

# INSPECTION REPORT

**CULHAM PAROCHIAL CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Culham near Abingdon

LEA area: Oxfordshire

Unique reference number: 123132

Headteacher: Mrs S Rimmer

Lead inspector: John Lilly

Dates of inspection: 26 – 27 January 2004

Inspection number: 260766

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:	Church of England - Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	47
School address:	High Street Culham Abingdon Oxfordshire
Postcode:	OX14 4NB
Telephone number:	01235 521766
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email	<a href="mailto:Office.3190@culham.oxon.sch.uk">Office.3190@culham.oxon.sch.uk</a>
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Melanie Jefferies
Date of previous inspection:	12 October 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Culham is a very small school with 47 girls and boys on roll between the ages of four and eleven. The school roll is growing. It is a voluntary controlled Church of England school. There is an independent pre-school adjacent to the school site. The school serves children from two villages and a wider rural area. No pupils are eligible for free school meals but this does not mean that all families are affluent. The social and economic backgrounds of the children are wide and broadly match the national average. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need is above average but the total number with special educational needs is below average. There are a few pupils with other than white/British backgrounds, but all speak English as their first language. The number of pupils who join or leave the school other than at reception year or at the end of Year 6 is average. The school gained an Achievement Award in 2003.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
12487	John Lilly	Lead inspector	The Foundation Stage English History Religious education Special educational needs English as an additional language Personal, social and health education
9614	Carolyn Webb	Lay inspector	
2210	Shree Lekha Mistry	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Geography Music Physical education

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## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	6-7
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	8-10
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	10-15
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	15-16
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS</b>	17-30
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES ONE AND TWO</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	31

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Culham is a good school** with many very good features. The headteacher provides very clear leadership and staff provide fine role models for children, working together as a close-knit, ambitious and purposeful team. They create a very good place in which to learn and a warm but strong ethos within which pupils develop as rounded and confident young people. Behaviour, relationships and attitudes towards the work and towards others are very good. Teaching is sound in Years 1 and 2 and often good, and good and often very good in Years 3 to 6. Consequently all children achieve well by the end of Year 6 and most attain above average standards. They are very well prepared for secondary education. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The head teacher gives very clear and determined leadership.
- The school's values and family atmosphere provide a very good place in which to learn and develop.
- Teaching is good and often very good.
- The range of learning opportunities for reception children has strengths but is too narrow. This is due in part to accommodation that is too small.
- Pupils develop very well as young people, behave very well and are keen and eager to learn.
- Management is good and staff work to a common, ambitious purpose.
- Progress in Years 3 to 6 is better than in Years 1 and 2.
- Pupils' ability to work independently is not fully developed.

Improvement has been good since the last inspection (1998) and in some areas very good. Even so, provision for reception children is still unsatisfactory despite some improvement and attainment by the end of Year 2 has declined. This decline, however, has been reversed and is now well set for further improvement.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	E*	A*	B	B
mathematics	E*	A	A	A
science	E*	A*	A*	A*

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

The table above should be treated with caution when the number of pupils in year group is small because one or two pupils can alter comparisons very significantly and change comparisons year by year, for example 2001. The very good picture in 2003 is borne out by this inspection, namely that standards attained in Year 6 are above and often well above average. (An \* shows performance in the top or bottom five per cent of schools nationally and of similar context). Standards are being maintained at this very high level. **All pupils achieve well** as shown by the good progress between Years 3 and 6. The picture is not so good at Year 2. Results in national tests and assessments in 2003 in reading, writing, and mathematics were well below average and, for science, low. This followed a period of several years of decline. This inspection finds that attainment in Year 2 has improved and is now broadly average.

Children join the reception year with broadly average attainment and by the end of this year achieve most but not all of the goals set nationally for the end of that year, but few children will exceed them.

**The personal development of children, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good** and this shows in very good behaviour, relationships and attitudes to learning, and very good attendance.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides a good quality of education** with many very good features. The curriculum has **good** breadth, balance and relevance. **Teaching is good overall**. This supports good quality learning and progress, and high achievement. Supporting this high performance is a very strong partnership with parents, very strong partnership with other schools and the community, and the very good personal development of the pupils. It is underpinned by very good care, welfare and guidance especially of pupils with special educational needs.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are good**. The headteacher provides very good leadership for staff and children alike. This is supported by good management and good governance backed by efficient planning and helpful policies. These provide secure foundations for future improvement.

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

Parents value the school highly and willingly play their full part in the school's success. They value in particular the fact that their children are happy at school and are keen to learn, and also appreciate the clarity and helpfulness of reports and consultation evenings.

Children say how much they value their school and the interesting work. They like the way their views are taken into account and are proud of their achievements.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Increase the range and quality of learning opportunities for children in the reception year.
- Improve the rate of progress of pupils in Years 1 and 2.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to learn independently.

The school meets all statutory requirements.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Attainment by the end of Year 6 is above average overall. Although rate of progress varies, all pupils make at least good progress as they move through the school and their achievement is good.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of attainment by the end of Year 6 are well above average.
- Achievement by the end of Year 6 is very high.
- Progress is better in Years 3 to 6 than in Years 1 and 2.

#### Commentary

1. Children join the school just before their fifth birthday with broadly average attainment and most leave Year 6 with very high attainment. This shows good progress and high achievement. Pupils reach their potential because they do well.
2. Judging from pupils who have moved to Year 1 from the reception year, progress there has been too slow because the breadth of provision is inadequate. Most pupils achieve the early learning goals set for the end of the reception but few will exceed them, especially in the area of personal and social development. This hinders learning in Year 1.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	E*	A*	B	B
mathematics	E*	A	A	A
science	E*	A*	A*	A*

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

3. The apparent decline in 2001 was due to the low prior attainment of a few pupils – in very small schools a single child can significantly change the comparisons against national averages. Standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6 in both lessons and also in national tests are well above average overall and there has been improvement since the last inspection. In national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2003, results were above the national average in English, and well above in mathematics and science. The improvement in attainment between Years 3 and 6 is much greater than in similar schools and this shows high achievement. The improvement trend over recent years is not marked because standards are already very high.



Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
Reading	A	D	E	E*
Writing	B	D	E	E*
Mathematics	C	D	E*	E*

*Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average  
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

- Standards in national tests and assessments at the end of Year 2 have declined over recent years and were well below average in 2003 in reading, writing, mathematics and science and very low when compared with similar schools. Managers and governors were concerned about this trend and took action; subsequently the attainment of children currently in Year 2 has improved. Their attainment in English, mathematics and science is now in line with national expectations and promises to show average attainment in national tests and assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2004. Even so, pupils make much better progress in Years 3 to 6 than in Years 1 and 2. This is in part caused by inadequacies in the provision for reception-aged children but is also in part because teaching is better in Years 3 to 6 than in Years 1 and 2.
- Attainment in information and communication technology is high. In all other subjects all pupils make good progress relative to their ability, and most reach above average standards. Overall, pupils make good progress at Culham School and achieve high standards.

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

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, attendance and punctuality are very good: relationships are excellent. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Attendance is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are proud of their school, and their attendance is above the national average.
- Development of pupils' spirituality, moral values, social skills and cultural knowledge is very good.

### **Commentary**

- Pupils like their school and arrive early in the mornings, keen to begin their lessons. Registration provides a positive start to the day and pupils enjoy learning though many still wait for adult direction before doing something on their own. They try hard to please their teachers and work very well with each other, aware of and supporting those with special educational or other needs. As a result of the strong Christian ethos and excellent relationships, the atmosphere in school is caring, friendly and supportive. Pupils like their star rewards, value the special head teacher's award, and enjoy celebrating these with their peers in the Friday assembly. Such highlights as honesty and friendship on the 'value tree' in the largest classroom are a visible recognition and celebration of their achievements in all fields.
- Very good spirituality is developed through the curriculum as well as through assemblies. The sung rendition of the Lord's Prayer during the inspection was very moving. Pupils are naturally curious about and respectful of other religions and traditions. When studying Judaism, for example, they were interested to learn of the rules governing the preparation and serving of kosher food. Pupils' understanding and appreciation of stories and music from other countries and traditions are very good. Alongside this, many opportunities in music, art and literacy, enriched through history and geography topics, lead to good cultural development, preparing pupils well for life in a multi-cultural society.

8. Pupils' moral development is very good: understanding the need for rules they try hard to keep them. The school operates as a self-disciplining society, within which all quickly develop a sense of natural justice. Sanctions, other than teachers' disappointment, are rarely necessary. Pupils' behaviour and their social development are very good. From the time they arrive, children learn to share and to take turns although development becomes better once they are in Year 2. They enjoy each other's company and all ages play well together, the oldest caring very well for younger pupils. Bullying is not tolerated and very rarely occurs in this harmonious school. There have been no exclusions in the past twelve months.
9. Pupils' social development is good and, when given opportunities to take responsibility, they enjoy and carry out their duties as litter and library monitors conscientiously. School councillors are proud to represent the views of their peers and to be consulted about decisions taken by the governors. As yet, despite encouragement from the headteacher, they are reluctant to take more responsibility for the council, relying on her to direct them. There are opportunities for the school to build upon the pupils' strong capacity and desire for greater independence but full advantage is restricted by overly controlled teaching. They develop confidence and self-reliance as they progress through the school and are well prepared for transfer to secondary school.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.0	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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

10. Attendance is very good and this contributes to the good achievement by Year 6. Pupils attend school so well because they are happy in school, are valued as individuals and know their work is worthwhile. This reflects the high priority the school places on encouraging good attendance.

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teachers are very well deployed. They know and care for their pupils very well and this underpins the good provision.

**Teaching and learning**

Teaching is good with some very strong features. Learning is good and results in good achievement.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is very well planned to meet the learning needs of all pupils.
- Assessment is used very effectively to evaluate progress and show pupils how to improve.
- Children are keen and eager to do well.
- Teaching assistants make a major contribution to learning.
- Teachers develop the children's speaking and listening skills well, helping them to order their thoughts through talk.
- Teaching in some lessons is overly controlled, missing opportunities for children to learn independently.
- Teachers make very good use of homework in Years 3 to 6 but these links with home are not so effective in Years 1 and 2.

**Commentary**

11. Teaching is a strength of the school. It is always good in Years 3 to 6 and often very good. In Years 1 and 2, it is always sound and often good. This difference is reflected in the pupils' different progress and achievement. In Year 1, pupils do not have well developed skills in managing their own learning and, therefore, their learning tends to vary in quality between one lesson and the next. They are not natural learners and are too dependent on direction by the teacher. This reflects slow development of their personal and social skills in the reception year. However, learning is much better in Year 2 and this allows the teaching to be much more effective. In a group guided-reading session, the teaching was well planned and had drive and challenge. The Year 2 pupils responded with close attention and thought, and their contributions were of a high standard.
12. The teaching in Years 3 to 6 is very expert across all subjects, in part because different teachers often take the subjects in which they are most expert. The pupils' learning becomes increasingly more independent as they become more skilled at evaluating their own work and seeing ways to improve. In discussion, older pupils have a very good idea as to whether they are doing well enough or not. They are ambitious learners. Even so, in some lessons the teachers tend to constrict the learning, missing the opportunities for children to extend their learning independently. Although the capacity of pupils to evaluate their own learning is developing in Year 2, this is the key difference between the quality of learning in Years 1 and 2, and Years 3 to 6.
13. Strengths in much of the teaching include:
  - Very detailed and expert planning.
  - Very skilled management that allows pupils' to progress to more challenging work.
  - The high expectations of teachers and the way they ensure that pupils meet them.
  - The effective ways that teachers develop pupils' speaking, listening, reading and writing skills in all subject areas; this develops pupils' ability to think and talk through problems and find solutions.
  - Good deployment of the skilled teaching assistants.
  - The effective use of assessment to focus the teaching and guide pupils on how to improve.
  - The effective planning and use of homework in Years 3 to 6.
14. The key difference in the quality of learning and teaching as between satisfactory and very good is the ability of teachers to inspire, excite and motivate pupils. In some lessons the teaching is too structured and directed. This misses important opportunities for the pupils to experiment and follow lines of thought on their own. In these lessons the pupils focus on getting a task done rather than trying on their own to extend their learning.
15. Effective leadership and management underpin the teaching and learning, supported by the way teachers work in strong collaboration and co-operation, sharing concerns and good ideas. However, this collaboration has most effect in Years 3 to 6, and the teacher of the Year 1 and 2 class does not benefit so much from the focused support of colleagues.
16. Very clear support for pupils with special educational needs leads to effective teaching and learning. There is a good policy for gifted and talented pupils and they are well taught and learn well. In discussion, however, very able pupils feel they could be doing even better and say that sometimes they find the work too easy. The teaching and learning is significantly enriched through special events and weekly visits to the local college for swimming and physical education.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 25 lessons or parts of lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	7	13	5	0	0	0

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

17. The judgements as to teaching and learning draw on range of evidence, for example work in books. Teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection in both quality and consistency.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum is good with some very good features.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Careful planning ensures that pupils learn at an appropriate level and that one topic leads sensibly to the next.
- Teachers link learning in one subject well so that it enriches learning in the other subject.
- Provision for personal development is woven effectively into all learning.
- The curriculum for reception children is insufficiently balanced and relevant.

