching and learning in Years 1 to 2, are characterised by:
  - Consistent low expectations leading to work which is too easy and unstimulating and, as a result, the achievement of most pupils, especially the more able, is unsatisfactory;
  - Overlong introductions, during which pupils lose interest and they do not make the progress they should;
  - A lack of clarity in explanations which results in pupils being uncertain how to tackle their work, and the slowing of lesson pace; consequently, pupils do not do as well as they should;
  - Teaching assistants are not engaged effectively during opening and closing sessions to support pupils' learning and social development;
  - Learning materials for more able pupils do not offer them sufficient challenge and, as a result, their progress is unsatisfactory.

15. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and included in all aspects of the curriculum. They make good progress and achieve well because of the additional support they receive. Teachers draw usefully on the expertise of specialist staff members to assess pupils' needs, identify appropriate activities for them and, when required, to review and rewrite their individual education plans. The teaching assistant for special educational needs supports pupils as they work through these plans. Teachers and their learning assistants work closely together to set suitable tasks and guide the learning of pupils' with special educational needs, where appropriate, through the different subjects of the curriculum. This extends to support for lower attaining pupils who are provided with especially modified work so that they can participate fully in class work and discussions. Teaching assistants are given specific targets to help them with this aspect of their work.
16. Overall, assessment is satisfactory. Assessment and recording procedures in the Foundation Stage link children's achievements to the early learning goals (the national targets for learning in each area of learning) but these assessments are not used well enough to plan their future learning and this limits their progress. Formal assessment procedures and analysis of statutory and non-statutory test results in English, mathematics and science are good. In Years 3 to 6, they are used successfully to set group targets and inform teachers' planning. In Years 1 to 2, assessment findings are not used effectively to ensure work is matched appropriately to pupils' range of abilities. In all other subjects, teachers assess pupils' work usefully against the nationally expected standards. Records are maintained and passed on to the next class. In Years 3 to 6, these records inform teachers' planning; in Years 1 to 2, insufficient use is made of assessment. Recognising this variable picture, the headteacher has made assessment a key priority in the school's development plan. As a result, assessment is being restructured. This has included the appointment of an assessment manager, the introduction of an assessment timetable, the compilation of subject portfolios of pupils' assessed work and a sharper focus on day-to-day assessment to inform planning and target setting. However, it is too early to judge the effectiveness of each of these new initiatives.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 25 lessons.**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	6	9	4	6	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 curriculum is **satisfactory** overall. It is good in Years 3 to 6. There is a good range of enrichment activities. The quality of the accommodation and resources is satisfactory overall but some classrooms are too small for large classes of older pupils.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The provision for science is good throughout the school.
- The curriculum for English, mathematics and design technology is good in Years 3 to 6.
- Further curriculum improvements are needed in the reception class and in Years 1 and 2.
- Large numbers of part-time staff means that there is some inflexibility in organising the curriculum.
- The locality around the school is used well to support the curriculum.

## Commentary

17. The curriculum meets National Curriculum requirements, and the teaching of religious education is based on the locally agreed syllabus. Sex and relationships education and drugs misuse are satisfactorily covered in the school's personal, social, health and citizenship programme (PSHCE). There are some restrictions in physical education due to the size of the hall.
18. The curriculum for children in the reception class is satisfactory overall. Whilst daily routines are well established and due account is taken of the national guidance, there is little systematic planning to cater for the particular learning needs of groups and individuals. Many of the activities provided are dull and mundane, lack a sufficiently clear educational purpose and there is little challenge, especially for the most able.
19. The school has adapted the nationally recommended guidelines for most subjects to help ensure that pupils in mixed age classes do not repeat the same work from year to year and that they build progressively upon their knowledge, skills and understanding. However, in Years 1 and 2 planning does not cater for the different age groups and abilities within the class. As a result, pupils of all abilities are frequently given work that is either too easy or difficult for them and they do not achieve as well as they should. Pupils in this class are not given sufficient opportunities to apply their writing or numeracy skills in other subjects. The curriculum for English and mathematics in Years 3 to 6 is strong. The introduction of additional teaching programmes in English and mathematics ensures that all pupils reach at least the expected standards by the end of Year 6. This contributes well to the sustained high standards achieved.
20. The school ensures that all pupils, including those with special educational needs are fully involved in all activities. The good practice of deploying extra staff to support pupils with special educational needs means that they remain part of the class and learn alongside their classmates. When they receive additional support they make good progress towards their targets. The class teachers in Years 3 to 6 are also the curriculum co-ordinators for science and design and technology and teach these subjects to these years. These class links help to ensure continuity in learning and raise standards in both subjects.
21. The school provides a good range of first hand experiences to complement the curriculum. The attractive locality around the school is used very well to support the curriculum for geography and science. Fieldwork in these subjects is a strength. During the summer all pupils benefit from using the school's outdoor swimming pool, under the guidance of a qualified instructor who is also the school caretaker and a governor; this helps to encourage water safety and promote confident swimmers. Visitors to the school, and visits locally and further afield enhance pupils' learning. There is a good range of out-of-school clubs which cater for pupils of different ages and interests. They include sporting and musical activities, French, chess and gardening.
22. The school has a large number of part-time staff who plan and teach a limited range of subjects. This restricts the development of a whole school approach to the curriculum and imposes constraints on the timetable. At present there are few links between subjects to promote purposeful activities.
23. The accommodation is cramped. As one classroom leads into another, lessons are sometimes interrupted by a flow of 'traffic'. There is a lack of privacy for pupils when they change for sport. The lavatories are inadequate and the small hall means that classes have gymnastic lessons in small groups for safety reasons.

