

INSPECTION REPORT

THRUPP PRIMARY SCHOOL

Thrupp, Nr Stroud

LEA area: Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 115544

Headteacher: Mrs S Dillon

Lead inspector: Ms A Coyle

Dates of inspection: 8th - 10th March 2004

Inspection number: 258204

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:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	120
School address:	Thrupp Lane Thrupp Stroud Gloucestershire
Postcode:	GL5 2EN
Telephone number:	(01453) 883 586
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs R Bullivant
Date of previous inspection:	22 nd June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Thrupp Primary School is a community school situated in a small rural village. It is much smaller than most other primary schools and there are 120 girls and boys on roll, including 19 children in the reception class. Most attend the governor-run private nursery before beginning school in the year of their fifth birthday, and attainment on entry is average. Only one per cent of pupils are from ethnic minority families or at an early stage of language acquisition. Eighteen per cent of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, which is similar to most other schools. Pupils' needs include moderate learning difficulties, social, emotional and behavioural needs, and speech and communication needs; two have statements for their special educational needs.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20603	Ms A Coyle	Lead inspector	English Art and design Design and technology Information and communication technology Music Physical education Foundation Stage English as an additional language
19322	Ms J Bedawi	Lay inspector	
21245	Mr W Lowe	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Geography History Religious education

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	4 - 5
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	6 - 9
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	9 - 13
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	13 - 14
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN THE AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	15 - 21
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	22

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **very good school** with many excellent features that is led and managed very well by an outstanding headteacher, committed senior managers and a conscientious governing body. It provides **very good value for money**. The standards achieved by pupils are often very high, notably in English and the creative subjects, and the teaching and learning are very good.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are very high in English, art and design, design and technology and music.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. They behave well and show excellent social and cultural development within a very inclusive environment.
- The excellent leadership of the headteacher provides an exemplary role model for colleagues.
- Excellent opportunities for extra-curricular activities and very good links with the community support pupils' learning well.
- The quality of teaching is very good overall, and often excellent throughout the school.
- A very good governing body supports the school closely, although a few statutory requirements are not met for providing parents with information and ensuring the safety of the site.
- The school's difficult accommodation inhibits activities for physical education.
- Attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory.

The school has improved considerably since the last inspection in 1998 and rectified the three key weaknesses that were identified. There are now more opportunities for pupils to take part in mathematical and scientific investigations, and the quality of teaching is very much improved. The governors have developed their roles through training and are now far more involved with the school than they were before, taking their responsibilities very seriously. In addition to these issues, the school development plan has been improved to a very high standard and the governors evaluate provision rigorously. There is also more monitoring of teaching and learning and the assessment procedures have been refined very well. These significant improvements have helped to push up standards generally and made sure that pupils are challenged to do their best.

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	B	A*	A
Science	A	A	A	A

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

Achievement is very good. The above table shows that standards have been consistently high over the last three years at the end of Year 6. In 2003, the results were well above the national average and those of similar schools in English, mathematics and science. The inspection evidence concurs with these results and shows that standards are currently above the national expected levels¹ by Year 6 in the core subjects of mathematics and science, and they are very high in English. Standards are generally above the expected levels in Year 2. Many pupils make very good

¹ **LEVELS** - By the end of Year 6, pupils are expected to attain Level 4 in all National Curriculum subjects. Those who achieve Level 5 are therefore attaining above the nationally expected levels. By the end of Year 2, pupils are expected to attain Level 2 in all National Curriculum subjects. Those who achieve Level 3 are therefore attaining above the nationally expected levels.

progress in relation to their capabilities and their average attainment on entry, and those with special educational needs are given plenty of guidance by support staff to help them achieve success. The very few who learn English as an additional language are also doing well in acquiring early language skills. Children in the reception class are provided with a very secure start to their education. The adults working with them have an excellent understanding of their needs and make sure that all are catered for very well. As a result, children enjoy learning and they comfortably achieve the expected goals² by the end of the Foundation Stage³.

Pupils' spiritual and moral development is very good, and their social and cultural development is excellent. The majority of pupils have very good attitudes to learning by the time they reach Year 6 and they behave well. However, the levels of attendance and pupils' lack of punctuality are unsatisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a very good quality of education for its pupils. Teaching and learning are very good overall in Years 1 to 6, and in the reception class. They are sometimes excellent. The curriculum is extended by very good links with local schools, an excellent range of after-school activities and a very good inclusive atmosphere that extends a welcome to all, whatever their capability or background.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good overall. The outstanding headteacher continuously strives to promote excellence and is a highly conscientious and very hard-working professional. She works in very close partnership with the dedicated senior managers and committed staff members and, together with the very good governing body, they steer the school closely. This has resulted in very good governance and management that have driven the school forward successfully.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are generally pleased with the way that the school educates and supports their children. They maintain that the school provides a friendly welcome for them and is keen to involve them. Pupils particularly like the extra-curricular clubs and they enjoy the welcoming and friendly atmosphere in the school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Seek to improve the accommodation, especially for physical education.
- Improve the unsatisfactory levels of attendance and pupils' lack of punctuality.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Make sure that parents receive the required information in the prospectus and governors' annual report, and address the issues of health and safety.

