

INSPECTION REPORT

OXSPRING PRIMARY SCHOOL

Oxspring

LEA area: Barnsley

Unique reference number: 106584

Headteacher: Mrs K Evans

Lead inspector: Mr J Brennan

Dates of inspection: 24th – 26th November 2003

Inspection number: 260675

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: 114

School address: Sheffield Road
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mrs A Sinclair

Date of previous inspection: October 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Oxspring Primary School is a small village school. The school has a long tradition and serves the village of Oxspring. It is organised into five classes. Apart from in Year 6, each class comprises two age groups. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is low. Almost all pupils come from a white British background and no pupils are at the early stages of learning English. At six per cent, the percentage of pupils who have special educational needs is below average. One pupil has a statement for their needs. This is also a low figure. The majority of pupils' special educational needs relate to moderate learning difficulties. The school is involved in the Healthy Schools Initiative and the School Sport Co-ordinator Programme.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21094	Mr John Brennan	Lead inspector	Art
			English
			Design and technology
			Information and communication technology
			English as an additional language
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30834	Mrs Ann Lowson	Team inspector	Mathematics
			Physical education
			Personal, social and health education
			Special educational needs
			Foundation Stage
			Religious education
33192	Mrs Alison Burton	Team inspector	Geography
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Oxspring is a satisfactory school. Pupils achieve well in mathematics and science. Achievement in English is satisfactory. Achievement in information and communication technology (ICT) is unsatisfactory. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Strategies to aid pupils' personal development have been well led and because of these pupils have positive attitudes to school. However, some details are missing from plans for the future development of the school. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well in mathematics and science to reach standards that are above average.
- Throughout the school pupils achieve well in learning to read and reach standards that are above average but higher attaining pupils do not achieve what they are capable of in writing.
- Achievement in ICT is unsatisfactory and standards are below average.
- Good provision is made for pupils who have special educational needs and for children in the Foundation Stage. These pupils progress well.
- Pupils work hard because relationships are very good.
- The school managers put great store in seeking and acting on the views of parents and pupils.
- Planning for lessons lacks detail and so learning intentions are often unclear.
- The school improvement plan is not detailed enough.

Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The school has met with mixed success in addressing the issues of the last inspection. It has done well to raise standards in mathematics and in reading but standards in writing have only improved slightly. Standards in ICT remain unsatisfactory. Good improvement has been made both in teaching and the curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage. Standards in science have also risen and the deliberate strategies the school has put in place for the personal development of pupils are paying dividends. There have been some good improvements to accommodation, most notably to facilities for pupils who have special educational needs and to outdoor play provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage.

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	E	B	B
mathematics	C	C	B	B
science	A	D	A	A

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average

Similar schools are those with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals

Achievement varies from subject to subject but is satisfactory overall. Achievement is good in reading and standards are above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Achievement in writing is not as strong; progress is steady and standards average. In mathematics pupils achieve at a steady rate through Years 1 and 2 to reach standards that match national expectations. In Years 5 and 6 more challenging teaching leads to progress picking up, so that pupils leave the school with an above average level of attainment in mathematics. In ICT achievement is unsatisfactory and standards are below expectations at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. Achievement is consistently good in science and standards are above average. Children in the Foundation Stage make rapid progress and attain the goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception. The relatively small proportion of pupils who have special educational needs make good progress towards the

targets set for them. Because of the relatively small number of pupils who take National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, results can fluctuate greatly from one year to the next. In such instances it is the trend over time that is important and in this respect the school matched improvements found nationally at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6.

The school operates as a harmonious community. **Pupils' spiritual moral, social and cultural development is good**, with pupils' moral and social development being the stronger aspects. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Attendance and punctuality are very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory.

The overall standard of teaching is satisfactory. Teaching in the Foundation Stage and the teaching of pupils who have special educational needs is good and leads to good achievement. Teaching assistants make a telling contribution to the progress of these pupils. The teaching of science and reading is also good, with mathematics being well taught in Year 5 and 6. This results in good achievement in these areas. However, this contrasts with some weaknesses in the teaching of writing and ICT throughout the school, which slows pupils' progress.

The curriculum is enhanced by a good number of trips and extra-curricular activities for older pupils. There have been some important improvements in accommodation but the lack of resources make it difficult to teach ICT and research skills. The school takes very good care of pupils and puts great store in listening and acting on the views of pupils and parents.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Leadership is stronger than management. Good leadership has done much to help pupils' personal development and the increasingly consultative style ensures that parents' and pupils' views are taken seriously and acted upon. Management is satisfactory. The school runs smoothly but the school improvement plan lacks the detail needed to guide all staff who are in management positions. This makes it difficult for governors to monitor the work of the school fully, so, although they fulfil their statutory duties, their governance is no more than satisfactory. Most co-ordinators fulfil their responsibilities well but the management of ICT has to date been unsatisfactory.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils have very positive views of the school. Pupils feel they are listened to and that they have an adult to turn to if they need advice. Parents feel that the school acts in partnership with them and that the school is well led. They feel that the school takes very good care of their children and that they are kept well informed.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in ICT.
- Improve the quality of teachers' plans for lessons.
- Strengthen the teaching of writing; in particular to meet the needs of higher attaining pupils more fully.
- Ensure that future plans for the development of the school are more detailed.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement varies from subject to subject but is satisfactory overall. Achievement is good in reading and standards are above average but achievement in writing is not as strong; progress is steady and standards average. In ICT achievement is unsatisfactory and standards below average. In mathematics achievement is satisfactory until Years 5 and 6 where it picks up so that standards are above average by the time pupils leave the school. Achievement is consistently good in science and standards are above average. Children in the Foundation Stage make rapid progress as do the relatively small proportion of pupils who have special educational needs.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of basic skills in reading is good and the strong emphasis given to, this results in good achievement by pupils of differing ability.
- Teaching enables pupils to reach a basic level of competence in writing but it lacks the necessary strength to ensure that enough pupils reach optimum standards of attainment.
- Pupils achieve well in mathematics because effective teaching during Years 5 and 6 builds on steady progress made earlier in the school.
- Achievement in ICT is unsatisfactory and standards are below average.
- Achievement in science is good throughout the school and standards are above average because a good balance is placed on acquiring knowledge and taking part in investigations.
- Because of good teaching and an improved curriculum, children in the Foundation Stage progress well and their education gets off to a flying start.
- Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress because prompt action is taken to identify and address their needs.