## Care, guidance and support

The school makes **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.

## Main Strengths and Weaknesses

- Pupils are well looked after in a safe and caring environment.
- Staff know the pupils well and pastoral care is good.
- Pupils report that they have a good and trusting relationship with at least one member of the school staff.
- There are no formal means of considering pupils' views of the school.

## Commentary

24. The school provides a secure, caring environment where pupils are well looked after. Relationships with adults are very good. All pupils report that they have good and trusting relationship with at least one adult member of staff in the school. As a result, pupils are confident to seek support and guidance, knowing they will be dealt with sympathetically. Pupils' health and safety are well promoted through the school's personal, social and health education programme. First aid assistance is by qualified staff. Child protection procedures are dealt with sensitively and effectively and the school exercises its responsibilities with vigilance and care. Regular inspections of school premises are carried out. Close attention is paid to health and safety issues and risk assessments, particularly when using the surrounding environment and on school visits.
25. Induction arrangements are satisfactory and most children settle happily into school life. Children have several opportunities to visit the school and parents receive an informative booklet. The school is presently reviewing these arrangements. Pupils are well prepared for transfer to secondary education.
26. 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 in Years 3 to 6 and pupils have specific targets for writing. Consequently, they have a good understanding of the steps they need to take to improve their learning. The benefits of these procedures do not extend to pupils in the reception class and in Years 1 and 2. There are carefully constructed programmes to support the learning of pupils with special educational needs. Booster classes and additional support programmes ensure that all pupils are encouraged to do their best.
27. The school has no formal procedures for collecting pupils' views of the school or involving them in the way the school develops. However, the school holds regular, informal discussions with a view to introducing a school council in September.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's partnership with parents, the community and other schools is **satisfactory**. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

## Main Strengths and Weaknesses

- The contribution of parents to pupils' learning is very good.
- There is a very effective Friends' Association which gives very good support to the school.
- Parents' support for the school is strong and they welcome the recently introduced procedures to involve them in the life of the school.

## Commentary

28. This is an improving area of the school's work. The school has established a stronger partnership with parents and the community which it sees as fundamental to its work. Parents report that they are now made to feel welcome in school, they feel confident in approaching the head teacher and speak highly of the 'family atmosphere' in the school. A number of parents and governors now help in the school on a regular basis. Some help in the classroom, others with outdoor activities and visits. This strong support is now a notable feature of the school and has a good impact on pupils' learning.
29. Parents are very supportive of the school and respond generously to appeals for help. The Friends Association, a committed group of parents, organises events which raise significant funds for the school. These funds are used to support identified priorities such as Information, communication and technology (ICT) equipment, software and the attractive adventure playground.
30. The quality of information provided for parents is good. Frequent newsletters provide up-to-date information on scheduled events and these are much appreciated. There are regular opportunities for parents to consult teachers about their children's progress. Curriculum information is provided each half term but parents say that they would welcome more meetings to help them keep abreast of what their children are learning. Information for parents, whose children have special educational needs, is good. The annual report to parents on their child's progress is thorough.
31. Parents are mostly pleased with what the school provides and most parents think their children make good progress. They are now invited to attend weekly assemblies, an opportunity which is greatly appreciated. The school is working hard to encourage a stronger sense of partnership based on mutual trust and confidence. However, some parents of younger children report that they are not as involved in supporting their children's reading at school as they would like because they are not encouraged to bring their books home.
32. There are several members of the local community who contribute significantly to the achievement of pupils. For example, the 'Green Club' supports the maintenance of the school's environment and also offers pupils opportunities to study the habitats of owls and bats. There is good support for local village events and strong support for charity fundraising. Good work has begun on developing business links to extend partnership for the benefit of the children. Children have a good understanding of those who work in the local community; for example, a local dentist has visited to help children to care for their teeth. The school uses the local community well to enhance the learning of its pupils through local visits around the village and further afield. Links with the church are good and pupils visit to celebrate Christian festivals. At Easter, the oldest pupils are presenting 'Resurrection Rock'. Links with other schools are satisfactory.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher provides **good** leadership. She is working successfully with staff and governors to set a clear agenda for improvement.



## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Under the incisive leadership of the headteacher, the school has set a clear course for development.
- Strategic decisions have been improved by the greater involvement of staff and governors in the planning process.
- Co-ordinators for English, mathematics and special educational needs have made a good start in their new roles and, with the science co-ordinator are effective models of good practice.
- Governors have not fulfilled statutory requirements and, therefore, governance is unsatisfactory.