² **EARLY LEARNING GOALS** - these goals are a set of skills, knowledge and understanding that children might be expected to achieve by the end of the Reception year in the following areas of learning: communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; creative development; physical development, and personal, social and emotional development.

³ **FOUNDATION STAGE** - This stage of learning refers to children aged between three and six years. In this school, it refers to children in the reception class.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is very good overall and pupils attain standards that are well above the national expectations by Year 6 in the national tests. Given the average attainment on entry, the progress made by pupils is very good because it accelerates noticeably as they move up the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many pupils achieve very well and attain very high standards by the time they reach Year 6 in English and the creative subjects.
- Children in the reception class often make good progress.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – proportion of pupils reaching Level 2 and above

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	100 (95)	84 (84)
writing	100 (95)	81 (86)
mathematics	100 (95)	90 (90)

There were only 11 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – proportion of pupils reaching Level 4 and above

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	90 (95)	75 (75)
mathematics	95 (79)	73 (73)
science	95 (100)	86 (86)

There were 20 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Commentary

1. **Pupils achieve very well in English** and standards are high. Boys and girls do equally as well, as do the few from ethnic minority backgrounds, because the very good teaching helps them to build rapidly on their skills. This is borne out by the results of the National Curriculum tests for Year 6, which show that standards have been mainly well above the national average and the results of similar schools over the last three years. The results of the 2003 National Curriculum tests were high compared to the national average, with 90 per cent at Level 4 and 50 per cent at the higher Level 5. The results were much higher than those of pupils in similar schools. By Year 2, standards were in line with the national average in reading but below those of similar schools, because although 100 per cent attained Level 2, none reached the higher Level 3. Similarly, in writing, although a well above average 100 per cent attained Level 2, none attained the higher Level 3. Nevertheless, overall these results represent a far better picture than that of the last inspection, when standards were just satisfactory, and the headteacher has already pinpointed targets for improvement to help raise standards even further. Overall, pupils' performance has improved exceedingly well by the end of Year 6. Most have made considerable progress since joining the school because basic literacy skills are taught very well across the curriculum.

2. **Achievement in mathematics is very good amongst all groups of pupils.** In the 2003 national tests, standards were very high compared to the national average and well above the results of similar schools at the end of Year 6, with 95 per cent of pupils at Level 4, and a good 55 per cent at the higher Level 5. Pupils in Year 2 did well because standards were above the national average and in line with those of similar schools; 100 per cent attained Level 2 and 18 per cent attained the higher Level 3. The inspection findings concur with this very positive picture and show that standards have risen well since the last inspection when they were just about average.
3. **Pupils do very well in science and achieve good standards.** In the national tests, the 2003 results show that 95 per cent of pupils in Year 6 attained Level 4 and a tremendous 65 per cent reached the higher Level 5, which was well above the national figure and above that of similar schools. The teacher assessments for pupils in Year 2 were above average for Level 2 at 100 per cent, and a significant number reached the higher Level 3. The evidence gathered during the inspection shows that standards are currently above the expected levels by Year 6 because pupils generally make very good progress, and literacy and numeracy skills are used well to help them increase their knowledge.
4. In other areas of the curriculum, achievement is generally very good amongst most groups of pupils, which leads to high standards of attainment by the time they reach the top end of the school in Year 6. Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds and the most capable do equally as well as others in all subjects. This is because learning builds rapidly on the good progress made by children in the reception class. From fairly average beginnings most achieve well and attain the expected goals, sometimes exceeding them. From this strong start they begin to make leaps and bounds in learning, accelerating rapidly as they move up the school. Of particular note, is the outstanding provision for art and design, design and technology and music that often leads to exceptional progress and very high standards. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well. This is because the provision for them is carefully thought out and highly inclusive in providing for all pupils who have learning difficulties, behavioural needs or who are especially gifted or talented. The use of conscientious support staff to help them does much to raise pupils' self esteem and boost their confidence. As a result, some make rapid gains.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have **very good** attitudes to learning. Their behaviour is **good**. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness and development is **excellent**. Attendance and punctuality are **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' awareness of spirituality, morality, social and cultural education impacts impressively on their learning and personal achievements.
- Pupils are curious, eager learners.
- Attendance and punctuality are not good enough and registers do not meet requirements.
- Behaviour in lessons and at play is good.