### **Commentary**

18. The curriculum in Years 1 to 6 meets the requirements of National Curriculum and for religious education. Careful planning ensures that it is very well balanced, broad and relevant to the needs of different ages, personalities and abilities. Subjects are given due and equal weight. Provision for reception pupils, although well planned, is too restricted by limitations imposed by inadequate accommodation and a lack of full-time staff support.
19. A strength in the planning, followed by skilful deployment of staff, is the way pupils progress from each topic to the next with proper coverage of the whole curriculum and study appropriate to each age or level of attainment. This is a key reason why achievement is good by the end of Year 6. In Years 3 to 6, the learning comes alive because different teachers and teaching assistants play to their strengths and expertise, sharing their enthusiasm with the pupils. These arrangements allow different teachers to take Years 3 and 4, and Years 5 and 6 separately for literacy, numeracy and science; this is very effective, especially since teachers develop speaking, listening, reading, writing and number work skills through all subjects. Together these strengths make the curriculum highly relevant to the pupils' learning needs.
20. In such a small school the range of clubs and activities is much less wide than usual but the school compensates well for this by special events, partnership activities with other schools, for example sport, and visits and visitors to the school. There is a very good link with a local college and sports centre for swimming and physical education. The school raises and widens the pupils' aspirations as seen in the high quality work on display resulting from a visit from an artist. These well-planned and often innovative activities significantly enrich the curriculum.
21. Good provision for special educational needs and a clear policy for able pupils lead to these pupils having good and appropriate access to the curriculum. The curriculum is well-planned to be equally relevant to girls and boys.
22. A strength of the curriculum is the way provision for personal development is woven into all learning and strongly under-pinned by a well planned personal, social, health and citizenship course. This aspect of the curriculum is strengthened by the very effective way teachers link learning in one subject to learning in another. Consequently, pupils see their learning as a whole. The curriculum builds the pupils' cultural awareness well and they are well prepared for both learning at secondary school and adult life in a multi-cultural world.
23. The restricted accommodation has been positively developed to provide an appropriate place in which to learn, although it still causes inconveniences. The only significant weakness,

however, is in the accommodation for children in reception because it is too small. The outside areas are well maintained with a good environmental pond and excellent 'adventure' equipment.

24. Resources for learning are of good quality and appropriate range overall, although their accessibility is inadequate for reception children. Elsewhere, they are easily accessible to both pupils and teachers. They are usefully extended through sharing arrangements with partner schools. Good use is made of the local built and natural environment.
25. Staff are of sufficient number and have good expertise to meet the demands of the curriculum, and are effectively deployed. An area for development is, however, specialist expertise for 'early years' education.

### **Care, guidance and support**

Pupils are very well cared for and the guidance and support they receive is good. Good child protection guidelines are followed.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pastoral care is very good.
- Pupils' relationships with adults are very good.
- Pupils evaluate their own work but do not frequently write down ways to improve.
- Procedures for monitoring and recording pupils' personal development are good.

### **Commentary**

26. The health and safety of pupils are high priorities for the school. Procedures to ensure these are generally good although children in the reception year do not have an enclosed area for their sole use. Regular risk assessments are carried out and review of security is on-going. Although first-aid is administered by trained staff and practice is good, not all incidents are recorded in order to facilitate monitoring. The designated teacher shares her child protection training with teaching staff and midday supervisors, and good procedures are followed.
27. Teachers know pupils well and, through useful comments on their written work and talking to them in class, ensure that they know where improvement is needed and how to achieve this. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their work and, as a result of the very good relationships they enjoy with adults, are not afraid to ask for help or advice. Those with special educational or other needs are well supported by their peers and teachers. They have clear and individual education plans that are frequently reviewed and acted upon. Pupils are usefully involved in these discussions as are parents. Teachers have a good knowledge of individuals and their capabilities, and effectively monitor and record pupils' personal development.
28. Through personal, social and health education lessons and participation in the local 'Junior Citizenship Day', pupils in Years 5 and 6 learn of the dangers and difficulties they face outside school and of their duties and responsibilities to each other and the community. This helps pupils to gain a thinking and perceptive maturity. Pupils have targets to guide their progress but this important area of guidance offers room for further development, for example, by writing down their plans for immediate improvement. This would help pupils to become more independent, for example by frequently evaluating their success in working towards objectives in their plans. The school promotes good attendance and punctuality very effectively. The quality of provision overall has improved since the last inspection.

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

The school's relationship and communication with parents is very good. Parents' support for the school is very strong. Links with other local schools and colleges, and with the local community are very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school and parents work in very good partnership to further the children's education.
- Very effective links with other schools within the cluster, the local community college and with the local community enrich and extend the children's learning.
- The close and effective links with the church through the team ministry's attendance at and involvement in school strengthen the children's learning and development.

### **Commentary**

29. At the heart of the village community this popular church school has established very close and effective links with parents, who share its ambitions for their children. They value the Christian ethos and are very involved with their children's education, helping them with work at home where they can. Parents give generously of their time, offering practical help, for example with the decoration of the staff room and head teacher's office. Fathers assist with some extra-curricular activities and undertake maintenance projects. Parents' attendance at consultation and other meetings is very good, demonstrating their very close relationship with the school. Support for productions and celebrations of festivals, such as Harvest, Mother's day and Christmas is overwhelming.
30. The parent-teacher association runs many fun and successful fund-raising events, such as the Summer fete, which parents and the local community enjoy and which contributes £4000 a year to school funds. As a result of parents' and village fund-raising for the information communication technology room, parents and local residents are now invited to, and do, use the computers out of school hours, some working alongside their children. 'Locals' are very proud of the school and do their best to support it at all times. Members of the church team ministry take at least five assemblies each term and are always ready with support, guidance and help if these are needed.
31. Communication with parents is good, and they are pleased to be asked for their views and suggestions. They receive good information about happenings at school and future events through regular newsletters. They like and value their children's reports. The reports detail not only what has been covered and how well their child has achieved but also give useful targets, showing how their children can improve. The dialogue between home and school through the reading records and homework diaries is satisfactory and parents can always speak to teachers if they are worried. Even so, some parents feel homework should form an even stronger link between home and school in Years 1 and 2; inspectors agree. Parents of children with special educational or other needs are always appropriately involved in individual education plans and their reviews. They enjoy good communication with staff and are pleased with the support they receive. Provision for children with special educational needs is considerably strengthened by good partnership with specialists such as education psychologists.
32. Very good links with other local schools and colleges are very well used to augment and enhance children's education and to ease their transfer to secondary schools. For instance, physical education lessons led by college staff and students at the sports centre include swimming throughout the year for all ages. Communication with other head teachers is very good and support, for example through shared training within the local cluster of schools, is very valuable. There has been good improvement overall since the last inspection.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are good.

