

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **THE BRITISH SCHOOL**

Wotton-under-edge

LEA area: Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 115739

Headteacher: Mr Paul Hiatt

Lead inspector: Mrs Jane Morris

Dates of inspection: 15 to 17 March 2004

Inspection number: 260691

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:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	162
School address:	Wortley Road Wotton-under-edge
Postcode:	GL12 7JU
Telephone number:	01453-843371
Fax number:	01453-842882
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Dr Andrew Telford
Date of previous inspection:	5 October 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a smaller than average sized primary school with 162 pupils on roll. All are from white British home backgrounds and have English as their mother tongue. The number of pupils joining and leaving the school at times other than those expected is now average, having been above average in the recent past. The school attracts pupils from diverse backgrounds. They come predominantly from two large housing estates which provide a mixture of owner occupied and rented accommodation. Attainment on entry to the school varies from year to year but is generally average. An above average number of pupils, 22 per cent, are on the school's register of special educational needs. Four pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs, representing two and a half per cent of the school population. This is above average. Pupils' special educational needs are emotional and behavioural linked as well as learning related. As a new school, built in 1992, the accommodation was planned for twice the number of pupils. The school is dealing with the consequences of a falling roll. Pupils are currently taught in seven classes, one for each year group. The headteacher has been in post for 18 months.

The school provides a 'Breakfast Club'. There is also a 'Kindergarten' facility on site which the majority of children attend before starting school. The school is renowned for its achievements in science, having won the National Science Challenge for a second time in 2003. In the same year the school gained the Football Association Charter Standard.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18270	Mrs Jane Morris	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage Science Geography History Religious education
9644	Mr Mike Whitaker	Lay inspector	
32206	Mrs Kaye Case	Team inspector	Mathematics Music Physical education Special educational needs
12116	Mrs Christina Morgan	Team inspector	English Information and Communication Technology Art and design Design and technology

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This school's **effectiveness** is **satisfactory** and it provides satisfactory value for money. Standards are average and achievement is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are always at least satisfactory and in the three younger classes, lessons have some particularly strong features. The leadership and management of the school are good and the headteacher with his deputy and the governors evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the school very well. They are leading a team committed to improvement.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Teaching is very good in reception and good overall in Years 1 and 2. This leads to above average standards at the end of Year 2.
- Teaching in Years 3 to 6, although satisfactory or better, does not always use assessment to promote sufficient achievement in reading and writing and this has led to standards being well below average at the end of Year 6 in these two areas.
- Governors are led by a very capable chair. They ensure financial planning is very good.
- A strong ethos fosters very good relationships and good links with parents.
- Pupils are well-behaved and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. Very good account is taken of their views and opinions.
- The curriculum is enriched by a wealth of additional opportunities. These are supported by very productive links that have been forged with the community.

Satisfactory progress has been made since the previous inspection and the issues raised have been addressed. Standards are higher than those reported previously in speaking and listening, science, information and communication technology (ICT), religious education (RE), geography and art. Standards in writing, at the end of Year 2, have risen. Standards in reading and writing at the end of Year 6 are lower than before and are the subject for focused school development which is being supported by guidance from the local education authority. Information to parents has improved and now meets statutory requirements. The school continues to provide a good ethos.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

**Achievement is satisfactory** overall with pupils in reception and Years 1 and 2 achieving well. In Years 3 to 6, pupils' achievement is not consistent. Standards in mathematics showed significant improvement in 2003 and the school exceeded its targets. Standards in science rose from average to above average. However, in reading and writing achievement has been unsatisfactory leading to results in English tests at the end of Year 6 being well below average for the past two years and the school has not met its targets. Currently standards in Year 6 are above average in speaking and listening but still below average in reading and writing. They are average in mathematics and well above average in science.

In 2003 standards at the end of Year 2 were well above average in writing and mathematics and average in reading. At present, Year 2 pupils' standards are above the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. They are also high in science.

Children's ability levels on entering the school vary from year to year. They are currently average. By the time they enter Year 1, children have met the anticipated goals and this year a very significant proportion of them are on course to exceed the expected levels.

**Pupils' personal qualities** and **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development** are **good** as are their attitudes to work. They behave well. Attendance is satisfactory.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The **quality of education** provided by the school is **satisfactory**.

The **quality of teaching** is **satisfactory**, as is assessment, although the effectiveness of its use requires further attention in Years 3 to 6. Teaching is very good in the reception class where all children learn well. It is good in Years 1 and 2 where pupils learn effectively. In Year 2 there are some examples of very high quality lessons that promote especially effective learning. In Years 3 to 6 teaching and learning are satisfactory, but in some literacy lessons pupils' learning is not always as productive as it could be. Science is taught very well.

The overall quality of the curriculum is good with very good extra-curricular provision enriching and broadening pupils' learning very effectively. Additional opportunities make a very worthwhile contribution to pupils' achievement especially in science, sports and the arts. The guidance and support offered to pupils are good. Partnerships with parents are good, as are links with other schools and colleges. The links with the community are very good and have a valuable impact on pupils' learning.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The **leadership and management** of the school are **good**. The headteacher and his deputy are effective leaders. Most subject co-ordinators fulfil their roles well although the monitoring of the impact of the use of assessment in English and mathematics requires further development. The governance of the school, guided by a very supportive and knowledgeable chair, is good and ensures statutory requirements are met.

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

Parents express positive views about the friendliness and approachability of the school and the care of their children. They all think their children like school and recognise that they are expected to work hard.

Pupils are generally enthusiastic about school. They feel safe and secure and know they can get help with problems if they need to. Some would like their lessons to be more interesting and fun. They feel teachers listen to and value their ideas.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Raise standards in reading and writing by the end of Year 6.
- Make certain the monitoring of lessons identifies how the effective use of assessment in English and mathematics can be used to promote better achievement, especially in Years 3 to 6.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Overall, in Years 3 to 6, standards are average and achievement is satisfactory. Pupils' achievement is good in Years 1 and 2 and they reach above average standards. Children of reception age achieve well and almost all are likely to reach the expected goals as they enter Year 1. A very significant number of these youngest children exceed the anticipated goals.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make good progress from reception to Year 2, achieve well and reach above average standards.
- There is some unsatisfactory achievement in reading and writing through Years 3 to 6 leading to well below average standards in these two key areas at the end of Year 6.
- Standards in science are rising and are well above average at the end of Year 6.
- Test results in mathematics at the end of Year 6 are showing improvement since the headteacher has started to lead and monitor the subject.
- Standards are above average in ICT, RE, music and art and design throughout the school.

#### Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.1 (15.2)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	16.9 (15.2)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	17.4 (17.2)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 15 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	25.2 (25.5)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	26.8 (24.2)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	29.7 (28.3)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 33 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

1. End of Year 6 test results in 2003 were average in mathematics and above average in science. Results showed improvement in these two subjects and the school exceeded its targets for mathematics. English results remained well below average in relation to all and similar schools for the second year running. Targets were not met. The number of pupils reaching higher levels was average in English and mathematics and well above average in science.
2. Test results at the end of Year 2 were average in reading and well above average in writing and mathematics. In all three areas results were better than those reported in the previous year. The number of pupils exceeding the anticipated level was above average in reading and well above average in writing and mathematics. Standards in mathematics have shown year on year improvement over the past three years. The teacher's assessment of science showed standards to be in the highest five per cent nationally.