## Commentary

33. The leadership of the new headteacher is good, and management is sound. The new headteacher has identified the strengths and weaknesses of the school and is planning appropriate action. Her improvement of performance management and monitoring of targets are examples of this. Despite a reluctance amongst some staff to recognise the need for change and improvement, she has secured clear progress in a very short time. This is recognised by staff, governors and parents. Of respondents to the parents' questionnaire, 88 per cent said the school was well led and managed while the remaining 12 per cent indicated they did not know. Challenging more able pupils, improving teaching and learning and developing provision in the reception year are priorities in the recently compiled school development plan. The identification of these key elements has followed the headteacher's wide ranging audit and the improved involvement of staff and governors in planning. The headteacher's promotion of parental involvement in the life of the school is helping to address a key issue from the last inspection and provide parents with a greater insight into educational provision. This is a positive start.
34. One of the most significant management changes the headteacher has introduced is the redefining of the role of subject co-ordinators. They are now responsible for the development of their subjects from Years R to 6. This is to give them an overview of standards across the school and a greater responsibility for the consistency of provision throughout the school. Monitoring, evaluation and the dissemination of good practice are key factors in this reorganisation. The system of specialist teaching and its location principally in Years 3 to 6 narrowed co-ordinators' responsibilities and, from this perspective, allowed the school to develop as two distinct units. In turn, this led to onerous curriculum responsibilities being placed on the staff in Years R to 2. This was reflected in the more effective co-ordination of subjects in Years 3 to 6 than in Years R to 2. The co-ordination of science is good. Although it is too early to judge the effectiveness of this restructuring, the co-ordinators for English, mathematics, and special educational needs have each made a good start.
35. The special educational needs co-ordinator works in close association with the teacher for special educational needs. They work in an effective partnership in leading and managing the support for pupils with special educational needs and guiding staff in the provision for these pupils. They draw successfully on the staff's knowledge of pupils to ensure the early identification of those with special educational needs and in determining appropriate support for their learning. When necessary, they receive guidance on this support through their very good relationships with outside agencies. Provision is further enriched through the special educational needs teacher's contacts with other schools and her expertise in making representations on behalf of her pupils. The co-ordinator and teacher are well supported by the nominated governor with whom they regularly meet to discuss provision.
36. The governors identify closely with the school and are very supportive of the pupils and staff. Governors meet regularly each term, and the chair of governors meets frequently with the headteacher to discuss current issues. Their programme of school visits has enabled them to observe the working classroom and gain a general overview of the school's practices. An examination of their minutes indicates that governors have not carried out their statutory obligations. Therefore, governance is unsatisfactory. Governance was an issue at the last

inspection. Finances are professionally administered by a very effective bursar. She regularly attends governors meetings to update them on budget matters. However, governors are not drawing successfully on the principles of best value to guide their practices or to determine the effectiveness of the school's provision and the management of its finances. There has been no evaluation of the effectiveness of the specialist teaching programme, its impact on curriculum development or its costs. With the guidance of the new headteacher, governors have recognised that, in the past, they have been deflected from their strategic role in dealing with too many day-to-day issues in meetings with too large an agenda. A training budget for governors has been identified and they are currently reviewing their practice and have begun to restructure their committees.

37. The school is satisfactorily placed for improvement because the staff have recognised the need to identify teaching and learning and writing standards in Years 1 and 2, and Year R provision as key areas for improvement. Subject co-ordination has been reformed to improve the management structure and produce a more equitable distribution of curriculum responsibilities. The headteacher's guidance to governors and her involvement of parents have done much to improve the school during her short tenure.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	341,577
Total expenditure	322,095
Expenditure per pupil	3,316

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	6,063
Balance carried forward to the next	9,155

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

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

There were no children under five years of age in the school at the time of the last inspection. Initially, attendance is full-time for those children who are five in the autumn term and children who are five in the spring term, enter school full time at the beginning of the spring term. Those who are five in the summer term enter school part time at the spring term and full time thereafter. There is a satisfactory induction process which helps parents prepare their children for school. Children's attainment on entry to the reception class is above average and all the children have had some pre-school experience. By the end of the reception year most children will attain the early learning goals in each of the areas of learning and some will exceed them.

Overall, the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory, with some significant weaknesses in planning and assessment. Activities do not take enough account of children's prior learning and planning does not build on what they already know and can do so that it meets the needs of all. The range of experiences offered to children is too narrow and learning slows when planned activities are too directed by an adult and there are insufficient opportunities for them to explore their own ideas and interests. Assessment of children's progress along the 'stepping stones' towards the early learning goals is not recorded in sufficient detail, or used to identify what children need to do next and their individual targets do not promote a good enough rate of learning. Adults work well together and children benefit from close attention when they are introduced to new skills. Teaching assistants ensure that children are well supported in their work but there were few examples of adults intervening in children's play to exploit their learning.

As a result, the children make unsatisfactory progress as they move through the Foundation Stage and do not achieve as well as they could. Whilst most children are likely to achieve the early learning goals by the time they start in Year 1, given their above average attainment on entry, too few children are likely to exceed them and work confidently in the early stages of the National Curriculum. Children with special educational needs are given a good support, and their achievement is satisfactory.

The benefits of good curriculum planning are not currently felt by the children in the reception class, where there is a lack of clarity about the educational purposes of the different activities provided. The organisation of the learning environment does not provide a stimulating context for purposeful play and this restricts the opportunities for imaginative, exploratory and investigative learning. Although there are some opportunities for children to initiate their own choices and make decisions, there are too few planned experiences for them to explore and investigate. Much of the teaching is repetitive; for example, the teaching of early phonics, which does not challenge children with the potential to progress at a faster rate. The school is aware of these deficiencies but, at the time of the inspection, the measures to rectify them had not had time to take effect. The resources and accommodation are satisfactory and the school makes effective use of its attractive outside area.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

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

- Relationships between staff and children are good.
- There are too few opportunities for children to show initiative and take responsibility for planning their own work.
- The staff are not consistent in their expectations of children's behaviour.