Leadership is good with some very good features. Management is good. Governance is good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides very strong and clear leadership.
- Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
- Monitoring and evaluation are strong, and lead to improvement.
- Management is effective and efficient.
- The management of reception and Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory but the manager of the reception and infant class has too wide a range of responsibilities.

### Commentary

33. The headteacher provides very strong and dynamic leadership for the school, inspiring children and staff through her fine professional and personal example. This has created a very good ethos in which children can learn and develop, and a staff team that work with common purpose, values and direction. Improvement in leadership, management and governance since the last inspection is good.
34. The governing body has recruited a good range of expertise and representation within in its members and has recently reviewed and given greater direction to their work. The way governors work is set out very clearly, and they are highly involved with the life and work of the school. Consequently, they have ensured that the school meets statutory requirements and have helped embed the school's highly inclusive values. They have a good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, for example weaknesses at the Foundation Stage and a pattern of low attainment at the end of Year 2, and are determined to find ways to improve these areas. Working closely with staff, they ensure that special educational needs are met, that financial control is secure and that the school is a safe and healthy place in which to work. They ensure that the school maintains a healthy financial balance and have clear plans for its use. Conscious of the high cost of schools of this type, they work hard to gain best value from investment by careful scrutiny of costs, consulting with others and comparing the way they spend money with practice elsewhere. They recognise the need to increase the number of children in the school as one way of increasing further the value for money and are succeeding in their efforts.

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	166546	Balance from previous year	49016
Total expenditure	183175	Balance carried forward to the next	32366
Expenditure per pupil	3897		

35. The costs per pupil in schools of this size are considerably above the average for all primary schools. The school receives sufficient funds to meet requirements and gains good value from these revenues. In part, this is because it is a well managed school, and this makes the work of the school efficient and effective. The foundation of this management is detailed monitoring that leads to a very clear picture of what is working well and what needs to improve. Improvement is achieved by careful improvement planning, appropriate staff training and thorough-going performance management.
36. Improvement overall since the last inspection has been good, but weaknesses still remain despite strengths in leadership and management. In most areas improvement has been very good, for example in provision for information and communication technology. Very high standards have been maintained at the end of Year 6. However, provision for children in the reception year is still inadequate. There has been a steady decline in standards by the end of

Year 2 but there is now an upward trend. Children join the school with average attainment but attainment by the end of Year 2 until recently was low. This compares with very high attainment by the end of Year 6. These differences cannot be fully explained by any changes in the attainment of children joining the school. Improvements in provision for reception children have not been satisfactory, despite many efforts by the school, including discussions with advisors and visits to other schools. A second weakness is that the manager of the infant section of the school is responsible for all subjects at this level, and for creating a relevant curriculum both for children in reception and pupils in Years 1 and 2. These children have very different needs. These responsibilities are too wide and cover too great a spectrum of expertise for one person to manage.



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

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

37. The last inspection report found that planning, resources and accommodation for children under five required improvement and this remains the case despite some improvement. Since that time, there is national guidance for 'early years' education covering both nursery and the reception years (The Foundation Stage); this guidance recognises more fully the importance of this stage in a child's learning and sets 'early learning goals' (ELGs) to be achieved by the end of the reception year. Currently, children join the school in the term of their fifth birthday and there were two such children at the time of this inspection. Children join the reception year with a wide range of ability but most have reached levels of development expected at that age; current children have slightly above-average attainment. Since the last inspection, the school has improved planning and assessment, and there is now joint planning with the on-site pre-school from which many of the children progress. This shows satisfactory improvement. The pre-school supervisor is a member of the school's governing body and this provides opportunities for further and necessary improvement through closer partnership.
38. In saying that the provision is unsatisfactory, inspectors recognise the problems facing schools of this type. There are very small numbers of these children and this situation causes staffing problems. The accommodation is too small to allow the range of learning through structured play that children of this age need. Although the children are made very welcome in the infant class, for much of the time they are with older children who have very different learning and developmental needs.
39. The school tries hard to overcome these problems. The accommodation is too small and this problem cannot be overcome within the present confines of the building. The school has plans to give easy access to the pre-school outside play area but these have yet to be implemented. Planning for the infant class as a whole now includes specific planning that conforms to national guidance for children in the Foundation Stage. The teaching assistant who works with the infant class is deployed where possible to work with reception children and her teaching is good. Children's progress is monitored using assessment frameworks appropriate to their stage in development and these cover progress within the required six areas of learning.
40. These efforts, however, are hindered by the lack of expertise among staff in meeting the specific learning needs of children of this age and weaknesses in the curriculum and setting. Children of this age need routines that balance group and individual learning, and opportunities to learn through structured play with adults working alongside them to extend and enrich their learning. The school recognises this lack of expertise and the class teacher is taking a course in 'early years' education. Senior management and governors recognise the need to improve provision and are actively seeking ways forward by researching practice in other schools with similar problems to overcome. They are supporting the essential training for staff and beginning to look for ways to work in more productive partnership with the pre-school.
41. Governors are concerned about the apparent low achievement by the end of Year 2. This inspection finds that the causes are in part due to the unsatisfactory provision for children in the reception year. Children do not make the progress they should and join Year 1 under-prepared for the more structured learning this year requires. Consequently, learning habits are not secure and pupils in Year 1 find it difficult to concentrate and show concern for the needs of others. Children told inspectors that they are achieving much more in Year 2 because they now understand how they needed to take more responsibility for their learning and behaviour. The class teacher commented that some Year 1 pupils liked to take part in the structured play activities sometimes provided for reception children, suggesting that they still needed at times this style of learning.

