

INSPECTION REPORT

**THE HENDREDS CHURCH OF ENGLAND (VA)
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

East Hendred, Wantage

LEA area: Oxfordshire

Unique reference number:123169

Headteacher: Ms Elizabeth Tansley

Lead inspector: Mrs Patricia Davies

Dates of inspection: 8th – 10th June 2004

Inspection number: 264374

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils: 4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 110

School address: Ford Lane
East Hendred
Wantage
Oxfordshire
Postcode: OX12 8JX

Telephone number: 01235 833379
Fax number:

Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mr Keith Mitchell

Date of previous inspection: 22nd June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- The Hendreds is smaller than other primary schools, with 109 pupils. The school has grown in size over the last 14 or 15 years, but there has been a dip in numbers more recently which the school reports as being caused by a fall in the local birth rate. Year groups vary in size, as do the proportions of boys and girls in some. For example, the current Year 2 group has many more boys than girls.
- The school serves a rural area, near Wantage, that consists largely, but not entirely, of private housing. Most pupils come from the immediate area, but a sizeable proportion also come from Wantage, and the school reports that a wide range of social and economic backgrounds is represented among its families. A few pupils are currently eligible for free school meals (FSM), but the school falls into the lowest benchmark group nationally. Most pupils stay at the school until they are 11. A few do leave at times other than the normal point at the end of Year 6, but the school reports movements of this kind to be for usual reasons such as moves out of the area.
- Since the school was last inspected, it has changed its Church school status from Voluntary Controlled to Voluntary Aided, which gives it closer links with the local diocese.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is below the national average and there are no pupils with statements or at the higher stage of action and support. However, the school does support some pupils whose behaviour is demanding.
- Nearly all the pupils are from White UK heritage backgrounds, and there are no pupils for whom English is an additional language.
- Since the last inspection, the school has experienced difficulties in recruiting and retaining teaching staff. This has resulted in periods of turbulence in some year groups, although the problems have now largely been settled.

- Children of Reception age enter the school each term and are taught alongside pupils in Year 1. These arrangements are due to change this coming September, in line with a variation to local education authority (LEA) policy, which means that all the children will then join the class at the beginning of the school year. Because numbers are small, some other classes contain two year groups and, within current arrangements, Years 2 and 3 are taught as separate groups.
- Attainment on entry varies with each cohort of children but, taken overall, is broadly similar to that of children of a similar age.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2246 0	Patricia Davies	<i>Lead inspector</i>	Mathematics; Science; Art and design; Design and technology; Music; Physical education; Foundation Stage.
9736	John Brasier	<i>Lay inspector</i>	
1578	Maureen Sinclair	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; Geography; History; Information and communication technology; Special educational needs.
2268 5	Natalie Moss	<i>Team inspector</i>	Modern foreign languages.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The Hendreds gives its pupils **a satisfactory education**, but with strengths in Years 3 to 6. There are also strengths in the wide range of experiences given to pupils and in the value placed on encouraging the self-esteem of each child. After a period of difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff, there is now a largely settled complement of teachers. Teaching and learning, and pupils' achievement, are satisfactory as a whole but good in Years 3 to 6, and also in information and communication technology (ICT) and for pupils with special educational needs (SEN). Pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to reach standards that are above the national expectations in English, mathematics and science by the end of this school year. Standards in ICT are likely to be above national expectations in both Years 2 and 6. Governance, leadership and management are satisfactory, and the school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Good teaching in Years 3 to 6, with the result that these pupils achieve well.
- Standards in writing in Year 2, which are below national expectations.
- A rich and exciting range of experiences that very successfully promotes pupils' self-confidence and enthusiasm for learning.
- Inconsistent opportunities for children of Reception age to learn through exploration and investigation.
- Unsatisfactory accommodation.
- Very good information for parents.

The school has made a satisfactory level of improvement since it was last inspected in June 1998, but there are some areas where improvement has been good and some where it has been very good. For example, reading standards in Years 1 and 2 have been robustly tackled, so that all pupils now achieve well in this aspect of English. As a result, standards in the present Year 2 are likely to be above national expectations in this subject. There have also been good levels of improvement in pupils' performance in Years 3 to 6, in ICT, and in curriculum planning. The school is also taking a firm lead in seeking ways to improve its accommodation. There is a strong educational vision for the work of the school. Leadership and management roles have been increasingly clarified and formalised, but some key roles have yet to be fully defined. Other areas where improvements have been satisfactory, but where developments are still in process, are the curriculum for children in the Reception class and the quality and use of assessment. The contribution of parents to school life is now good.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Key: A* - very high; A – well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average; E* - very low.

Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

As year groups are small, test results tend to vary from year to year and therefore need to be treated with caution. The Year 6 group taking the tests in 2003 had also been significantly affected by staff changes when in Year 4. However, comparisons made on the basis of pupils' prior attainment in the tests in Year 2, and on the value added to their attainment since that time, indicate that these pupils had made satisfactory progress across the three subjects. Mathematics has been the consistently weaker subject over recent years. When performance in the test results is considered over time, the school has done better in the Year 2 tests, where the trend is above the national trend, than in those at Year 6, where it has been broadly in line with it. Results in reading for pupils in Year 2 have been almost consistently the strongest, and they reflect the school's focus on improving attainment in this aspect of English. Girls tend to do better than boys in the tests, but no significant evidence of this difference was found during the inspection.

When children first enter the Reception class their attainment varies, but it is broadly similar, overall, to that expected of children of a similar age nationally. The current group is making satisfactory progress, and the children's attainment will broadly meet expectations by the time they enter Year 1. Inspection evidence shows pupils to be **achieving satisfactorily**. However, pupils in the present Year 6 group are achieving well and are likely to reach standards above national expectations in English, mathematics and science. The pupils currently in Year 2 are also on track to reach standards above national expectations in speaking, listening and reading skills and in mathematics. In writing, standards are likely to be below expectations because, until recently, pupils' progress was limited by the fact that they had too few opportunities to write. Standards in science are likely to be broadly in line with expectations. Pupils achieve well in ICT, and standards are above national expectations in both Years 2 and 6. Those with special educational need also make good progress. Achievement in French and Latin is very good. Not enough evidence was collected to allow overall judgements to be made about standards and achievement in other subjects

Pupils' **attitudes, values and other personal qualities are good**, and are well promoted by the school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils show considerable enthusiasm and much confidence. Attendance, punctuality and the quality of relationships are very good. Behaviour is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The **quality of education is satisfactory** and benefits from a very broad range of enriching experiences and activities. **Teaching and learning are also satisfactory**, but stronger in Years 3 to 6 and in some subjects and areas than in others. Teaching is occasionally unsatisfactory when Reception-aged children are not given the chance to learn through play and exploration. Assessment systems and their use are satisfactory.

The curriculum is good. It is broad, balanced and innovative, and there is effective provision for pupils with special educational needs. Pastoral care is good, as are links with parents and with the community and other schools and colleges. The information provided to parents is of good quality. Arrangements for seeking pupils' views about school life are satisfactory. Resources are satisfactory, but accommodation is cramped and limits the ways in which some teaching can be organised, especially for the Reception group.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school's leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has a strong educational philosophy which is firmly upheld and promoted by the headteacher, and keenly supported by staff and governors. Staff recruitment and retention have been well managed. Senior management has been satisfactorily strengthened, but there remains some informality in the deployment of some key leadership and management roles. Governance is also satisfactory, and all statutory requirements are met. Governors are playing an active role in seeking improvements to accommodation and are sharpening their monitoring role.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Satisfaction with the school on the part of parents and pupils is good.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in writing in Year 2.
- Increase the opportunities for Reception-aged children to explore and investigate.
- Improve accommodation, as planned.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils' **achievement is satisfactory overall**, including that of pupils with particular gifts and talents, though there are examples of good and very good achievement in some areas. In the current Year 6 and Year 2 teaching groups, standards are above national expectations in the core subjects of mathematics and ICT. In science, standards are above the national expectations in Year 6, and broadly in line with them in Year 2. The picture is more mixed in English, with standards above national expectations in all aspects of the subject in Year 6. However, in Year 2, while standards are above the national expectations in speaking, listening and reading, they are below the national expectation in writing.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good achievement in ICT, in Years 3 to 6, and for pupils with special educational needs.
- Very good improvement in reading standards, particularly in Years 1 and 2.
- Standards in writing in the present Year 2 group, which are below national expectations.
- Very good levels of achievement in French and Latin.