Commentary

5. There are many opportunities for pupils to experience spirituality beyond assemblies. Teachers challenge pupils with thought provoking ideas so that they wonder and question *'how, why, what if?'* For example, in a design and technology lesson, Year 2 and Year 3 pupils discovered for themselves the complexities of pneumatics. They had *'fingers crossed'*, that their working models would lift the lid of an egg box. The joy shared equally by the teacher when they did succeed, was delightful. The sense of community is strongly reinforced in the tradition of planting a daffodil, by each new pupil. Assemblies fully meet the collective worship

requirements; themes are based on positive attributes, like being special. Joyful music is provided by the skilled piano playing of a retired member of the local community and staff give a very positive lead on moral concepts, so that pupils learn right from wrong and usually make the right choices, very well supported by the high, yet realistic, expectations. By Year 6, pupils have developed an outstanding sense of social responsibility, taking on duties or politely offering help to adults and fellow pupils alike. They care about their school and enjoy play activities with much younger children, setting an impressive example. Cultural education is excellent, exemplified in pupils' work in art, dance and music, recognised by the recent 'Artsmark Gold Award'. The school is a sea of vibrant colour and texture with displays that represent both world wide and local culture and events. Visitors significantly enhance pupil's knowledge of different multicultural heritages through hands-on workshops, including African story telling and Aboriginal Art.

6. Pupils enjoy school, find work fun and are very good, curious learners, excited and challenged by new ideas. They participate very well in discussions, putting their point of view clearly. They listen carefully and settle to work purposefully, intent on the task in hand. The youngest children enjoy the many extremely well planned activities that are provided for them, proudly showing and talking about their healthy meals, thinking hard to recall the word 'raspberry', or engrossed in playing with construction toys. Older pupils persevere when challenged and are able to work with a very good degree of initiative and independence.
7. Attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory, declining significantly since the last report. The school is working appropriately to improve them through newsletter reminders, chasing up parents, requesting reasons for absence and keeping careful records of days lost to holidays. Recently, most of the authorised absence has been due to ill health, flu or viral infections and some holidays of longer than 10 days. Unauthorised absence is low. The educational welfare officer visits some families. Pupil lateness is a concern in all years. The school's monitoring of punctuality is unsatisfactory; for example, no written records are kept and the registers do not meet statutory requirements because they are sometimes marked in pencil.
8. Behaviour is good overall. In lessons, pupils know that they are expected to learn and behave well, although they sometimes get a little noisy. Play times are well supervised by trained adults. Pupils mix and play together well. The older pupils have very good relationships and show positive collaboration in their games, taking care not to let football stray into other areas in the sloping, difficult playground. The school acknowledges that there are sometimes instances of bullying. Parents raised this issue, but agreed that once reported, bullying is generally effectively resolved. The school takes their concern seriously. In line with its very good inclusion for all pupils, focused circle-time class discussion is used, together with close support and monitoring, so reducing the number of incidents. No bullying was seen during inspection, only very good social and racial harmony.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	6.2
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.5

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

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	Number of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	99	2	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **very good quality of education** for its pupils. Its curriculum is extended exceedingly well by an outstanding range of extra-curricular opportunities.

Teaching and learning

Teaching, learning and assessment are **very good** throughout the school, with a significant proportion being excellent. This shows a very marked improvement since the last inspection.

Main Strengths and Weaknesses

- Teachers plan their work very well with due regard to the individual abilities of their pupils.
- There is a high level of expectation and challenge within the work provided; this is particularly true in classes for the older pupils where it was excellent.
- Considerable emphasis is put on the development of the pupils' capacity to work both collaboratively and independently.
- Time and resources are used very effectively during lessons.
- In a small minority of lessons the noise levels are too high.
- The limitations of space in the hall have an adverse effect on lessons in physical education.

Commentary

9. The school provides thoughtfully for the youngest children in the reception year and the teaching is very good overall. Children enter the private nursery run by the governors when they are three and transfer to the reception class in the year of their fifth birthday. Most settle happily and feel secure in their new environment. Regular assessment plays an important part in the school day and is used formally to adapt teaching and learning.
10. In the infant and junior classes, the very high standard of teaching and learning experienced by the pupils is the key to the school's success and is made possible by the very professional approach to all that they do by teachers and support staff. When this is linked to the high level of school and general subject management, plus the very effective level of lesson planning then the reason for these high standards is brought more clearly into focus. Assessment is used very well in classrooms to focus on the needs of individual pupils, for example, its use in setting individual targets, the formation of groups within the class and the deployment of adult support. The effectiveness of group work has improved considerably since the last inspection where it was judged to be a weakness in provision. Teachers demonstrate a very good subject knowledge and use it very effectively to challenge and raise the expectations of their pupils.
11. The assessment procedures are very good and they are used effectively to support and inform future subject provision. The high level of teaching skills is clear evidence of the teachers' dedication and of the success of the school's staff development programme.

12. The methods used by teachers to ensure the continued progress of their pupils are very good. Teachers think carefully about the resources they use and these are closely matched to the objectives of their lessons. For example, an English lesson with an information and communication technology focus made excellent use of overhead computer projection, the Internet, leaflets and prepared sentence strips to enhance the ability of the pupils to search for information. Where resources are limited, for example, the school hall for physical education, then teaching is adversely affected because the learning of the pupils is diminished. Nevertheless, teachers show a good level of awareness of the need to engage all their pupils in their lessons and use questioning well to probe for knowledge and understanding while ensuring that as many pupils as possible get a chance to show what they know. For example, in a mathematics lesson the teacher used questioning very well to encourage the pupils to think and work independently. Teachers also use questioning well to encourage and engage their pupils and to build their confidence and self-esteem. Time is used very well and lessons have a brisk pace that helps to maintain the interest of pupils and keeps them on task. This is a very good improvement in the use of time since the last inspection where it was considered to be a weakness in provision. The use of homework is generally good.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 29 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
6	8	13	2	0	0	0

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

The curriculum

The school provides a **very good** curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage and for pupils in the infant and junior classes. It is enriched by an **excellent** range of clubs. However, although there are plenty of resources in the school, the weaknesses in the outdoor accommodation inhibit some activities.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a very good curriculum for its pupils.
- An excellent range of after-school activities extends pupils' learning.
- Learning support assistants and other adult help in classrooms are very well organised.
- The accommodation poses problems for the teaching of physical education, although the school does its best to overcome the difficulties.

