

INSPECTION REPORT

UPLOWMAN CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Tiverton

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113369

Headteacher: Mrs J L Norris

Lead inspector: Mrs Janet Watts

Dates of inspection: 13 – 15 October 2003

Inspection number: 259769

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:	53
School address:	Uplowman Tiverton Devon
Postcode:	EX16 7DR
Telephone number:	01884 820552
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Andrew Barlow
Date of previous inspection:	November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is a small, rural, Church of England (Controlled) village primary school. There are 53 boys and girls on roll aged from four to eleven. There are slightly more boys than girls overall, but there are significant gender imbalances in some age groups. Pupils are taught in three mixed age classes each morning and two mixed age, whole Key Stage classes each afternoon. Pupils come from a wide range of social backgrounds, though all are of white European ethnic background and there are no pupils for whom English is not their mother tongue. Pupil mobility is low. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs, five others are on the school's register of special educational needs. The levels of knowledge and understanding of children when they enter the school in the Reception class are about average, which is lower than at the time of the last inspection. There are currently six pupils in the Reception age group. The building, which was built in 1874, has no hall and the Key Stage 2 classroom is used for assemblies, lunches, and as a library. There have been many changes in staffing during the last two years. The headteacher took up the permanent appointment in September 2002 having previously been acting headteacher for a short time.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1945	Janet Watts	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage English Science Music Art and design Physical education
11414	Ann Bennett	Lay inspector	
32606	Verna Derwas	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Religious education History Geography Design and technology Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a thriving village school with a number of considerable strengths. It is highly respected by parents and the local community. After a period of excessively frequent staff changes due to illness, **the school's effectiveness is satisfactory overall and improving.** The school certainly gives satisfactory value for money. Pupils enter the school with broadly average attainment and they make sound and often good progress. The quality of teaching observed during the inspection was good. Evidence from the work in pupils' books indicates that some of the pupils did not achieve as much as they should have done and the standard of their work was weaker last year. Thanks to the appointment of new staff and the good leadership and vision of the recently appointed headteacher, the school now has a clear direction and purpose. The headteacher is committed and conscientious, and she is inspiring a strong and highly supportive team. The quality of pupils' learning is usually good and they are keen to learn; this is contributing to the school's capacity to improve standards further. Progress is already being made with those areas identified as weaknesses.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils reach above average standards in reading, speaking and listening and music.
- Pupils' writing skills are weaker than they should be.
- Standards in information and communication technology are lower than they should be.
- Pupils' behaviour is very good; they have positive attitudes and enjoy school.
- The school values every pupil equally and staff know the pupils very well as individuals; the quality of care, support and guidance is good.
- Attendance is very good and well above the national average.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work is not always helpful in pointing out precisely what pupils need to do to improve.
- The quality of the accommodation is unsatisfactory.

Despite the high staff turnover, much good progress has been made on the issues identified in the last inspection in November 1998. Pupils' behaviour is much improved and is now a strength of the school. Provision for physical development for children under five is now adequate. Teachers' lesson plans are more detailed and the needs of the higher-attaining pupils are now beginning to be met. There are no longer any safety issues. The support assistants are now closely involved in planning and have regular, purposeful meetings with the teachers. These assistants are highly skilled and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. Standards declined last year in writing and mathematics. This is partly due to the changed nature of the intake when pupils start school, and to recent inconsistencies in the quality of provision because of high teacher turnover.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	C	B	A	A
mathematics	A	C	A	B
science	C	C	A	B

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

NB: the size of each year group is very small and valid comparisons cannot be made with national figures.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and improving rapidly. So far this term, pupils' achievement in lessons and in their work in their books shows they are achieving well. The youngest, those aged under five, achieve well and are on course to meet or exceed the goals they are expected to reach by the end of Reception. Year 2 pupils reach above average standards in reading and speaking and listening, representing good achievement since they started school. They reach average standards in mathematics and science. Pupils achieve less well in writing and standards are lower than they should be. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have positive attitudes to learning and are currently making good progress in lessons, though some achieved less than they should last year. In Year 6, standards are above average in reading and speaking and listening, average in mathematics and science but lower than they should be in writing.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral social and cultural development are good. They have positive attitudes, are keen to please their teachers and their behaviour is very good. They are developing a good sense of responsibility and co-operate well. Attendance is very good and pupils are usually punctual.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory and improving. The quality of teaching observed was good. Learning, too, is good overall and despite the difficulties of the past pupils have not lost their motivation. Teachers do not always mark the pupils' work rigorously enough and help them to understand precisely what they need to do to improve their work. The curriculum is satisfactory although there is insufficient emphasis on developing pupils' use and application of their skills across subjects. The school cares for its pupils well and provides a good range of extra-curricular and curriculum enrichment activities. Collaboration with parents is very good and enhances pupils' education. There are good links with the secondary school and the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has a clear vision for the future direction of the school. In-service training is given high priority and helpfully includes support assistants. The use of rigorous self-evaluation is at an early stage of development. Governance is good. Governors are highly supportive and have a good strategic overview.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents support the school strongly and view it very positively. Pupils have a great deal of respect for their teachers and are proud of their school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in writing by ensuring that pupils have planned opportunities to use their writing skills across the curriculum and that writing skills are taught systematically.
- Raise standards and achievement in information and communication technology (ICT) by implementing the school's current improvement plan for ICT and monitoring closely the impact on standards.
- Increase the rigour and consistency of the marking of work and the use of day-by-day assessment to help planning for the needs of each pupil.
- Continue to press the appropriate authorities for improvements to the accommodation.