## Commentary

38. Children enter the Foundation Stage with personal, social and emotional skills that are often above those expected for their age and most are likely to achieve the early learning goals in this area of learning by the time they enter Year 1. They are happy to come to school, settle quickly into the reception class and become familiar with the routines of the school. The children form good relationships with one another and the adults with whom they work. They are learning to play happily together but need to 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 getting ready for lunch, but the classroom is not organised in a way that enables children to do things for themselves. For example, staff do not always encourage the children to tidy up at the end of sessions. All children do not behave as well they should.
39. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory because the teacher does not have sufficiently high expectations of children's behaviour. As a result, children are not always aware what is acceptable and do not behave well. For example, when the children gather together for registration or at the beginning of lessons they are restless and attention is given to children who shout out at the expense of those who put their hands up and wait. There are too few occasions when they can select their own resources and plan their own activities. They also need more opportunities to express their feelings and think about issues from the viewpoint of others.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's speaking and listening skills are good.
- Children enjoy listening to stories but they do not have enough opportunities to select books that interest them.
- There are too few opportunities for children to write independently.
- There is an overuse of worksheets which limit children's written responses.
- Activities do not take sufficient account of previous learning.

## Commentary

40. By the time they start Year 1, most children will have met the early learning goals in this area of learning but their achievement is unsatisfactory overall. When given the opportunity, they express themselves clearly, use a good vocabulary and communicate their thoughts and feelings effectively. They listen attentively to stories, joining in with the parts they know and are keen to predict what might happen next. They enjoy looking at books and show a good awareness of how books are organised. More able children are reading simple texts independently. They mostly know the sounds that letters make. On entry to the reception class, the standard of children's writing is similar to expectations but progress along the stepping stones is unsatisfactory. It reflects a pattern of teaching that emphasises handwriting skills and accurate letter formation. Whilst most children can copy underneath a sentence written by the teacher, and some write simple sentences on their own, there are too few opportunities for them to write independently for different purposes. There is little writing of labels, lists, messages and reports in the activities provided in other areas of learning.

41. Teaching is unsatisfactory. It does not meet the needs of all children. The focus on children learning the recommended key words list from the National Literacy Strategy is mostly appropriate, but the emphasis on initial letter sounds is often repetitive. Consequently, children who are capable of recognising the final and middle sound in words are not taught these skills quickly enough and this adversely affects their progress. In addition, there are few occasions for children to choose and browse through books for themselves. For example, the classroom lacks an attractive book corner containing picture books and early reference books, or writing area, where children can develop and practise their early writing skills independently. There are few opportunities for children to develop their early writing experiences through play. The emphasis on teaching individual letters and words means that vital, enjoyable, early reading and writing experiences are overlooked. Some lessons are too long and children are expected to sit and listen for a considerable time and they lose concentration.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff plan a satisfactory range of mathematical experiences.
- There are insufficient practical activities and too much is recorded in workbooks and worksheets.
- The most able pupils are capable of doing better.

### **Commentary**

42. Most children will meet the expected goals in mathematical development but given their prior attainment, confidence and curiosity on entry to the reception class more able children could be doing better. Most children are confident in dealing with numbers from zero to 12 and about half count securely to 20. More able pupils understand mathematical terms such as *two more than* and *one less than* but there is insufficient work to ensure progress in all aspects of mathematics. The focused teaching of number work in the daily session of numeracy emphasises recording. Too often children are completing the same work in their mathematics work books. This fails to recognise the needs of the more able pupils who have already met the expected outcomes in mathematics and are ready for more challenging work.
43. Overall teaching is satisfactory because staff plan a broad range of mathematical experiences which are backed up by a sound range of resources. Computers are used appropriately to reinforce basic skills. However, teachers concentrate too much on addition and subtraction sums and there is insufficient encouragement for children to apply and develop their mathematical knowledge and skills through play and other practical activities.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum is enriched by visitors and parents, all of whom enhance children's knowledge and understanding.
- Good use is made of the school's environment.
- Staff do not intervene effectively to extend children's learning.

## **Commentary**

44. Most children come into school with above the average expected levels of general knowledge and this is extended by practical learning experiences, many of which use the stimulating external environment of the school. For example, children observe and learn about the creatures that live in the school grounds. They develop respect for the natural world and learn to protect the environments on which these creatures depend. Their understanding of time is promoted through the organisation of daily routines and activities such as planting bulbs and flowers in the garden in autumn and watching them grow in spring. They show development in their skills of observation and prediction, for example, through experimenting with sinking and floating in the water tray.
45. Pupils have regular access to the computer and learn to control it through using the mouse. The programs selected support their learning in other areas; for example, in mathematics when they are identifying the values of different coins. These sessions generate delight and they work with skill and concentration. All children make satisfactory progress and by the time they enter Year 1 some are likely to exceed the expected level.
46. The quality of teaching in this area is satisfactory overall. However, sessions are teacher directed and there are too few planned activities to foster children's curiosity, to encourage them to ask questions and stimulate a rich use of vocabulary, nor are there sufficient opportunities for children to observe, investigate and explore scientific phenomena for themselves.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

