

INSPECTION REPORT

COSSINGTON CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Cossington, Leicester

LEA area: Leicestershire

Unique reference number: 120124

Headteacher: Vivienne Hawes

Lead inspector: Raymond Jardine

Dates of inspection: 6 – 9 December 2004

Inspection number: 266670

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils: 4–11 years
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 108

School address: Main Street
Cossington
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Michael Graham

Date of previous inspection: 7 June 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Cossington Church of England Primary is a voluntary controlled school that serves the villages of Cossington and Sileby, and the surrounding areas, with most pupils coming from Sileby. The school is smaller than many other primary schools, having 108 pupils on roll. There are considerably more boys than girls in each of the four mixed age classes. The school is a popular choice amongst parents in the locality and the numbers on roll have remained steady for several years around the planned admission number. Almost all pupils are of white UK origin; just three are from other backgrounds. None has English as an additional language. The socio-economic backgrounds of pupils' families are wide-ranging, but overall they are about average compared with that of England as a whole; the proportion entitled to free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving other than at the usual times is low. There are 18 pupils on the register of special educational needs, which is about average. Four of these pupils receive additional support from outside agencies, and of these, two have a Statement of Special Educational Needs. Their needs cover moderate learning and speech and communication difficulties, and dyslexia. Pupils' attainment on entry is broad and is typically about average, although their language skills are below average. The school gained Investor in People Award in 2001.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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9756	Ken Parsons	Lay inspector	
21872	Lorna Brackstone	Team inspector	Foundation Stage English Art and design Geography History Music Physical education Religious education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Cossington is a good school. It has a very caring and positive ethos where expectations of pupils' academic and personal development are high. Consequently, very good attitudes and relationships are fostered amongst its pupils and they achieve well in key subjects. The teaching is good and much of it very good. The school is led and managed well and provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well in English, science and information and communication technology, and very well in mathematics, but their good literacy skills are not applied enough in other subjects.
- Lessons are stimulating and very challenging. Teachers and learning support assistants work closely so that pupils of all abilities learn well, including those with special educational needs.
- Pupils very much enjoy school and attendance is high. There is a strong community spirit within which pupils feel secure and well supported. Consequently, they collaborate very well together.
- The very strong leadership provided by the headteacher and deputy promotes close teamwork throughout the staff, which is focused on achieving high standards.
- The curriculum is well planned and very much enriched by visits, visitors and a range of extra-curricular activities that involve many pupils.
- The indoor accommodation is unsatisfactory, as it is too cramped, and this constrains some curriculum activities despite the best efforts of staff.

There has been good progress made since the last inspection. Teaching quality has improved because it is better monitored and supported. The school's self-review arrangements have become more systematic and, in consequence, standards have risen at a rate above the national trend.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	D	B	A	C
Mathematics	A	A	B	D
Science	C	C	B	C

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

Overall achievement is good and it is very good in mathematics. In 2004, Year 6 standards in English were well above the national average; in mathematics and science they were above. Standards in English and science have improved in recent years while those for mathematics have been more consistently above or well above average. The

comparison with similar schools should be treated cautiously as the school is near the lower border between this cluster of schools and another. Value added measures for these pupils show that they achieved well overall compared with both national and similar schools. Standards in the current Year 6 are above average in English and science, and pupils achieve well in both. Mathematics standards have recovered and are well above average. In Year 2 tests in 2004, standards were well above average in reading, writing and mathematics and above those of similar schools. Standards seen in the current Year 2 are above average in reading and writing and pupils are achieving well in both. In mathematics they are well above average. ICT standards are above average throughout and pupils make good progress in acquiring basic skills and applying them in subjects. Standards in religious education are average. Pupils with special educational needs and those gifted and talented achieve well. They are well supported and challenged in lessons. Children in the Foundation Stage also make good progress. Most are on course to achieve the goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception in personal social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical, physical and creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good. Pupils have very positive attitudes, enjoy learning and their attendance and punctuality are very good. Behaviour is very good; there have been no exclusions in recent years.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided is good.