3. Reception children join the school with generally average standards, although there are variations between year groups and some groups enter school with lower ability than that expected. They all achieve well because teaching is very good and it encourages them to develop a willingness to learn as well as ensuring good progress. By the time they start Year 1 their standards are at least in line with those expected and a very significant number have surpassed the anticipated levels.
4. The school presents a very mixed picture of achievement. Currently pupils are achieving well in Years 1 and 2 in all core subjects and satisfactorily overall in Years 3 to 6. Science presents a very positive picture of standards and achievement throughout the school. Although achievement is now satisfactory in mathematics in Years 3 to 6, in English it is unsatisfactory because pupils do not make the progress they should from the end of Year 2 to the end of Year 6. The school is aware of a number of contributory factors that have led to this situation, including the number of pupils who have special educational needs, and is working with the local education authority to address the very low standards. Inspection findings show that the school's efforts to improve reading and writing have yet to be realised and a significant number of pupils currently in Year 6 are unlikely to reach the expected levels. The school has not been promoting reading sufficiently well, especially for those with more ability, and opportunities to write longer, narrative passages have been neglected. The additional support given to pupils with special educational needs is good. However, the school recognises that newly introduced procedures, such as the 'Kick Start' programme, which aims to develop learning in these two key areas have not had time to impact on achievement in the older classes and there is still considerable work to be done.
5. Since his arrival at the school, some 18 months ago, the headteacher has further developed individual pupil tracking systems to monitor pupils' progress over time, especially in reading. These more rigorous systems are beginning to have a beneficial impact on the information given to teachers to ensure that pupils build on their prior achievement. Pupils are aware of and use their own targets for learning. The school has concentrated on developing teaching to support pupils' different learning styles but these are taking time to become embedded in the work of the school.
6. Although standards at the end of Year 6 in reading and writing are lower than those reported previously, standards in speaking and listening are higher. Science has developed considerably and test results show significant improvement. In ICT and RE standards have risen, and are now above average. Improvement in ICT has been particularly good because standards were previously below average. Art and geography have improved and music remains a strength throughout the school.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils demonstrate good, positive attitudes in lessons and are enthusiastic about taking up opportunities offered by school. Behaviour is good and the school is free of harassment. Relationships are very good and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Attendance is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to school and the opportunities it offers.
- The school is inclusive, free of harassment and behaviour is good.
- Relationships between pupils and adults are very good.
- The school's opportunities for involvement and positive ethos ensure good personal, social and moral development.
- The unsatisfactory attendance of a very small minority of pupils causes concern.

## Commentary

7. Parents are universally of the view that their children enjoy school and the inspection supports this opinion. In lessons, pupils are keen and enthusiastic, interested in what is going on and anxious to respond to teachers' questions which helps them to learn. Unsurprisingly, the livelier the lesson is, the better the pupils' responses. However, even when the pace is slower and the tasks less demanding, pupil response is never less than satisfactory. The youngest children in the reception class are content to leave parents and carers in the morning, and settle quickly and confidently into securely established classroom routines. Pupils of all ages are interested in and care about their school. They are keen to take part in the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities on offer, such as competitive sport against neighbouring schools and drama productions. They relish the chance to serve on the school council or as house captains and the opportunity to represent the school in local and national competitions.
8. Behaviour is good, as it was at the time of the last inspection. Pupils are friendly and outgoing towards visitors. In lessons, the great majority of pupils are well behaved and respond positively to teachers' high expectations and good classroom management. Behaviour at lunch and in assemblies is orderly and appropriate. Play is lively but good-natured; good behaviour is promoted by the school's provision of games, toys and play equipment. The school is inclusive and free from any sort of harassment towards any particular group of pupils - all are included regardless of background or ability. A small number of parents, and a few children, expressed concerns about bullying, but nothing untoward was observed during the inspection. Discussions with staff, parents and pupils produced no evidence of a widespread problem. There had been instances of unpleasantness but all agreed that any cases were swiftly and effectively dealt with by the school. Some pupils preferred to try the pupils' own, successful peer mediation procedure before involving adults.
9. Relationships between staff and pupils, and between pupils themselves, are very good and contribute significantly to pupils' good personal and social development. Reception children develop well in this area and progress beyond the expected goals. Pupils are encouraged to involve themselves in the running of the school, for example by standing for election to the school council. To promote a sense of community, older pupils take turns to sit and eat with younger children, from the reception and Year 1 and 2 classes. Other pupils act as lunch-time librarians, take charge of the break-time play equipment and look after the arrangements for assemblies. Moral development is good; pupils are aware of the school's well-defined standards of acceptable behaviour. There are class rules which are discussed by pupils and a house system to engender a feeling of communal responsibility.
10. In personal social and health education (PSHE) lessons, pupils debate moral issues such as the right of people to smoke in public places. They try to exercise moral judgements themselves, for example by allowing peer mediation to resolve disputes. Spiritual development is satisfactory; pupils are made aware of the value of non-material things through the art, music and drama curriculum. Links with local churches and work on other faiths in RE lessons makes them aware of their own and others' beliefs. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. They experience the art of theatre through events such as the recent production of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' by a touring company and by putting on their own shows. Lessons in modern foreign languages such as French, German and Japanese bring them into contact with life in those societies, as does a link with a school in India. They are, perhaps, less aware of the diversity of cultures to be found in contemporary Britain.

## Attendance

### **Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2002 / 2003(%)**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.3	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

11. Attendance is satisfactory. Authorised absence, at 6.3 per cent is above the national average for primary schools but unauthorised absence is nil. The absence level is due to a very small number of pupils with above-average absences. There is some petty lateness, again on the part of a very small number of known families. The education welfare officer is in contact with these families. There have been no exclusions during the preceding 12 months.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. The curriculum is good and enhanced very significantly by additional opportunities. Pupils are well cared for. There are good links with parents and other schools and very good links with the community. The ethos for learning is good.

### **Teaching and learning**

The quality of both teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. It is consistently very good for reception children and good for pupils in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6 it is satisfactory overall. Assessment is satisfactory overall with recent initiatives having a significant impact. There is still more to be done in the older classes especially in relation to English.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The teaching of reading and writing in Years 3 to 6, although satisfactory, is not yet improving achievement sufficiently. Assessments do not always ensure that tasks are matched to pupils' abilities in order to challenge and extend them.
- There are examples of the highest quality of teaching in Year 2.
- Science teaching is of a very good quality.
- ICT, RE, and music are taught well throughout the school.

### **Commentary**

#### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 29 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	9	8	11	0	0	0

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

12. Reception children achieve well and often very well because teaching is always very good and fosters positive attitudes to learning. Learning support workers play a vital role in enabling pupils to settle to their work. The planning and organisation for these children is especially effective and ensures they experience lessons of a high quality.
13. Teaching for pupils in Years 1 and 2 is good with some very good and excellent features in the Year 2 class. The good quality of teaching makes certain that all pupils are learning and

achieving well. Curriculum planning and subject knowledge are secure. There are good opportunities to challenge and extend pupils and they are all treated equally and fairly.

14. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory overall but the teaching of reading and writing requires improvement. Although improvement in the teaching of reading has started there is still a lack of attention paid to the development of higher level reading skills. Teachers miss opportunities to develop extended writing, particularly for the more able. In some subjects the use of photo-copied worksheets inhibits the development of pupils' writing skills. These factors contribute to the slower rate of learning in the older classes and this has had a negative impact on overall achievement over time in these two vital areas. In mathematics improvement is evident but there is still more to be done to develop problem solving skills that are sometimes restricted, once again, by the overuse of worksheets in the older classes. Although the use of assessment is developing it still requires further attention to ensure its impact.
15. Teaching is better in lessons where teachers get pupils engaged in their tasks at the earliest opportunity and do not spend too much time on long introductions that slow the pace of learning. Inspection observations support the views of some pupils that on occasions their lessons could be more interesting and fun if they were drawn in sooner. Lengthy preambles mean that sometimes learning support workers, although monitoring pupils' participation in introductions, have to wait to get actively involved in supporting pupils' learning.
16. All teachers have high expectations of behaviour. Pupils respond to this well and are therefore able to work both co-operatively and independently without fuss. However, on occasions pupils who are left to work independently are not monitored closely enough and they continue to work with misconceptions and without sufficient guidance to support new learning.
17. Teachers are keen to develop ICT. They ensure skills are taught well and lesson plans highlight opportunities to integrate the use of ICT skills into other areas of the curriculum. Religious education and music are taught well because teachers have good subject knowledge and this enables pupils to reach above average standards.
18. Pupils with special educational needs and those who need an additional 'boost' have time with a valuable part-time member of teaching staff and with effective learning support workers. This helps them to learn productively but the impact of some of the newly introduced additional support has yet to be felt further up the school. Support workers are well briefed and usually work effectively and in close partnership with the class teachers and the support teacher. Governors take an active interest in promoting higher achievement in mathematics by working with pupils as they take part in mathematical challenges.
19. Assessment is satisfactory overall and recent developments in tracking pupil progress in mathematics are beginning to ensure that teachers are aware of where pupils need to progress to next. The success of the close scrutiny of progress in reading is evident, but in writing there are still areas that require further monitoring. Pupils are aware of their own targets for learning. Marking is inconsistent, especially in English. Some pupils' books have very useful comments which indicate where pupils have been successful and what they need to concentrate their efforts on to improve their standards. In others, there are just ticks with no comments at all, or comments with no explanation as to why work is good. This means sometimes pupils are not able to celebrate any specific improvement or detect areas requiring attention.

## **The curriculum**

The school ensures that all pupils have a good range of learning opportunities. It provides very good enrichment to widen their experiences through extra-curricular activities and a variety of visitors to the school. The school's accommodation, particularly the grounds, is good and resources support pupils' learning well, especially in the reception class.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The breadth of curricular opportunities is good.
- Opportunities for enrichment are very good and support valuable, additional learning.
- There are some good cross curricular links.
- There is good use of ICT to support learning across the curriculum.
- There is a need to develop more effective teaching of literacy in Years 3 to 6.

## **Commentary**

20. The school provides a good, broad and balanced curriculum and is increasingly developing meaningful links between subjects. It follows the locally agreed syllabus for religious education effectively. Information and communication technology is used well to support learning across the curriculum and the school has plans to increase the number of data projectors which are already used well in some classes.
21. The school provides a very comprehensive range of extra-curricular activities to extend the curriculum. Visits by theatre groups, musicians and artists are used as the focus for work across the school. For example, pupils in Year 5 are comparing the production of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' given by a theatre company to a cartoon version of the play. There is planned use of local professional people to talk about their careers. These include a doctor, a vet, a soldier, a policeman and a journalist. This programme of visits is used systematically to widen pupils' horizons and to support aspects of the school's provision for PSHE. This is well developed and 'circle time' is a useful focus for this in most classes.
22. A wide range of sports clubs supplement the day to day provision. The school has very high quality outside facilities that enable it to support these activities very well. Pupils with particular sporting talents are directed to Bristol Rovers Football club or Gloucestershire County Cricket club for further opportunities. Talented pupils receive additional music tuition and the school orchestra is well attended.
23. There have been recent initiatives to develop the National Literacy Strategy further, although these have had a limited impact so far in the older classes. Reading, as a major focus for the school's development is showing signs of improvement as is the impact of the monitoring of mathematics. Science has made very significant gains through close monitoring which has ensured development of the subject. Standards have improved significantly. The school is aware of the need to review and evaluate current practice in order to raise standards in Years 3 to 6. Moves to adapt and develop the mathematics curriculum and ways of teaching it are further forward. The school is conscious of the need to develop opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical knowledge in a range of different circumstances.
24. The school has positive strategies in place for providing all pupils with equal access to the curriculum. Special educational needs provision is good. Support is available in most classes and the school has high standards of pastoral care. The good accommodation is very well maintained. Resources are good and promote effective learning, with colourful displays enhancing the school environment.

## **Care, guidance and support**

The school provides a good standard of care for its pupils through informal support and very good relationships. Pupils' views on school life and their own progress are valued and heeded; they are well cared for physically and emotionally.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are very good procedures for involving pupils in the life of the school.

- Support for pupils, although largely informal, is good; arrangements for induction into the reception class is especially good.
- A strong ethos of care ensures pupils' physical and emotional well-being.

### **Commentary**

25. Pupils feel that their voice is heard in the school. There is a school council with representatives from all classes, including reception. It meets weekly, and members consult with and feed back to their classmates. Pupils themselves are responsible for chairing and recording the meetings. As well as discussions about play equipment, the council addresses matters such as unacceptable behaviour. The peer mediation system gives pupils the opportunity to resolve their own differences without involving adults. The school council takes its job seriously and its members believe that staff listen to them. Pupils are involved in discussions about targets and most know what their targets are.
26. The school monitors pupils' personal development well. Satisfactory assessment procedures are in place. Support is mostly informal, but is based securely on very good relationships and a detailed knowledge of each child's background. Pupils themselves feel confident about the support available; in pre-inspection questionnaires, 92 per cent of pupils felt that they had a good, trusting relationship with at least one adult in school. The high take-up rate of the wide range of extra-curricular events and clubs ensures that most pupils are well known to a variety of adults and seen in a range of settings. Procedures for settling children in when they join the reception class are very good and parents are overwhelmingly happy with those arrangements.
27. There are good procedures for ensuring pupils' health, safety and well-being. The headteacher is the designated person for child protection purposes. All staff, including support staff, have been trained in child protection awareness and all know what action to take in cases of concern. Health and safety is in the hands of a governor with professional experience in the subject; all the necessary procedures are in place. Competent arrangements exist for dealing with pupils' medical needs. The school works hard to promote healthy diets - mid-morning snacks are apples and bananas rather than crisps and pupils are encouraged to have water available at all times. Year 6 pupils visit the 'Life Skills' road show during the school's summer PSHE week. The school nurse is available for 'drop-in' consultations every week and local police talk to pupils about their personal safety. Pupils decide which charity they wish to support and are given the responsibility of organising fund-raising events.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

This is a school that values its links with parents and the community and is, in turn, valued by them. It is seen as friendly and accessible and provides relevant and appropriate information. Very good community links add reality to pupils' learning and good relationships with partner institutions smooth transfer arrangements.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school has a welcoming atmosphere and parents appreciate easy informal access to staff
- Information about school activities and children's progress is timely, concise and written in parent-friendly language.
- A wide range of community links enrich pupils' learning.
- Good relationships with partner institutions ease pupils' progress through the various stages of education.