Commentary

1. Because year groups are small, the attainment of children when they first enter the Reception group varies a lot, but it is broadly similar, overall, to that of children of a similar age nationally. The small group of children in this group at the moment achieve satisfactorily. By the time they enter Year 1, they are likely to meet all the early goals for learning, while their attainment is anticipated to exceed the expected level in those goals specifically related to mathematical development.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.8 (27.7)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	26.2 (25.2)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	29.6 (27.4)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 15 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. National test results tend to vary from one year to the next for the reason given above, and therefore need to be treated with some caution. When performance in the test results is considered over time, however, the school appears to be doing better in the Year 2 tests, where the trend is above the national trend, than in those at Year 6, where it has been broadly in line with it. Other trends show that reading results for pupils in Year 2 have been almost consistently the strongest, while pupils have not done so well in mathematics at Year 6. Comparisons made on the basis of the 2003 Year 6 group's performance in the national tests taken when they were in Year 2, and on the value added to their attainment since that time, suggest that they had made satisfactory progress across the three subjects tested. It is worth noting, also, that this group had been significantly affected by staff changes when they were in Year 4. Girls tend to do better than boys in the tests, but the picture is a mixed one, and no significant evidence of this trend was seen during the inspection.

3. Since the last inspection the school has focused closely on raising standards in reading, attainment in this aspect of English having been identified as a key issue for improvement in Years 1 and 2. There has been a very good level of improvement since then, as indicated in the test trend mentioned above. As a result, pupils throughout the school are achieving well in this aspect of English, and inspection evidence indicates that standards are likely to be above national expectations for pupils in the current Year 2 and Year 6 groups. More recently, the school has successfully turned its attention to mathematics, particularly in Years 3 to 6, and now plans to turn the spotlight on writing. Inspection evidence shows these priorities to have been appropriately chosen. Literacy and numeracy skills are well used and developed across other subjects.

4. The current Year 6 group was also disrupted by the same staffing difficulties that affected last year's group. Nevertheless, while the **overall level of achievement across the school is satisfactory**, the pupils in this group are achieving well and the school is on track to reach its more challenging targets for them. Teaching is consistently good, and the pupils' earlier success in the Year 2 tests as a relatively able group has been maintained. By the end of this school year, their attainment is likely to be above national expectations in English, mathematics and science.

5. Pupils in Year 2 are achieving satisfactorily. The school's assessments of children when they first start school in the Reception group show that the present Year 2 is also a relatively able group, although it contains a high proportion of boys, some of whom present demanding behaviour. However, there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching which inhibit these pupils from making good progress, particularly in writing, where until recently their progress was unsatisfactory. This group is likely to reach standards above national expectations in speaking, listening and reading skills, and also in mathematics, but standards are likely to be below national expectations in writing because recent improvements have not yet had a full impact on attainment.

6. Pupils achieve well in information and communication technology (ICT), and standards look set to be above national expectations in Years 2 and 6. The subject has been skilfully and enthusiastically developed, and pupils benefit from a wide curriculum and plenty of opportunities to practise their skills. Information and communication technology is also used well across the curriculum. The small proportion of pupils with special educational needs also achieve well, benefiting from well-targeted work and support within small class groups. Pupils throughout the school achieve very well in French, as do those in Years 3 to 6 in Latin. Once again, teachers' subject expertise and the interest they generate arouse pupils' enthusiasm for these subjects, and this, in its turn, contributes to the high levels of progress. Not enough evidence was gathered to allow overall judgements to be made about standards and achievement in other subjects.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to school life and the experiences it offers are **very good**, and so too are levels of attendance and punctuality. Standards of behaviour are **good**, and the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' enthusiastic interest and participation.

- The promoting of pupils' confidence and self-esteem.
- Very good relationships.
- Very good attendance and punctuality.
- Opportunities for independent learning in the Reception group, which are sometimes missed.

Commentary

7. In the current school year, authorised absence has fallen to 4.1, with no unauthorised absences. Pupils are keen to come to school because they enjoy what it has to offer. Punctuality is also very good; where teachers have offered sessions that take place before the start of the school day, in mathematics for example, pupils readily attend and have elected for these to continue.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	4.5
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.4

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

8. The pupils express great enthusiasm for the many different experiences they have at school. They speak warmly of teaching staff, the wide range of opportunities they are given, and the subjects they enjoy. In lessons, pupils are keen to answer questions and contribute their own ideas. Pupils say that, with few exceptions, everyone works hard. They enjoy some lessons so much that they want to continue with their work, even in their own time. Pupils relish the chance to do jobs independently and are encouraged to help one another at lunchtime, and they organise the school sports and the Christmas celebration.

9. One of the school's most conspicuous aims is to build the confidence and self-esteem of each and every pupil, while at the same time developing in them a spirit of generosity towards others. All staff promote this approach well. The school's curriculum and enrichment activities also contribute greatly to fulfilling this ideal, particularly French, Latin and Judo, and the thinking skills sessions for lower attaining pupils. Pupils benefit from the school's small community, and moral and social values are promoted well. Individual pupils are well known to staff, who develop very good relationships with, and between, pupils. A friendly and lively manner is often laced with good humour, and pupils enjoy this approach. There are plenty of chances, in and out of lessons, for pupils to work together, and they do this well. Investigative work in science, for example, requires pupils to plan joint activities. However, there are fewer opportunities than there might be for co-operation in physical education, for example, through team games. The school values pupils' achievements in a wide range of contexts, and continues to celebrate the achievements of former pupils in its termly newsletter. In lessons, too, pupils' contributions are valued. As a result, pupils offer views and speak about their work confidently, listen with respect to the viewpoints of others, and show pleasure in the achievement of fellow pupils.

10. Pupils exhibit mature behaviour in most situations, and there have been no exclusions. They appreciate what is expected of them and are keen to comply. There is little challenging behaviour in class, but younger children say they are occasionally bothered by the behaviour of others. The behaviour of Reception-aged children occasionally deteriorates when they lose attention, in most cases because they have not had the chance to follow their curiosity or to learn independently though exploring and investigating. In their questionnaire, a significant minority of parents reported that their children were harassed or bullied. No evidence of bullying was found during this inspection, but pupils report that there is some rough play, and some unkind behaviour, although on a very limited scale. There is no evidence that these actions are repeatedly targeted at any individual, or of any racial disharmony. Indeed, the very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are well integrated, and their cultures and traditions are recognised and celebrated.

11. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong, and older pupils, for example, can thoughtfully explore questions such as 'What makes a good friend?'. They are encouraged to think more deeply about issues and to develop their inquisitiveness and concern for others, although opportunities to fully explore spiritual themes are sometimes missed in assemblies. However, these occasions have a tranquil atmosphere that does much to reinforce the school's sense of community at the start of the day. The many trips and visits, and specialist teaching, give pupils a rich cultural experience. The school also provides good opportunities for pupils to appreciate the diversity of world cultures, for example, through an 'Africa' study day, and to develop an awareness of the multicultural nature of British society.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Asian
Parent/pupil preferred not to say

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
105	0	0
2	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education given by the school is **satisfactory**, but with strengths in the good teaching in Years 3 to 6. Its strengths also lie in an innovative curriculum with very many opportunities for pupils to experience wide-ranging and rich learning experiences, and a good level of care. Links with parents, the community and other schools and colleges are also good.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning, and of assessment, is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching in Years 3 to 6, and good teaching of ICT, of pupils with special educational needs, and of small groups of pupils in ‘booster’ groups.
- Inconsistent opportunities for the very youngest children to explore and investigate.
- Not enough recorded work in Year 2.
- Limited use of learning support staff during some whole-class sessions.
- Inconsistencies in the quality of marking and the feedback to pupils about their work, and the involvement of pupils in the assessment of their own learning.