Teaching quality is good. A considerable amount is very good. Lessons are well structured and achieve a good balance of whole-class discussion and individual or group work. Learning support assistants are skilled and work closely with teachers to support specific pupils. Most lessons involve a high level of challenge and activities are often imaginative. They stimulate interest and are generally adapted well for the range of pupils' abilities and needs, especially in English and mathematics. Consequently, pupils of all abilities learn effectively. Homework is good. Marking provides plenty of commentary so that pupils know what they need to do to improve. Assessment is good overall; clear targets are set for all pupils in key subjects. The curriculum is broad and very much enriched through a range of very well attended extra-curricular activities, sporting events, visits and visitors. However, the accommodation is unsatisfactory; it constrains some activities in reception, ICT and practical subjects. Pupils are very well cared for, supported and guided. There are very good links with parents and other schools, and good links with the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good.

The headteacher provides very good leadership and direction for the school, which has promoted close teamwork throughout the staff. Subject leaders monitor and develop their subjects effectively. Self-review is systematic and increasingly involves governors in monitoring the school's work. Governance is good. Governors understand the school's

strengths and weaknesses and are influential in shaping its development. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities well.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils are highly satisfied with the school's work. Parents say their children make good progress, think the teaching is good and staff very approachable. They feel the school has a strong community spirit. Some parents would like more information on their children's progress and inspectors agree. Pupils say they like school and feel they work hard and that their views are listened to.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Make more use of pupils' good literacy skills in other subjects across the curriculum, particularly religious education, history and geography, and so raise standards further.
- Explore ways in which the cramped internal accommodation can be improved to provide better facilities for pupils, particularly in reception and in Years 3 to 6.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is good overall. Children in reception achieve well in almost all areas of learning. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 also achieve well in the core subjects and attain standards that are above average, and well above in mathematics. Pupils of different abilities and backgrounds make good progress.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in English, science and ICT and very well in mathematics, but pupils' good literacy skills are not applied enough in humanities where standards seen were about average.
- Children in reception achieve well in almost all the areas of learning; achievement in physical development is satisfactory.
- The more able pupils in Years 5 and 6 could achieve more in their scientific enquiry skills.
- Pupils with special educational needs are supported effectively in class and through small group sessions and make good progress as a result.
- The more able, gifted and talented pupils achieve well. Lessons are very challenging and good opportunities are also provided to enable them to excel in areas such as sport.

Commentary

1. In 2004, standards in Year 6 national tests were above those nationally in both mathematics and science, and well above in English. In relation to schools whose pupils attained similarly in Year 2, standards were about average in English and science and below in mathematics. However, this comparison needs careful interpretation and does not provide a fair picture of pupils' achievements because Cossington's standards in Year 2 four years previously are near the lower border of this group of schools nationally with another group. Value added measures for these pupils provide a fairer picture of their achievements; these were above average on all national comparisons and showed a slight improvement compared with 2003. A good proportion of pupils achieved above the expected level, particularly in English. Overall, pupils' achievements in Year 6 in 2004 compared to their standards in Year 2 were good, as they were the previous year. The school exceeded its target in both English and mathematics; its targets for 2005 are higher and appropriately challenging. Standards have risen in Year 6 over recent years at a rate above that nationally, most noticeably in English and to a lesser extent, science, but it is mathematics standards that have been most consistently above or well above the national average over this time. Girls have tended to achieve better than boys, but no difference was found during the inspection.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.6 (28.1)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	28.2 (29.3)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	29.8 (28.9)	28.6 (28.6)

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

- In 2004, standards in Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics were all well above those nationally. In relation to similar schools, they were above average. Good proportions of pupils achieved above the expected level in reading, very good in writing. Standards have been above or well above average over the past four years, with the exception of 2003 when there was a dip. There is no pattern of better achievement amongst boys or girls in recent years.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.5 (14.9)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	16.3 (13.8)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	17.5 (16.1)	16.2 (16.3)

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

- Standards seen during the inspection in Year 6 are above average in English and well above in mathematics. In mathematics in particular, standards have recovered to a more typical level after a dip in 2004, mainly due to careful analysis of pupils' responses to test questions last year, which helped guide teaching and a strong focus on problem solving skills in the curriculum. In science, standards are above average overall. Pupils are achieving well in both English and science and very well in mathematics. However, the more able could achieve more in their scientific enquiry skills; not enough attention is given to teaching these higher skills in Years 5 and 6.
- In Year 2 standards are above average in reading, writing and science and well above in mathematics. Taking account of pupils' attainment on entry to Year 1, they are achieving well and very well in their mathematics, where the quality of teaching, curriculum planning and leadership are very good.
- Reception children are accommodated in a class with a small number of Year 1 pupils. They initially start school on a part-time basis at the beginning of the academic year in which they will be five and are then gradually introduced into full-time education after the first few weeks. During this inspection, there were 15 children in the reception year group. Children start school with levels of attainment that are as expected, although their language skills are below. By the time they reach Year 1, all children have achieved well and most have reached the recommended level within each area of learning of the Foundation Stage curriculum. However, their achievement in physical development is not as good and is satisfactory. Resources for developing physical skills are insufficient and the outdoor play area is not used enough.
- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are above average in both Years 2 and 6. Pupils make good progress in acquiring new knowledge and skills and they apply them well across the curriculum in most subjects. Teachers and