Commentary

13. The curriculum is very good throughout the school. Children in the Foundation Stage have access to a broad and balanced range of learning opportunities that are very well suited to their needs, whilst in the infant and junior classes, pupils follow the full National Curriculum. An exceedingly good emphasis is placed upon the development of pupils' creative and aesthetic awareness through artistic and musical activities and the school promotes learning enthusiastically. As a result, standards are very high in these areas and pupils' successes are celebrated joyfully throughout the school and with the community.
14. Pupils are given excellent opportunities to extend their learning through joining a wide variety of clubs and activities. These include clubs for recorders, choir, brass band, drama, arts and crafts, computers, science, French and gardening, all of which are very well attended. Further opportunities are created by the school's active participation in projects and events like the artist-in-residence project and inter-school competitive sports, as well as cross-country events

and swimming galas. Full advantage is taken of the village location as a resource for learning; for example, pupils have drawn and learnt about the history and geography of it and visiting specialists provide music tuition for the guitar and violin.

15. The school has a sufficient number of qualified teachers and support assistants. A very good feature of the provision is the very effective use that is made of adult help of all kinds in the classrooms. Learning support staff play an active and important role in supporting both individual pupils and groups, showing a good level of understanding of the problems faced by those for whom they are responsible. In addition, individual members of the governing body frequently join lessons or take after-school activities. For example, the chair of governors makes a strong contribution to pupils' learning by running a weekly science club.
16. The school has a good variety of resources for the number of pupils on roll, but the accommodation is limited and there are significant shortcomings in the outdoor facilities that inhibit some activities. The staff work hard to minimise the restrictions of the sloping site and they try to ensure that it does not detract from pupils' learning. Since the last inspection, some good improvements have been made to the indoor accommodation and the school has established suitable outdoor play areas for children in the Foundation Stage, along with improved resources. These are put to good use to aid the children's development, and the outdoor areas contain plenty of things for them to do, including gardening. However, there are many difficulties associated with the uneven hard-play areas for the infants and juniors and the limited size of the school hall. For example, the teaching of dance and gymnastics in the hall for the oldest pupils is very difficult because of the lack of space and the need to manoeuvre around stacked chairs, tables and the piano. Although teachers do their best to cover the curriculum satisfactorily by making use of the school field nearby, this is not ideal as it presents hazards because pupils have to walk along and cross over a very busy main road to get there. Moreover, there are no toilets or suitable changing facilities for pupils to use on the field. The school is currently thinking of ways to improve the situation by considering alternative options, including the levelling of a grassed area close by, although the financial implications are a major source of discussion.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils' care and welfare are **satisfactory** overall with strengths in pastoral guidance. The monitoring and support for pupils' academic progress and personal development are **very good**. Induction arrangements are **good** and pupils' opinions are **very highly** valued. However, there are some shortcomings related to health and safety matters.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good monitoring and support for pupils' academic and personal progress have a most positive impact on their achievements.
- Some aspects of health and safety require the governors' attention.
- Pupils' views are considered by staff to be very important.

Commentary

17. The monitoring and support of pupils' academic progress and personal development are thorough and very good. The results of national and optional tests are carefully analysed to identify areas requiring further attention. Pupils' progress over time is monitored and the information gained is used to refine learning for all groups, including pupils who are gifted and talented and pupils with special educational needs. This leads to close pinpointing of '*next steps*' so that pupils make very good progress in relation to previous learning. Pupils generally have a good idea of what they need to do to improve their work. The school's strong focus on pupils' personal development is reflected in timetables, with personal, social and health education and circle time discussions being prominent. This is benefiting pupils by raising

their self-esteem and producing very positive attitudes and improved behaviour. Pupils have confidence in their ability to be successful learners.