Commentary

12. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, and there are areas where both are good, most notably in Years 3 to 6. Teaching of the core subjects of English, mathematics and science is satisfactory, but ICT is well taught, as are pupils with special educational needs. In broad terms, this picture is similar to the findings of the last inspection, though there is some evidence of improvement in the proportion of good and better teaching, and also in the teaching of ICT, where improvement has been good. Not enough evidence was collected during the inspection to enable judgements to be made about teaching and learning in other subjects.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 16 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	1	10	4	1	0	0

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

13. At the time of the last inspection, teaching of the Reception group was judged to be unsatisfactory. Largely as a result of improvements to the curriculum and planning, the present small group of children in the Reception group is now satisfactorily taught. However, the children do not always have the chance to follow their own interests and curiosity, or to explore and investigate

within their learning activities. Occasionally, the lack of such opportunities results in teaching and learning being unsatisfactory because children become inattentive and behaviour deteriorates. On the other hand, when such activities are available there is an enthusiastic level of activity and children make good progress. Opportunities for ready and spontaneous access to practical activities are limited by the small size of the classroom, and also by the lack of an outdoor area for learning immediately outside the classroom. Improvement in both would allow for greater flexibility in the choice of activities.

14. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 benefit from being almost consistently well taught. Teaching is never less than satisfactory, and sometimes it is very good. Most significantly, teaching of the core subjects of English and mathematics is good in these classes. Teachers are well prepared and teach confidently because outline planning for lessons is supplemented with detailed notes. These clearly spell out, for example, key questions, varied and challenging tasks, and the areas where assessment will focus. These teachers are enthusiastic and lively, with the result that pupils' attention and interest are always engaged. Pupils' enthusiasm is such that sometimes they do not want the lesson to end and are still discussing their work as they leave the classroom! Teachers are also well aware of the need to vary teaching strategies to help pupils understand and learn, especially where work is particularly challenging. Teachers readily respond to pupils' difficulties and needs, changing their approach during the lesson when necessary. Relationships with pupils are very good, and this creates a constructive and relaxed learning atmosphere where pupils' confidence is fostered. These very positive relationships also model teachers' expectations in respect of behaviour and productivity. The emphasis on investigative and independent work in mathematics allows pupils to work alone or with others and, whatever is required, they almost unfailingly co-operate or respond quickly when their attention is called back to their task.

15. Information and communication technology is well taught. Teachers are confident in their knowledge of the subject and lessons are well structured. All the strong features noted above also contribute to pupils' enjoyment of the subject and to their ready use and understanding of ICT in a good range of contexts. The only note of caution in this otherwise positive picture is the lack of opportunities for older pupils to look critically at their performance in order to improve it. Small group work for lower attaining pupils in English and mathematics is effective, and pupils in these groups are well motivated, including those whose behaviour can sometimes be challenging.

16. The work set for pupils with special educational needs is carefully matched to their needs, and the pupils also benefit from the small size of the classes. Targets are realistic and are usually achievable. These pupils often have good individual support, particularly in English and mathematics. A good range of tests is used to support teachers' assessments and pinpoint areas of concern that form the basis for future action, though so far the pupils themselves play only a limited part in discussing and drawing up their own targets.

17. The teaching of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. Sometimes it is good, and exhibits many of the strengths outlined above. For example, the imaginative use of a puppet held the full attention of Year 2 pupils during a mathematics lesson and, in a well taught English lesson for these pupils, tasks were well matched to different levels of ability. However, the demanding behaviour of some pupils in this year group is not always well managed by relatively inexperienced teachers. When this happens, pupils' concentration becomes less focused, and what may earlier have been good progress is reduced to satisfactory. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 record their activities in mathematics on white boards, but only a limited amount is completed in workbooks, and this work is sometimes untidy. These weaknesses have also been apparent in their written work, but this issue has been addressed and the situation is now improving. Learning support staff and other adults working in these classes are well briefed on small group work and give pupils close and focused attention. They are not always used to best effect during whole-class teaching sessions and discussions, though where good practice was to be seen they targeted individual pupils with quiet discussion and encouragement.

18. The overall quality and effectiveness of the school's assessment practices were found to be unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection and this was a key issue. There has been a sound

level of improvement since then, and assessment and its use are now satisfactory and undergoing further well-focused development. Pupils' progress is tracked from year to year and National Curriculum targets are set for individual pupils in all year groups. Information from national tests and other tests is closely analysed by the assessment co-ordinator together with subject leaders of the core subjects, and the school has started to look more closely at the relative performance of different groups of pupils. Such analysis and subsequent planning have been successful, for example, in raising standards in reading in Years 1 and 2 and in tackling standards and achievement in mathematics in Years 3 to 6. The relatively new co-ordinator is now fast developing the availability and use of computerised information so that performance, including that of different groups of pupils, can be more readily reviewed. Continuous assessment, in the form of marking and oral feedback to pupils, is also being promoted. There are already some pockets of particularly good practice, for example, in Year 6, where a constant dialogue takes place between pupils and teacher on evaluation and support. The benefits of this approach are mirrored in pupils' confident responses and in the way activities are varied to meet pupils' needs, because the teacher has a good understanding of what pupils do, and do not, understand.

The curriculum

The school's curriculum is **good**, with a particular strength in the breadth and diversity of opportunities to enrich pupils' learning. Accommodation is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very good range of enrichment opportunities.
- Cramped accommodation, particularly for children in the Reception group.
- Good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Underdeveloped provision for talented and gifted pupils.

Commentary

19. The school now has a well planned, balanced and innovative curriculum, and one which successfully seeks equality of opportunity for all. A number of good improvements have been made since the last inspection, including subject planning and time allocation. Planning for subjects now relates to national guidelines, and subjects are taught systematically. Where necessary, planning is modified to meet the needs of mixed-age classes, and to establish links with other subjects or respond to the nature of an activity, such as practical work in science. The school day has been extended, and this allows space for subjects and sports not normally taught in such depth, such as Latin, French, Judo and gymnastics, while still giving good attention to the required curriculum. Pupils thoroughly enjoy these 'extra' and innovative activities and gain a sense of personal pride which greatly enhances their self-esteem and their achievement. Their personal development is further enriched through the schools' caring and inclusive ethos. This is reflected in the good programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE) which teaches pupils about the misuse of drugs, and about sex education and relationships. Pupils have many opportunities to take responsibility and to contribute to the school community, which helps to nurture a sense of citizenship. Year 6 pupils are well prepared for the transition to secondary school.

20. Although some parents expressed concern about the extent of extra-curricular activities, the inspection found that pupils' horizons are successfully extended through a very good range of special events, visits and activities, both within and outside normal school hours. There are also good opportunities for all in music and performance. Pupils can join netball, gym, ICT, science and craft clubs, for example, and many attend the popular 'After School Club', which offers varied experiences.

21. The curriculum for the children in the Reception group is now satisfactory, having been judged to be poor at the time of the last inspection. It is suitably planned and takes due account of the Early

Learning Goals for these very young children, but it does not yet fully offer the regular and frequent opportunities these children need to investigate and explore. Both the formal curriculum and less formal activities play a positive role in the good provision for pupils with special educational needs, as do the specific targets on their individual educational plans. Good use is made of external specialists. The school ensures that pupils with special educational needs have ample opportunities to take part in all school activities, and their contributions are always recognised. Gifted and talented pupils also benefit from the opportunities given to all pupils. However, as yet there is no rigorous approach to identifying these pupils, and there are no specific learning programmes in place to meet their needs. Resources are satisfactory overall, but accommodation is unsatisfactory. The number of pupils attending the school has grown over the years, and some classrooms and other areas are cramped. The shortage of space particularly affects the class with the very youngest children. Here, opportunities for ready and spontaneous access to practical activities are limited by the small size of the classroom, and also by the lack of an outdoor learning area immediately outside the classroom, a facility which would allow for greater flexibility.

22. Space is also limited in the hall. Good use is made of the space available for teaching physical education, but it is difficult to use large apparatus. Neither is there an adequate library area where pupils can learn a full range of library skills. The school is aware of the need to make substantial improvements to the accommodation and has been very active in seeking ways to fund rebuilding initiatives, in addition to pursuing capital funding for major works. Other sources of finance have been acquired and have been used recently to create reception, administrative and staff areas. Transportation and refurbishment costs for the new temporary classroom, given by the diocese, have also been met by the school.