Commentary

1 Since the last inspection the school has met with mixed success in tackling the weaknesses identified in standards in English, mathematics and ICT.

2 The most marked improvement has come in mathematics where purposeful leadership and challenging teaching in Years 5 and 6 ensure that pupils achieve well to reach above average standards of attainment by the end of Year 6. The quicker pace of learning evident in these year groups ensures that by the time pupils leave the school they have a good level of skill in working out the answers to sums and in applying knowledge to solving problems. Work is not always matched to pupils' ability in Year 1 and 2 and progress here is steady, so that in Year 2 pupils are working at expected levels.

3 In English standards have risen to be above average in reading at the end of Year 6, since pupils make good progress. Throughout the school the teaching of reading is well organised and because teachers make sure that pupils understand what they read, they read fluently and with a good level of comprehension. However, in writing standards are average, which is the same as at the time of the last inspection. While teachers teach handwriting and spelling well, they are less sure about how to instil flair and imagination into pupils writing.

4 In ICT resource difficulties, ineffective management and insecure teacher knowledge have resulted in standards remaining below expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and achievement is unsatisfactory. By the end of Year 6 pupils have not only not spent enough time working with computers, but have not used what skills they have picked up in a purposeful enough way.

5 The school has done well in raising standards in science. The subject has been well led and from Years 1 to 6, teachers are good at balancing the improvement of pupils' scientific knowledge and their ability to carry out investigations. By the end of Year 2 pupils already have a reasonable knowledge of how to carry out a fair test and this is well exploited through Years 3 to 6. Pupils progress well so that pupils in Year 6 are currently working at an above average level.

6 Because of the relatively small number of pupils who take National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, results fluctuate greatly from one year to the next. In 2002 for instance, results were well below those of similar schools, while in 2003 they were in line with these schools. In such instances it is the trend over time that is important and in this respect the school matched improvements found nationally at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. The school met the targets it set for results in National Curriculum tests last year, which reflects the careful tracking of performance evident in the school.

7 As with the results of National Curriculum tests, attainment on entry into school can vary year on year. Although pupils start school with a broad range of abilities, attainment is typically a little below that found nationally. Because of improvements to the curriculum and to teaching children in the Foundation Stage children make good progress in all aspects of the curriculum apart from physical development. Until recently shortcomings in outdoor play facilities hindered progress here. Children now enjoy much improved facilities but the school is still in the early stages of making full use of them. Nevertheless pupils start Year 1 having reached the standards expected for their age in all areas of learning.

8 Pupils with special education needs reach standards in line with their age and ability and in some subjects, such as reading or in mathematics, reach standards similar to their peers. This represents good achievement. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the well-targeted teaching support given by the special needs co-ordinator and learning support staff.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.7 (16.3)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.3 (14.9)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.9 (15.5)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 17 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.9 (25.5)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	27.9 (27.4)	26.8 (26.7)
science	30.5 (27.8)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 19 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Attendance is well above average and punctuality is now very good. Both attendance and punctuality have improved since the previous inspection. Pupils' personal development including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, with moral and social development the stronger features.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships throughout the school are very good.
- The school council and class councils are very proactive.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to develop a clear awareness of the multicultural nature of British society.

Commentary

9 Pupils enjoy coming to school and have very good records of attendance. Procedures for promoting attendance are effective and have ensured its' continued rise. Punctuality is now very good and this represents good improvement since the previous inspection.

10 Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong, which is promoted well from when children start school, through personal, social and educational development in the Foundation Stage. Pupils are polite, take turns, share resources and help each other when working. Playtimes are calm, with Year 6 pupils taking responsibility for the very youngest children through their 'play leader' scheme. At lunchtimes, older pupils help the infants to get their coats on and monitor their use of the toilets, reminding them to wash their hands! In discussion, pupils in Year 6 say that they enjoy this responsibility because it gives them the opportunity to establish meaningful relationships with the younger children.

11 The school council and class councils are very proactive and well organised. Pupils enjoy these responsibilities and know that all staff respect their decisions. There are many instances when school procedures have been changed as a direct result of consultation with the school council, so pupils do have a real voice in this school. As a result pupils behave in a more mature way. Not only does this help pupils develop positive attitudes towards school, it also helps them to learn to take into account the views of others, even when they are different to their own. Pupils' personal, moral and social development all benefit from the school's active approach in canvassing pupils' views and opinions. The opportunities given for pupils to take responsibility and to show initiative have much improved since the previous inspection.

12 Relationships in the school are very good. Pupils help each other when working and are keen to offer help to those pupils who need it. Pupils are happy and confident. During the inspection, discussions were held with Year 6 pupils and they were very keen to express their support of the school, their teachers and their friends. All of this helps create a harmonious community and good conditions for pupils to work and play in.

13 Cultural and spiritual development is satisfactory. By organising visits and inviting visitors to come in, the school makes satisfactory provision for pupils to appreciate their own cultural heritage, particularly through their history studies. There are some good opportunities for pupils to appreciate music and dance from other cultures through their physical education lessons on dance but in other subjects opportunities are missed. Religious education lessons, assemblies and collective worship enable pupils to learn about other major world religions, however, there are too few experiences that allow pupils to develop a thorough awareness of the multicultural nature of British society. Assemblies also provided useful occasions for reflection and in this respect provide well for pupil's spiritual development. However, there are too few opportunities in lessons for such reflection and in particular encouraging pupil's to think about how they might improve themselves.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (95.8%)

Authorised absence	
School data	4.1
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.1
National data	0.4

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

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	107	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	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. Provision for pupils who have special educational needs is good. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is also good. The curriculum is enhanced by a good number of trips and extra-curricular activities for older pupils. There have been some important improvements in accommodation but the limited quantity of resources makes it difficult to teach ICT and research skills. The school takes very good care of pupils. It puts great store in listening to and acting on the views of pupils and parents.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and assessment is satisfactory. Teaching in the Foundation Stage and the teaching of pupils who have special educational needs are good and lead to good achievement. The teaching of science and reading is also good, with mathematics also being well taught in Year 5 and 6. This results in good achievement in these areas. However, this is countered by some weaknesses in the teaching of writing and of ICT.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers manage pupils very well and ensure that they work hard.
- Good knowledge in the teaching of reading and science ensures that pupils make good progress.
- Challenging teaching in Year 5 and 6 leads to good progress in mathematics.
- Teachers' effective partnership with teaching assistants makes a telling difference to the progress made by children in the Foundation Stage and by pupils who have special educational needs.
- Planning for lessons lacks detail and so the learning intention for lessons are not always clear.
- Pupil's knowledge of how they might improve their work is underdeveloped because targets set for them are not used well enough in lessons and they have little opportunity to respond to marking.