18. All of the required policies, practices and checks related to health and safety are in place. However, there are a few health and safety areas related to governors' responsibilities that require attention and these have been identified by the inspectors and shared with the headteacher and governors. For example, although the awareness of child protection is good, the governors have not yet reviewed the policy to include the latest local authority guidance. Nevertheless, the child protection officer has had recent updated training and staff understand the procedures. There is very good liaison with related external support agencies, and the advice they provide is valued.
19. Each pupil is a highly valued member of the school community. The school takes very great care to listen and when possible, act on pupils' opinions and views. The school council, for all but the reception children who get regular feedback from older pupils, gives pupils a strong voice on aspects like the playground and their desire for a proper playing field. Induction arrangements are good. There is a well-established programme for parents whose children are about to start school that involves visits and '*taster sessions*'. Pupils who arrive at other times of the year are made welcome and allocated a pupils friend, to help the settling in process. The school provides satisfactory attention to pupils' care and welfare. The staff know their pupils well and have developed very good relationships with them. Pupils feel very secure in asking for help, knowing that they will receive attention and helpful guidance.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a **good** partnership with its parents and carers. Community links are **very good**. Links with other schools and colleges are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents offer good support, enhancing the work of the school.
- Community links are very good as are the links with other schools and colleges.
- The prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents do not fully meet statutory requirements.

Commentary

20. Parents have good partnerships with the school. They are made welcome when they visit and any help they offer is greatly appreciated, so that many parents often pop in to give a hand. The thriving parent teacher association makes a real difference through its contribution to resources such as the adventure playground. Parents' evenings attract a high turnout of around 90 percent. Reports on pupils' progress are good quality and have improved since the last inspection; they give a broad overview and are very personal to the individual child. Academic targets are not always precise enough. Parents are pleased with the good teaching, the approachability of staff and the progress that their children make. They are particularly enthusiastic about the many after school clubs. The school listens to parents and acts on their views when possible. Parents are keen for their children to have homework diaries and this is now to be seriously considered.
21. Community links are very good. The school has built an enviable local reputation. Many community members are involved in the school's work in a host of different ways. Some, including governors, help in class, or by relating their experiences in lessons or sharing their expertise in an after school activity. Although it is not a church school, it has strong links with the church and pupils attend services, including the carol concert. The school is negotiating closely with the parish council about the use and development of the nearby community field, but no decisions have yet been made. There are close contacts with local industrial history,

the school appreciates the loan of artefacts and the information provided by the charitable 'Stroud Water Trust'. There are very productive close links with the Stroud pyramid cluster group of primary and secondary schools; pupils and staff share events, for example in drama and the arts and opportunities for professional development and good practice, even extending to an informal '*Headteacher's Friendship Group*'. Transfer arrangements for pupils are very well developed and smoothly facilitated by cluster group contacts. Year 6 pupils are given a science investigation to complete that is then followed through into Year 7. Student teachers from local colleges are warmly welcomed to do their practical training.

22. The governors are not meeting their statutory requirements fully as they do not provide sufficient information in the prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents, both of which have several omissions.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Governance, leadership and management are **very good** overall. The leadership of the headteacher is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The outstanding leadership of the headteacher is a major factor in the school's effectiveness.
- The very good governing body helps to shape the vision and direction of the school and has an excellent understanding of its strengths and weaknesses.
- There has been excellent improvement since the last inspection.
- The strategic planning by the senior management team is very good.

Commentary

23. The excellent leadership of the headteacher helps to instil a strong sense of purpose and direction into all that the school does, based on very good assessment and rigorous monitoring and self-evaluation procedures. In this, a very effective senior management team and a board of governors that is fully committed to the development of the school very ably support her. The headteacher, governors and staff of the school are very much the driving force behind the high levels of achievement found within it. They have not, however, lost sight of the importance of developing the spiritual and aesthetic aspects of their pupils through the maintenance of a very strong ethos that fully recognises the uniqueness of the individual.
24. The school's strategic planning is very good and it effectively evaluates all that it provides. The governing body, in its role of critical friend, plays a very important part in the development of new initiatives and in ensuring that their value in raising standards is fully assessed. Governors are very involved in the life of the school maintaining close links through discussion with senior management, receiving written reports on different aspects, making visits to the classrooms and working with pupils. These findings represent excellent improvement in the effectiveness of the school since the last report.
25. The very marked improvement in the standard of teaching is clear evidence of the success of the school's commitment to staff performance management, careful recruitment and the successful building of a highly effective team of teachers. Staff training is based on clearly identified school development needs and this has had a very beneficial effect on the overall standards attained by the pupils. The school, at all levels of management, is fully committed to the principle of inclusion and establishing a positive climate for learning.
26. Financial management is good and fully reflects the principles of best value. The school provides very good value for money and it has projected its financial needs well, including the setting aside of a substantial sum of money to carry forward and help it to maintain a reasonable level of accommodation, staffing and class provision in the future.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	321,002
Total expenditure	311,128
Expenditure per pupil	2,659

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	61,854
Balance carried forward to the next	71,728