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. When children start in the reception class their physical skills are generally above those expected for their age. Each day they have opportunities to develop these skills by using balancing equipment and playing with large, wheeled toys in the outdoor area. Children also have regular sessions in the school hall which helps to promote their development. There is a satisfactory range of practical activities to develop children's manipulative skills and they handle pencils, scissors, construction toys and the computer mouse with good control and co-ordination.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

During the inspection it was possible to see only brief examples of creative development. These, together with the evidence on display show that pupils are given a satisfactory range of experiences to develop their creativity. The theme of 'People who help us' provides a focus for this area of the curriculum. However, staff miss opportunities to challenge children through questioning. For example, when they were making splatter patterns, opportunities to extend children's understanding of colour and texture and for children to enter into a discussion about their work were lost. There are a variety of role play areas, which include a dentist's surgery and a play house. The children enjoy dressing up but these areas are not used well to promote imaginative play and there was no evidence of adult intervention to develop children's imagination and to help them play purposefully together.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good** in Years 3 to 6 and **unsatisfactory** in Years 1 and 2.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of speaking and listening are well above average throughout the school.
- Reading skills are above average throughout the school.
- In Years 3 to 6, the quality of marking and pupils' understanding of what they need to do to improve their work are good in Years 3 to 6.
- Pupils, in Years 1 and 2, read from a narrow range of books which do not offer sufficient challenge; in particular for the more able.
- In Years 1 and 2, too little attention is given to providing opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills.

#### Commentary

47. Throughout the school, standards in speaking and listening are high. Most pupils listen attentively to their teachers. They speak confidently, have a wide vocabulary and contribute actively to class discussions. Pupils in Year 6 speak clearly about a range of issues, including the recent improvements to the school. They are confident speaking to a wider audience, for example, in assemblies or at the end of lessons, when they explain to other pupils what they have done and learned. In discussion with Year 6 pupils, they expressed strong views about whether they preferred books by Philip Pullman to those by Jacqueline Wilson and could argue their case showing respect for different points of view.
48. In Years 1 and 2, although standards are above average in reading, they should be higher, especially for the more able pupils. Pupils read short extracts daily from a restricted range of books which are often much too easy for them and are insufficiently challenging and interesting. There is a lack of focus on reading for understanding and enjoyment. This leads to average and more able pupils marking time and does not allow them to appreciate a wide range of good quality texts and to develop an appropriate range of higher order reading skills. The new headteacher, who is currently the literacy co-ordinator, is aware of the shortcomings of this approach. She has improved the range of fiction and non-fiction books and introduced group reading sessions, when pupils of a similar ability read and discuss the same book, to help improve their comprehension skills and promote their enthusiasm for reading. Most pupils understand the difference between fiction and non-fiction and know how to locate information using the contents and index. Pupils in Year 6 read fluently and expressively and with evident enjoyment. They talk with knowledge and enthusiasm about authors and books and are gaining a good appreciation of different genres. They express strong preferences for certain types of books. They have a good understanding of the purpose of glossaries and bibliographies and most pupils are adept at using thesauri and dictionaries to improve their work.
49. In Years 1 and 2, achievement in writing is unsatisfactory. Pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to write independently for a range of purposes and a variety of audiences. Scrutiny of their written work revealed an over-reliance on the use of workbooks and work sheets that do not give pupils sufficient opportunities to develop their literacy skills. There is some colouring at the expense of writing and consolidating simple words which they have already learnt to spell. Pupils develop good handwriting, spell simple words correctly and have good basic phonic skills.
50. In Years 5 and 6, examples of innovative and interesting ideas to support writing are evident. For example, opportunities for drama are a feature of some lessons and these are valuable in

developing pupils' speaking and listening skills and helping to bring texts to life. Pupils, in Years 5 and 6, studying 'The Listeners' by Walter de la Mare successfully dramatised the poem to enliven it and to capture and maintain everyone's interest. There are good examples of pupils evaluating their own and one another's work.

51. Strengths in the teaching
  - Teachers in Years 3-6 have high expectations of their pupils, lessons are lively and pupils are keen to contribute.
  - Teachers use questions and comments to probe pupils' understanding and involve pupils of all abilities.
  - Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are given good opportunities to plan, and redraft and evaluate their writing to improve the quality of their work.
52. Teaching is unsatisfactory when
  - Too little is expected of pupils, in reading and writing, especially the more able; this has a negative impact on learning and the progress they make.
  - Tasks and activities are routine, all pupils do the same work because assessments of pupils' work do not inform planning and many underachieve.
  - Pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to develop their writing skills across the curriculum.
  - Teaching assistants are not used effectively to teach reading.
53. There has been no consistent programme of monitoring teaching and learning throughout the school. Consequently, the good practice evident in some of the older classes has not been disseminated throughout the school. The new headteacher is aware of these shortcomings. She has audited the provision and introduced a number of measures to improve the quality of reading and writing; in particular in Years 1 and 2, but it is too early to judge their effectiveness.

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

54. In Years 3 to 6 there are well-planned opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills across a range of subjects. There are not enough well-planned and interesting activities for pupils in Years 1 and 2 to use their reading and writing skills in other subjects. Too many worksheets and too much copying restricts opportunities for pupils to experiment with different styles of writing across the curriculum.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics in Years 3 to 6 is **good**, that in Years 1 to 2 is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- In Years 3 to 6, high standards reported at the last inspection have been maintained.
- In Years 3 to 6, pupils achieve well because of the good teaching and learning throughout those years.
- The subject co-ordinator has made a good start in the recently reformed leadership and management roles.
- In Years 1 and 2, higher attaining pupils are not challenged and their achievement is unsatisfactory. This has not improved since the last inspection.