### **Commentary**

28. Links with parents are good; the school values these links and has created a welcoming atmosphere in school. Parents of children in the reception class are welcome to bring them into school in the mornings to help settle them. Parents are encouraged to attend school events,

especially assemblies. A number of parents work voluntarily in school; those seen during the inspection felt that they were valued and treated as members of the school team. Parent governors are well known at the school gate and happy to act as a channel of communication between parents and school. All of the parents who responded to the Ofsted pre-inspection questionnaire said that they would be happy to approach the school with a problem. A lively and active parent teacher association works hard to promote social links between school parents and community as well as raise funds for pupils' benefit.

29. The school provides parents with good quality information. Regular newsletters, written in accessible, parent-friendly language, inform parents about school events. Class teachers send out letters detailing the work their classes will be doing over the ensuing term. Both the school prospectus and the governing body's annual report are informative whilst being informal in tone and have improved since the previous inspection when they were found wanting. Parents have three formal opportunities a year to meet their children's class teachers and all the parents seen during the inspection valued the easy informal access they had to staff; many minor problems are resolved by a quick word when the child is delivered or collected. Pupils' annual reports, though concise, provide parents with a comprehensive overview of the year's work; children (including those in the reception class) add their own view of their work. The school uses questionnaires to get parents' views on matters such as the length of the school day or the annual report format. In the pre-inspection questionnaires, a significant minority of respondents felt that they were insufficiently consulted about school matters and insufficiently informed about children's progress. Inspection evidence does not support these concerns. The school is open and accessible to parents and the information it provides is good.
30. Very good community links are well utilised to add an extra dimension to children's learning. For example, a doctor talked to Year 6 about smoking in preparation for a debate on banning smoking in public places; a local journalist talked to Year 5 about her work, Year 2 visited the town's fire station in connection with their study of the Great Fire of London and Year 6, in support of work on citizenship, role-played a trial at Stroud Magistrates Court.
31. There are good links with partner institutions. Very good liaison with the on-site 'Kindergarten' ensures that children's transfer to the reception class is almost imperceptible. The school works in conjunction with other local primary schools on joint projects such as an arts week and various sports events. Staff have joint training days. There are good relations with the secondary school to which the majority of pupils transfer. Parents are consulted on matters such as friendship groups and pupils have a familiarisation visit. A teacher from the secondary school's modern languages department visits weekly to give Year 6 a taste of modern languages (French, German or Japanese). Students from the secondary school volunteer to assist at sports events.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The quality of leadership and management is good. The headteacher and the deputy headteacher have a clear vision for the school and provide strong and united leadership. The school is managed effectively. Most staff with subject responsibilities lead and manage their subjects well. The governance of the school is good and all statutory requirements are met.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher and governing body have a shared view of the strengths and areas for improvement within the school.
- A comprehensive school improvement plan provides clear direction for the current and future work of the school.
- The English co-ordinator has insufficient opportunities to monitor lessons in order to improve the use of assessment to help match work to pupils' abilities more closely, especially in the older classes.

- The governing body contributes effective support to the school under the very able direction of the chair.
- Financial planning is very good and is taking account of future needs of the school in relation to the falling roll.

## Commentary

32. Since his appointment, 18 months ago, the headteacher has worked hard to raise standards within the school. He is ably assisted by the deputy headteacher, who has provided constant support during recent changes in staff and class organisation caused by illness and the falling roll. The headteacher has already begun to address the issues of low standards in English by, for example, undertaking close analysis of pupils' performance in order to identify strengths and weaknesses. He has further developed a system of tracking the performance of individual pupils in reading in order to ensure that progress is maintained. His own subject leadership has already had a significant impact on raising standards in ICT and mathematics in the school. He has undertaken lesson observation in mathematics and these are having an effect although there is still more work to be done in ensuring assessment is used to inform planning to meet the needs of all pupils, especially in the older classes.
33. Good systems contribute to the effective leadership and governance of the school. The headteacher keeps the governing body fully informed of the results of any analyses undertaken so they are fully informed about the standards in the school, giving them a shared view of the school's needs in terms of pupils' achievement. They recognise the areas requiring improvement. Their work is aided by a clear and thorough school improvement plan that provides the direction for raising standards. For example, last year it was discovered that reading was a key factor in limiting some pupils' progress and achievement. As a result of actions taken, particularly with younger children, there have been significant improvements in reading ages but these have yet to be felt at the top end of the school. School priorities are linked to local educational and national priorities, such as the 'Primary Leadership Programme'. All actions for improvement have the persons responsible, deadlines and costs clearly set out.
34. The headteacher has continued to implement a good system of performance management that gives a focus to the work of individual members of staff and stringent evaluations enable him to monitor the impact of any initiatives. There is a good match of staff to subject responsibilities, in the main. Good systems are in place for ensuring appropriate training is available, including that for newly qualified teachers. Leadership in mathematics, science, ICT, RE and music are good or better. Staff regularly monitor planning and on a rotational basis are released to monitor the quality of teaching. The results of any findings are acted upon, for example, when recent monitoring found that the different learning styles of pupils were not always being catered for, the school undertook inset training to address the issue. However, the role of the literacy co-ordinator who has the necessary enthusiasm, determination and expertise, needs further expansion if improvements are going to result in the required improvement in achievement in this subject. The headteacher is fully aware that continuing the programme for the regular monitoring of the teaching of English, especially in Years 3 to 6, is essential in order to drive up standards.
35. The governing body is effective in its role. The chair provides very good leadership to a dedicated and skilled group of people who have the interests of the school at heart and are willing to give generously of their time to fulfil their duties as governors. They are ambitious for their school and are committed to endorsing it within the community. Recent close involvement in setting up an informative web site demonstrates their determination to promote their school and all its qualities. Two governors regularly meet with the special educational needs team in order to gain a good understanding of the progress of the current initiative in reading. This enables governors to assess whether they are providing best value for the pupils. The school is committed to full inclusion; governors and staff ensure that all pupils have access to the full curriculum and where possible the extra curriculum.



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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	518,621
Total expenditure	528,449
Expenditure per pupil	2,810

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	69,357
Balance carried forward to the next	59,529

36. The finances of the school are very effectively controlled by the headteacher and the governing body. They are assisted by a very capable bursar. The finance committee meets regularly and allocates funds to current and future projects. Their meetings are managed efficiently. Costs per pupil are average. Money is allocated to subject co-ordinators to support their work and there are well-organised financial procedures in place to monitor purchasing. Prudent financial planning in the past has resulted in the school being able to maintain its seven classes and keep the high staff ratio for the current year by using the significant carry forward it has accumulated. The reduction in the number of classes, which is inevitable, is being well managed. The principles of best value are adhered to well and specific grants are used for their intended purposes.

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

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

37. There are 16 children in the reception class who follow the Foundation Stage curriculum. All joined the reception class in the autumn term. The vast majority have attended the on-site 'Kindergarten' with which the reception class teacher has very close and productive links. This enables children to enter full-time education with little anxiety and has a very beneficial impact on their learning. They adjust to school easily. The overall attainment on entry of the current group is average, but this is not always the case. In some years a number of children start school with below average skills and struggle to meet the Early Learning Goals especially in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development as was the case for a group currently in Year 1. Assessment is used very productively. The class teacher is able to identify children who have any particular needs and she ensures that these needs are met within the very good provision. The teacher makes certain that all children achieve well and some achieve very well in relation to their ability. This means that the vast majority of the present group of reception children will certainly reach the Early Learning Goals in all areas and a very significant number will exceed them. This area of the school's work continues to be a particular strength as it was at the time of the previous inspection.