42. Within the restrictions of the inspection insufficient evidence was available to make judgements on knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development, and physical development. Planning for these areas is detailed and appropriate. Children do gain from taking part in the wider provision of the school such as for physical education, events, assemblies and work with computers.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children feel secure and build trusting relationships with adults.
- Children have insufficient opportunities to interact individually with adults.
- The curriculum does not provide children with enough opportunities to learn through routines that balance individual and group learning.

### **Commentary**

43. The children are made to feel cared for and secure, and therefore gain in confidence and willingness to trust adults. However, because of restrictions within the provision they need to respond to rules and expectations for older pupils rather than first learning to follow stable and secure routines. Since they are often working with older pupils they switch from feeling daunted in a larger group to feeling that are doing something different on their own but not fully understanding why. Because they lack the necessary and continuous interaction with adults, they tend to be passive in larger groups, act without considering others in small groups and drift when working on their own. This hinders their development of the social skills to work with others. This lack of development is evident in Year 1 pupils who find it difficult to consider the needs of others unless firmly controlled. The children are learning to relate to others well but lack enough opportunities to learn to concentrate and collaborate. There are some but not enough opportunities to take part in role-play and use their imagination. Consequently, the children are likely to meet most but not all of the early learning goals by the end of the reception year.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children make good progress when taught alone by the teaching assistant.
- Children do not have enough opportunities to interact individually with adults through talking.

### **Commentary**

44. Teaching observed was satisfactory and good in focused learning with the teaching assistant. It does not have, however, the continuous conversational nature required at this stage, whether with each other or adults. Consequently, children learn in fits and starts and do not develop their ability to talk, speak, read and write in coherent ways, in varying contexts and independently. Even so, the two children in the reception year are likely to meet the early learning goals in all four aspects of communication by the end of the reception year but are unlikely to exceed them.
45. In full class sessions, the children are nervous about contributing, in part because the topic is sometimes beyond them, for example when the full class is studying a 'big book', and in part because they are among older children. This leads them to become passive learners who are not really involved or contributing. Their learning speeds up considerably when they can work

directly with an adult, as when the teaching assistant took them outside to act out and talk about a story. When, however, they cannot interact with an adult, their learning becomes slow, erratic and lacking in purpose, for example when given a word and letter jigsaw to complete while the older pupils were involved with group guided-reading. Because they did not have adult support, essential opportunities were missed to build not only their recognition of letters but also the sound of letters and the talk that should help them think about what these sounds can do. The children have access to books and enjoy them but not as part of their learning. They have good awareness of the sounds of letters and how these can make words with meaning and are beginning to form letters – sometimes into words.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is effective when children can interact directly with an adult.
- The children do not have enough opportunities to learn through a wide range of structured play.

### **Commentary**

46. Teaching observed was satisfactory with good features as when children learned a great deal about measuring lengths with ribbons and estimating between longer and shorter; they then tried out these ideas by making hats. They are making sound progress in their ability to count and use number to record what they see and help solve simple problems. Even so, the restrictions within the provision do not allow for the range of structured play guided by adults that they need at this stage. Consequently, teaching over time does not provide the breadth and variety of learning required. This leads the children to see number work as something separate rather than integral to all their learning activities. Even so, the children observed are likely to reach their early learning goals by the end of the reception year although they are unlikely to exceed them.

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

### **ENGLISH**

#### **English**

Provision in English is **very good**.

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

- Teachers plan the work very well to meet the learning needs of different ages and levels of ability.
- The skilled teaching and good attitudes of the children come together to build very effective speaking and listening.
- Pupils in Years 3 to 6 write very fluently and this supports good learning in other subjects.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to use word-processing to encourage drafting and creative writing.

## Commentary

47. Children join the reception with broadly average literacy and communication skills. Their progress in the reception year is too slow and this means they achieve the early goals by the end of the reception year but few exceed them. This deficit means that pupils in Year 1 make satisfactory progress but not the good or very good progress of which they are capable, especially the more able pupils. Progress speeds up in Year 2 because the pupils have gained greater understanding of what they need to learn and why. Current attainment in Year 2 is broadly average and promises to show average attainment in national tests and assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2004.
48. This shows signs that the school is beginning to find ways to improve achievement in Years 1 and 2. The trend in results in national tests and assessments at the end of Year 2 over several years shows a steep decline in standards of reading and gradual decline in standards in writing. By 2003, standards in both reading and writing were well below the national average and very low compared with similar schools. The key weakness was in the proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 3. Standards in English were not as high as in mathematics. Attainment of current pupils in Year 2 shows signs that the trend is now upwards.
49. Learning improves significantly in Year 3 and progress becomes more rapid as pupils move up the school. Year 3 pupils are proud of their improvement and can explain clearly what they have already achieved this academic year. 'My spellings are much better' 'I am reading much bigger books' 'I can write better sentences'. Over recent years, standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 have been maintained at a high level. In 2003, the large majority of pupils attained the higher Level 5 and standards are higher than in mathematics. Current pupils in Year 6 are well placed to maintain these high standards and show good achievement.
50. Most children join reception able to speak in a structured way and by Year 6 can speak in complex and purposeful ways to aid their thinking and expression. They use spoken English to discuss problems and balance arguments, to infer and deduce possible solutions and to use language imaginatively to pose hypotheses. Standards overall are above average and this shows good achievement.
51. This pattern is reflected in pupils' listening and their ability to gain meaning from what they hear. Most pupils listen attentively and in Years 3 to 6 go that important step forward to think about what they hear, work hard to understand and then keenly apply their learning to their work. Listening is weakest in Year 1 relative to standards nationally expected. By Year 6, they speak confidently for a wide range of purposes and attainment is above the standards and comprehension levels expected of their age. Achievement is good.
52. Reading progresses steadily in Years 1 and 2. Year 2 readers show good awareness of plot and character, and can describe why they prefer one author or type of book to another. They read accurately, with fair fluency, and can correct mistakes and search for the meaning of new words from the context. They read extensively, are keen readers and enjoy books. Standards reached by the best readers are high, reading with great expression and sense of audience. Early in Year 3, pupils build on these skills, seeing reading as a normal and essential part of all learning and an important source of enjoyment. In upper years they can discuss the nuances of meaning in text with significant sophistication. By Year 6, most pupils read widely, with enjoyment, and show ambition to read even more demanding texts. They have good awareness of different quality in writing and have a sound understanding of vocabulary. They can use books to research and find information but these skills offer an area for improvement. Standards are above average and achievement is good.
53. By Year 2, pupils form letters well and some are writing cursively. The average and above-average attainers can link sentences together in an ordered and purposeful manner. Creative writing is sound. Overall, pupils make sound and sometimes good progress and attainment

matches national expectations. Progress and achievement between Years 3 and 6 are good. Pupils quickly gain the ability to write quickly in extended ways. Although spelling is sometimes not as considered as it should be, pupils use writing to describe accurately, order argument, express thoughts and tell a story. They can write for a purpose and to persuade, for different audiences and in different ways; this is a considerable help with their work in all subjects. An area to develop would be giving pupils more opportunity to write creatively. Standards by Year 6 are above average. All girls and boys do equally well relative to their abilities and talents, including those who join the school late, sometimes with problems with their learning.