To meet statutory requirements:

- Seek to meet all the requirements of the physical education curriculum, which cannot all be met currently because of the inadequacies of the accommodation.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

The achievement of pupils is satisfactory and improving. This overall judgement covers a complex picture. This term pupils are now achieving well in lessons and in some of their written and recorded work, after a period of high staff turnover in which the standards achieved by some pupils declined, particularly in 2003 in writing, and mathematics. As the inspection took place fairly near the beginning of the new school year, the efforts of the recently appointed headteacher and newly appointed teacher are only just beginning to have an impact, but they are certainly starting to improve standards. Pupils' achievement in lessons is now frequently good in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. There are no significant differences in the achievement of boys and girls.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Year 2 pupils achieve above average standards in reading and speaking and listening.
- Standards in mathematics and science are average but standards in writing are lower.
- In Year 6 the picture is similar; current pupils are achieving above average standards in reading and speaking and listening.
- Standards in mathematics and science are average but standards in writing are lower than they should be.
- Standards in music are good and above expected levels, across the school.
- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are weaker than they should be.

Commentary

1. The pupils in the Reception class, aged under five, have been in school for only a few weeks. Their personal and, social and emotional development is good. In three of the other five required areas of learning (communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and physical development) the majority of those currently in the school should attain or exceed the expected early learning goals for children of this age. Early signs are that they are beginning to make good progress and achieve well.
2. Of the current Year 1 pupils, when they left the Reception group, a significant proportion of them reached lower than expected standards as several of them have identified difficulties with their learning. Nevertheless they are making sound progress.
3. Pupils in the current Year 6 and those who left last summer were most affected by the high staffing turnover. Their achievement declined whilst they were in Year 5. The pace of their learning is now much improved and they are managing to attain above average standards in reading, speaking and listening. Their achievement in writing and mathematics last year was disappointing. This term's work already shows that they are beginning to achieve well and make good progress in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress and achieve satisfactorily.
4. Standards in music are above average across the school. Pupils achieve well and make good progress in both musical composition and performance.
5. Standards in ICT are below average and lower than they should be. The school has only recently been properly resourced for the subject.
6. There was insufficient evidence to make secure judgements on standards of achievement in art, design and technology, physical education, religious education, history, geography, and personal, social and health education (PSHE).

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils enjoy school and their attendance is very good. They like to get involved in lessons and the other activities provided. They relate well to one another across the age range, with older pupils often supporting younger ones. Pupils behave very well throughout the day, because teachers consistently expect high standards of behaviour. The school gives pupils plenty of scope to develop as well-rounded young people.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attendance is very good, and supported well by parents.
- There is a strong school community, with everyone working together.
- Pupils are industrious and take their work seriously.
- Pupils behave very well because they are managed well.
- Relationships between pupils and with all the adults in the school are very good.
- Pupils take responsibility well.