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

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

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

- All adults provide very good role models. They know the children very well.
- The organisation of the classroom and daily routines not only encourages independence, but also gives opportunities for children to work with adults in small groups.
- Relaxed and profitable 'starts to the day' ensure children feel very secure and they quickly settle to very purposeful activities.

#### **Commentary**

38. Teaching is very good. The teacher and all other adults are very clear about what it is children need to learn. This means that they concentrate on developing children's willingness to take part thus helping them to foster a desire to learn. All adults focus on developing children's social skills alongside every area of learning. An appropriate range of self-initiated and adult led activities are very well planned and enable children to feel secure right from the start of the day. Children always achieve well and some very well since, before starting school, some have had limited experiences of the world beyond their own homes. Children learn how to relate to one another and to adults in a very wide range of stimulating situations. In one observed lesson they took turns to talk about and taste lychees, star fruit and pineapples, donated by a local greengrocer. They were able to make useful comparisons and draw on previous experiences to describe the different tastes and textures very productively. As this example shows, children are eager to explore and are encouraged to find out for themselves. They exhibit good behaviour and achieve well in this area to exceed the expected goals.

### **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Every opportunity is taken to help each child develop their speaking and listening skills.
- Children's reading and writing skills are fostered very well within closely structured and profitable sessions.

## **Commentary**

39. Children achieve well and reach good standards because teaching is very effective and has high expectations. It takes account of the needs of each individual. Teaching inspires all children to want to learn to read and write and also to listen and talk. The classroom provides a wealth of opportunities for children to do this as they discuss with adults and one another. They are keen to try out early writing skills and very enthusiastically described the sounds made by different letters, accompanied by the actions that support their understanding of how some letter sounds work together. They are able to use this knowledge as they quickly begin to recognise words and start to read text in their reading books. The teacher has highly developed systems to encourage word recognition and correct letter formation. This makes certain that progress is tracked carefully and profitably so children build on previous learning effectively. Parents are encouraged to support learning in this area at home. 'Home and school' comment books are used very well to promote additional learning opportunities. Some children are not able to share books at home and this hinders their progress. However, the teacher's determination to promote this area every day pays dividends and ensures all children ultimately do well. They are almost all likely to meet the Early Learning Goals and a very significant number will surpass them.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The teacher plans stimulating activities.
- There are very good quality resources to support practical activities.
- Small group activities, such as role-play in the 'greengrocer's shop', encourage the development of the language of mathematics.

## **Commentary**

40. High quality teaching makes sure that children take part in well-structured, practical activities that promote their awareness and understanding of the value of numbers. They achieve well and the vast majority are more than likely to reach the anticipated standards by the end of the year. A significant number will do even better and will exceed the expected levels. There are detailed plans to make sure that children learn successfully and assessments provide clear guidance for the teacher to ensure that lessons challenge and extend children's knowledge within a wealth of well-focused tasks. The classroom has useful number displays for children to refer to and the teacher takes care to use counting games and real-life situations that involve number whenever possible. Children produce graphs of the numbers of people in their families. They learn how to identify shapes by name and how two groups of three when joined together make six. They count on and back and are offered practical opportunities to weigh and measure and are able to sequence events.

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

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

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- High quality additional opportunities, especially in the science and ICT elements, are provided to support this aspect of learning.
- Quality discussion about events and the world around them takes place between the children, the teacher, learning support workers and other helpers.

## **Commentary**

41. Teaching in this area is very good. It develops children's confidence to explore and find out for themselves. It promotes and broadens their awareness and knowledge of the world around them. They learn very well so the vast majority meet and a very significant number exceed the expected goals. Some children have limited real life experiences to draw on before they start school and as the teacher is very familiar with the needs of each child she makes sure they achieve well in relation to their previous knowledge. The tasks that are prepared for them are motivating and the quality of the teacher's and her assistants' discussion ensures all children are fully involved and are continually adding to their knowledge. They are challenged to think and to express their thoughts about why things happen. For instance, they have planted potatoes and different types of beans in order to draw comparisons between their rates of growth as they watch them grow. Children are taken on visits away from school in order to broaden their horizons.
42. Children are given ample opportunities to work at the computer both independently and with help. For example, all children achieved very well and reached high standards when they used a 'drawing programme'. They produced colourful weather pictures showing their very good mouse control. They had the capability to select different colours and different textures and then used a 'text box' to add their names to the finished product. Some needed a little help and guidance but the majority were able to switch on the computer, log on and load the programme following the teacher's initial introduction and managed the task independently. Carefully planned topics help children to consider the work of different people from the community. They explore Christian beliefs and the faiths of other people and this ensures the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus are followed. An understanding of past events and their place within them is encouraged well. Construction sets are of a particularly high quality and are used with a real purpose in mind as are their own designs for making large model vehicles such as a fire-engine and a greengrocer's van out of scrap materials.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **very good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Opportunities for developing hand eye co-ordination and body control are very good and are presented to children in many different and stimulating ways.

## **Commentary**

43. Achievement in this area is good and standards are at least average and many children reach higher levels. Teaching is very good and ensures that both the indoor and stimulating outdoor environments are used to promote the development of physical skills. Large climbing apparatus are available in both the hall and outside in the playground. Children use these frequently to explore and climb in order to develop their spatial awareness. Bikes, and other ride-on toys are available in the secure outside play area and make sure they gain balancing techniques. Children often have access to throwing games that increase their hand-eye co-ordination very effectively.

44. A session in the hall with a parachute created terrific excitement and very productive outcomes as children worked co-operatively to raise the canopy, counting and working together to ensure there was sufficient height to move around underneath it. This meant that if they were quick enough they could change places dodging and avoiding one another. They also followed the teacher's instructions closely and sensibly and showed no anxiety about taking part, as they created a tent to sit inside with one child acting as the centre pole. Great fun was had by all.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The teacher plans well for different role play scenarios and 'small world' play that stimulate children's imagination.
- A range of different and good quality art equipment and resources are introduced to the children.

### **Commentary**

45. Children are taught very well in this area. They achieve well, with some having to develop their creativity from a fairly low starting point because they are not used to playing imaginatively. They begin to develop their skills in using colour and experimenting with different shapes and textures because the teacher encourages their independence and gives them numerous opportunities to find things out for themselves. Their standards are at least in line with those expected at the end of the reception year and a large percentage will go beyond the expected goals. They are given ample opportunities to paint, draw, model, use collage materials and sculpt. Musical opportunities are made available frequently to the children and they are learning how to hold musical instruments correctly. They are given lots of opportunities to dress-up and play imaginatively. They use 'small world' equipment to create scenes that they discuss with helpers. The classroom and work space reflect the attention given to this area of the curriculum. Colourful displays celebrate the many different types of activities that are offered. Photographs depict many different 'role play' settings such as an African street market, the dentist and the 'The Three Bears' House'.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2**

### **English**

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' speaking and listening skills are above average across the school.
- Pupils' reading and writing are above average by Year 2 because all pupils achieve well.
- Overall standards in reading and writing are below average in Year 6.
- The co-ordinator has the necessary skills to lead the subject but her monitoring role is under-developed, especially in the older classes, and does not help to ensure that lessons have activities matched to different abilities or that assessment and marking are used consistently to drive up standards.
- The teaching of basic skills is good.

### **Commentary**

46. Most pupils enter Year 1 with good speaking and listening skills and teachers provide regular opportunities for discussion and collaborative learning which help pupils to build on these skills as they move through the school. Their standards are above average. This was seen in Year 6 where pupils had been well prepared for a debate on the question of smoking in public places.