23. The school grounds are good and offer the children plenty of variety for their play and recreation, as well as being a good resource for learning. Staffing is good, and there is careful use of specialist knowledge and training to enhance the curriculum. Past difficulties related to the recruitment of new teachers have been mostly resolved, and staff work well together. The number of support staff is adequate, but their potential is not always used to best effect in lessons.

Care, guidance and support

Pastoral care is **good**, with **satisfactory** arrangements for seeking pupils' views and involving them in the life of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The benefits of being a small school.
- Very trusting and caring relationships with adults.
- Good induction arrangements.
- Good attention to health and safety.
- Limited opportunities for younger pupils to contribute their views about the school.
- A lack of recent training in child protection for some staff.

Commentary

24. A strong feature of the school's good care and support for its pupils lies in its small size and its close links with the village. Individual pupils are well known by staff, who talk caringly about pupils and any difficulties they might be facing. The school's strong emphasis on nurturing pupils' self-esteem also gives a solid foundation to its pastoral care. Pupils' personal development is closely monitored and they receive a good level of guidance and support.

25. Lunchtime staff take an interest in the children and look after them well, and older pupils also act as 'watchdogs' during break-times to look after other pupils. Discussions with pupils, and responses to the school's questionnaire, reveal pupils' appreciation of this level of care and show that they have much trust in staff. Pupils also praise the way in which new pupils are welcomed into the school. The induction arrangements for children of Reception age are enhanced by close links with the village playgroup. The 'After School Club' is also a prominent feature of the school's pastoral work. Staff give much commitment to this facility, and many pupils are keen to join its activities. The care and support of pupils with special educational needs are also good, and are underpinned by the same values and aspirations as those already described.

26. Health and safety feature prominently in the life and work of the school, and procedures are good. For example, inspections of the school site, fire drills, and risk assessments are carried out regularly, and all the necessary systems and checks take place for trips, visits and use of the Internet. First aid arrangements are also good, with several staff trained in handling a critical medical condition. Healthy living is well promoted through the school's PSHE programme and during physical education lessons. Child protection arrangements are well known by staff, but some have yet to update their training.

27. The school is working on its means of developing a formal approach to gathering pupils' views and acting on them. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have been able to express their views in a questionnaire, and offered thoughtful opinions and perspectives. The analysis of the results by the school shows that every individual response was valued. However, pupils in the younger year groups have no such opportunity to air their views, and there is no school council. Academic progress is carefully monitored within the present systems, and the school uses the information gleaned to direct support in specific ways. For example, the 'booster' groups in mathematics are one example of 'targeted' support, while the focus on encouraging thinking skills in lower attaining pupils is another. However, there are inconsistencies in the extent to which pupils can contribute to the assessment of their own learning because a whole-school approach has not yet been fully established.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There are **good** links with parents, the community, and other schools and colleges.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good information for parents.
- Good practical support from parents.
- Good links with local, wider and international communities.
- Good links with other schools and colleges.

There are no significant weaknesses.

Commentary

28. The school's prospectus, the governors' annual report, and reports on pupils all give information of very good quality. The school's website also offers parents easy access to information and gives useful links to national educational bodies and village websites. Each term, parents also receive lively newsletters that are packed with information and pictures of

the school's work. These very strongly promote the school's values in respect of offering pupils a wide range of experiences and celebrating achievement. A particularly notable feature is the clear identification of the learning objectives for each activity. School reports are succinct, evaluative and personal to the child, and they contain sensible targets and information about the child's progress in relation to the National Curriculum. There are also mini-reports every half term that inform parents briefly about progress. The parents of children with special educational needs say they are pleased with the level of information they receive. They are involved in regular review procedures, and they also find it easy to meet with staff at other times.

29. In the last report a key issue related to parents' involvement in school life, and this has been addressed successfully. Parents are now supportive of the school in many ways, although a minority feel that their offers to help have not always been followed up. Nevertheless, parents currently support the school by raising funds through the parent/teacher association, and by helping in class, accompanying groups on trips and with swimming, and carrying out lunchtime supervision. They also give expert help when needed, for example, with cycling proficiency, ICT, craft activities, science and environmental projects, coaching sports, and helping with homework and reading. There are two consultation evenings each year, and a variety of other events that parents can attend. Parents are consulted about wider issues through questionnaires and meetings. They are also invited to join governors on governors' monitoring mornings. Recent improvements to the school's administrative area have created space for parents and staff to meet in privacy.

30. There are good links within the local community and further afield. For example, specialist teaching in French, Latin and physical education draws on local expertise. Other members of the village community come into school to help with reading, and there is a strong link with the local church and clergy. The school also actively encourages pupils to join sporting clubs within the area. Local businesses help with art, food projects, mathematics, quilting and science. The Museum of Modern Art in Oxford has exhibited pupils' art. There are also many international links, including those with Australia, Normandy, the USA and Japan, connections often brought about by maintaining contact with the families of children who have left the school. These same links have also helped pupils gain a ready familiarity with e-mail.

31. There are very good links with the local playgroup, partly through shared staff, and also with the Roman Catholic school in the village. These take the form of sporting fixtures, joint training and music workshops. There is also a local cluster of schools which work well together, for example, through shared training ventures and through collaboration involving subject leaders. Good communication is maintained with the secondary school which receives many of the school's pupils, though the schools have not yet discussed how best to accommodate the curriculum needs, in French and Latin, of those pupils transferring from Year 6. The local sports college helps with sports training in general, and athletics training is given by a qualified athletics coach. There are good links with two teacher training institutions.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership, management and governance is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A strong educational vision.

- The governing body's good use of expertise among its members to benefit the school.
- The good management of staff recruitment and retention.
- Remaining informalities in the deployment of some key leadership and management roles.
- Governors' monitoring role, which needs greater emphasis.

Commentary

32. The school's strong educational philosophy is firmly upheld and promoted by the headteacher, and keenly supported by staff and governors. The ideals that inspire it are rooted in a belief in the importance of creating rich and wide-ranging educational experiences for all pupils. They are also founded in a commitment to increasing achievement by simultaneously building pupils' confidence and working to the strengths of staff. The school has had a significant degree of success in several areas, most particularly in boosting pupils' enthusiasm for learning, but also in Years 3 to 6, where teaching is good and pupils are achieving well. Where the school has focused closely on improving standards, particularly in reading, but also in ICT and mathematics, there has been much improvement. There has been a satisfactory level of improvement, overall, in relation to roles and responsibilities and professional development, which were issues raised in the last inspection.

33. Difficulties in recruiting teaching staff during the last few years have been handled well. The school is quick to develop and use individual skills and interests; the provision for ICT, for example, has been enhanced in this way. Staff with particular areas of expertise have been sought and appointed to strengthen provision in subjects where weaknesses had been identified, with much success, for example, in the case of design and technology. By retaining experienced and long-standing members of staff on a part-time basis, the school has been able to continue to draw on their good skills, both in management and teaching. For example, their expertise has been used successfully not only to strengthen the work of the senior team and of school management, but also to increase the achievement of lower attaining pupils in mathematics and English and to enhance the range and quality of activities designed to enrich the curriculum.

34. The senior team has been extended and now holds key whole-school responsibilities for core subjects, curriculum, assessment and finance. However, other important leadership and management roles, such as those of deputy headteacher and of key-stage co-ordinators, have not yet been formally defined. As a result, the potential influence and impact of post-holders in these roles, for example, in ensuring good provision right across the school, are not being realised. A similar picture exists in relation to some other key roles. For example, subject leaders have a good idea of what is happening in their subject but, in some cases, do not always use this knowledge rigorously enough to ensure that the good provision in Years 3 to 6 is replicated within the younger class groups. Where responsibilities have been clearly marked out and formally acknowledged, as in the case of assessment, improvement is moving on at a brisk pace. Other areas that are also successfully led and managed are special educational needs, ICT, and design and technology. French and Latin are very well organised and led by the staff teaching these subjects.