Commentary

7. Attendance is very good, and has been at a consistently high level, compared with national figures for primary schools, for a number of years. Parents are supportive, although this term a number of pupils have had holiday absences. Punctuality is good.
8. There is a strong school community, with staff and some parents joining in aerobics on the playground before the day begins. This innovation both gives valuable exercise and provides a clear sense of 'togetherness' before the pupils move to their classes for registration. The whole school goes swimming together, and there are more formal events and productions where the pupils work together and learn to value one another's contributions.
9. Pupils show good attitudes towards their work: they are industrious in class and pay good attention. They work together well in small groups. Younger pupils are still learning some of the social skills they need, but these are reinforced well in their class. Behaviour is now very good, because teachers manage it well. They expect, and wait, for pupils to follow instructions. Pupils know right from wrong and take praise and challenge equally well; boys given behaviour targets understood the reasons and felt they were fair. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils relate very well with each other, no incidents of unkindness were observed and there have been no exclusions.
10. Pupils seem to feel ownership of their school, and have a mature attitude towards being responsible. The newly formed school council is giving pupils a voice in decision-making, and during the inspection a cheque from their harvest giving was presented to a local charity of their choice, providing for the homeless.
11. The school gives pupils plenty of good opportunities for personal development. Pupils respond to this 'family' atmosphere by being tolerant and understanding of each other, with a good awareness of living in a school community. Assemblies give pupils good opportunities to participate by contributing their ideas or saying their own prayer aloud, to think and to apply what they hear, and in this way to grow in understanding of themselves.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	3.5
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.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
51	0	0
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 quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory and improving. There has been a period of significant instability with staffing and the effects of this have only recently been overcome. The teaching and learning of numeracy and literacy are satisfactory, although pupils are not always challenged enough to use and apply these skills across the curriculum. The ethos of positive encouragement and higher expectations provided by the current team of teachers and support assistants is giving the pupils confidence to work hard and improve their knowledge and skills. The work of support assistants is now managed very well, they are becoming increasingly skilled not only in interpreting teachers' instructions but also in undertaking observations and assessments of pupils.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching observed during the inspection was nearly all good. Learning is often good in literacy and numeracy, except that the pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to use and apply these skills across a wide range of subjects. The assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory overall. Although teachers are now marking pupils' work conscientiously, they do not use day-by-day assessment and marking well enough to tailor teaching to the individual needs of pupils, so helping them to improve their work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have high expectations of good behaviour and pupils respond well.
- The quality of pupils' learning throughout the school is satisfactory or better, and is improving rapidly as pupils' positive attitudes to learning are re-kindled.
- Despite the limitations of the accommodation, teachers frequently use effective methods and organise and manage lessons well.
- Teachers and support assistants often question the pupils skilfully, probing their understanding.
- When their work is marked, pupils are not shown clearly enough whether they have learned what was intended, and precisely what they need to do to improve their work.
- Pupils are given too few planned opportunities to use and apply their skills of writing, number and information technology across the full range of subjects.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 15 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	1	11	3	0	0	0

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

12. Teaching is good overall and this shows a slight improvement since the previous inspection. The quality of the pupils' learning mirrors the quality of teaching they receive.
13. The Reception group, in the same class as the Year 1 and Year 2 pupils, is often taught by the support assistant, with the lessons planned and resources to be used organised by the class teacher. The support assistant follows the plans very carefully and she makes very helpful detailed notes and observations. Whilst the class teacher always works with this group for guided reading, sometimes opportunities for the teacher to assess the Reception pupils' progress are unfortunately missed. Relationships between adults and youngsters are very good and they enjoy joining in with discussions with the other pupils when they share their thoughts and ideas.
14. Across the school, teachers have sound knowledge of the subjects they teach. Very good use is made of the headteacher's specialism in music. She teaches the subject to the pupils in Years 1, 2 and Reception to very good effect. The Key Stage Two teacher, who teaches Years 3, 4, 5, and 6 each afternoon, also has good subject expertise in music. She helped pupils to plan, compose and organise a performance of an African rhythmic chant, as part of the school's contribution to the community's harvest festival. This performance was repeated during the inspectors' visit, with pupils performing to a high standard. Teaching in music is good and sometimes very good. Consequently, pupils really enjoy their lessons and make good progress.
15. Lessons are planned in considerable detail; this is an improvement since the previous inspection. Curriculum planning ensures all subjects are covered and repetition avoided in mixed age and ability classes. The needs of pupils with special educational needs and the higher-attaining pupils are satisfactorily met. Teachers manage the pupils well and the support assistants provide very effective help and support. This is also an improvement since the previous inspection.
16. During 2002/03, the school reports that older pupils in particular experienced a very high number of supply or temporary teachers and consequently considerable instability. The efforts of current teachers are already starting to be noticeable, with pupils responding well to greater rigour and higher expectations.
17. Analysis of pupils' recorded work for last year shows inconsistencies in marking and teachers' expectations of presentation, with some marking merely perfunctory. Already this year there has been an improvement, but pupils are still not always told whether they have learned what was intended, or precisely what they must do to improve their work. Provision for homework is satisfactory. Target setting is in place and becoming more specific. A good start has been made on more rigorous assessment of pupils' written work, through termly assessments.

The curriculum

The overall quality of the curriculum is **satisfactory**, although the accommodation is unsatisfactory and this affects the quality of the pupils' learning experiences. Most noticeably, the provision for physical education is inadequate because the school is unable to provide an extensive physical education curriculum. The room in which Year 3 and 4 pupils are taught in the morning is cramped, making practical work very difficult. Good extra-curricular provision enriches the curriculum.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Taught curriculum time meets requirements, apart from the provision for physical education.
- A helpful pupil 'tracking' file has been established, so that teachers can monitor pupils' progress.
- There is a good range of visitors, and visits out from the school.
- There is a curriculum plan which shows possible links between subjects, but this requires further development so that pupils can practise skills in a co-ordinated way.
- Assessment opportunities are not linked rigorously to learning objectives.
- Sometimes, opportunities are missed for practising skills learnt in core areas e.g. extended writing.
- The use and application of ICT is underdeveloped throughout the curriculum.