### **Commentary**

55. By the age of seven, all pupils are likely to attain the expected standard, and around a quarter, because of their innate ability, may attain above that. Throughout Years 1 and 2 pupils' progress varies, with the less able making satisfactory progress, and the average and more



able pupils making unsatisfactory progress. There was no evidence in the work sample seen of more able pupils and those of average ability being challenged; consequently, they do not do as well as they could. While the achievement of less able pupils is satisfactory, that of the vast majority of pupils is unsatisfactory. In Year 2, the work sample shows that all pupils work at the expected level for their age and that no pupils work above that. Inspection evidence suggests that, by the end of Year 6, all pupils are likely to attain the expected standard for eleven-year-olds with a high proportion attaining above that. Throughout Years 3 to 6 pupils make good progress in relation to their previous attainment. Teachers challenge pupils consistently and their brisk lesson pace ensures pupils do as well as they can; consequently their achievement is good. Across Years 1 to 6, pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well because of the additional specialist support they receive. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls in the school.

56. Pupils enjoy mathematics and respond positively to the task their teachers set. By the age of seven, pupils add and subtract simple numbers mentally. They read and sequence numbers accurately to 100, with some pupils able to do so to 1000. They understand that numerals have different values depending on the position they occupy in a number. They total simple sums of money and record them in the correct notation. They describe some of the properties of two and three-dimensional shapes. They recognise right angles and identify them when plotting routes. By the age of eleven, pupils use intricate strategies confidently to work things out mentally; for example, they use inverse operations to solve complex problems. They calculate successfully with fractions, decimals and percentages, convert between them and recognise those which are equivalent. They draw and measure angles to the nearest degree. They use formulae appropriately to aid their calculations. They consider the outcomes of various activities and identify whether they are likely to influence further repetition.
57. Teaching and learning are good throughout Years 3 to 6:
- Teachers' effective questioning techniques continually engage pupils, develop their contributions and further their learning.
  - Teachers make good use of assessment to plan appropriate tasks to address pupils' misunderstandings.
  - Staff high expectations require pupils to precisely explain their methods and use mental methods appropriately to accelerate their calculations.
  - Teachers' good subject knowledge ensures pupils' observations are challenged effectively and their ideas developed to extend the group's learning.
  - Good standards of marking by teachers helps pupils to realise how well they are doing and what they must do to improve.
58. Unsatisfactory teaching in Years 1 and 2 is characterised by:
- Low teacher expectations mean that the benefits of sound basic provision are not being exploited for all pupils and average and higher attaining pupils are not challenged sufficiently.
  - Work is not matched appropriately to the range of pupils' abilities.
  - There is variable support for pupils with special educational needs when they are not working with a teaching assistant.
  - There is a lack of clarity in teacher's guidance to help pupils work effectively on their own or in groups.
  - Teaching assistants are not used effectively.
59. The co-ordinator has made a good start in her new role to develop her responsibilities to include Years R to 2; however, it is too early to judge effectiveness. Overall, assessment procedures and analysis of end-of-year tests are good. In Years 3 to 6, they have been used effectively over the years to plan appropriate tasks for the full range of pupils' abilities. In Years 1 and 2, assessment outcomes are not used effectively to inform planning. For example, teacher records show pupils' assessment limited to the expected standard with no assessment beyond that. Resources are good and are used appropriately to support pupils' learning.

## Mathematics across the curriculum

60. Teachers successfully promote the use of mathematical skills in other subjects. This extends to measurement in design and technology and science, and the reading of scales. It also includes the use of mathematics to aid the interpretation and representation of findings from geography fieldwork; for example, traffic and shopping surveys.

## SCIENCE

Because of timetabling arrangements it was not possible to judge provision or teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6 provision is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The high standards, identified at the last inspection for pupils aged eleven, have been maintained.
- In Years 3 to 6, all pupils achieve well because of the teacher's high expectations and consistent good teaching.
- Staff make good use of investigations to develop pupils' scientific skills.
- Good, regular assessment is made of pupils' knowledge base, but investigative skills are not formally assessed.

### Commentary

61. By the age of seven, inspection evidence, from work scrutiny, indicates that all pupils are likely to attain the expected standard with around a third attaining above that. Pupils make steady progress in relation to their previous learning as they move through Year 2. The work set is appropriate for the range of pupils' abilities and they achieve well because they are effectively challenged. Inspection evidence indicates that, by the age of eleven, all pupils are likely to attain the expected standard for their age with a high proportion attaining above that. Pupils make good progress throughout Years 3 to 6 building effectively on their previous learning. The teacher sets work which relates to pupils' abilities and consistently challenges their knowledge and skills; as a result, pupils do as well as they can and they achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the useful support they receive. The consistency of this support and its relation to their previous learning helps them to make good progress as they move through the school. There is no difference in the performance of boys and girls.
62. By the end of Year 2, pupils develop their investigative skills. They carry out observations and record their results appropriately in diagrams and text. They understand that plants need light for healthy growth by examining the development of plants in different conditions. They experiment with a range of simple electrical circuits to discover why some work and some do not. With their teacher's help they begin to consider the notion of a fair test. By the age of eleven, much of pupils' work is undertaken through carefully developed investigations. They recognise the importance of accurate observations and recordings. More able pupils use their understanding of averages to improve the quality of their records. Where appropriate, they carefully tabulate their discoveries and graph their findings; for example, during their exploration of shadows. They understand the need for fair testing and use this concept appropriately to investigate forces and their effects. During one lesson seen, this was clearly in evidence as the pupils examined friction.
63. Teaching and learning are good through Years 3 to 6:
- Teacher's command of the subject and infectious enthusiasm motivate and engage all pupils and sustain a brisk lesson pace.
  - The teacher makes good use of questions to assess pupils' understanding to adjust lesson pace and content to meet pupils' needs.