Commentary

14 Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good. Effective planning and the close working relationship the teacher establishes with teaching assistants means that the school successfully overcomes the challenge of teaching reception and Year 1 pupils in the same class. This sense of teamwork allied to good organisational skills and a range of interesting activities means that pupils make good progress and are well prepared for the next phase of education.

15 A consistent strength of teaching throughout the school is the way teachers manage pupils. Very clear routines, high expectations of behaviour and comfortable relationships create a very good climate for learning. As a result pupils feel confident in giving their views or asking for help and they work hard. Little time is wasted and teachers can work with one group of pupils, knowing that others will be able to work independently.

16 The ability of teachers to exploit this positive atmosphere for learning is inconsistent. The most important factor in this is the variable quality of lesson plans. Many lesson plans lack important details and there is insufficient information to guide either learning or teaching. As a result pupils are often unaware of what the intentions of the lesson are or what they have to do within a given time. This makes it difficult for them work with a clear purpose in mind and for teachers to assess how well they have done. Where teachers' knowledge of the subject matter is strong this negative effect on teaching is not as marked. Hence pupils continue to make good progress in science and reading. However, where teachers' subject knowledge is insecure it undermines the quality of their teaching and in particular affects the quality of their questioning and demonstrations. This results in superficial learning. This is most often the case in ICT and in writing. This lack of detail also reduces the chance of teachers making meaningful links between subjects. While there are occasional instances of work in one subject aiding learning in another, this practice is inconsistent and many opportunities are missed.

17 On the whole the teaching of basic skills is good. In mathematics pupils readily learn to work out the answers to sums and in English they quickly learn to read and write neatly and spell words correctly. However teachers remain unsure about how to teach pupils to write with interest and style and this holds back the achievement of higher attaining pupils in particular. Teachers have to overcome considerable difficulties arising from a lack of resources to teach basic ICT skills. However, skills are often taught in isolation and many of the tasks pupils are asked to perform lack a sense of purpose, so do not make the most of the potential that computers have to make pupils think.

18 The hallmark of good teaching is challenge. At Oxspring Primary School this is at its best in science, where pupils are given a good range of opportunities to carry out investigations and in mathematics in Years 5 and 6, where planning matches work to pupils' differing abilities and gives them interesting work to do. Pupils respond with enthusiasm to such teaching and the pace of learning quickens. The school expressed some concerns over differing attitudes to learning in boys and girls, but inspectors found no significant difference. However, it is noticeable that when teachers talk for too long or tasks are routine in nature some pupils switch off and boys in particular seem less tolerant of such undemanding teaching.

19 Teachers mark work conscientiously and it is not uncommon to find lengthy, thoughtful comments, which give pupils a good indication of what they need to do to improve. However, pupils are given little opportunity to respond to these or to put problems right, which undermines the potential of marking to move learning along. Targets are set in English, but neither have a high profile in lessons nor are linked closely enough to subsequent lessons and so their impact is diminished. Because of this, pupils do not have a good knowledge of specific ways in which to improve. Teachers' planning does not make reference to the targets identified in individual education plans, which prevents the teacher from assessing progress against the targets within lessons.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 21 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	1	6	13	1	0	0

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

The curriculum

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum. Good opportunities are given to older pupils to take part in extra-curricular activities. The curriculum is made more interesting by a good range of visits and frequent visitors to school, both of which support learning. There are adequate resources for most subjects, apart from resources for ICT. The school works hard to compensate for the limitations of the accommodation and overall, the accommodation is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides well for those pupils with special educational needs.
- Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good, representing a good improvement since the previous inspection.
- Good use is made of visits and visitors to make lessons more interesting.
- Provision for personal, social and health education is good.
- Resources for ICT are insufficient and the inadequate library makes it difficult to teach research skills.

Commentary

20 The school makes good provision for pupils who have special educational needs, so they achieve well in relation to the targets set for them. The special educational needs curriculum is well organised and pupils' individual education plans contain short, achievable targets, which are shared with them and their parents. This is a good strategy and one that successfully involves them all. However teachers' weekly and lesson plans make no reference to individual targets and this makes them difficult to monitor on a daily basis.

21 In the Foundation Stage, children benefit from a good variety of experiences that are well planned and organised. The emphasis on the development and support of their personal, social and emotional needs ensures that children are happy, have positive attitudes to new challenges and are well prepared for the next stage of learning. The school is giving these children a good, positive start to their school life.

22 The school is actively involved in the School Sports Co-ordinator programme and the Healthy Schools programme. All staff are committed to ensuring that pupils receive a good grounding in developing an active, healthy lifestyle and they show their commitment by giving a lot of time to out of school activities. The range of activities provided for older pupils is good. In discussion, Year 6 pupils said that they appreciate what the staff do for them and that they fully enjoy the range of sporting and athletic activities in particular. A corresponding weakness is the lack of extra-curricular opportunities for younger children.

23 The school enriches the curriculum by providing a range of interesting, well-planned visits, selected to make lessons in school more interesting. Cultural development is supported through visits to local theatres; for example some pupils were recently involved in the production of "The Nutcracker". However, neither visits nor visitors to school are so widely used to improve pupils' knowledge of multicultural issues. Although the school has a race equality policy, little thought has been given to broadening pupils' horizons to understanding multicultural Britain.

24 Good provision is made for personal, health and social education. The school has a well-planned approach to the subject and makes effective use of the school nurse, the local police and fire service to support learning.

25 Overall, accommodation and resources are satisfactory. The school makes the best use it can of its accommodation. Improvements to the hall, to increase its size, are in the pipeline. The accommodation for outdoors education for children in reception is now improved. A new outdoor area has just been completed and good plans are in place to ensure that children have daily access to challenging, well-structured outdoor play. The small size and inconvenient location of the library do, however, inhibit the teaching of research skills. Resources are satisfactory apart from in ICT, where there are insufficient resources to teach the curriculum in sufficient depth.

26 The number of teachers is adequate to meet the needs of the curriculum. There is a good number of teaching assistants. These contribute particularly well to the achievement of pupils who have special educational needs and to the success of the provision for children in the mixed reception and Year 1 class.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes very good care of the emotional and physical needs of its pupils. The school listens to and acts on the views of pupils. Good use is made of assessment to help pupils who need extra help.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school council is effective in giving pupils a say in the running of the school.
- Good health and safety procedures are in place.
- Adults know the pupils well and pupils feel able to talk to them should they have any problems.
- The school acts quickly to help pupils who are falling behind in English and mathematics.