35. There is a conscientious and manifest desire to look at the quality of what is happening, to respond to the evaluations of other professionals, such as those from the LEA, and to promote improvement through training and performance management. The school is also aware of the need to support teacher training institutions, and has students from two local colleges. Senior staff monitor teaching and pupils' work, and also analyse test and assessment information, although some of these practices are still at a developmental stage in

some subjects. As a result of the monitoring, the school's development plan contains appropriately focused priorities. Detailed numerical criteria are used to measure the impact of initiatives on standards, but other criteria tend to be broad.

36. The governing body is an able and hard working group that gives the school its full support. Individual members have a wide range of experience and skills and put these to good use. Information and communication technology is one area of the school's work that has greatly benefited as a result. Others are finance and communication, and links with parents and the community. Governors play a full part in looking at national test data and drawing up the development plan, and all statutory requirements are met. Governors with key roles now visit the school regularly, on a formal basis, to monitor and explore its work. They are also well aware that this area of their responsibility needs to be more rigorous. Their most significant work has been in seeking and securing phased improvements to the school's accommodation. While going down the conventional route of submitting bids for government funding, helped by their new Voluntary Aided status as a church school, they have also set about seeking other sources of funding in order to start the programme of improvement in advance of the bid being granted.

37. Financial management is satisfactory. The school keeps a watchful eye on funding and so, for example, the teaching commitment of the headteacher varies from year to year, depending on financial circumstances and the availability of staff. The school has also been careful to build up some earmarked funding to carry forward towards its building improvements. Spending is regularly monitored, and best value procedures are satisfactory. The school's administrator, a valuable and valued member of the senior team, joins the governors' finance committee and is, therefore, able to contribute financial information when important decisions are made. She manages the day-to-day financial arrangements effectively and efficiently. However, while subject leaders play a part in discussions about spending priorities, they are not given responsibility for managing a budget for their respective subject. This was a weakness highlighted in the last inspection report. The use of funding for special educational needs has been approved by the LEA, and helps these pupils to benefit from being taught in relatively small class groups.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	311,653
Total expenditure	320,572
Expenditure per pupil	2,788

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	64,896
Balance carried forward to the next	55,977

38. The expenditure for each pupil is close to the national average, and when account is taken of all aspects of the school's performance the school gives satisfactory value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Reception group is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lack of consistency in offering children opportunities to explore and experiment.
- Cramped accommodation.
- Good relationships between adults and children.
- Good induction arrangements.

Commentary

39. There are currently 11 children in the Reception group. Children enter the class at the beginning of the term in which they have their fifth birthday and attend full time. These arrangements are to change this coming September so that all the children reaching five years of age during the academic year will start school together in September. Because year groups are small, these children are taught in a class together with pupils in Year 1. Arrangements for introducing the children to the school are good, largely because the school is well known within the community and informal links are strong. Children often have older brothers and sisters attending, so that they are already familiar with the school, and there are close links with the village playgroup.

40. At the time of the last inspection, the provision for these children was found to be poor. Weaknesses in the relevance and breadth of the curriculum have now largely been resolved, with the school's use of the early goals for learning to guide planning and assessment. As a result, teaching and provision are satisfactory. Since the last inspection, the work with these children has been kept constantly under review. A particular aim is to ensure that, in mixed-age classes, planning for children of Reception age is integrated effectively with the planning that is based on National Curriculum requirements and intended for pupils in Years 1 and 2. Staff training has been provided to accomplish this, and the continuing development of the Foundation Stage curriculum remains a school priority. However, as yet, children do not have consistent opportunities to learn through investigation and exploration, and this is one reason why teaching is occasionally unsatisfactory. In contrast, when children do have these chances, they embrace them with enthusiasm and there is a real buzz of activity; most significantly, the children then make good progress. These exploratory aspects of children's learning are constrained by the small size of the classroom, which does not make it easy for freer, independent activities to be available at all times. The children always have access to the school's good outside resources and play equipment, and these facilities are used well to enrich the curriculum. However, there is no defined outdoor learning area immediately outside the classroom, where children could be easily supervised, a facility which would ease internal space. The school is very aware of the need to improve the accommodation for this age group, and the proposed building programme will make substantial improvements and include a specified outside play area.

41. The present group of Reception children represents a broad range of ability. These children are achieving satisfactorily, so that by the time they enter Year 1 their attainment will be broadly as expected. The school's early assessments identified this group as being more able in their mathematical knowledge and understanding than in language and literacy skills, and their attainment is likely to exceed expectations in mathematical development.

42. The development of the children's **personal, social and emotional** skills receives sound support and encouragement, though opportunities for the children to be independent are sometimes lost because they are not consistently given opportunities to explore and experiment. Relationships are good; adults give children close individual attention during activities, and are warm and friendly in their approach. Children work well together, either alongside others or when they share tasks and equipment. They move around the room with confidence, and are attentive and cooperative most of the time. The children's response occasionally deteriorates when they are not able to follow their personal interests or curiosity.

43. **Communication, language and literacy** are satisfactorily taught. Children listen attentively during large group sessions and are happy to respond to questions. Small group tasks are suitably modified to meet the needs of different ability groups, such as those to consolidate children's knowledge and understanding of letter sounds. The children clearly enjoy books. Some higher attaining children, for example, enthusiastically select and read aloud simple, familiar stories, while others in the same group recognise one or two commonly used words and some letter sounds. Lower attaining children match picture cards to develop their recognition of letters. During literacy sessions, one or two higher attaining children are usefully paired with pupils in Year 1 to complete simple, independent writing activities. There are sufficient chances for children to 'write' independently, in role play contexts (such as the class 'café'), and with support from adults to record what they want to say. However, a significant proportion of children do not form letters confidently.

44. During the last inspection, the curriculum for **mathematical development** was found to be limited. It is evident from assessment information and from teachers' planning that children now have a suitably broad range of experiences. These are often linked with, and recorded alongside, work in other areas of learning. Most children are comfortable with solving problems involving numbers to 10, such as calculating 'one less' or 'one more', and middle attaining children confidently count and order numbers up to 20. Middle and lower attaining children identify simple shapes that they see in the world around them, and represent these in pictures of trees and houses. In more structured lessons, work is suitably matched to the needs of different ability groups and there is a well-ordered atmosphere. Supporting adults know what they have to do, make a prompt start to their work with small groups, and give individual children careful attention. These short sessions have the potential for children to make good progress. In practice, however, progress is more often satisfactory rather than good, and this is because the children are not always given the opportunity to experiment with the practical resources first so that discussion can then build on their own ideas and contributions.

45. Provision for the development of children's **knowledge and understanding of the world** is satisfactory. The school's immediate environment is often put to good use to support work in the classroom. For example, a walk in the village was used to explore the different senses and the natural world. In earlier work on healthy food, children sorted foods into different types. Wider knowledge of the world is gained through French lessons, and Reception-aged children make a good start to the development to their knowledge and understanding of the world. They make models from construction toys, and they design and make simple puppets. A 'workshop' day gave them the chance to think about, and design, a play area, which they then 'modelled', using a variety of materials. During the inspection, children explored the school and grounds to identify and 'record' items that were powered by electricity. However, teaching in this area is occasionally unsatisfactory when classroom activities are not varied enough to allow the children to explore and find out for themselves. When this happens, noise levels rise, children increasingly lose attention and interest, and some misbehave.

46. Children's **physical development** is satisfactorily catered for. The general playground is well resourced with climbing apparatus, and the Reception children have daily access to these facilities as well as to small games equipment and wheeled toys. They also have regular sessions in the hall. Children take part in such activities with enjoyment. They move confidently, and with a good awareness of others in the space. They balance on different parts of their body, holding each position for a short while, and follow instructions. Good attention is paid to making children aware

of simple changes in their body as a result of exercise. There are satisfactory opportunities to develop finer physical skills, for example, through the use of simple tools to cut and stick. These skills have been used to make puppets and little booklets for personal writing. However, some children have difficulty with pencil control during writing activities.