Commentary

18. The curriculum provided by the school is satisfactory overall, but there are some deficiencies because the high teacher turnover has adversely affected continuity of experience. This led to the standards and achievements of pupils in Key Stage 2 falling in some aspects of English, mathematics, and science. Following the recent appointment of a new headteacher, and a new full-time Key Stage 2 teacher, curriculum continuity is starting to improve.
19. Sufficient time is being given to all National Curriculum subjects and religious education, and the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been established. However, because there has been no effective curriculum review there are very few cross-curricular links identified and so core-learning skills are not being practised in other subject areas. The 'pupil-tracking' file is a useful tool for monitoring individual pupils' progress, including the progress of pupils with special education needs. Pupils are not yet involved enough in their own learning because learning intentions do not always take account of the skills being taught and there are few opportunities for pupils to negotiate appropriate individual targets with their teachers. The teaching and use of ICT is underdeveloped throughout the curriculum, because until recently resources have been insufficient.
20. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall because teachers and support staff have a good knowledge of their needs and a good relationship with these pupils. Planning generally takes account of their specific needs.
21. The school provides well for pupils to learn outside school. Pupils have opportunities for a wide variety of visits, including residential visits for Key Stage 2 pupils. There are visiting speakers and theatre groups. All pupils participate in joint musical events planned by the local small schools association.
22. The accommodation is unsatisfactory. The role-play area, and water and sand play areas for Foundation Stage pupils are outside because there is insufficient space for some activities inside the temporary classroom for Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. One Year 3 and 4 classroom is very small. This inhibits pupils' ability to see the whiteboard adequately as well as limiting the activities that can be planned to enhance learning. Another class is based in the small hall, which doubles as a dining room, assembly hall, library, and thoroughfare into another classroom. The lack of dedicated hall space means that some aspects of the physical education curriculum cannot be taught and this is unsatisfactory.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes good care of its pupils and encourages them to understand and to be responsible for keeping themselves fit and safe. The headteacher knows her pupils very well, and leads by example, in setting and expecting high standards, and in the guidance offered to pupils. The recently formed school council is beginning to give pupils a voice and a forum to make small decisions.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are encouraged to keep fit and be aware of protecting themselves.
- The headteacher's knowledge of pupils helps her to monitor and challenge them effectively.
- Academic guidance is not yet specific enough for pupils to understand precisely how to improve their work.
- Governors take health and safety seriously and acted on the issues of the last report.
- The school council provides a helpful means of involving pupils formally.

Commentary

23. The school takes good care of its pupils and treats them as individuals. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The headteacher knows her pupils very well, and her attention to the welfare of the whole pupil is impressive. She praises, challenges, talks to them, and gives reasons they understand. The school is part of the 'Healthy Schools' initiative to promote health and well-being.
24. At the time of the last inspection there were health and safety concerns about the pupils' access to the playground. These have been resolved. Governors are fully involved in monitoring health and safety, and the headteacher has received relevant training. New staff are made aware of child protection arrangements, which comply with those agreed locally, and there is clear guidance for pupils on internet safety. Supervision at lunch and playtime is good, because many of those involved are also classroom assistants. There are very few accidents or injuries and first aid training is organised for new staff.
25. Staffing difficulties over the last two years removed one of the advantages of a small school: that the teacher gets to know pupils very well over a period of years in the same class. Although there are targets on pupils' annual reports, these have not been carried forward to the new school year, and pupils cannot always remember what they are.
26. Sensible arrangements are made for induction of pupils new to the school, providing them with time to meet all the adults who will care for them, and detailed meetings for parents are organised.
27. The school has begun to seek and act on its pupils' views. The school council held its second meeting during the inspection but its impact is yet to be felt. Pupils from each year group were present, and this has the potential for pupils to get involved in low-level decision-making.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school benefits from strong parental support and this helped it through recent staffing difficulties. Parents' suggestions and advice are valued highly and are acted upon. Belonging to a local small schools group has benefited staff and pupils by extending the range of possible activities.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Strong parental support helped during the recent staffing turbulence.
- Parents are kept well informed.

- Reports still do not tell parents precisely enough how well their child is progressing towards their individual targets.
- There is a strong sense of community.
- There are effective transfer arrangements to secondary schools.
- The local small schools association helps to reduce isolation and extend and enrich activities.