- Staff insist pupils use scientific terms appropriately and display a clear understanding of scientific concepts.
  - The teacher ensures that pupils have a clear understanding of scientific enquiry to help them plan and conduct effective investigations.
64. The good leadership and management of the subject specialist derive from her established and unique position in both teaching and co-ordinating the subject from Year 1 to Year 6. Her success as co-ordinator is reflected in pupils' high standards over the years. Assessment is good overall. Each term, the teacher tests the knowledge and understanding of pupils in each of the years. She uses the results of these written tests, her own assessments and her informal assessments of their investigative skills to determine pupils' attainment in relation to the expected standards for their age. These are then formally noted in the pupils' record file. Resources are good and the teacher makes good use of the school site and the local area to develop pupils' scientific understanding.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

65. Timetabling arrangements meant only one ICT lesson was seen in Year 6 and one in Year 2. Therefore, there are no judgements on provision, standards, teaching and learning. The observations below are based on those lessons, the examination of pupils' work, discussions with pupils and staff and scrutiny of school documentation.
66. The small work sample and teachers' records indicate that an appropriate range of work is covered which meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. In addition, staff timetable sessions in which they teach information and technology skills to promote pupils' efficient use of equipment and develop their skills for independent learning. During the inspection very few examples were seen of teachers using ICT to support pupils learning in other subjects.

### Information and communication technology across the curriculum

67. Evidence showed that teachers make good use of ICT. In Years 3 to 6, pupils use word processing skills to write and amend a range of texts for incorporation into a multi-media guide to a place of interest. To aid their work in design and technology, they use appropriate packages to operate control devices; for example, they developed an animated 'haunted house scene' and explained the necessary links between the events on screen. In science, pupils have explored the effectiveness of insulation materials by drawing on a suitable package incorporating a temperature probe and compared their findings from the resulting graphs. Using appropriate data packages, pupils have recorded their weather studies and traffic and shopping surveys to support their work in geography. Pupils access the internet and undertake research with CD-ROMs to investigate rivers and compose a biography of Isaac Newton.
68. In Years 1 and 2, pupils have programmed routes involving right-angled turns. They have used appropriate programs to support their art work through explorations of colour, line and background. In one of the two examples seen, pupils in Year 2 used an appropriate program effectively to extend their learning in mathematics. They identified correctly the times shown on digital and analogue clocks.

## HUMANITIES

69. Too little evidence was obtained to make a firm overall judgement in religious education, history or geography.
70. An analysis of pupils' work in **religious education** shows that pupils are following the local authority's agreed syllabus and assessments are made in line with its guidance. There was a

limited amount of written work available. In Years 1 and 2, this is mostly confined to worksheets which limits pupils responses. In Years 3 to 6 pupils are developing an understanding of world faiths and know some of the similarities and differences between them. Assemblies make a strong contribution to teaching and learning in religious education.

71. Only one **history** lesson was observed in the Year 5/6 class. Pupil's work from Years 2 and 6 was examined and standards attained found to be average in both year groups. However, there is an over-concentration on the use of published worksheets which sometimes curtail pupils' responses and do not challenge sufficiently the more able. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 do a sufficient amount of work and all required aspects are covered. They take a pride in presenting their work neatly indicating a positive attitude to the subject. This attitude was reflected in the lesson observed. No lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2. The small amount of work seen from pupils in Year 2 was untidy and often unfinished. Again little difference was seen in the standards attained by pupils of different abilities suggesting that the more able are not sufficiently challenged. The school's resources for history are supplemented appropriately by loans from the local library and museum services. A recent visit to Reading museum has added interest to the curriculum. The school is beginning to explore more cross-curricular links with other subjects as recommended in recent national guidance but specialist teaching structures restrict the scope for this. The co-ordinator is new to the role and, as yet, has had little time to influence teaching and learning or the standards achieved. The subject is currently a major focus of the school development plan.
72. No **geography** lessons were observed, but the standards of work seen in Year 6 were above average. The curriculum for geography is greatly enhanced by practical studies of the local environment and good comparisons have been made between habitats near the river Thames and rivers around the world. Practical fieldwork is a strength of the subject. In geography because the class teacher is also the curriculum co-ordinator, sound links with other subjects such as science, art and literacy have already been introduced in Year 3 to 6.
73. The leadership and management roles in history and geography are curtailed because there is insufficient oversight of the curriculum across the school. This, coupled with the lack of assessment in either subject, has an adverse effect on the standards achieved.