They had researched the topic extensively and had questioned a local doctor about the dangers of smoking.

47. Pupils' standards in reading and writing are currently above average in Year 2 because pupils of all abilities achieve well. 'Guided reading' sessions are well established, effectively organised and have been instrumental in enabling pupils to read books from the reading scheme with understanding and expression. Skills are well established and pupils across the range of abilities are independent and confident readers. Pupils borrow books from the well-stocked school library and a significant number read a wide range of books at home which provide more challenge than some of those read in school. These younger pupils have regular opportunities to write for a variety of different purposes. The quality of their writing is high, with accurate spelling, punctuation and an interesting use of vocabulary. Pupils present their work well although joined handwriting is not established.
48. There has been some curriculum development this year and initiatives are slowly taking effect but they have come too late to ensure that the current Year 6 pupils will reach expected levels. Evidence from the inspection confirms that too few pupils are working at the anticipated level and very few are performing at the higher level. However, in Year 5 standards are higher and are showing improvement. An analysis of the school's own tracking procedures indicates that pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6 has been unsatisfactory in both reading and writing in the past. This under-achievement has been across all ability groups and in all junior classes and has been reflected in pupils' results in national tests for 11 year olds in 2002 and 2003 and the school has not met its targets. As such, standards are lower than those reported in the previous inspection report.
49. The quality of teaching observed during the inspection was satisfactory overall, but better in the younger classes. All teachers place a strong emphasis on the structured teaching of basic skills. Teachers make good use of ICT to support learning. For example in Year 2, the teacher used images to explain the link between speech bubbles and speech marks. This was reinforced profitably by additional work in the computer suite. A good working atmosphere and good relationships underpin learning in most classes. Working routines are established and pupils work conscientiously even when not directly supervised. Only when introductions are too long do pupils grow restless and inattentive.
50. Daily guided reading sessions have been instituted in all junior classes this year. This is beginning to have an impact on pupils' attainment in reading. All pupils across the ability range use a range of strategies to decode unfamiliar text. However, the reliance on a published scheme to structure reading is having a limiting effect on pupils' knowledge and understanding of a range of literature. The better readers in Year 6 all have favourite authors and read widely at home. However, they did not understand the term genre, could not compare and contrast different authors or evaluate critically what they read. Recent initiatives have featured displays of 'target authors' such as Jacqueline Wilson and Michael Morpurgo but there is too much reliance in lessons on extracts rather than an encouragement to read whole books. As a result pupils' higher reading skills, such as analysing the plot, looking at the motivation of characters, awareness of recurrent themes and using inference and deduction are insufficiently developed.
51. Evidence from the scrutiny of books and folders indicate that in Years 3 to 6 the majority of work consists of highly structured grammar and comprehension exercises. There is also a significant reliance on worksheets from published schemes. There are occasional, good examples of pupils' writing on display in classrooms. For example, in Year 5 pupils' enthusiasm for myths and legends in their Ancient Greeks' topic was reflected in an attractive classroom display that incorporated some lively writing. However, in the junior classes opportunities for pupils to write creatively or for different purposes are too limited. Pupils of all abilities often do the same tasks. Although support staff relate well to, and help lower attaining pupils, tasks are not always matched appropriately to their learning needs. However, information from assessments is used well to identify those pupils who would benefit from intervention strategies, either by withdrawal for individual help or for group support and new initiatives in this area are beginning to have an impact.

52. Work in pupils' books is marked regularly, although it is seldom evaluative. In Year 6, there are missed opportunities for pupils to receive comments that would help them to reflect on progress towards specific targets, celebrate success in having achieved them and help them to identify the next steps forward. This inhibits pupils' understanding of how they can improve their learning. Although assessment and recording procedures are in place, teachers do not take sufficient account of the information produced to plan for the range of abilities within the older classes.
53. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic. She sets a good example through the quality of her own teaching. However, her management and leadership role is significantly underdeveloped. As a result, her impact on the curriculum and teaching has been limited. There has been insufficient monitoring of teaching and learning to ensure that recent initiatives are being consistently implemented. Although she looks regularly at teachers' planning, she has not had opportunities to assess how effectively that planning is delivered. She is aware of several of the issues identified in this inspection report, but has not been able to develop teaching and learning sufficiently to ensure that pupils in Years 3 to 6 build on the good start they make in Years 1 and 2. She has ensured that teachers have good resources that build on the use made of 'story sacks', introduced to the youngest pupils. She has initiated the use of 'curiosity kits' to engage the interest of boys in Years 3.

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

54. Pupils have satisfactory opportunities for using their literacy skills in other areas of the curriculum. The school is beginning to develop cross curricular links and other subject areas are used as a focus for work in literacy lessons. For example, pupils in Year 2 have researched and written about Van Gogh's life as preparation for looking at his paintings in their art lesson.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress, achieve well and reach above average standards because of good and some very good teaching.
- Good use is made of learning support workers.
- There is an over emphasis on number work and not enough tasks where pupils are required to apply their knowledge and skills in purposeful situations.
- Teachers in Years 3 to 6 do not always use information from assessment and marking to inform future planning.
- Leadership of the subject is good and is securing improvement.

### **Commentary**

55. Standards in mathematics in Year 2 are above average. In 2003, the national test results showed pupils' attainment was well above average in relation to all and similar schools. Performance at the end of Year 2 has exceeded the national average for the last three years. In Year 6, the 2003 national tests show pupils' attainment to be in line with the national averages in relation to all and similar schools. Standards in Year 6 are currently average and pupils are achieving satisfactorily in lessons. However, pupils' standards at the end of Year 6 have been too low in the past. This is because they have not been building on their prior attainment sufficiently well from Year 3 to 6. Improvement is now discernable, and the school's determined effort to improve standards is reflected in the improved results. Standards are now similar to those reported in the previous report, having been below and well below average in the three years prior to 2003. Boys and girls are currently making similar progress.

56. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good overall. In a very good lesson in Year 2, particularly effective planning took account of all pupils' needs and their rates of progress. The work was demanding yet accessible and all pupils learnt very well. The lesson was interesting and challenge was evident as the teacher kept extending and developing pupils' skills and understanding whilst maintaining a very good pace and using a variety of different teaching strategies to involve pupils as much as possible. All pupils were expected to show and be able to explain their mental calculations. In these younger classes pupils' understanding is being continually assessed and future planning adapted to address their needs. A group of children who were already successful at adding two digit numbers were further challenged to apply their learning to a new situation involving the addition and subtraction of money. Their peers, who had failed to master the operation previously, were very ably assisted by a learning support worker so they could succeed and acquire the required skill during the lesson.
57. In Years 3 to 6 the quality of teaching is satisfactory with some strengths. Teachers' planning shows what the intended learning for the day is and this is shared with the pupils. By identifying what it is they expect pupils to be able to do by the end of the lesson there is a clear focus for learning. Teachers in older classes do not, however, always use information from their assessments and marking to inform future planning and challenge for pupils sufficiently well. The starting points to lessons which involve mental calculations are good and pupils respond well to the teachers' demands, but some whole-class teaching lacks sufficient pace and there are missed opportunities to involve pupils in dialogue, despite this being a focus for the school improvement plan for the year.
58. Examples of good support for pupils with special educational needs were seen during the inspection. A governor was seen helping to assess pupils' knowledge of two dimensional shapes on a computer programme before supporting them with a related, practical investigation. Learning support workers show very good knowledge of pupils' abilities and temperaments and support their learning sensitively and well, providing encouragement and clear guidance about a task to a small group of pupils, so they cope well with new ideas and vocabulary. Very able pupils are recognised and are challenged to work outside their year group in order to meet their needs so they can reach higher standards.
59. Some opportunities for pupils to apply their own thinking to new situations or mathematical problems were seen, but the scrutiny of work revealed that much of the work covered is based on number calculations and neglects other areas of mathematics such as shape and space and data handling. An over reliance on worksheets from a published scheme of work often limits the possibilities for applying knowledge and skills to new and challenging situations and this inhibits learning.
60. Leadership of mathematics by the headteacher is good and lesson observations to improve teaching have taken place. Recent changes to subject leadership have already had a significant impact on standards through increased awareness of the need to track pupils' individual progress. The introduction of nationally produced plans and a very worthwhile emphasis on teaching that recognises different learning styles has also contributed to the recent improvements as has the school's involvement in the 'Primary Leadership Programme'. These are, however, going to take more time to have the impact on improvements in teaching and standards that the school is looking to achieve.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