Commentary

28. Parents are extremely supportive of this small village school, with a good proportion travelling from outside the area so that their children can attend. All say their child likes school, is expected to work hard, and that teaching is good. During the period of staffing problems parents were well briefed, and shared with each other first-hand information, so that all felt well informed.
29. Written communication from the school is good, and a few parents have been asked to proof read the new school prospectus to make sure parents can understand it easily. It is reported that the school plans to use a similar process with other communications, like reports, to make sure they are jargon-free. Reports have improved since the last inspection though they do not yet explain precisely enough progress towards individual targets. They are attractively presented, incorporate prepared statements of curriculum content and hand-written comments by teachers. These comments indicate a good understanding of each child, and are often written with humour.
30. Parents have ready access to teachers in the playground at the start and end of the day, and all reported feeling that they were approachable. Parents feel that this is their school, with an impressive half of all parents attending the most recent governors' annual meeting.
31. The school community extends far beyond the village, and school events become a focus. The parents, teachers and friends association (PTFA) is active and good numbers attend events. Links with the church are good.
32. Pupils are prepared well for transfer to secondary school. The Culm Valley Schools' Association is effective. It compensates in part for the small numbers of pupils in each year group, giving pupils opportunities they would otherwise miss and also enables staff training costs to be shared.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership and management are good. The recently appointed headteacher has a clear vision for the future direction of the school. There is a very good team spirit and this is a real strength. Good systems are being put in place to ensure the school runs smoothly and is well managed. This is essential, given that the headteacher teaches every morning, plus two afternoons in addition.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher is committed, conscientious and has been highly successful in engendering a strong team spirit and creating an effective team. She is a good teacher and consequently provides a good role model for other staff.
- The school is only just beginning to be in a position to monitor and evaluate the success or otherwise of its work, because so many policies and procedures are at an early stage of implementation.

Commentary

33. Leadership is good. The recently appointed headteacher leads the school with the full support and confidence of governors behind her. She is receiving unstinting support from staff and a positive ethos has been created in which all staff are included and valued for their contribution to the school.
34. All teachers have several subject responsibilities and subject leadership is beginning to be effective. All have the capability to become effective subject leaders, but need time and more practical experience to fulfil their potential.
35. Management is good overall. On her appointment, the headteacher found few policies that were implemented adequately and no well-constructed school improvement plan. Pupils' records, details of their progress and how it was tracked were minimal. Much of this has now been rectified.
36. The school has sufficient, well-qualified teachers to match the demands of the National Curriculum. Learning support assistants are available to support each class. Induction procedures for new staff are good and performance management and appraisal procedures are satisfactory. Administration is efficient and the administrative officer is very supportive of the school.
37. Necessary policies and planning have been developed rapidly. They are still evolving and need to be reviewed to ensure that pupils' skills are developing progressively and in a fully co-ordinated way. Similarly, while procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress are now in place, they are not yet used effectively enough to monitor progress and plan specific learning targets, or to help evaluate the overall work of the school.
38. Governors are highly supportive and have an increasingly good understanding of the work of the school, through receiving regular reports from the headteacher and personal visits to see the work of the school at first hand. Governors are now much more closely involved in strategic planning.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	176227
Total expenditure	150914
Expenditure per pupil	2954

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	16000
Balance carried forward to the next	25313

39. The school has good procedures and sound systems for financial planning and to monitor and control expenditure. The relatively high carry forward has been much reduced in the current financial year, as it has funded the purchase of ICT resources. Best value principles are beginning to be applied well. This was particularly so when the new 'laptop' computers were

purchased, when the governors researched prices and costings very carefully and secured a very attractive 'best value' purchase for the school.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision is **satisfactory** overall. Three lessons were observed. These dealt with the areas of communication, language and literacy, the children's mathematical development and their physical development. It was also possible, through these observations, to glean evidence to assess their personal, social and emotional development.

Strengths and weaknesses

- The children in the Reception group have settled very happily into school.
- They are already achieving well in the personal, social and emotional area of learning.
- The accommodation is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