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

31. Only a few lessons were observed specifically and thus, just a few judgements can be made about teaching and learning in some areas of learning but not all of them. Nevertheless, the inspection evidence shows that the school makes **very good provision** for the youngest children and the teaching is very good overall in the reception year. Children enter the private nursery run by the governors when they are three and transfer to the reception class in the year of their fifth birthday. Most settle happily and feel secure in their new environment. The outdoor areas contain plenty of things for them to do, including gardening. However, the sloping site and restricted outside facilities limit the amount of outdoor play, although staff make very good use of what is available for physical activities, including the school hall. Regular assessment plays an important part in the school day, and is used formally to adapt teaching and learning.
32. Children do well in **personal, social and emotional development** and attain the expected standards by the end of the reception year. They play together happily and share and take turns successfully. They are taught well so that they concentrate hard during activities with the teachers, and they spend lengthy periods on the independent tasks they are given. For example, children particularly enjoy talking about healthy foods, such as asparagus, tomatoes and carrots, and they love to make pretend spaghetti and sauce from string and glue! Adults treat them with courtesy and respect, and this leads to good attitudes from the children.
33. The teaching of **communication, language and literacy is very good**, and sometimes excellent. As a result, achievement is good and many children attain the expected standards or exceed them. They develop speaking skills rapidly and teachers interact very well with them, guiding them carefully. Most attain the Early Learning Goals because all adults involve them in conversations, and this helps them to increase their skills and take an interest in their surroundings. Children talk animatedly with each other, using full sentences, and they are successful speakers, recalling well stories they have been told, such as *'The Little Red Hen'*.
34. In **mathematical development**, the teaching is very good overall, and sometimes excellent, which has a considerable effect on children's learning, as they extend their knowledge of the numbers up to 20 and beyond. They achieve well and attain the expected standards; for example, when making Rangoli patterns or counting up and back. The adults working with the children also encourage them to begin to subtract numbers and this helps to extend learning.
35. Only a few sessions were seen in **knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development** and the observations of activities related to these areas were sampled. As a result, overall judgements on standards and teaching are not possible. None the less, throughout the day children have an extensive range of excellent opportunities to develop the skills of using pencils, crayons, computers, paints and printing inks. Many children enjoy conducting simple scientific investigations to find out how seeds grow. They use construction materials and sand happily and move confidently when using outdoor equipment or playing in the garden area, although the uneven site and the many steps present difficulties for them at times.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are particularly high amongst the oldest junior pupils.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are very good overall and occasionally excellent.
- The subject is led and managed very efficiently.
- Language and literacy skills are used very well across the curriculum.

Commentary

36. Pupils achieve very well and standards are very high by Year 6. The very good leadership and enthusiastic management of the subject leader are key factors that affect the standards attained. Speaking and listening skills are very good and pupils are confident when talking to adults and each other. Lessons often involve discussions in pairs or with the whole class and pupils make thoughtful contributions that lead to a good sharing of ideas with their classmates. Progress is assessed very well and the information gained is used rigorously to help teachers plan future work. Learning support staff contribute very well in lessons and offer clear support and guidance to pupils with special educational needs to help them achieve success.
37. Standards of reading and writing are good by the time pupils are in Year 2 and very good in Year 6. This is due to the quality of teaching, which is very good overall, and sometimes excellent. Younger infant pupils have a secure knowledge of letter sounds, alphabetical order and the spelling of simple words, and they talk animatedly about their favourite books, such as 'The Bear Hunt'. They enjoy taking home reading books to share with parents and participate eagerly in regular class reading sessions. In preparation for writing poetry, infant pupils enthusiastically study rhyming couplets and rhythms in verses such as '*The Adventures of Isabel*', '*The Sea is a Hungry Dog*' and '*Rumble in the Jungle*'. By the time they reach Years 5 and 6, pupils have honed their skills very well. They conduct research vigorously and follow it up by writing clear instructions, play scripts and lucid narratives based upon multi-cultural stories from Africa, the Caribbean and China. They often produce work of a very high standard that is carefully written, neatly presented and spelt correctly. These features contribute well to the very good progress pupils make.
38. Teaching and learning are very good and occasionally excellent. Thorough planning based upon a rigorous use of assessment information means that lessons build rapidly on pupils' learning. Excellent questioning such as '*Is punctuation important in poetry?*' leads to very thoughtful answers from the pupils; '*I felt three commas*' commented one infant pupil. In the junior classes, pupils learn how to develop written narratives based on extracts from stories such as '*The Iron Man*' and they consider how to use adjectives and adverbs to create a sense of expectation. Their writing journeys are often thoughtful and exciting to read. Excellent opportunities for research into topics such as 'Seabirds' and 'Air Balloons' are supported very well by the use of information and communication technology.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

39. Pupils use their language and literacy skills very well in other subjects. Daily opportunities for speaking and listening activities help pupils to focus on contributing during discussions. They employ literacy skills very well within other subjects; for example, pupils are given good opportunities in science to use their writing skills for recording hypotheses and the results of experiments.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are good.
- Teaching is good overall, and a significant amount is very good.
- Careful use of rigorous assessment procedures aids planning.
- The subject is very well managed by the co-ordinator.