61. Pupils use mathematics successfully and satisfactorily as part of their work in other subjects particularly in younger classes. For example, they use data handling, graphs, tally charts and tables in science and geography. Older pupils extend their understanding of the application of mathematics when they make good use of their measuring skills to make model Viking longboats in history and when calculating the surface area of containers in science.



## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average because all pupils achieve well.
- Teaching is of a high quality and science investigations are promoted very effectively.
- The subject is led very well and the enthusiasm of the co-ordinator enables pupils to take part in exciting projects.
- The way in which pupils' work is kept in Years 5 and 6 detracts from the high quality of the content and does not celebrate the high standards sufficiently well.

### Commentary

62. Standards in science have improved since the previous inspection. Test results at the end of Year 6 for 2003 show standards to be above average in relation to all schools and well above average in comparison with similar schools. At the end of Year 2, teacher assessments show standards to be in the highest five per cent nationally. A well above average number of pupils reach levels beyond that expected at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. Currently pupils in Year 2 are working above expectations, and these are likely to develop even further during the next term. In Year 6 they are already well above the anticipated levels because the pupils have continued to build on their well-developed investigative skills that were established by the end of Year 2. Standards are high because teaching is of such a consistently high quality and not only concentrates on developing factual knowledge but also fosters enquiry skills very effectively. Higher attaining pupils do particularly well in this subject.
63. The Year 6 teacher's very good teaching and skills at leading the subject are not only recognised by the school but also by the local education authority. Her expertise enables her to work as an 'advanced skills teacher'. She helps teachers in other schools to develop their techniques further. In lessons seen with Year 6 pupils, the co-ordinator used her evident skills to challenge, support and develop pupils' understanding of solids, liquids and gases by giving them very interesting and motivating tasks. Pupils gave very informed reasons for their predictions about how the surface area of a container would impact on the rate of evaporation of a liquid, drawing on a wealth of prior knowledge. At the end of their investigations, that took place over two days, pupils evaluated and gave very mature explanations as to why the outcomes were as they were. Without teacher prompts they could make comparative statements such as, "The bigger the surface area the quicker the rate of evaporation".
64. The Year 2 teacher also has talent in this area. Indeed, in one lesson seen, teaching was exceptional. This particular lesson enabled all pupils to achieve very well as they accessed and used equipment independently, making sure they measured small quantities of water very carefully in order to make their tests fair. They were able to explain what they were doing to answer the question, "Will a sunflower grow best in sand or compost?" They planted sunflower seeds with great attention to ensuring the same amounts of compost and sand were in each pot. The recording of their investigations, highlighting what was being done to ensure fairness, was remarkable and was pitched at three different levels of task. This was complimented by the use of the computer by two pupils who worked in complete harmony as they committed their report to a pre-prepared proforma on a screen, completely unaided.
65. The very competent co-ordinator makes certain additional opportunities are offered to pupils through events such as the National Science Challenge which the school enters regularly and has won twice. Pupils are very enthusiastic about taking part in these prestigious competitions. The commitment of the school to supporting pupils' learning and further achievement is evident. After school clubs help pupils develop their knowledge and understanding further and supports the school's determination to make certain they all reach the highest possible standards. The co-ordinator monitors standards through lesson observations and work scrutiny, supports

colleagues by giving demonstration lessons and helps ensure all teachers have a common understanding of the levels that pupils are working at and where more can be achieved. All of this work has a positive and significant impact on standards and achievement. Science books belonging to pupils in Years 1 to 4 are well presented. Pupils' work in Years 5 and 6, however, is not presented in a way that celebrates the high standard of the content. Folders of work, including graphs, records of investigations, plans for experiments and evaluations of work do not show the progress of pupils in a productive way and detracts from the overall high quality outcomes achieved.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in ICT is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' attainment is above average across the school.
- Teachers are confident and have good subject knowledge.
- Resources are good.
- Information and communication technology is used well to support learning across the curriculum.

### **Commentary**

66. At the time of the last report the school's provision in ICT did not meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. The school has successfully addressed this key issue and attainment is now good across the school. The school's resources, including a well equipped computer suite, are used well and ICT is taught successfully both as a set of discrete skills and as a tool to support learning in other subject areas. Pupils are confident and independent users of a wide range of programmes.
67. An extensive programme of on-going in-service training has raised staff confidence and enabled them to see the potential of ICT in advancing pupils' learning across the curriculum. They use it confidently in lessons and also to record the results of assessment and for preparing lessons. All staff are provided with a 'lap-top'.
68. The headteacher has assumed the role of co-ordinator because of staff illness. Since the previous inspection staff development has ensured good progress has been made. A scheme of work is based on national guidelines and all aspects of the curriculum are covered well. Manageable but useful records are kept of pupils' progress in each unit. The school is constantly updating its resources and recent additions include a digital camera which pupils use to record their work in other subjects. A data logger has recently been purchased to further support the very good work with ICT in science which is already complemented very well by the use of a digital microscope.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

69. Teachers make good use of ICT to support a range of subjects. It featured as an integral and profitable part of many lessons seen during the inspection. For example, in a mathematics lesson with Year 3 pupils there was effective and productive use of the teacher's lap-top to reinforce learning about fractions.

## **HUMANITIES**

70. Work in geography and history was not inspected in depth but was sampled. It is not possible, therefore, to make a judgement on overall provision in these two subjects. Evidence about coverage of the curriculum and standards is drawn from one history lesson and one geography lesson, planning, discussions with pupils and an analysis of pupils' work. Religious education is reported in full.

71. On the evidence available through scrutiny of work, it is likely that standards in **geography** will be in line with national averages by the end of Year 6. This would be an improvement since the previous inspection, when standards were judged to be 'below the expected standard'. The one lesson seen with Year 5 pupils was satisfactory with some good opportunities to debate the 'pros and cons' of turning the main street in the town into a pedestrian precinct. The curriculum is soundly planned and enriched by visits, which make the subject interesting for pupils. For example, Year 6 pupils recalled field trips that helped them to study and learn more about rivers because they had benefited from first-hand experiences. In Year 4 good use has been made of pupils' ability to use a digital camera to consider how the environment of the school could be improved by eliminating litter from the 'quiet areas'. Useful links with literacy are made when pupils write brochures to encourage people to visit Wotton under Edge.
72. Evidence suggests that standards in **history** are in line with national averages by Year 6 and that these have been maintained since the previous inspection. Visits and visitors are used well to enrich the subject and make it relevant to pupils so improving their learning. For example, the visit by Year 2 pupils to the fire-station supported work about the changes in fire fighting techniques through the centuries particularly well. Information and communication technology is also used very well to support research as was seen when pupils in Year 3 were shown how to access information about the Vikings from a web-site. They were given step by step guidance on how to log onto and gain information about artefacts and the roles of different historians so they could find out more about the lives of these invaders. There are, however, some missed opportunities for pupils to record their work and write in depth about the topic being studied because of the overuse of published resource materials and worksheets. The analysis of pupils' work showed some chances were overlooked for extending the use of writing skills, especially for higher attaining pupils, although some good links were made between history and literacy when pupils developed their awareness of Greek myths and legends during their project on Ancient Greece.