Commentary

27 The care and welfare of pupils underpins the work of the school. The school has good health and safety procedures, including thorough risk assessments. Governors are involved in various aspects of safety. The designated governor for child protection ensures that teaching and non-teaching staff are aware of procedures to be followed should they have concerns. All staff have very good relationships with pupils. Pupils feel a sense of family at school and are happy to be there.

28 The school has an effective school council, which follows up ideas made by pupils during class discussions. The school council meets fortnightly and has been consulted on a range of issues ranging from sanctions for poor behaviour to the purchase of play equipment. Pupils feel that their views are listened to and valued by the school. Several changes to school policy have been made as a result of pupils' suggestions. This helps pupils to develop a positive view of their school and contributes to their good attitudes.

29 The school has put in place good tracking systems that allow for the early identification of pupils who need extra help. Effective assessment procedures, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics and the good quality of teaching, result in pupils who have special educational needs progressing well. A weakness in whole-class teaching is that teachers' planning does not make reference to the targets identified in individual education plans, which prevents the teacher from assessing progress against the targets within lessons.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are very good. Links with the community and other schools are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has a very good, positive relationship with parents.
- Parents have confidence in the school.
- Parents are actively involved in the school.
- Curriculum provision is enriched by links with the community.

Commentary

30 The school has a very good, positive relationship with parents who feel able to approach the school on any matter. Parents are confident that any concerns will be dealt with effectively and quickly. They feel that the school has a warm, friendly atmosphere where pupils can make good progress. They are particularly confident of the care their children receive and of the school leadership. The school communicates with parents on a regular basis. Annual reports to parents of pupils' progress are comprehensive and indicate that teachers know their pupils well. The information given to parents helps them to support their children's learning through homework and activities in the home. In addition the school actively seeks their views by issuing an annual

questionnaire. This helps to inform the school development plan and ensures that parents have a say in how the school can develop.

31 Parents help in various ways in school and the school values their contribution to pupils' learning. Parents have also helped to raise substantial funds for the school, which have been used to enhance the outdoor play facilities and play equipment as well as for subsidising educational visits. Various courses organised for parents have been well attended and have encouraged some to seek further qualifications.

32 The school encourages the local community to attend school festivals at harvest and Christmas time. Representatives of the local church, the police, fire service and local businesses make visits to the school. The curriculum is enriched by visits that pupils make to the locality, museums and sites of historical interest. These visits contribute well to pupils' learning and make their education more interesting and relevant.

33 The school has effective links with other local schools in extra-curricular sports activities. The school works actively with the local secondary school to ensure that pupils transfer there with confidence and feel supported. Work begun at Oxspring is continued at secondary school and both teachers and pupils make visits close to the time of transfer. This helps to ensure continuity and progression in pupils' work. Secondary school staff also visit the primary school. These links enable staff to share their knowledge of pupils' needs and abilities. There are also good links with pre-school providers, which help pupils to settle happily into school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The quality of leadership is good, with management satisfactory. Governance is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a shared commitment to meeting the academic and social needs of pupils.
- The priority given to listening and responding to the views of parents and pupils ensures that they are drawn into partnership in improving the school.
- Actions taken to promote pupils' personal development are well led.
- The school development plan has insufficient detail to guide those in management positions.

Commentary

34 The headteacher shares leadership well so that staff, pupils, parents and governors have a say in how the school can move forward. Staff opinion combined with pupils' and parent's questionnaires give managers a clear indication of satisfaction and areas in need of development. These provide valuable information for the school development plan and ensure that staff, pupils and parents have a positive image of the school and its leadership. Much has been done since the last inspection to develop a stronger sense of partnership with parents and pupils. This has been well led and is having a positive impact on pupils' positive attitudes and on the team spirit within school. In addition, planned actions to promote pupils' personal development, such as the introduction of the school council, have been successful.

35 Governors ask searching questions of the school, particularly in regard to how finances are to be used as well as putting forward ideas and opinions of their own. However, this proactive attitude is undermined by their lack of involvement in the school development plan. Here, governors' role is largely limited to checking a draft and they have little input into formulating it. This undermines the work of an otherwise well-run governing body. The well-defined committee structure ensures that statutory obligations are fulfilled.

36 The school priorities reflect an understanding of the main areas of weakness and a will to do what is best for the school community. The headteacher provides those with management responsibilities the time to lead and manage their areas of responsibility and to review progress

regularly. However, the impact of the considerable amount of self-evaluation work undertaken is undermined by a lack of detail in the school development plan. The key weakness in development planning is the lack of success criteria, which means that there is little for managers to compare performance against and to evaluate the impact of training, changes to teaching or the addition of resources. This has several important implications:

- Reports to the governing body and accounts of the success of actions tend to describe tasks that have been completed rather than the improvement or lack of it that resulted from them. For example, new resources have been purchased for teaching writing but monitoring has not focused on how well they are being used or what improvements there have been in the quality of writing. Some weaknesses therefore, remain.
- Too much is left to the discretion of subject co-ordinators, making it difficult for the headteacher or governors to check whether they are getting value for money from the considerable investment they make in self evaluation tasks. Although many co-ordinators manage their subject well, there is room for improvement. In the case of ICT, the poor use made of the time available and a lack of supervision by the headteacher and governors has resulted in shortcomings that remain unchecked.
- Although the headteacher and co-ordinators carry out a considerable amount of observation of teaching and analysis of planning, weaknesses remain, particularly in short term planning. The quality of classroom observation varies considerably, some targets for improvement are too general and in some instances they remain the same over time. In contrast, objectives for performance management of teachers are clear and closely linked to the school improvement plan, providing a much sharper focus for measuring teachers' performance.