54. Teaching is satisfactory and often good in Years 1 and 2, and always at least good in Years 3 to 6, and often very good. Strengths in much of the teaching include:
- detailed and expert planning allows pupils of different ages and abilities to progress from one level of challenge to a more demanding level;
  - teachers use open questions and clear examples of structured speaking to develop the pupils' speaking, listening and thinking skills.
55. Teachers use homework very effectively in Years 3 to 6, but some parents feel that opportunities are missed in Years 1 and 2 to build a powerful learning partnership with parents in developing the pupils' speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. Pupils' reading logs show that the reading partnership is not as developed as in some other effective schools. Teachers use assessment to track carefully and then evaluate pupils' progress and this helps them focus their teaching. Continuous assessment leads to helpful comments in class and marking in books that helps pupils understand how to improve.
56. The subject is well led and managed and staff work to a clear and helpful policy, often extended by further guidance on specific areas of teaching and learning. However, in Years 1 and 2, the manager of the reception and infant class also carries responsibility for all the other subjects at this stage. This is an overly demanding role. Resources for learning are good, including a well-stocked library. Computers are used to support learning well, although more use of word-processing could be made in drafting and creative writing.

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

57. Teachers throughout the school use every opportunity to develop pupils' skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing, and this is a considerable strength of the curriculum and teaching.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Planning and teaching are good.
- Teachers ask probing questions to check understanding.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to their learning.
- Occasionally pupils do not make sufficient progress when they are not supported well in their learning.

## Commentary

58. Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 in 2003 were above national averages by Year 6 but were well below average at the end of Year 2. Results show a marked decline in standards since the time of the last inspection in 1998 when they were judged to be satisfactory in comparison to other schools. Standards in mathematics have not been maintained since the last inspection when they were reported to be above national averages at the end of Years 2 and 6.
59. Current standards in Years 2 are average and in Year 6 above average. In Year 1 pupils estimate, measure and compare lengths with good accuracy and understanding. Pupils in Year 2 estimate and measure distance between two points and draw accurate lines using a ruler correctly. By using two different types of calculators (ordinary and scientific) pupils in Years 5 and 6 find out mathematically that multiplication takes precedence over addition in mathematics, explaining why with considerable understanding.
60. In the majority of lessons seen, teaching and learning were good; in one it was satisfactory.

Strengths in most of the teaching include:

- Teachers' use of good subject knowledge to plan challenging lessons with clear learning objectives.
  - Good emphasis on the introduction to lessons followed by probing questions to check understanding, and correct use of subject vocabulary.
  - Very good management of pupils, time and support staff results in very good behaviour and very positive attitudes to learning.
61. There was no unsatisfactory teaching, apart from one occasion when the work was not so well matched to pupils' ability and there was not enough individual support for younger pupils. Consequently, learning was at times slow and insecure. Although pupils listen very well and are mostly keen to respond to questions and give reasons for their answers, further opportunities could still be provided within mathematics to encourage pupils to be excited and eager to answer questions very quickly.
62. The leadership and management of the subject are very good and have influenced the good teaching and above-average standards in Years 3 to 6. Pupils' progress is carefully monitored. National Curriculum tests and other assessments are carefully analysed and findings are used to inform future planning and teaching effectively. Targets are shared with parents through pupils. Resources are sufficient and easily accessible to all.

## Mathematics across the curriculum

63. Pupils often use mathematics as part of their work in other subjects – and as a result develop an appreciation of the practical application of these skills. For example, in science they measure, record and compare the results of investigations and in design and technology pupils draw designs carefully, using measurement to cut materials accurately for their models. There is widespread use of bar and other graphs to analyse and interpret data. Teachers and pupils make good use of computers in completing these tasks.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good.
- The planning is detailed with clear objectives and interesting and relevant activities for all abilities and ages.
- Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2, and very well in Years 3 – 6.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils as to their work and behaviour.
- Planning and children's work are not monitored sufficiently.
- Information and communication technology is not used sufficiently to aid learning.

### Commentary

64. National test results at the end of Year 6 in 2003 show that standards were well above average in comparison to other schools and well above the national average for the higher Level 5. This maintains the high standards reported at the last inspection. However, standards in national assessments at the end of Year 2, have not been maintained at the same high level since the last inspection and in 2003 were below the national average.
65. Current standards in Year 2 are average and in Year 6 above average. Most pupils including those with special educational needs are achieving well because of good teaching, and a very well planned curriculum. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 carefully explore different sounds and make and accurately record observations, and communicate their findings in speech and writing clearly. Most were able to investigate and tell how different instruments produce different sounds by hitting, banging and shaking. That standards are above average by Year 6 indicates that pupils have achieved very well since their below-average standards in national tests at the end of Year 2. This is because they receive consistently good teaching in Years 3 to 6. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 build on their learning about energy to carry out a fair test with clear scientific understanding when investigating different circuits and batteries to create a louder buzz and faster motors. Pupils in all years record findings efficiently with good extended writing.
66. The quality of teaching and learning is good in both classes. Lessons are lively and based upon good planning and clear objectives. Previous work shows that pupils record their findings in tables and graphs successfully using computer programs. The use of computers to support learning is encouraged although there are opportunities for further development. Lessons are well organised and a variety of methods and resources are used effectively. Teachers and support staff circulate around the groups giving them support and encouragement to do well. They ask probing questions to check understanding and push learning on. Pupils are managed well. Relationships between pupils are good. Teachers use marking and assessment effectively to help pupils improve their work. The pace of lessons is usually brisk, which maintains pupils' interest and increases their work rate. Sufficient time is given to enable pupils to complete set tasks. Pupils with special educational needs have good support and achieve well.
67. The leadership and management of the subject are effective. The co-ordinator works part time and is responsible for four other subjects along with science. She has, however, too little opportunity to monitor planning and pupils' work. Resources are sufficient and good use is made of the local environment and places to visit.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards by the end of Year 6 are above average.
- The subject is very well led and managed.
- There has been good improvement in resources and staff expertise.
- Teaching and learning are good and pupils achieve well.
- Pupils are keen and eager to learn.
- The use of ICT to support teaching and learning in other subjects is not consistent throughout the school and across subjects.