47. Provision for **creative development** is satisfactory. There are appropriate resources for imaginative play in role play areas, and these are changed regularly to match current work and maintain the children's interest. However, the general lack of space limits the extent to which these areas can be used throughout the day. Areas with shrubs and bushes have been created in the playground, specifically to encourage children to imagine and pretend. During the inspection, a walk around the village was used successfully as a stimulus before children were introduced to the work of Chagall and Matisse, and as an inspiration for pastel work. Completed work showed that the children had made good progress, including those who had joined the class this term, as pictures were carefully and thoughtfully completed. During assembly, children joined the older pupils in singing a simple and well known round, performed in three parts.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good improvement to reading standards, particularly in Years 1 and 2.
- Standards of writing in Year 2, which are below national expectations.
- Good teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6.
- The good use of language and literacy across the curriculum.
- Too little involvement of pupils in the assessment and evaluation of their work.

Commentary

48. The attainment of the current Year 6 group is likely to be above national expectations in all aspects of English, thus maintaining similar standards to those reached by this group in the tests at the age of seven. Individual educational plans for pupils with special educational needs are followed, and their progress is good.

49. At the time of the last inspection, pupils were judged to be making satisfactory progress as a whole in English but were not making enough progress in reading in Years 1 and 2, where standards in this aspect of the subject were found to be below national expectations. The school has given this key issue much attention, and its success is to be seen in the results of national tests for Year 2 pupils in the last few years, where standards in reading have been almost consistently the strongest. All pupils achieve well in this aspect of English, and pupils in the present Year 2 and Year 6 groups are likely to reach standards above national expectations by the end of the academic year.

50. In addition to good achievement in reading, those pupils in the present Year 2 group also achieve well in the development of speaking and listening skills, where standards are also likely to be above national expectations. Indeed, the majority of pupils from Year 1 onwards have good speaking skills and, apart from one or two boys, also listen carefully. Most speak clearly, use a wide vocabulary, and can understand and respond in discussions. A focus on stories enhances pupils' vocabulary and reading ability. A significant proportion of the present Year 2 group are confident readers, making good attempts at reading independently and using a range of strategies to work out difficult or unfamiliar words. Pupils have been well taught, with good prompts which stimulate ideas about the characters and the plot. In Years 3 to 6, pupils continue to develop their ability to pinpoint in texts the evidence that supports a particular point of view. The majority are fluent and read with expression. Their research skills on the Internet are good, and they make effective use of contents pages and indexes. Although it has a range of up-to-date fiction and non-fiction books, the library is poorly situated and far too small to function well. As a result, library skills are not promoted to the extent that pupils are familiar with how books are catalogued and organised.

51. The emphasis given to individual and group research is one of the reasons why the quality of speaking and listening is above expectations. This is because pupils are very much involved in communicating their newly found knowledge through discussions and presentations. These activities both underpin and stimulate the good quality writing that is a feature in Years 3 to 6. Skilful teaching ensures that everyone contributes and benefits. Good relationships, and a deeply held ethos of valuing all, promote in pupils the confidence to participate. Pupils write in a variety of formats and styles that maintain interest and enjoyment. Punctuation, spelling and grammar are taught methodically, and high standards are reached, as is evident in the pupils' use of quotation marks and their understanding of how to write dialogue. A constant emphasis by teachers on the meaning and the expressive use of words helps pupils to improve the quality of their writing.

52. Despite the good progress made by Year 2 pupils in the development of their speaking, listening and reading skills, the overall achievement of pupils in Year 2 has been hindered by unsatisfactory progress in writing. Until recently, these pupils had too few opportunities to write, and, as a result, their skills have been slow to develop. Having focused on reading, and then on mathematics, the school is aware of the need to improve attainment in writing and has already instigated an action plan that recognises pupils' potential to reach higher standards. This plan places greater stress on a more structured teaching programme, and highlights useful strategies such as the modelling of good writing. As a result, this group's progress has quickened in the last few months, and the quality of presentation has improved. Nonetheless, the initiative was introduced too late to have a major impact on standards in writing in the present Year 2 group, and their results in the national tests are likely to be below national expectations. Higher attaining Year 2 pupils, for example, do not as yet use capital letters and full stops regularly when writing sentences. There is evidence of work at the higher Level 3, but it is not consistently maintained. The new approaches outlined above, together with the school's determination and its previous success in raising performance in other areas on which it has focused attention, combine to form a secure basis for future improvement.

53. The teaching of English is satisfactory as a whole. It is strongest in Years 3 to 6, where the teaching and learning seen were never less than satisfactory and were sometimes very good. In these classes, teaching is well supported by detailed planning, the judicious use of praise, and the linking of all aspects of English into a unified approach. Teachers know their pupils well. A wide range of teaching and learning styles, including the use of card games, for example, engages pupils with varying interests and aptitudes. Group work enhances their

ability to work together, and teaching skilfully extends the capacity to empathise. Higher attaining pupils are well challenged to ensure that they reach the higher National Curriculum levels. Where teaching is most successful, these factors result in lively and rewarding discussion. For example, during the inspection, pupils in Years 4 and 5 did not want to leave lessons and continued their presentations in their free time. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory, and some good teaching was seen where written tasks were well matched to pupils' needs.

54. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Good vision, allied with a structured curriculum, has been instrumental in the very good improvement in reading since the previous inspection, and in writing in Years 3 to 6. The development of a more systematic assessment system has also been an important factor. However, pupils are not yet sufficiently involved in the assessment and evaluation of their own work with a view to understanding how it might be

improved. The school has started to tackle this by improving the marking of pupils' work, but a whole-school approach has not yet been established. The school has recently extended its monitoring of teaching and learning through the scrutiny of pupils' work, but this is not yet firmly established.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

55. A belief in the central place of good language and literacy skills in the curriculum results in good support in other subjects, and these skills are very well promoted through French and Latin. These same factors have a positive impact on standards. For example, a focus on research in music and history in Year 6 extends pupils' skills in writing and speaking when they work hard on their computer-generated presentations. Year 3 pupils make puppets in design and technology and write a script for role play. In nearly all classes there are many examples of work that celebrates pupils' successful use of English in a wider context, for example, in science and when recording experiences during visits. Given the school's recognition of the need to improve the writing of Year 2 pupils, there is scope for more opportunities for them to write in history.

French

No overall judgement can be made about provision in French. No lessons were seen, but evidence was gathered from an analysis of pupils' written work, video-tapes of lessons in all classes, and discussion with teachers and groups of pupils.

Commentary

56. At the time of the last inspection, French was relatively new in the school; improvement since then has been good. French is taught by a part-time teacher, who is clearly confident in the use of spoken and written French. No direct teaching could be seen during the inspection, as the specialist teacher was absent. It is clear that pupils thoroughly enjoy the subject, and they talk of the fun they have in lessons. They are excited and pleased by their success, and their enthusiasm and enjoyment contribute to their very good progress. Work in French also has a very good effect on literacy in general, helping pupils to speak with ease and to understand spoken and written structures. There is also a high degree of geographical and cultural understanding gained through learning about ways of life in another country, and further enhanced by residential trips to France.

57. By the end of Year 6, pupils reach standards that reflect those of pupils in the early years of secondary education. Children make a good start in the Reception group and continue to achieve very well throughout the school. By the end of Year 1, pupils can count to 20 in French and sing songs such as 'Frère Jacques'. In Year 2 they begin to use the structures of everyday speech and conduct simple conversations about their ages and about the clothes they wear. By the time they reach Years 5 and 6, pupils are able to discuss biographical details with some sophistication, and in role play situations they practise language to do with shopping, using euros as currency. Speaking and listening skills are very good. Pupils listen to one another very well. They speak with confidence and without hesitation, using clear grammatical structures, and with a sense of purpose and audience. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a very confident understanding of written and spoken French, and higher and middle attaining pupils command a very good range of vocabulary and grammar. Their written work is impressive, and they write ambitiously, often in complex sentences. These high standards of work were to be seen, for example, in play-scripts of a dialogue between 'Guillaume and Harold'. The work

of lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, is less ambitious, but they too achieve very well.

58. The French teacher is also the subject leader, and she manages and promotes the subject very well. Units of work are carefully prepared, some based on commercial resources. Careful records are kept of pupils' attainment and progress.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching in Years 3 to 6, and in small group work with lower attaining pupils.
- Good attention given to investigation and to developing pupils' use and application of their mathematical knowledge and understanding.
- Too little recorded work in Years 1 and 2.
- Inconsistencies in the quality of marking and feedback to pupils about their work.