Commentary

40. The evidence reviewed during the inspection clearly shows that pupils in Years 2 and 6 are attaining standards that are above those expected nationally for their age groups. This is a marked improvement over the standards noted in the previous report that judged attainment to be in line with that expected nationally. There has been a very good level of improvement in the schools provision for the subject since the last inspection. This is particularly true of teaching, learning and overall standards. The pupils in Years 2 and 6 have achieved very well thanks to the good, often very good teaching that is provided for them. When this is linked to the very good subject management, rigorous assessment procedures and very good attitudes adopted by the pupils towards the subject then the reasons for the school's success become much clearer.
41. The high standard of teaching experienced by the pupils is distinguished by the ability of teachers to use questioning effectively to probe for knowledge and to ensure that all their pupils are fully involved. They establish very good relationships with the pupils that in turn lead to an atmosphere of mutual respect in which the development of their self-esteem and confidence is an important factor. For example, in a lesson for Year 6 pupils on fractions and percentages, the pupils visibly grew in confidence thanks to the very effective use of resources, good questioning and planning, and the understanding attitude adopted by the teacher. There is a very much improved level of instruction in the use and application of mathematics since the last inspection. Learning support workers and other adults are used very effectively in classrooms to support both individuals and groups.
42. The subject is very well led and managed. Lessons are based on a scheme of work that provides progression and pupils' successes are monitored with the use of standardised assessment tests. These results are used very carefully by the school to assist planning and the organisation of groups. The school is very aware of its duty to make suitable provision for pupils who have special educational needs or are gifted and talented. It does this very well and all groups are achieving well; in the case of some older gifted and talented pupils their levels of achievement are very good.

Mathematics across the curriculum

43. Mathematics is used well in other curriculum areas; for example, in science lessons to illustrate the results of experiments in the form of graphs and tables. Pupils also use computers well to reinforce their learning.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quantity and quality of experimental work going on in the classrooms are good.

- Teaching is good overall and staff provide a good level of marking and challenge for pupils.
- The subject is very well managed by the co-ordinator who monitors provision in all its aspects.
- Standards have improved since the last inspection particularly for the older pupils.

Commentary

44. Pupils are attaining standards that are above those expected nationally by the end of Years 2 and 6 because the good teaching is closely linked to an effective scheme of work, very good assessment and recording procedures and a high standard of subject and general school management. All of these factors combine to ensure that all pupils, regardless of capabilities, make good progress and achieve well.
45. Teachers are providing a wide range of science experiences that cover the provisions of the National Curriculum. This is particularly true of the development of the ability of pupils to carry out scientific enquiries that was seen as an area for development in the last report. Pupils are successfully encouraged to predict results and then experiment to test their hypothesis and to strengthen their understanding that science is based on evidence. They are encouraged to discuss their ideas and justify the conclusions they reach. This process contributes to the good development of speaking and listening skills. In this context, teachers use good questioning skills that encourages pupils to think about, and discuss, what they are doing. The work provides a good level of challenge and general expectation for all abilities. The work of Year 6 pupils demonstrates very good development in their ability to record their findings accurately and neatly.
46. Teachers plan their lessons well and maintain very good relationships with their pupils, all of whom work well together. However, a few pupils are overly noisy and do not concentrate fully at times. Nevertheless, staff mark all pupils' work carefully and they set targets that are recorded in the front of workbooks and used to help with the assessment of individual progress. The school is well resourced for the subject and teachers use the materials available to good effect during their lessons. There is also a good link to art in the drawing of diagrams.
47. There has been a very good level of general improvement in provision within the subject since the last inspection:
- The standards being attained are now good.
 - National test results are better having risen from being in line with national averages for Year 6 to above.
 - There are much improved opportunities for pupils to conduct experiments and investigations.
 - Teaching is much better than it was.
 - Subject management is very good and there are more resources.
 - The progress made by the pupils has improved from satisfactory to good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The provision in information and communication technology is **very good**.

Strengths and weaknesses

- Computers are very used well to support pupils' learning across the curriculum.
- Teaching is very good and the subject is managed conscientiously.

Commentary

49. Pupils achieve good standards by Year 6 and the most capable do very well indeed because computers are used very well to extend learning across all subjects. For example, in one outstanding lesson with a research focus the pupils in Years 5 and 6 gained a great deal of knowledge about air ballooning from a 'Curio Talk' and Powerpoint presentation given by an individual pupil. The excellent use of slide show techniques, sound effects and text emphasised specific aspects of flight and safety. Other activities provide pupils with exciting opportunities to extend their learning with computers. For example, in an English lesson with an information and communication technology focus the adults and pupils made excellent use of overhead projections, the Internet, leaflets and pre-prepared sentence strips to help pupils search for information. In Year 2 pupils attain well and use email facilities confidently, as they work alongside parents and support staff for guidance. Learning is often fun, although lessons sometimes become too noisy in the infants when pupils grow excited about their work.
50. The quality of teaching is very good overall. It is occasionally excellent in Years 5 and 6 because the teacher's expectations are exceedingly high and activities are superbly organised. Excellent question and answer sessions push pupils to think hard and some respond avidly to the excellent curricular opportunities for designing their own websites. Leadership of the subject is very good and the resources have been much improved since the last inspection. Planning documents show that teachers cater well for the differing capabilities of pupils, including those with special educational needs, and they organise challenging tasks that draw well on the school's good range of software and applications.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

51. Pupils use computers very well in mathematics for recording graphs and sequencing shapes to make tessellating patterns. In art and design they use computer programs confidently to draw shapes, flood-fill the screen and print out their designs independently.