### Commentary

68. Standards in ICT are above average at Year 6. Higher-attaining pupils are suitably challenged and as a consequence often produce work of very good quality. Standards have improved greatly since the last inspection when they were judged to be below average; this is because resources are much better and staff have had extensive training. The extension of the computer suite, with sufficient computers for all pupils to participate fully in lessons, has made it possible for pupils to acquire skills more quickly and build on their learning successfully. Pupils achieve very well because of the good teaching that skilfully uses laptops and interactive whiteboards.
69. Pupils in Year 6 explore the Internet purposefully and quickly obtain information that consolidates learning about the water cycle in geography. On display around the school there are good examples of work done with spreadsheets and databases. Year 2 pupils confidently use spreadsheets to carry out a traffic survey, calculating the number of vans passing by the school. They create a simple database and use graphs and charts well to communicate their findings. Pupils in higher years write simple procedures to control the movement of a 'turtle' cursor around the computer screen, showing good understanding as to how computers control machines as long as they correctly programmed.
70. The quality of teaching is very good in Years 3 – 6. Teachers have a sound grasp of the skills needed to teach ICT. They follow a good scheme of work that leads to purposeful lessons and learning that builds on what has gone before. Lessons are well planned and follow a clear pattern. Introductions clearly outline what is to be done and pupils are given enough time for each set task, before a closing session that sums up what progress has been made and where planning will go next. Lessons are well managed and teachers give very good support and encouragement to all pupils, which promotes good learning attitudes. Pupils enjoy their lessons and all pupils make good progress.
71. The subject is very well led and managed. The co-ordinator has worked very hard to overcome the weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection and has succeeded. Resources are much better, the policy is up-to-date and the scheme of work forms a sound basis from which to develop further ideas for teaching.

### Information and communication technology across the curriculum

72. The school uses ICT well to support teaching and learning in a range of subjects. There are good examples of where it is used well in mathematics and geography, and pupils were seen to use the computer in the infants' class frequently and confidently.



## HUMANITIES

All the following subjects were sampled, not inspected in detail, and there was therefore insufficient evidence to make some judgements. Where judgements are made, they are based upon teaching, if seen, pupils' previous work, displays of work, discussions with pupils and teachers and scrutiny of documents such as planning and assessment records.

### Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is taught very well in Years 3 to 6.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good.
- Some high-attaining pupils say they could do even better if set more challenging tasks.

#### Commentary

73. Standards are slightly above average in Year 6. Standards have been maintained and to some extent improved since the last inspection when they were judged to be satisfactory. Geography was not timetabled during the two days of inspection, although one lesson was observed informally during the pre-inspection visit.
74. There was little evidence of work done by the pupils in the present Years 1 and 2 in their books but project work on display suggests standards are average. Pupils in Years 3 - 6 study the water cycle and then move on to study rivers, a topic that has included a visit to the local river. By Year 6, pupils develop good understanding of the water-cycle and apply this to the study of rivers, showing good geographical understanding. Year 6 pupils use computers confidently and independently to enhance their knowledge and understanding. All pupils make good progress and show good understanding at each level with an ability to think geographically.
75. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 3 to 6. The good teaching is characterised by thorough planning with clear objectives reflected in the wide range of modified tasks to meet the needs of pupils of different year groups. Introductions to lessons are brisk and questions are searching while encouraging those lacking in confidence to try. The class teacher moves quickly from group to group (using three rooms) intervening appropriately to move learning forward and introducing clearly each group to the next stage. The teacher assistant is deployed effectively to work with Year 3 pupils. The pace in the lesson is good and pupils remain on task. As a result their learning is good and most pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well and make good progress. There is a sound balance between direct teaching and independent learning. A particular feature of geography teaching that contributes significantly to pupils' learning is the good use made of information and communication technology. Pupils use the Internet link in the classroom as an established research tool. Although the teaching is good, some higher-attaining pupils feel they could do even better.
76. The management and leadership of the subject are satisfactory, with a clear policy and sensible scheme of work. Resources are adequate and are in good condition.

### History

Provision in history is **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is well planned to meet the needs of all ages and abilities.
- Work in books shows that children study topics in depth.

## Commentary

77. Although no teaching could be observed, work in books and on display suggests that both learning and teaching are good. The curriculum is well planned so that all pupils cover the required topics and build their understanding securely as they move up the school. The pupils' work shows that they can think and investigate as young historians, and realise that part of history is to imagine what it was like to live in other times, and how and why societies change over time. The available evidence suggests that attainment by the end of Year 2 is average and by Year 6 above average. This shows good achievement by all children and an improvement since the last inspection.

## Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good** with many very good features.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment in Year 6 exceeds the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. This shows good achievement.
- Teaching of Years 3 to 6 shows considerable subject knowledge and understanding.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to write creatively, expressing their feelings and beliefs.

## Commentary

78. Standards in Year 2 are sound and in Years 3 to 6 good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. All pupils gain in knowledge and understanding, which they use well when developing their own beliefs and faith. They have a mature and open approach to the subject in both their work and in their contributions in class.

79. Work in books suggests that teaching is usually at least good. Tasks are well planned with clear objectives, and reflect the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils study Christianity, Hinduism and Judaism in depth and this prepares them well for life in a multi-faith society and world.

80. Learning is highly reflective as in a very effective lesson on Judaism and kosher food. Because the teacher was knowledgeable and perceptive, she did not rush into teaching the facts alone but gave time for children to consider their own feelings over food customs. Through very good use of a video that showed the feelings and beliefs of a young Jewish girl, pupils gained a deep understanding of the part special foods play in Jewish religious life. The tasks the teacher set matched the needs of each age and ability, and helped the learning have relevance to the children's own experience. Even so, the tasks did not stretch the ability of older pupils because they did not have time for, for example, expressive and creative writing to deepen and extend their learning.