Commentary

59. Provision for mathematics varies, with the most effective work taking place in Years 3 to 6, where pupils achieve well. The present Year 6 group is likely to reach standards above national expectations by the end of this school year, with a significant proportion performing at the higher Level 5. These findings represent good improvement since the school's last inspection, when pupils in these year groups were found to be making satisfactory progress, and Year 6 pupils were attaining standards broadly in line with national expectations. The subject has been closely targeted for improvement, and most of the issues noted in the previous report have been tackled well. The school has been relatively more successful with Years 3 to 6, where it has focused the greatest attention, than with Years 1 and 2. Planning and assessment practices have been improved, and resources are no longer unsatisfactory.

60. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. It is consistently good in Years 3 to 6, with the subject leader acting as a good role model. Activities in these classes are interesting and challenging for pupils of all abilities, to the extent that some Year 3 pupils are still in deep conversation about their work as they go out for the morning break. Any occasional lapses in good behaviour are handled firmly but positively, and lively and enthusiastic teaching keeps pupils alert and responsive. Lessons are carefully planned and prepared. Teachers are careful to work from what pupils already know, and they vary their teaching strategies to take account of the pace at which pupils are grasping new ideas. This was true, for example, in Years 5 and 6. Here, the teacher responded to pupils' earlier difficulties by using practical demonstrations and methods to illustrate what was happening and to help them reach the correct answer. Teachers are constantly checking and challenging pupils' knowledge and understanding, and will readily change their approach, during a lesson if needed, to ensure that pupils understand. The same quality of attention and response to pupils' needs is to be found in the checking of pupils' work. This process involves not only a 'feedback', but also a dialogue. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6, for example, write in reply to the teacher's comments and ask questions. However, this approach is not followed consistently throughout the school, and this is an area of its work that the school is currently developing.

61. Part of the school's strategy for improving mathematical performance has been the introduction of additional sessions. There are short 'extra' lessons that seek to improve pupils' mental agility with number, and also 'booster' lessons for lower attaining pupils. This small group work with lower attaining pupils is also well taught. The sessions are introduced through mathematical games for small 'teams', and there is a competitive edge to them that pupils enjoy. These activities are also a good vehicle for pupils' personal development, requiring them to follow rules and take turns, so that those with more demanding behaviour become

attentive and well focused. Even when there is an imbalance in the number of boys and girls in these groups, the teacher makes sure all take a full part.

62. The last report pointed to a weakness involving an over-emphasis on mechanical activities and the use of worksheets. This is no longer the case. Good attention is given in all classes to learning through mathematical investigations, and particularly so in Years 3 to 6, where teachers are always seeking to identify links between different concepts and help pupils apply their knowledge and understanding to new learning. For example, higher attaining pupils in Year 6 showed a competent grasp of the 'patterns' that would help them to calculate different ratios, and were keen to challenge themselves by moving beyond whole numbers and applying the pattern to decimal numbers. In 'booster' groups, too, pupils are constantly encouraged to explore and explain different methods for finding an answer to a problem. Pupils are enabled to explain their ideas and strategies because teachers routinely use, and reinforce, mathematical vocabulary.

63. In Years 1 and 2, where pupils are achieving satisfactorily, such opportunities are more limited. However, the current Year 2 group is relatively 'more able', and standards are therefore likely to be above the national expectations by the end of the school year. For example, pupils of all abilities are confident in working with numbers up to 100, and higher attaining pupils accurately complete written calculations with numbers beyond 100. Teaching in these year groups is satisfactory, and good learning takes place when teachers use imaginative techniques to hold pupils' attention. At times, however, weaknesses in the management of the challenging behaviour of some pupils mean that progress is only satisfactory. Work is varied and matched to pupils' differing abilities in Years 1 and 2. However, tasks are too often completed on white boards and subsequently erased, and too little is completed in books. Where work is recorded it is often untidy, and marking does not always pay enough attention to raising pupils' awareness of the quality of presentation expected, or to identifying and commenting on pupils' mistakes and misconceptions. Learning support staff are generally well briefed about their work with small groups and give these pupils good individual attention. Sometimes, they also give quiet help to pupils during whole-class discussion, though this approach is not consistent in all lessons. The subject leader has monitored performance in these classes but has not yet had the opportunity to tackle the inconsistencies that exist.

Mathematics across the curriculum

64. The use of mathematics across the curriculum is good. For example, mathematical skills are routinely used in design and technology, and during investigative work in science.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good emphasis throughout the school on learning through scientific investigation.
- Inconsistencies in standards of presentation and the quality of marking.

Commentary

65. The last inspection report noted strengths in regular investigative work and the good use of trips and visits to extend pupils' scientific experience. These good features have been maintained. In all classes science is taught rewardingly through practical tasks and exploration. Pupils are encouraged to plan their own investigations and are enabled to record their findings in a wide variety of ways. As a result, they are comfortable in taking part in these tasks and in making and recording observations. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6, for example, regularly draw conclusions based on close and detailed observation and relate their findings to their scientific knowledge and understanding. Pupils in Year 2 make decisions about their tasks, use simple equipment, and explain what is happening. Where these practical approaches are most effective, pupils are particularly thoughtful about their work and show much interest.

66. Weaknesses in planning and assessment have been resolved with the adoption of national guidance material. The curriculum is well balanced across all aspects of the subject, with a good quantity of work completed and with close attention to the use and promotion of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. For example, pupils record their work in a scientific style and format, and use tables, drawings and graphs to present their findings. Year 2 pupils had researched information on the computer about the different parts of flowering plants, and those in Year 3 confidently logged on to the Internet to use an interactive program about plant growth. Microscopes and sensors are also used. Timetabling arrangements are flexible enough to take account of the need to pursue some investigations, and record changes frequently.

67. In keeping with the findings of the last inspection, achievement across the school is satisfactory, but with variations. Those pupils now in Years 3 to 6 achieve well, while those in Years 1 and 2 are achieving satisfactorily. Standards in the present Year 6 are likely to be above national expectations by the end of the school year. Standards for the current Year 2 are likely to be broadly in line with expectations, with little evidence of attainment at the higher Level 3. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. All pupils benefit from the strengths and improvements described above, but there are variations in the quality of teaching and learning right across the school. Where teaching is most successful, there is good attention to promoting the knowledge and use of scientific vocabulary. In Year 3, for example, pupils fully understood the role of the 'control plant' and could explain its function. The class teacher also skilfully encouraged pupils to explain in greater detail. These pupils really enjoyed the lively discussion, and listened carefully to one another's contributions.

68. Pupils' good achievement in Year 6 is also nurtured through the class teacher's closely focused checking of their work, and the feedback that results from it; in this way, misconceptions are quickly picked up and sorted out. This level of dialogue is challenging, and clearly motivates pupils to do better. One higher attaining pupil, for example, redrafted work about evaporation following just such a 'dialogue'. High expectations for what pupils should achieve are illustrated by well presented work. However, this quality of feedback, and an accompanying insistence on high standards, is not yet fully established across the school as a whole. In some classes containing younger pupils, marking does not regularly draw pupils' attention to errors, in spelling for example, or to untidy work, nor is there enough comment on the scientific content of the work. Weaknesses in the presentation of work were also highlighted in the last report.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good leadership and management.
- Good teaching and learning.
- Good use of ICT to support learning in other subjects.
- Limited involvement of older pupils in assessing their work.

Commentary

69. There has been a good level of improvement to ICT since the last inspection, when standards were broadly in line with national expectations and pupils' achievement was judged to be satisfactory. Much of the improvement is due to the skilled, committed and enthusiastic work of the relatively new subject leader. She has high expectations which are communicated well to other staff. There is now a well planned curriculum which systematically develops pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. Most significantly, pupils have plenty of opportunities to practise their skills in this and in other subjects. Resources have also been improved, and the school has benefited from the help of governors with particular skills in this area; for example, they have offered technical support and set up the school's website. As a result, pupils are achieving well in this subject, and standards are likely to be above national expectations by the end of the school year both in Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they have one-to-one help. Specialist teaching is also available when necessary to promote the learning of higher attaining pupils.