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

### **Design and technology**

Timetabling arrangements meant it was not possible to judge provision, teaching and learning in Years 1 to 2. In Years 3 to 6, provision in design and technology is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The high standards, by the age of eleven, reported at the last inspection, have been maintained.
- Pupils work effectively in groups to make a variety of high quality products.
- Pupils make good progress and achieve very well because of high quality teaching.
- Pupils regularly evaluate their products effectively by constant reference to the criteria they have agreed, particularly user requirements.

### **Commentary**

74. By the age of seven, the teacher's files indicate that pupils have followed an appropriate course of activities. The small sample of work provided suggests that pupils attain the expected standard for their age within those examples. Inspection evidence indicates that all pupils, by the age of eleven, are likely to attain at least the expected standard for their age, with a high proportion of pupils attaining beyond that. Because the teacher guides pupils in co-operative

practices and insists that they justify their decisions at each stage of their activities, she encourages them to exceed their own expectations. Consequently, they achieve very well. Her constant challenge and probing of their understanding help pupils make very good progress as they move through the years. There is no difference in the performance of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs make steady progress because of the additional support they receive. Their effective engagement in co-operative activities encourages them to surpass their own expectations and they achieve very well.

75. In Years 1 and 2, pupils design, make and evaluate appropriately a range of products. These include attractive finger puppets made from a variety of fabrics and a 'Car for Teddy' built from construction materials. Pupils gain experience of a wide variety of materials, and successfully develop essential skills by designing, making and evaluating a range of products. In Years 3 to 6, the pupils' working practices demonstrated their clear understanding of the teacher's guidance on health and safety and their familiarity with drills, saws and vices. To improve the quality of their products, pupils explore a range of basic techniques to identify the one most appropriate for their current task. For example, they examine switch designs, the effects of wiring circuits in different ways and the means by which structures can be strengthened or stabilised or made more rigid. In Years 3 and 4, pupils design and assemble attractively finished, electric torches with functioning switches, and make photograph frames with appropriate means by which they can stand or hang for display. In Years 5 and 6, pupils design and construct imaginative and attractive, electrically-powered games, and build a model playground which incorporates a variety of play activities. Strong features of this work include the pupils constant reference to the users' requirements, the evaluation of product function, the modifications for improvement and the testing of their product against the group's original agreed criteria.
76. Teaching and learning are very good throughout Years 3 to 6:
- The teacher's obvious enthusiasm promotes pupils' enjoyment and pride in their attainments.
  - Lessons are very well structured, organised and resourced.
  - The teacher's challenging questions require pupils to justify their decisions which helps to develop their learning.
  - The teacher's high expectations strike a very good balance between making and evaluation to ensure pupils focus on modifying and improving their products appropriately.
  - Pupils make very good use of their broad repertoire of designing and making skills and their thorough understanding of construction techniques to develop high quality products suitable for the agreed purpose.
77. It is too early to judge the effectiveness of the newly designated role of co-ordinator for this subject and the inclusion of all pupils from Year R to Year 6 within the responsibilities of the post. Assessment is satisfactory overall. It is based on observation of pupils' individual and group work, judgements of their written work and products, and records of their experiences and skills. Records are maintained, with pupils' attainments matched to expected standards. They are used effectively to inform planning and teacher support for identified need. Resources are good and the teacher uses the school site successfully as a stimulus for pupils' ideas and from which they learn design features.

## **Art and design**

78. No overall judgement has been made about the quality of provision because no lessons were seen. All available work was examined and was of average standard both at Year 2 and Year 6. The subject is currently a focus of the school development plan and is in the process of a major overhaul. A new scheme has recently been introduced and this is already having a positive impact in Years 3 to 6. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 have produced some high quality still life paintings. Good links with other subjects such as creative writing and religious education have recently begun in accordance with recent national recommendations. At present the co-ordinator does not lead or manage the subject in Years 1 and 2. This lack,

coupled with the lack of a formal assessment process, has an adverse effect on pupils' progress.

## **Music**

79. No music lessons were seen; therefore, it was not possible to make a firm judgement about provision. There are good opportunities for pupils to play musical instruments, to sing and to listen to music in assemblies. Girls and boys enthusiastically take part in school productions such as the 'Resurrection Rock' which was being rehearsed during the inspection. Pupils spoke and sang confidently whilst acting out the Easter Story and gave a very enjoyable performance.

## **Physical education**

80. No lessons were seen in **physical education** during the inspection. Discussion with staff and examination of school documentation indicate that all aspects of physical education are covered. This includes athletics, inter-school sports and specialist coaching. The school site and immediate locality are used for outdoor and adventurous activities such as orienteering. In summer, good use is made of the school's outdoor swimming pool to teach pupils water safety and swimming.

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

81. Personal, social, health education and citizenship is a developing area of the school's work. No lessons were seen to make a judgement about provision. The headteacher, who is also the co-ordinator for this aspect of the school's work is developing this area which focuses strongly on circle-time activities. This enables pupils to discuss their thoughts and feelings and consider issues from the viewpoints of others. The school is currently working towards the achievement of the 'Healthy School' award and pupils are developing a good understanding of healthy living. Assemblies foster a strong sense of the school community. The school's good use of its strong links with the community have a positive impact on pupils' developing sense of citizenship.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	5
Value for money provided by the school	5
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	4
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	2
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>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	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	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	5
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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