37 Governors and staff review performance data well and have a good understanding of the main messages this gives. Pupils' performance is tracked closely, which leads to an early identification of pupils who are underachieving and to the provision of extra help. This is a major reason why pupils who have special educational needs progress well.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	310,761	Balance from previous year	36,393
Total expenditure	278,790	Balance carried forward to the next	31,971
Expenditure per pupil	2,445		

38 The use of financial resources is well managed. The headteacher, administrative staff and governors work well together and consider various spending options before deciding how best to allocate funds. The governors' finance committee efficiently and regularly monitors the budget to ensure that a tight check is kept on spending so any problems are identified early. However, the impact of spending decisions is not evaluated because it is not made clear what should be achieved through the allocation of resources. Thus, governors cannot always be sure that they are getting value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

39 The school makes **good** provision for children in the Foundation Stage. This represents good improvement since the previous inspection. When children start school, they have skills that are a little below average, but this does vary over time. By the end of the reception year, children have made good progress and the majority of children reach the early learning goals in all areas of learning. This represents good achievement. The quality of teaching is good and often very good. A significant strength of the teaching is in the very good quality of planning to encompass the mixed reception and Year 1 class. This is very challenging to plan, but the teacher does it successfully because she makes very good use of the teaching assistants available to her. These efficient colleagues are crucial to the success of the joint planning for two year groups. As a result of good organisation, very good liaison with teaching assistants and effective teaching, children benefit from interesting learning activities that are well matched to their different skills and abilities. Resources are satisfactory, but there are too few large wheeled toys. The accommodation is satisfactory and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. A new outdoor play area has just been built, but its use is still at an early stage. However, good plans are in place to ensure that it becomes part of all areas of learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are developing good attitudes to learning.
- Most children show good levels of independence.
- Children are given good opportunities to work with others.

Commentary

40 Most children are likely to achieve the early learning goals in this area of learning. The quality of teaching is good. Children are happy, lively and keen to take part in the new and interesting activities planned for them. They are confident to talk about their activities, sometimes going into great detail. Staff have put much thought into fostering this positive attitude. Relationships between children and adults are very good and as a result, children are trusting and know that they will be helped when they try new things. Adults act as good role models and are quietly insistent on appropriate behaviour. Routines are well established and because of this, children are secure and skilled at knowing where resources are kept and how to access them. Learning activities are well organised, with a large, easily visible timetable enabling children to see what they are going to be doing.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is often very good.
- Most children develop independent writing skills.
- Children are eager to read, they enjoy their time with books and try hard.
- Good opportunities are given for children to extend their vocabulary.

Commentary

41 Most children are likely to achieve the early learning goals in this area of learning. The quality of teaching is very good and this is evident in the way activities are planned to build upon new skills. All staff organise good activities enabling children to extend their vocabulary, to develop their interest in reading and to write for different purposes. In a literacy lesson seen, the teacher made very effective use of puppets as a starting point for writing. The teacher made good links with reading and writing skills during this brisk, lively lesson. Lessons are very well organised, with skilfully managed activities to support the different skills and interests of reception and Year 1 children and with effective support from classroom teaching assistants. Children do an impressive amount of work; they are encouraged to write for a range of purposes and they do this well, particularly in their ability to write about their observations in science activities. This good achievement prepares children well to learn for themselves and as such, is a vital ingredient for future learning.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children gain good knowledge and understanding of mathematical ideas.
- The teaching of basic number skills is good as a result children quickly learn to count.
- Activities are well matched to the different abilities of the children.

Commentary

42 Children achieve well because they receive good teaching. Learning activities are interesting and well planned, with an effective focus on developing secure basic skills in number. The teacher and teaching assistants know the children very well; this enables staff to target individual children and to support their learning in a rigorous but sensitive way. Individuals are carefully assessed and monitored. This means that activities are well matched to their needs. Most children have a good understanding of simple addition and confidently take away numbers up to ten. Higher attaining children begin to calculate in much larger numbers. Simple puppets and soft toy resources are used with good effect to interest children and to teach simple mathematical concepts.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Early concepts in science are taught very effectively.
- Learning activities are planned to interest and engage the children.

Commentary

43 Most children are on course to reach the early learning goals in this area of learning and they achieve well. Early concepts in science are taught very effectively and as a result, children are beginning to think about how to predict, sort objects into categories, and record their findings in a variety of ways, while developing secure knowledge of basic concepts. Because of the wide-ranging nature of activities, children cover important aspects of history and geography. The close attention given to religious education means that they know Christmas is a special time. Regular use of computers ensures that children soon begin to use them independently and with some confidence.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good range of activities promotes the development of fine physical skills in manipulating tools.

Commentary

44 Most children are likely to reach the early learning goals in this area of learning and their achievement is satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory. Plans are in place to make good use of the new outdoor area, which has only just been built. Accommodation for physical development outdoors has improved since the previous inspection, but the new improvements have still to be fully embedded into the curriculum. In consequence, children make only satisfactory progress in their physical development, and their achievement is not as good as in the other areas of learning. Resources for outdoors physical development are satisfactory, but there are few large wheeled toys. Good use is made of the school hall and children move around it with confidence and control. They use the hall space safely and respond quickly to their teacher's instructions. Day to day activities frequently give children the chance to manipulate tools and small equipment.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Varied and well-planned activities provide children with a rich range of experiences.

Commentary

45 Most children reach the early learning goals in this area of learning, representing good achievement. This is because teaching is good. Activities are planned so as to enable children to experience a variety of techniques and to use a good range of materials and media. Currently, children are looking at the work of Paul Cezanne, in particular the artist's approach to representing still life. They look at posters and pictures of his work and use this knowledge well to produce their own still life compositions, using material, bottles and fruit. They have used oil pastels to try to match the colour of the fruit and the blue glass of the bottle. The role-play area is small, but well used. Many opportunities are created for children to use language and so children play imaginatively and purposefully. Resources are satisfactory for creative development, but there is only a small selection of dressing-up clothes for role-play.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in reading to attain standards that are above national expectations.
- Higher attaining pupils do not achieve well enough in writing because of some weaknesses in teaching.
- Pupils who have special educational needs progress well.
- Clear strategies for teaching handwriting and spelling result in standards that are above average.
- In a few lessons teachers talk for too long and pupils lose concentration.
- Good leadership has led to improvements in reading and assessment, action to improve writing have been less successful.
- The school library is inadequate and this adversely affects the development of pupils' research skills.

Commentary

46 When the school was last inspected standards of attainment were average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Raising standards was an issue for the school to address. This has been done well in reading, so that pupils now leave the school with standards that are above average. Although the school has made some progress in improving standards in writing and ensures that many pupils reach average standards of attainment, a lack of confidence in the teaching of writing means that too few pupils reach higher levels.