40. Six children aged under five are in the Reception group of the Key Stage 1 class. They are taught in a class with the Years 1 and 2 pupils, but have a curriculum planned for them by the class teacher that meets the requirements of the Foundation Stage curriculum.
41. Children's personal, social and emotional development is good. They have been in school only a few weeks, but they are settled, responsive and co-operate well. They are on line to meet or even exceed the goals for this area of learning by the end of Reception.
42. Children's skills in communication, language and literacy are developing well and they are on line to meet the goals for this area of learning. Some of them speak well in thoughtful, well-articulated sentences. They love books and words, expressing their enjoyment at the story of 'The Rainbow Fish'. In one session, they learned really well, that as they are so important their name must begin with a capital letter! They are learning to form their letters and understand that printing and writing convey meaning.
43. Children's mathematical development shows that they are likely to meet the goals in this area of learning, or even exceed them. Already, some know the names of and can identify three dimensional shapes, such as cone, cylinder, cube and cuboid. Some can count and recognise numbers up to five.
44. The children's physical development is now catered for adequately. This was identified as a weakness in the last inspection. They enjoy riding on three wheeled tricycles, on go-karts and scooters. They are learning to balance, push pedals with their feet, and use a brake. They are happy to take turns and change to a different activity when asked. They are able to use some games apparatus in the field or playground, but as the school has no suitable indoor space, their physical activities are curtailed in wet weather.
45. The children are often taught by the support assistant, working to the teacher's plan and instructions. This is frequently effective and much of the teaching observed was good. At times this arrangement does mean, though, that the class teacher misses opportunities to assess the children's progress as they move through the Foundation Stage.
46. The class teacher helps the children to cope well with the difficulties of the accommodation, through insisting on sensible behaviour and making sure that the children are made aware of the school's expectations of good behaviour and concentration.
47. The children are frequently taught in a cloakroom area or the staff room; the space where role-play, sand and water play areas are located is very tiny and this is unsatisfactory.

48. Improvements have been made since the last inspection, particularly in the school's provision for supporting the children's physical development.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory** and improving.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of reading are above average throughout the school.
- Standards of speaking and listening are above average throughout the school.
- Standards of writing are lower than they should be across the school.
- Pupils do not use their literacy skills, especially their writing skills, effectively enough across the curriculum.

Commentary

49. Standards in English are average at Year 2 and at Year 6. However, the pupils' high level of reading skills masks some below-average attainment in writing. Standards have declined since the last inspection, but are now beginning to improve rapidly as writing is currently a major focus for development, after some disappointing writing results in the National Curriculum tests in 2003. Given the frequent staff changes of the last two years, teachers have done well to maintain the standards of reading, speaking and listening. There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, but evidence from lessons observed during the inspection, plus current improvements in their written work, indicates that pupils are beginning to achieve well.
50. Speaking and listening skills are developed and promoted well. Across the school, pupils listen carefully to instructions and to each other. Year 2 pupils used good vocabulary in science when talking about their experiments with cars, running down slopes and onto different surfaces, travelling different distances. Pupils contribute well in class discussions. For example, some Year 3 and 4 pupils showed a mature level of thinking when commenting upon, and expressing, their reasons for liking a piece of poetry. Teachers use questioning skills effectively, so that pupils have to compose thoughtful answers and explain their reasons, rather than merely a 'yes' or 'no'. This was well exemplified in a science lesson, when pupils were asked to identify the differences between an explanation and a description.
51. Standards of reading are good and above average across the school. Younger pupils are learning to blend sounds, which helps them to build up unfamiliar words confidently. Many are able to recount a story sequence in their own words, as when the pupils in Years 1 and 2 were able to remember the story sequence after reading 'My Teddy' together as a group. Older pupils read fluently and maturely, often with great expression. In an introduction to a new topic – 'The Tempest', by William Shakespeare, several were able to tackle and read correctly proper names such as 'Prospero', 'Gonzalo' and 'Ferdinand' without hesitation. Evidence from pupils' personal reading journals indicates that they read a wide range of fiction and work by different authors. They are often developing a mature sense of commentary and criticism, giving cogent reasons as to why they like, or do not like, a particular book. Pupils are enjoying the opportunity to use the library through the 'Borrow a Book Club', and are becoming much more confident in using the non-fiction classification system. Most parents are very supportive and listen regularly to their child read, or share books with them, and this makes a significant contribution to pupils love of literature.

52. Writing is a key area for development. The headteacher and staff realised that standards had slipped since the last inspection, particularly so in the last year. Teachers are now using the National Literacy Strategy more effectively to teach writing, and in literacy lessons pupils write stories, descriptions and poetry regularly. Their achievement suffered last year and standards of presentation, grammar and spelling slipped, and much of the marking of their written work was unhelpful. Pupils are now starting to use vocabulary more effectively; for example, Year 3 and 4 pupils are being encouraged to use a wider range of verbs so that their writing has more impact and vitality. The presentation of pupils' work is already much improved this term. There are some examples of pupils using and applying their writing skills well across the curriculum, for example in science, but this is the exception rather than the rule. As yet, writing opportunities across the curriculum are not planned for in a coherent way. Pupils have under-developed word processing skills and this limits the use of information and communication skills to support their work in English.
53. The quality of teaching in lessons observed was good. The lesson's intentions or objectives are usually shared with the pupils, but when tackling a piece of written work pupils do not always write out the learning intentions at the start of their work, so they have no means of self checking whether they have achieved what was intended. Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for and included. Targets are being set in English, but these have not been in place long enough to have an impact on pupils' achievement, nor is the monitoring and assessment of them sharp enough.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