70. By the time pupils leave the school they have used ICT to combine word-processing and graphics. They have had access to the Internet for research and to send e-mails, and they have used computers to handle data and for control, monitoring and modelling. An example of good learning was seen where Year 2 pupils discussed how information can be represented as graphs and how the computer could be used to generate these. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 take account of the purpose of the task and the intended audience.

71. Good teaching is a major factor in the pupils' success. Lessons are well planned, with clear introductions and a range of practical activities to reinforce learning. Teachers' good relationships with pupils, and their confident subject knowledge, ensure that pupils' interest and attention are engaged. Pupils enjoy the subject and are keen to demonstrate their skills. They speak with confidence, for example, about their use of digital cameras and of PowerPoint, and also about what they have learned from independent research on the Internet. Work is assessed at the end of each unit, but older pupils do not always benefit from understanding the criteria used to assess their knowledge and skills. This makes it difficult for them to reflect critically on their work and make improvements.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

72. The use of ICT across the curriculum was found to have weaknesses when the school was last inspected, but this aspect of the subject is now good. There is an integrated approach which combines the discrete ICT lessons with the use of computers to aid learning across the curriculum. A wide and well planned range of experiences enhances pupils' skills and understanding. All subjects show considerable use of computers. Pupils are involved in a local weather watch initiative, for instance, and send e-mails to Australia as part of their geography studies. A particularly strong feature right across the school is the use of the Internet for research, with Year 2 pupils, for example, using a Toy Museum website to access information. Information and communication technology also supports the core subjects well. Good use is made of the BBC school science clips, and mathematics teaching is enhanced through the use of educational games. Year 3 pupils, for instance, rapidly logged on to the science website and began to explore an interactive program about the conditions necessary for plants to grow. Pupils use computers to draft and redraft their English, to improve their spelling and grammar, and to research the work of writers such as Roald Dahl.

HUMANITIES

Not enough evidence was collected to enable judgements to be made about standards, pupils' achievement or provision in history and geography. Evidence is taken from a small sample of teaching, a scrutiny of planning and of pupils' work, and discussions with pupils and the subject leader.

Commentary

73. Planning for **history** is based on national guidelines and has been modified to allow for mixed-age classes. Pupils' knowledge and understanding are enriched by visits to local museums, for example, and also by links made with other subjects. Michael Morpurgo's book 'Friend or Foe', for instance, had been read to good effect by pupils in Years 4 and 5 in their studies of World War II, and had helped them to empathise with people's experiences of the Blitz and evacuation. A theatrical performance also brought Victorian schools to life for pupils in Year 2. There is a good range of writing opportunities in Years 3 to 6, an example of which was seen when pupils in Years 5 and 6 discussed the advantages and disadvantages of each of Henry VIII's marriages. Opportunities for independent research are also good. As a result, pupils in Year 6 know many facts about Ancient Greece, though they are more hesitant in evaluating the contribution made by that society to the world and in explaining whether the Roman Empire preceded the Greek one. Valuable opportunities are also available to Year 2 pupils, who talked confidently about the research

into toys they had carried out through the Internet. By the end of Year 2, pupils develop a good sense of the passing of time, with simple time-lines used effectively to show changes. There is a satisfactory balance in Year 2 between worksheet material and independent work, but opportunities for these pupils to write are not always fully exploited.

74. **Geography** is well planned, with the national guidelines adapted to meet the school's needs. Visits and field trips extend the curriculum well, as do cross-curricular links. Year 1 pupils, for example, extended their knowledge and understanding of places, transport and jobs on the island of Struay through reading the story of 'Katy Morag and the Two Grandmothers'. There was good planning for ICT in a Year 3 lesson to enhance pupils' mapping skills and their understanding of weather patterns. Older pupils discuss and write about environmental issues, and by the time they leave school pupils have been taught the basics of physical and human geography. Governors with an interest in environmental issues have supported the school in the planting of a bank of wild flowers.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Not enough evidence was gathered to allow judgements to be made about standards, achievement or provision in each of the subjects of art and design, design and technology, music, and physical education. The following commentary is based on evidence from very small samples of teaching, photographs, discussion with pupils, and a scrutiny of pupils' work and of planning.

Commentary

75. The subject of **art and design** is satisfactorily represented within the school's curriculum. National guidance is used as a basis for planning work and making assessments. Pupils' experiences are widened by links with other subjects and through 'workshops', which introduce them to non-western art and three-dimensional work. A whole-school African day, for example, gave pupils the opportunity to make masks from clay and decorate them with traditional patterns. Greek studies in Years 5 and 6 have been used as a stimulus for textile collage work, and landscape pictures in pastel were produced following a residential trip. Pupils also consider the work of other artists, such as Lowry, Picasso and Van Gogh, though not always in sufficient depth to enable them to comment on the artists' different styles of painting. The school grounds act as a useful resource, and were used by pupils in Years 4 and 5 as a location for creating 'dream' paintings. To help gather and generate ideas, pupils were using a digital camera.

76. There has been much improvement to **design and technology** since the last inspection, when provision and achievement in this subject formed a key issue. Most significantly, the school appointed a teacher with specialist expertise, and her enthusiasm and commitment have made a strong impact throughout the school. In keeping with the practice in other foundation subjects, the systematic development of knowledge, understanding and skills is now based on national guidance. Projects are varied and exciting, and pupils express their enjoyment of the subject both in conversation and in the individuality and 'finish' of their work. For example, pupils in Year 2 have completed large stick puppets based on characters and animals in the story of Noah's Ark, and they talked about their task with much enjoyment. Pupils' achievements are celebrated in attractive displays.

77. Good attention is given to all aspects of the subject, and nowhere more so than in the subject leader's own class of pupils (Years 4 and 5), whose most recent work was to design a

Treasure Box for something special. This was finished to a high standard of accuracy and precision, showing very good achievement and standards above national expectations. Designs were individual, with careful attention to detail, and reflected high levels of interest on the part of the pupils. There had been careful preparation, the work had been evaluated along the way, and prototypes had been produced. Good use of mathematical skills took place during the planning and construction process, and also of ICT as pupils printed their own little designs to use as decorations.

78. The school has also paid attention to improving provision for **music**, and particularly to the opportunities pupils have for singing. During an assembly, the whole school took part in a three- part song, with clear, tuneful singing. Higher attaining pupils sing confidently and sweetly. Pupils are clearly familiar with the hymns they sing, and such whole-school occasions help to weld the school's sense of community. Improvements to provision have been helped by planning based on national guidance and by the use of specialist teaching. All classes in Years 3 to 6 benefit from recorder lessons, and some pupils take violin lessons, though some parents expressed concern that lessons do not include a wider range of instruments. Music is also promoted well through whole-school musical productions such as the performance of 'Joseph', due to take place at the end of the term, and through 'workshop' days. The most recent of these events was the African day, mentioned above, when pupils were taught African songs.

79. The school's planning covers all aspects of **physical education**, in line with national guidance for this subject. Some parents raised concerns about too little time given to team games, but inspection evidence found this was not entirely true. For example, during the inspection pupils in Years 4 and 5 practised cricket skills, showing growing confidence in over-arm bowling, and also took part in a 'lineout' game. The bowling of higher attaining pupils was competent and accurate. There are also football and netball clubs, run by parents, and sporting fixtures with other local schools. The school is aware that this aspect of sport is not promoted with the same vigour as some others, though pupils' participation in community teams and sporting activities is promoted well and pupils' achievements in these events are readily celebrated. In addition to physical education lessons, all pupils benefit from the expertise of specialist teachers for gymnastics and Judo, who take weekly sessions during the school day. Pupils clearly look forward to these occasions and take part with enjoyment. Gymnastic lessons in the hall are regular and frequent. These lessons are well organised and give good attention to the effect of exercise on the body. The space is confined but is used as well as possible; pupils are kept busy and active, although the small size of this area limits the use of larger apparatus. Pupils show a real sense of pride in their achievement during weekly Judo sessions. The etiquette and discipline of this sport very successfully promote a wide range of other social and mental skills and attributes. For example, the sessions clearly encourage respect for others, high standards of behaviour and a sense of awe, in addition to developing physical skills, such as control. High expectations of pupils in these respects are particularly successful with pupils who have special educational needs, notably those with more challenging behaviour. Literacy skills are also supported and developed, through the use of vocabulary related to the subject.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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