HUMANITIES

Religious education was inspected and the provision for geography and history was sampled. There was not enough opportunity during the inspection to obtain the evidence necessary to make any overall judgements about geography and history in terms of standards, teaching and general progress, as only one lesson was seen in each subject. However, what can be said is that in both lessons the standard of teaching was good and the pupils made progress as a result.

Geography and History

52. In the **history** lesson for Year 1 pupils the teacher made good use of discussion and questioning to probe for knowledge and they responded well to the stimulus provided. They were able to provide some information about the Spanish Armada and showed developing study skills by distinguishing between fiction and non-fiction books. In a very good link to art and design the pupils made cloth rats, biscuits with weevils in from clay and identified the use of various artefacts from the period.
53. In the **geography** lesson, Year 4 pupils, learnt about the use of water in other countries and the dry and wet areas of the World. There was a good use of cross-curricular links in terms of information and communication technology and physical, social and health education.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Management of the subject is good.

- Pupils' spiritual knowledge develops well.

Commentary

54. The subject is well managed with a clear policy statement and the locally approved syllabus provides it with continuity and progression. Assessment is based on the syllabus and the manager carries out an annual review that includes the progress made by pupils and development criteria. The last review demonstrated a good understanding on the part of the manager of the needs and development opportunities of the subject.
55. Pupils in Year 2 are learning the stories of the Bible such as *'Noah and the Ark'*. Their moral sense is being developed, for example, in discussions about the importance of keeping promises. They are developing a good spiritual awareness by thinking about others and their relationships with them. For example, the pupil who wrote:

*"God made me special and different from others
By giving me love."*

56. A scrutiny of the work of pupils and the one lesson seen indicates that teaching for Year 6 pupils is good. However, it is not possible to draw any valid conclusions about teaching for the rest of the school. The standards reached by Year 6 pupils in their written work are good. In work that showed care Year 6 pupils demonstrated a good level of understanding about their moral duty to others. For example, at the beginning of the lesson the pupils were asked to write nice things about each other. The importance of not hurting the feelings of others was emphasised. This exercise was well conducted and helped to raise the self-esteem of the individual pupils. They understand the differences between the belief systems of various religions and the importance of showing respect for them. The theme of most of the work seen was the importance of loving others. Artefacts are used well and the school has a satisfactory collection of them.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

57. Only a few lessons were sampled in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education, and so there is not enough evidence to make firm judgements overall about provision or teaching.
58. Nevertheless, it is clear from a scrutiny of pupils' work and teacher's planning that the standards are very high in **art and design**. The school has recently been awarded the 'Artsmark Gold' for its excellence in the subject. Pupils create colourful imaginative work with teachers, governors and artists-in-residence, and they frequently take part in painting and collage activities, producing finished projects and pieces for excellent wall displays based on very rich multi-cultural themes such as *'One World, One Country'* and stories about African, Chinese and Aboriginal cultures. In **design and technology**, all elements of the curriculum are covered exceedingly well and pupils have plenty of opportunities to increase their creative skills through model-making activities. They create a wide variety of three-dimensional fish shapes, hanging mobiles and batik designs, as well as clay models of creatures inspired from the tales of *'The Children of Atum'* from Ancient Egypt. Pupils also produce working models of tanks and cars with balsa wood, glue and wheels, and create designs for *'Talking Textiles'* based upon the story of *'The Owl and the Pussycat'*. Standards in **music** are very high. Pupils enjoy singing and constantly strive to excel under the guidance of the excellent subject leadership. With tuition from visiting musicians, some learn how to play instruments, such as guitars, and all have the opportunity to take part in events such as the Stroud Singing Festival and school productions, which parents say delightedly are of a very high standard. In **physical education**, pupils experience a satisfactory curriculum, although there are no large grassed areas for outdoor games and the school's sloping site and small hall inhibit activities. Nevertheless, staff make good use of the hall and hard play areas for gymnastics and team games and they make

sure that the statutory requirements are met by making use of a local field for energetic activities. Dance is an outstanding feature of the provision and the subject leadership is excellent. The deputy headteacher works tirelessly to motivate and inspire pupils and she encourages them to reach for the stars in activities, culminating in performances for the annual Cheltenham Dance Festival.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

59. A few lessons were observed in this curricular area and teachers' planning was scrutinised. From the information available it is clear that the school makes excellent provision for pupils personal, social and health education. All classes have very good opportunities for quiet discussions during lessons known as 'circle time' and these help pupils to think about social and moral issues, as well as practise their speaking and listening skills. They are taught very well by staff who value every pupils' contribution, whatever their ability or background, and learning is enjoyable, despite the serious messages that are shared openly between pupils and staff. For example, in one lesson about health education the pupils considered empathetically the harmful effects of drugs and alcohol upon humans. The teacher's final activity of getting pupils to think of something nice to say about their peers had a positive impact on learning. A closing phrase of, *'There's nothing better than having someone saying thank you or saying something nice about you'* lifted pupils' spirits as they thought positively about each other.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	1
Value for money provided by the school	2

Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	5
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	1
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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