47 Relationships are positive; teachers manage pupils very well and create calm, conducive conditions for learning. Little time is wasted, pupils work hard and there is a strong work ethic in classrooms. This creates a good base for teachers to move learning along. This is done best in the teaching of reading. A good degree of consistency in teaching and the early identification of pupils who are underachieving help all pupils to do well. Pupils are given extra help by teaching assistants and their class teacher. These 'catch up' sessions work well and the contribution made by teaching assistants is crucial to the good progress made by pupils who have special educational needs. Teachers strike a good balance between teaching individuals to read and teaching groups of pupils to read. In Years 1 and 2, concentration on teaching pupils the sound letters make means that by the end of Year 2 many read fluently. Most can break words down into their different sounds when they come across vocabulary that puzzles them. From an early stage teachers concentrate on helping pupils understand what they are reading. This is built upon in Years 3 to 6, where pupils are given ample opportunities to examine texts and find the answer to questions. By the end of Year 6 most pupils are expressive, fluent readers and can readily use text to find the answer to questions set by teachers. The inconvenient location and small size of the library makes it difficult to teach library skills systematically.

48 The very good quality of relationships in classes gives teachers confidence to ask pupils' opinions and means that pupils listen attentively to each other. Most teachers are beginning to use specific strategies to encourage speaking and listening. It is not uncommon to see all pupils write answers to questions on whiteboards, thus ensuring that all their classmates pay attention. On other occasions pupils may be asked to discuss their views and opinions in pairs. However, there are still times when pupils are expected to listen for too long without being involved enough. When this happens, although they still behave well, many lose concentration. This is particularly the case when teachers are either showing pupils how to write or are discussing the writing of other authors. This means that pupils do not get as much as they should out of these sessions and the quality of subsequent writing suffers as a result. The exception to this is in the mixed Year 1 and reception class, where the teacher's skilful questioning keeps all pupils on their toes and sets up the purposes

for further activities well. All in all however, the school ensures that pupils become confident speakers who are able to reflect upon the thoughts and opinions of others.

49 Pupils make steady progress in writing. Once again good assessment ensures that underachieving pupils receive extra help and reach a satisfactory level of competence. In particular, the targeted use of the headteacher's time to provide extra practice is paying dividends. The concentration on grammar exercises also ensures that pupils reach reasonable standards, while regular practice in spelling and handwriting means that pupils reach good standards by the end of Year 6. Teachers' ability to help pupils to become expressive writers is insecure and suffers from a number of shortcomings. As a result pupils' writing often lacks interest and flair and in particular higher attaining pupils do not reach their potential. There are several reasons for this:

- Teachers' planning lacks detail. This means that it is not always made clear to pupils what they are expected to learn by the end of a lesson or in what ways they will be expected to improve over the course of a few lessons. At its worst it also means that questioning lacks depth and the potential of texts to deepen pupils' understanding is lost.
- Work on grammar does not link well with pupils' own writing. This means that the daily exercises pupils do in English lessons are not preparing them well enough for extended writing.
- The link between reading and writing is not strong enough. Pupils may be working on reading material and comprehension exercises that are unrelated to the type of writing towards which pupils are working.
- When teachers use a series of lessons to build towards a particular piece writing there is no ongoing display of what pupils have learnt for teachers or pupils to refer to as lessons progress. This means that at the end of a unit pupils have not learnt enough about the style required to be able to use it in their own writing.

50 Tightly organised assessment procedures contribute to good progress in reading. The quality of marking in writing is good and gives pupils a very clear indication of what they need to do to improve. However, pupils are not always given the chance to revisit writing and improve on first drafts in the light of these comments. Pupils are set targets for improvement but these are not sufficiently linked to forthcoming work and are not referred to in lessons. Because of this, pupils are largely unaware of their targets and so their potential impact on improving writing is lost. The co-ordinator monitors provision very regularly. Good feedback has been given on shortcomings in reading and these have been tackled well. She has worked hard to tackle weaknesses in writing and has met with some success. However, weaknesses still remain and actions within the school development plan to tackle these lack detail. Not enough thought has been given to what should be achieved by monitoring or extra training and, moreover, problems in writing have not been diagnosed sharply enough.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

51 The school provides some good opportunities for pupils to write in other subjects and this helps pupils write in a range of non-fiction styles. Some teachers have given much thought to this and when studying the Vikings for instance, think carefully about the type of non-fiction writing to be taught. However, such practice is not widespread and, on the whole, planning does not identify links with other subjects regularly enough. Opportunities for research are limited because of shortcomings in the library. In English lessons computers are mostly used to help pupils practice spellings or grammar exercises. Not enough use is made of computers to help pupils write at length.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards by the end of Year 6 are above national expectations and this represents good improvement since the previous inspection.

- Pupils achieve well over time.
- All teachers are good at managing behaviour, so lessons take place in quiet, busy classrooms.
- Teaching assistants work effectively with pupils who need extra help and these pupils progress well.
- The subject is led and managed well.
- Very good use is made of homework in Year 6 to support and extend learning.
- Teachers' short term planning is not detailed enough. Some plans lack clear learning objectives and some do not show what different groups of pupils are expected to learn.

Commentary

52 Standards in the current Year 2 class are broadly in line with national expectations. Pupils' progress and overall achievement are satisfactory. By Year 6, pupils have made good progress and a high proportion of pupils reach standards that are above the national expectation. Standards have improved gradually throughout the juniors over the last four years and have improved since the previous inspection. Most of these improvements are linked to the good quality of teaching in Years 5 and 6 and the positive way the subject is led and managed. Those pupils who have special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set for them.

53 A consistent strength of teaching is the way in which teachers manage behaviour. Clear routines, comfortable relationships and well-defined expectations of behaviour ensure that classrooms are calm and that pupils complete a considerable amount of work. However, there are some variations in how well teachers exploit this good atmosphere for learning that they have worked hard to create.

54 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall in the infants and there are evident strengths in the way basic skills are taught. For example, analysis of Year 2 pupils' work showed that the quantity and range of mathematics they do is good. This ensures that pupils have a secure knowledge of place value and use a sound range of strategies to solve problems. However lesson plans do not always contain clear learning objectives, so that it is not explained to each group of pupils what they will learn. As a result work is not always matched to pupils' differing abilities.

55 The quality of teaching in the upper juniors is good and this is having a positive effect on pupils' achievement. For example, in a good lesson with a mixed Year 4 and Year 5 class, the planning was more detailed and did show clear activities for each group of pupils. The real strength of this lesson was in the teacher's subject knowledge, which enabled her to teach the pupils, with clarity, how to read and plot co-ordinates. She made it very clear to the pupils what she expected them to do during the lesson and indicated what she would be looking for when the work was marked. This tactic is not widely used, an inconsistency due to lack of clarity in short term planning. When objectives are clear, learning has a sharper focus, the pace of learning quickens and as a consequence, all pupils remain interested, challenged, and achieve well.