## **Religious education**

Provision in religious education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good and enables pupils to reach above average standards.
- Drama is used well to promote further understanding of Christian festivals, such as Easter.
- The subject is led well.

### **Commentary**

73. By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils attain standards in religious education that are above those expected within the locally agreed syllabus. The achievement of pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good. This has come about because of the recent extra focus the school has put into monitoring the coverage of the subject and the work that pupils produce. The subject co-ordinator has made sure schemes of work are followed consistently and this has paid dividends. Pupils are making good progress by building on their prior knowledge systematically. They talked with confidence and respect about Christian festivals and showed an awareness of, and understanding about, the similarities and differences of others' beliefs and religions. There have been satisfactory improvements since the previous inspection because standards are higher.
74. Teaching is good and makes certain pupils learn well because teachers have secure subject knowledge. By Year 2, pupils have a good understanding of the moral themes of the stories of Jesus such as 'The Good Samaritan'. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils learnt appropriately about the miracle of the water turning to wine. Pupils in Year 4 re-enacted, successfully, the important events of the Easter story, using identified key reference points in their notes as prompts for their 'play-lets'. These helped develop their understanding of the roles of figures such as Pontius Pilate in an interesting and active way.

75. By Year 6, pupils are beginning to develop a sense of reverence and respect for the beliefs of others. They have learnt about and understand the importance of festivals and celebrations, and their significance for members of particular religions. They can draw inferences about the 'Epiphany' being fact or fiction and consider the story of the creation from a variety of viewpoints displaying a good understanding that there is more than one interpretation. They understand how religious stories and artefacts, visits to holy places, the Bible and other holy books, can help them find out about different beliefs and events.
76. The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject well because she monitors pupils' work and has identified strengths and areas for development. There are more opportunities for further moderation activities scheduled for the coming term. Good links are established with local churches, including visits to the Baptist Church where pupils are able to experience the feelings of being in the baptism pool. The subject makes a good contribution to the moral, social and cultural development of the pupils because they have regular opportunities to learn about different beliefs and traditions as well as developing their own values.

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

77. Work in art and design, design and technology and physical education was not inspected in depth but was sampled. It is not possible, therefore, to make a judgement on overall provision in these three subjects. Evidence about coverage of the curriculum and standards is drawn from planning, discussions with pupils and looking at examples of pupils' work. Music is reported in full.
78. Under the guidance of an experienced co-ordinator, **art and design** has maintained a high profile and attainment is now above average across the school and is better than that reported previously. Art is used appropriately to illustrate work in other curriculum areas and there is also strong emphasis on developing discrete subject specific skills. Standards of display are high and help to create a stimulating learning environment. The scheme of work is based on national guidelines, but these have been adapted and refined over time to create a curriculum which more accurately meets the needs of the school. Assessment and recording procedures are in place and pupils' sketch books provide an ongoing record of their developing skills. The co-ordinator keeps a portfolio of pupils' work and photographic records of displays to help monitor standards successfully.
79. Only one art lesson was observed during the inspection. This was of a high quality. Information and communication technology was used well to display large reproductions of Van Gogh's work so that pupils in Year 2 could see his techniques and reproduce them in their own work. Using thickened paint and glue spreaders, they successfully created an individual sunflower and gained a real insight into Van Gogh's use of colour.
80. In **design and technology** there have been frequent changes of co-ordinator and curriculum development has not kept pace with that in art and design. Good cross curricular links have been established, particularly in Years 1 and 2 but it is largely taught as a discrete subject in Years 3 to 6. Links with ICT have yet to be developed.
81. Although no lessons in **physical education** were seen during the inspection, documentation and discussion with pupils show clearly that the curriculum is appropriate and covers all elements of the subject effectively as was reported in the last inspection. The provision of a wide range of additional sporting activities is a strength of the subject. Staff training has been undertaken to ensure that less confident members of staff are being supported to develop their teaching further.

## **Music**

Provision for music is **good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above average because teaching is good.
- Pupils are enthusiastic and they are motivated to learn.
- Resources are good.
- The provision of an extensive range of extra opportunities supports pupils' learning well.
- The subject is led well by an informed and enthusiastic co-ordinator.

## **Commentary**

82. In the two lessons observed during the inspection, teaching was good. Planning is effective and ensures pupils stay interested and motivated during lessons. All achieve well and reach above average standards. Pupils throughout the school enjoy the wide range of music making activities on offer. Extra activities provided by peripatetic teachers are a strength of the subject. Additional recorder teaching for all Year 3 pupils is funded by the parents' association so they all receive an extra 'boost' with playing an instrument and practising reading music. Pupils with particular ability and those who just enjoy playing are encouraged and do especially well.

83. Music continues to maintain a high status in the school with standards similar to those reported before. Pupils sing and play enthusiastically both in lessons and in assembly. In Year 3 pupils were seen very competently providing an accompaniment as two pentatonic songs were played and sung at the same time. In Year 1 pupils were challenged to maintain a steady pulse in a variety of ways. Their enthusiasm was very apparent. Pupils are introduced to a variety of music during assemblies because staff have different musical expertise which they often share with the pupils giving them additional inspiration to learn.

84. The plentiful, good quality resources are carefully stored, and the extra space in the school enables music making activities to take place in different rooms. Many and varied musical events are arranged during the year so pupils experience giving live musical performances. For example, the orchestra and choir perform for elderly residents at a local home. Opportunities for pupils to listen to live performances are also arranged. Pupils attend the Cheltenham Festival and hear a diverse selection of music. They listen to both opera and jazz. The orchestra plays in front of the whole school every Friday during the 'praise' assembly. They are guided by the subject co-ordinator who leads the subject well. She has recently introduced a scheme to enable those teachers who are not music specialists to teach the subject with increased confidence.

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

85. Insufficient lessons were seen in this area to make an overall judgement about provision. However, in the one lesson seen with Year 2 pupils, teaching was very good and pupils achieved very well during a profitable debate about making correct choices when confronting situations. The pupils showed maturity as they discussed, in pairs, the conflicts that existed between taking the right or wrong action.

86. Discussions with the teacher taking responsibility for this area were held and show it is an aspect of learning that the school is currently developing further. The whole school has been working on providing a unified approach. There is an appropriate emphasis placed on sex and relationships information, and drugs and alcohol education. The school dedicates curriculum time to developing this area on agreed themes. Currently Year 4 are looking for ways to care for and improve their environment and their learning and interest were well-supported by the visit of the Mayor and a local councillor to promote the town's re-cycling programme. This visit also gave pupils an insight into how democracy works as the visitors explained their roles within the community. The school council plays a useful role in developing pupils' experiences of debating and resolving issues. They understand how to chair their own meetings.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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