81. The subject is soundly led and managed but the manager has insufficient time to monitor planning and the pupils' work. Assessment tracks progress well. Resources are of good range and quality, and used effectively. The subject enriches and is in turn enriched by the wider life and work of the school. There are good links with the local church, but links with other faith communities are still at the planning stage. The subject makes a significant contribution to the pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

### Art and design

Provision in art and design is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan the work very well.
- Teachers have high expectations from all pupils regarding work and behaviour.
- Teachers link art work with learning in geography and design and technology very productively.
- There is insufficient use of sketchbooks to aid imagination and to develop ideas.
- The subject is well led and managed.

#### Commentary

82. Standards of attainment in art and design are above average in Year 6, and all pupils make very good progress. There has been an improvement in the standards since the last inspection, when they were reported to be in line with national expectations. Art and design activities are alternated through the year with design and technology, whereby a full or half term of art and design is followed by an equivalent period of design and technology. This allows for extended learning and development of secure skills and understanding. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that some activities are linked profitably to other subjects, mainly design and technology but also geography. For example, pupils in Years 3 to 6 study Monet's paintings in depth to produce a two-dimensional picture showing water, linking this with the geography topic on rivers.
83. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers now have a good scheme of work that ensures the development of pupils' skills through the years, and they competently carry out detailed plans to achieve high standards. Teachers very effectively introduce pupils to an interesting variety of historical sources, particularly related to two-dimensional work. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 successfully create water effects using different materials like tissue paper, magazine pages, paint and glue. This indicates that their techniques and skills are well developed. Pupils of all abilities enjoy art and design greatly and are very proud to see their paintings and models on display around the school, as well as in local public buildings such as the library and town hall. The high expectations the teachers have of pupils have been extended further through the visit of an artist when pupils produced outstanding two-dimensional work connected with a topic on Ancient Egypt. Sketchbooks are used but are not employed to their full potential to develop creativity and ideas.
84. Leadership and management are good and the co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge. Resources in the subject are satisfactory, both for practical work and research.

### Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is well led and managed.

## Commentary

85. Standards of attainment are broadly average by Year 6, and have been maintained since the last inspection.
86. As this subject takes place alternately with art and design, no teaching was seen during the inspection. Other evidence indicates that pupils have sound knowledge, understanding and skills, and that they are making good progress. This includes pupils with special educational needs.
87. Most pupils in Years 1 and 2 have the appropriate level of skills to use scissors, glue, card and tissue paper to make working models with a 'Jack in the Box' feature. In Years 3 to 6 pupils design and make slippers using each of the stages of the design well. They work on longer projects requiring investigating, planning, making and evaluating. This helps them to understand, to build confidence and to transfer knowledge and skills from one situation to another.
88. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and works successfully to raise standards. Resources are of good quality and quantity, and are easily accessible.

## Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory** with several very good features.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Music is embedded in the life of the school.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to learn instruments.

## Commentary

89. Music plays an important part in the life of the school and good standards have been maintained since the last inspection. In assemblies, all pupils sing with great musicality, using phrasing and dynamics very well to express the meaning and beauty of the music. In one assembly the head teacher used the overall topic of a world famous percussionist to help children understand what it takes to be – as one pupil said – 'great', while also allowing children time to listen quietly, responsively and with understanding to a musical composition. In the infant class, children learned about rhythm and beat, performed on a variety of instruments, and then created dances to express the meaning of the music. Older infant pupils sang with a good sense of melody and performance, discussing the way the music expressed ideas and feelings. On this evidence, teaching and learning are at least satisfactory and often better.
90. The school does not have a choir, instrumental groups or other instrumental teaching opportunities. Even so, pupils' musical experiences are enhanced by visits to pantomimes and singing with pupils from other schools. They perform at special events to parents and the local community.
91. The teaching of music is carried out by a knowledgeable teaching assistant, who also plays the piano at assemblies. The subject is overseen by the co-ordinator working to a sensible scheme of work and management is sound. Resources are satisfactory and provide pupils with opportunities to respond to music from other cultures.

## Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan well with the lecturer at Abingdon College.
- Lessons start promptly as the equipment is laid out prior to the lesson.
- Pupils have good attitudes and their behaviour is very good at all times.
- There is very good provision for swimming for all age groups.
- There are no extra-curricular activities and clubs run by the school.

### **Commentary**

92. At the time of the last inspection, attainment in physical education was in line with national expectations for Year 6, with standards in swimming a particular strength. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. During the inspection week, two gymnastics and two swimming lessons were observed. Attainment in swimming is above average by Years 2 and 6. Assessment records show that nearly all the pupils safely swim 50 metres by the time they leave school at the end of Year 6. Pupils enjoy swimming and are confident in water, using back and front crawl with good style.
93. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils make good progress in their learning and development of skills as a result of good planning and teaching. The school compensates for the lack of space for physical education at school by making a good use of the local leisure centre, partnership with a physical education lecturer, and trainee students and specialist swimming instructors to ensure that pupils are taught effective techniques. Pupils are challenged to improve their style and speed. Pupils participate well in all lessons with enthusiasm. They listen well to their teachers and show respect for the rules. They collaborate well in teams and participate happily with others of differing age, attainment and gender. A strong feature of the provision is the way that pupils with special educational needs are included in all lessons. Support staff give them extra help, which means they play a full part in lessons and make similar progress to their classmates. However, there is a lack of extra-curricular activities and clubs, although pupils are encouraged to join out of school clubs and take part in competitive sport as part of the local primary school partnership.
94. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory and teachers work to a sensible scheme of work and policy.

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

### **Personal, social, health and citizenship education**

Provision in personal, social, health and citizenship (PSHC) education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A well taught and planned provision gives a very good foundation for learning in other subjects.
- The curriculum as a whole both uses and enriches the learning, making a major contribution to the pupils' personal development.

### **Commentary**

95. Although no teaching could be observed, discussion with pupils, work in books and the detailed planning shows that this subject makes a very good contribution to the pupils' personal development and their wider knowledge and understanding of themselves and the wider world. This suggests that both teaching and learning are at least good. A strength in the provision is that PSHC does not stand alone but is integrated with work in other subjects, the social

responsibilities assigned to pupils, assemblies, the school council, events and experiences further afield and through visitors to the school. It provides a very good vehicle for the school to use in their plans to increase children's ability to work independently. The subject is well led and managed.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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