56 Effective use is made of the teaching assistants to work with small groups of pupils who have special educational needs. This enables them to keep up with their peers and they achieve well. Analysis of pupils' work from the current Year 6 showed that they had completed an impressive range of work. Pupils presented their work well and the quality of their work showed that the teacher consistently gives them challenging tasks and activities. The quality of homework is very good in Year 6. It is well organised and presented, making a good contribution to learning.

57 Teachers' use of computers to support learning varies and is heavily dependent on the confidence of the individual and, on the whole, is not purposefully planned for. Satisfactory use is made of literacy skills; for example, in all lessons, the teacher ensures that pupils use correct technical language to explain mathematical concepts.

58 The subject is led and managed well and this has improved since the previous inspection. All teachers have had their mathematics teaching checked, with the subject leader making sure that all staff have a very sharp focus on the current priorities for development in the subject. Any

weaknesses identified are brought forward as whole school issues and are rigorously tackled. The subject leader makes effective use of national tests and teacher assessments to identify any areas where pupils are not doing as well as they could.

Mathematics across the curriculum

59 This aspect of the curriculum is satisfactory. There are a few examples of graphs and tables to record data collected in geography or science. However links between mathematics and other subjects are not deliberately planned for on a routine basis. Too much is left to the discretion of individual teachers and because of this opportunities can be missed.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and set interesting and challenging activities for pupils to do.
- Because of good quality help, pupils who have special educational needs achieve well.
- Good questioning by teachers gives pupils the opportunity to explain their thinking.
- The science co-ordinator has a clear view of the strengths and areas for improvement in the subject.
- Learning intentions are occasionally not made clear to pupils.
- Insufficient use is made of computers to develop science.

Commentary

60 The standards achieved by pupils throughout the school are above average and have risen since the last inspection. The quality of teaching is good. All teachers show good subject knowledge and an enthusiasm for teaching science, which rubs off on pupils. Relationships are comfortable and encouraging, allowing pupils to work confidently and to enjoy science. Teachers build on this well to provide pupils with a wide range of activities including many opportunities to carry out experiments. This has helped pupils to develop good scientific skills and the ability to plan and follow through investigations. Learning is typified by a good sense of enquiry and the use of predicting and recording skills.

61 Teachers display good skills in questioning which helps pupils make good progress in lessons and to explain their thoughts clearly. Pupils are encouraged to carry out their own investigations. For example, in a lesson in Year 6 pupils were finding out the properties of various sugars. As a result, pupils collaborated well in devising a range of investigations for other groups to carry out.

62 Teachers have high expectations of presentation so pupils take a pride in their work and care over its appearance. There was evidence that pupils' skills in writing and mathematics were being used to good advantage in recording their work. This is not consistently done because planning does not identify potential applications purposefully enough. There is insufficient use being made of ICT to enrich the science curriculum.

63 Pupils' work is consistently marked with thoughtful questions posed to prompt further thinking. Time for pupils to respond to those questions is, however, not given and so weakens the impact of marking. In addition teachers' short term planning does not detail learning intentions clearly enough. Objectives of lessons are not made known to pupils, so that although they progress well, pupils do not continuously assess their own achievements. Where intentions are made clear, as for example, in a lesson in a mixed Year 1 and Year 2 class, pupils understood exactly what they had achieved in knowing what makes a fair test.

64 Pupils with special educational needs make equally good progress in science and are ably helped by teaching assistants, sometimes individually and sometimes in small groups. They help pupils to explain their thinking more clearly and to record their work. More able pupils were encouraged to expand on their explanations more thoroughly.

65 The science co-ordinator has recently reviewed the scheme of work to give more focus to scientific investigation and enquiry. This is paying dividends and has been aided by regular monitoring of teaching and learning. Results have been carefully analysed and areas for improvement have been identified.

66 The school makes good use of its resources, including the local countryside, to enhance the curriculum. Classroom resources for independent research are limited however, and pupils do not have sufficient access to books that would extend their learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of attainment are below average and achievement is unsatisfactory.
- The low level of resources makes it difficult to teach ICT.
- Too little thought has been given to making best use of currently available resources.
- The co-ordinator has a poor grasp of current difficulties and this undermines plans for the future.
- Teacher's demonstration of skills are accurate.
- Many tasks that pupils are expected to do lack a sense of purpose.

Commentary

67 Standards of attainment were below average at the time of the last inspection and it became a key issue that the school take action to raise them. However, actions to date have proved to be inadequate and standards remain below average. Although there have been some additions to resources, the lack of a computer suite makes it difficult to teach ICT to the whole class at once and this adversely affects achievement. Nevertheless, the school has not done enough to make the most of the resources it does have and management of the subject has ill-defined plans to overcome current difficulties.

68 Overall teaching is satisfactory. Short term planning however, is weak. The aims and objectives of lessons are unclear and too little thought is given to what pupils will learn. Teachers' demonstration of new skills is correct and in one class was enhanced by the use of a large computer screen. However, there is a tendency to teach skills in isolation and subsequent work does not make good enough use of these skills. It is rare for pupils to use computers in thoughtful ways.

69 In all but one class teachers have to show pupils new skills by gathering them around a small computer screen. Because there are four machines in each class, they have to ensure that different groups of pupils spend time using the computers over a period of time before moving on to new skills. This makes teaching very difficult. Although pupils experience the various elements of the National Curriculum they do not cover them in enough depth. By the end of Year 6 pupils' skills are underdeveloped and they have not been working at computers frequently enough or learning at a fast enough rate.

70 Guidance issued to teachers has been insufficient and too much is left to the discretion of individuals. This means that pupils' experiences vary greatly. In particular:

- Not enough thought has been given to how other subjects could be used as vehicles for pupils to apply skills. Because of this, pupils' application of ICT skills is weak.
- Classes spend very different amounts of time studying ICT. For example in a class of Year 3 and Year 4 pupils they spend one hour per week studying ICT. But despite covering many of the same topics and having to cover a similar amount of work, the class of mixed Year 4 and 5 pupils spend only 20 minutes a week being taught ICT.

- Not enough thought has been given to making best use of the large computer screen. This has remained in one class for nearly a third of the year. Although there are intentions to move it around, little thought has been given to which units of work it would be of most use and this wastes its potential.