54. The development of pupils' skills in language and literacy across the curriculum is patchy and sometimes unsatisfactory. There is no school curriculum plan to identify when and how writing, for example, is to be used to support another subject. As the pupils have such good speaking and listening and reading skills, they are able to understand and articulate ideas well. Their well-developed reading skills mean that they can assimilate information and ideas very quickly. Their maturity of understanding and general spoken vocabulary is much better than is revealed in their writing. These skills with words and ideas now need to be capitalised upon and extended to pupils' writing in all subjects.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Units of work and lesson planning are benefiting from greater attention to detail.
- Good use is made of highly skilled support assistants.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning.
- Teacher's marking of pupils' work is not always helpful in pointing out where pupils can make improvements to their work.
- Pupils lack knowledge of their own progress.

Commentary

55. Standards are average in Year 6 and pupils achieve satisfactorily. Standards have declined since the last inspection. This is due partly to lower expectations by teachers as a result of staff changes, but also to the fact there has been an over-emphasis on number (Attainment Target 2) and too little attention given to the other areas of mathematics. This has slowed pupils' progress and consequently their achievement.
56. Standards are average in Year 2. In the class with Reception, Year 1 and 2 pupils, work is well planned to cover the wide age and ability range. The teacher's insistence on high standards of behaviour supported the school's ethos and expectations of pupils. Pupils use the same

workbook for writing as for recording in numeracy lessons, which makes it difficult for parents, teachers and the pupils themselves to judge their progress and the progression in skills development.

57. The quality of teaching across the school now is at least satisfactory with some good teaching. As a result, most pupils are just beginning to achieve well. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. All pupils, including gifted and talented pupils are well supported because of teachers' very good knowledge of the needs of individuals and the help provided by the capable teaching assistants. Most of the work pupils do is at an appropriate level for their age and ability. Teachers plan and organise the lessons well to meet the needs of the two or three different year groups in a class, as well as the needs of the different ability levels. Teachers use praise extensively to motivate pupils and to demonstrate the value placed on all pupils' contributions.
58. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is mostly good. The teachers have high expectations of behaviour and application. In a class of some Year 4, 5 and 6 pupils the teacher's very calm manner positively affects pupils' behaviour, whilst the very effective use of the teaching assistant to support pupils with special education needs means that all pupils understand the learning objectives. In one lesson observed, pupils were able to work collaboratively as they developed measuring techniques in order to collect data. Although the teacher's planning missed the opportunity to develop pupils' ICT skills in recording this data, in the subsequent lesson the next day pupils were able to enhance their ICT skills. In a Year 3 and 4 lesson pupils were able to explain their ideas about doubling and halving numbers and so made good progress. Pupils are taught to use resources effectively and use the plenary session to consolidate knowledge they have acquired during the lesson.
59. Useful assessment procedures enable pupils' attainment to be recorded and individual performance to be tracked. Analysis of pupils' work in the previous year shows that teachers' marking of pupils' work was often too brief or non-existent. Although some targets were set and learning objectives were occasionally shared, there was little evidence of day-by-day assessments. All this has contributed to the decline in standards at the end of Year 6 and is partially the result of the many staffing changes over the last two years. Improvements in marking and the planned contents of the mathematics curriculum in the upper school are already evident with the permanent appointment of a class teacher. New target-setting booklets are to be shared with pupils and parents in order to enable parents to support their children's learning. Nevertheless, currently pupils remain mostly unaware of how they can improve their work and are given too few opportunities to set personal targets for improvement.
60. The subject is competently led and managed. All teachers work together to plan and ensure balance in delivering all aspects of the subject. This approach is in line with the school's style of management. Although the co-ordinator helpfully oversees the use of termly and half-termly assessment and recording of progress, as yet these do not link closely to the daily assessments teachers make of pupils' progress.

Mathematics across the curriculum

61. There are insufficient planned opportunities for pupils to use and apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- At both Key Stages, pupils understand the idea of a scientific investigation and are developing a good scientific vocabulary.
- Lessons in Key Stage 2 are very well organised and planned, given the very wide range of age and ability that are in the class (i.e. Years 3, 4, 5 and 6).
- Well-briefed support assistants are used and managed very effectively.
- Writing is not consistently well used to support the pupils' understanding in science and the use and application of ICT in science is very limited.