71 The use of a residential trip for older pupils, which has an element of ICT, enhances the curriculum. However, this does not make up for pupils' limited experiences in school. The potential of ICT to broaden pupils' cultural horizons is untapped. Pupils have very little opportunity to communicate through e-mail.

72 The co-ordinator is largely unaware of current shortcomings so leadership and management of the subject is poor. Despite being given some pointers by the local education authority over a year ago to guide work, little has been done. This use of management time has been badly thought out. There has been little observation of teaching and learning and little sampling of pupils work or analysis of planning.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

73 Although computers are used in other subjects much is dependent on the confidence of the individual teacher and there is no purposeful pattern to the links between ICT and other subjects. Links are strengthened a little because computers are housed in classrooms. While much of what is done on them may serve the needs of other subjects, their use does little to further the development of ICT.

HUMANITIES

74 It is not possible to make an overall judgement on standards in **history** or **geography** as no teaching was observed. Pupils' work was examined, displays were observed and planning was analysed. Judging by the evidence available, pupils reach average standards of attainment by the time they leave the school.

75 History and geography are planned well, study units are clearly identified and planning is linked to the assessment of pupils' work. Plans and displays indicate that good use is made of the local community environment to extend pupils' knowledge and skills.

76 Pupils expressed interest and enjoyment in their work through their writing, especially those in Year 6, who have researched aspects of Victorian life. There was some evidence seen of humanities work linking well with literacy and mathematics although this is not purposefully built into planning. Pupils said how much they had enjoyed this independent research. However, books in classrooms were insufficient in quantity to enable pupils to engage in independent study.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**

Main Strengths and weaknesses

- There is a small but effective amount of specialist teaching of Hinduism.
- The subject leader has written good guidance documents to help staff.
- Teachers' short term planning is not detailed enough and lacks clear learning objectives.

Commentary

77 Standards of attainment seen during the inspection remain in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus, as they were at the time of the previous inspection. Two lessons were seen during the inspection and in these, the quality of teaching was satisfactory. The subject leader has specialist knowledge of the Hindu religion and so gives specialist teaching to older pupils. As a

result, in discussion with Year 6 pupils, they were able to talk with largely secure understanding about Hinduism. They were able to make links with the unit of Indian dance they were studying in physical education and had already enjoyed listening to some Indian music. In addition the curriculum also helps pupil develop some understanding of other world faiths.

78 A weakness in teaching is the quality of short term planning, which is very brief and does not indicate with enough clarity, what the main learning objectives of a lesson are. As a result of this, in some lessons the teaching and subsequent learning lack sufficient depth. This is reflected in the scrutiny of pupils' work, which shows that some learning has been superficial. Pupils' work is done on loose sheets of paper, which are stored in files, but these are not always dated nor do they all have a title. This fails to present an important subject in a suitably well-organised way. There is little evidence to show that ICT skills are used well enough to support learning.

79 The subject is led and managed satisfactorily. The curriculum has been well planned on a two-year cycle to accommodate the mixed-age classes. The subject leader has also written good guidance documents to support staff. Assessment procedures are currently under review. No teaching has yet been monitored, however, and short-term planning is not monitored routinely. Resources for the subject are satisfactory.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

80 Work was sampled in **art and design**. One lesson was observed and samples of pupils' work examined. Standards of work on display and in the lesson seen indicate that standards are in line with national expectations. In the lesson seen teaching was good and although planning was brief, with no obvious learning intention described, the task linked well with work on the Vikings. The teacher's careful demonstration enabled pupils to make models of Vikings boats successfully from clay. However, pupils have limited experience of three-dimensional work. Pupils in Year 6 have insufficient knowledge of the work of different artists and the limited amount of art work on display or collected by the co-ordinator shows that art and design does not have a particularly high profile.

81 Work was sampled in **design and technology**. A scheme of work is in place but has yet to be revised to take account of the changes in the organisation of classes that were implemented over a year ago. Pupils in Year 6 can describe a range of tools and materials from which they have made products. They have a satisfactory knowledge of mechanisms that make models work and understand the need to plan work carefully and standards appear to be in line with national expectations. In the one lesson seen teaching was unsatisfactory. Planning was brief and intended learning outcomes unclear. As a result pupils' effort at exploring methods to strengthen structures were, in the first instance, random, and later on restricted to copying a method that the teacher showed them.

82 It was only possible to see one lesson of **music** and it was not possible to make an overall judgement on provision.

83 A comprehensive scheme for the teaching of music is in place. Standards achieved in the lesson observed were in line with national expectations. Pupils made a good and interested response to the music lesson observed. They listened with enjoyment and attention to music from other cultures. There is some enrichment of the curriculum for a minority of pupils who play the recorder at a lunchtime club and pupils occasionally get a chance to perform to a wider audience at school festivals. In addition pupils are given the chance to learn guitar from a visiting teacher.

84 Only one **physical education** lesson was seen. The school has worked hard to compensate for the limitations posed by the school's accommodation, particularly in outdoor activities. In particular, effective links with partner primary schools and the local secondary school provide pupils with more challenging activities. As a result, older pupils in particular benefit from a good range of sporting and athletic activities. They also have the opportunity to take part in a residential visit, when interesting and exciting sporting activities are offered, such as fencing and climbing.

85 The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator has involved the school in new initiatives, such as the School Sports Co-ordinator programme. This has been done with the precise aim of raising pupils' attainment overall and to encourage positive attitudes to physical activity. The signs are that this is successful. The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of extra-curricular sporting activities for older pupils but these do not extend to younger pupils.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

86 It was only possible to observe one lesson of personal, social and health education and although it is not possible to make an overall judgement on provision the school places a high importance on the development of personal and social skills. A scheme of work is in place encompassing developing relationships, sex education, drugs education and citizenship. 'Circle time' is used to discuss these and other issues. In addition the school is involved in the Healthy Schools programme.

87 There was also evidence of 'circle time' being well used to foster pupils' skills in taking responsibility and making democratic decisions. A class of Year 3 and 4 pupils discussed which after-school activities they would like to see in place. They showed interest in other pupils' ideas. The teacher used effective questioning to encourage all pupils to contribute, to explain their ideas clearly and to reflect on the views of others. Pupils' achievement in applying the skills and concepts taught is good as reflected in their attitudes, responses and behaviour throughout the school. Pupils in Year 6 have been taught good skills in taking responsibility for younger pupils at playtimes. School council members speak confidently, articulately and take their responsibilities seriously.

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	3
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	2
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
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	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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