Commentary

62. Pupils attain average standards at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. Key Stage 1 pupils worked capably with their teacher to assign a range of toys into sets which show whether they are toys to be 'pulled' or 'pushed', or whether in fact they can belong to both sets. Key Stage 1 pupils are beginning to use good scientific vocabulary to describe and explain. They are beginning to understand the idea of a 'fair test'. They worked hard with their teacher to plan an investigation to find the best surface for miniature racing cars, so they could then find out on which surface the cars would travel the furthest. Good links are made with mathematics, with pupils needing to measure quite accurately in centimetres. Achievement overall is satisfactory.
63. Year 3 and 4 pupils are further developing their understanding of forces, and how they act in different directions. Pupils use and understand well scientific vocabulary such as 'compressed' and 'stretched'. During the lesson observed, they learned a great deal about a whole range of springs, how they work and their uses.
64. Year 5 and 6 pupils have a firm grasp of the principles of the pull of gravity and air resistance. Very good and thorough questioning from the class teacher elicited from pupils some mature, scientific explanations.
65. Teaching observed was mainly good. Lessons are well resourced and pupils respond well and enjoy the practical nature of the subject. Analysis of work shows that pupils are learning to set out an account of an investigation or experiment in a logical way, but overall there is too little planned use and application of pupils' writing and ICT skills to support their knowledge and understanding of science.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good provision of new ICT equipment and resources.
- There has been good quality training for the teachers.
- There are limited planned opportunities to develop ICT skills through other curriculum areas.
- Standards are below average.

Commentary

66. Provision for ICT has improved very recently with the addition of eight laptop computers with a wireless network, but there are not enough planned opportunities to develop ICT skills through other curriculum areas. Too few planned opportunities for pupils to practise their skills make overall provision unsatisfactory and attainment below average.
67. In two lessons observed with the older pupils, a lack of structure and support meant that pupils were not able to consolidate previously taught skills. In one short session the text chosen for Year 3 and 4 pupils to modify, was inappropriate, and the lack of a plenary session meant that any difficulties encountered by the pupils were not identified. In another lesson with this age group pupils were able to develop word-processing skills successfully as they learnt to use the edit key to change font size and to colour text. In this lesson the teacher's clear planning with an achievable target enabled all pupils, including a pupil with a statement of special education needs, to succeed. All pupils were able to start up and log off having saved work to their personal files. In a numeracy lesson some Year 4, 5 and 6 pupils were able to use a database program to record simple data in order to produce a variety of graphs which compared the data.
68. The school now has a satisfactory ratio of computers for the number of pupils, but the new system does not always work as expected. Currently there is little opportunity for pupils to use the computers independently in lessons, except in the specifically timetabled ICT lessons. Pupils do, though, appreciate that they are allowed to use the lap-tops during the lunch hour.
69. Although teachers have recently benefited from government funded training, they are not yet planning for the use of ICT across other subjects. The newly appointed co-ordinator has well-developed information and communication technology skills but has not yet had time to influence the planning or teaching of the subject. An assessment system has been put in place but is not yet effective.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

70. ICT is not being used satisfactorily across the curriculum, and in consequence skills are being taught in isolation. Extending the use and application of ICT in other subjects is a priority for development within the current school improvement plan.

HUMANITIES

No geography lessons were seen. One lesson was seen in religious education in the Year 1 and 2 class and one history lesson in the same class. Some pupils' work was analysed but there was insufficient evidence to make an overall evaluation about the quality of provision in history, geography and religious education. Religious education is taught regularly and in line with the locally agreed syllabus.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

No lessons were seen in design and technology, art and design or physical education, therefore no judgement was made about provision in these subjects. Nevertheless some good quality observational drawings, undertaken in art lessons, were displayed. Provision in physical education is limited by the accommodation. Pupils swim regularly and last year (2003) all of the Year 6 pupils successfully completed 400 metres, and some swam 800 metres. Although the school uses the playground and field to teach games and aspects of gymnastics, dance and other aspects of physical education cannot be provided for properly due to the inadequacies of the accommodation.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have a good level of expertise to share with the pupils.
- Lessons are well structured and resourced; the Parents, Teachers and Friends Association (PTFA) has contributed significantly to the purchase and provision of good quality instruments.
- Pupils have an above average ability, at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, to compose and perform.

Commentary

71. Pupils across the school reach higher standards in music higher than is normally expected of pupils of this age. The youngest pupils, in Reception and Years 1 and 2, have a good sense of beat and rhythm. They sang the action song 'Pinocchio' with great enthusiasm, but tunefully and with good diction, attaining high standards. They were introduced, very skilfully, to a new song 'A dragon's very fierce...' and over half of the pupils were able to use untuned percussion skilfully to maintain a steady beat. They treated the musical instruments with great care and respect.
72. Pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 had been involved in composing the musical accompaniment and actions to a performance based on an African rhythmic chant. They had performed it originally to celebrate the harvest festival for the church and the community. The composition and performance was of a high standard. Pupils are well aware of pitch, dynamic and tempo. They perform with great confidence.
73. The school regularly plans and prepares musical productions which they perform to parents and the community. All pupils in the school are involved and everyone is highly appreciative of their efforts.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

There were no lessons available to be seen to make a judgement about provision in personal, social and health education (PSHE).

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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