support assistants have good ICT skills and make efficient use of the available resources, despite some constraints imposed by the school's accommodation. Standards in religious education are in line with those expected in the new locally agreed syllabus, and pupils' achievements are satisfactory. In other subjects sampled, pupils showed above average standards in physical education lessons and in design and technology. Standards seen in history and geography were about average. Not enough use is made of pupils' good literacy skills in these subjects to help promote standards.

7. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in lessons and through small group sessions outside class. Their needs are assessed carefully and appropriate action plans devised. They are supported and guided very well by teachers and well-briefed learning support assistants. Those few who are from minority ethnic groups are fully integrated into lessons and school life, and progress as well as their peers. The more able, gifted and talented pupils also achieve well, especially in mathematics and English where lessons are very challenging, and through the many sporting and creative activities provided.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have very good attitudes to school and their behaviour is also very good. Their attendance is well above the national average and their punctuality is very good. Pupils' social and moral development is very good, whilst their spiritual and cultural development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have a very positive approach to their education and are very keen to take part in school activities.
- Behaviour is very good in most lessons and contributes considerably to the learning taking place.
- The school has a very strong ethos that involves very clear expectations of behaviour and fosters an excellent community spirit.
- Relationships are very positive and pupils are proud to be part of the school.
- Pupils enjoy school and this is an important reason why their attendance is very good.

Commentary

8. The school has a very strong ethos that values each pupil as an individual and helps to create a friendly community with very good relationships between the children and both teaching and non-teaching staff. This encourages a very positive attitude to school amongst the pupils and a working atmosphere in which teachers do not have to expend much time maintaining order. Pupils respond very well and display a very strong interest in their lessons, the school clubs and everything else the school has to offer. Support for extra-curricular activities is exceptionally high, with most pupils participating in some way. They are very pleasant young people whom it is a pleasure to meet. The relatively small size of the school means that pupils and staff alike know everybody else well and all are accepted in the school community. Pupils look after each other and accept others for whom they are. They express a strong sense of belonging and feel very secure within the school.
9. This positive ethos is the key to the very good behaviour in lessons and around the school. However, the school's written behaviour policies are quite vague in terms of the guidance they provide; they contribute little to the very positive results the school actually achieves. Pupils work well in all lessons, getting on with their tasks even when the teacher is engaged elsewhere in the room and they use the time available well. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for themselves; in some classes every member has an individual area of responsibility. Even the youngest children are expected to organise themselves at the start of the day. Behaviour around the school is very sensible, with no pushing or shoving; they cope very sensibly with the crowded conditions they experience in some classrooms. Pupils going through a classroom to access the computers at the back do so quietly, creating the minimum of disruption, for example. There are hardly any bullying incidents, and then only name calling, but there are procedures in place to deal with any that might occur. There have been no exclusions in recent years. The school is well supervised and the recently arrived reception children have settled well into the school environment. Pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes in lessons and hence benefit from the high level of support that they receive.

10. The school's vision statement, aims and mission statement all emphasise the development of pupils' social and teamwork skills. The school has a very clear set of moral values to help pupils distinguish right from wrong. Pupils respect the feelings and beliefs of others and are able to work well as part of a group and when contributing towards a common goal. These values are fostered early in the reception year where provision for children's personal, social and emotional development is good; they are likely to meet the goals for reception by the end of the year. The school's strong set of social values emphasises working as a community and pupils are able to listen to and appreciate each other's views. In a Years 1 and 2 art and design lesson, for example, they were able to suggest how others could improve their work in a very mature and unthreatening manner. They work well in class in pairs or groups and are able to organise their own playground games; a conga line one break-time seemed to include virtually everybody in the lower playground. The school also encourages pupils' concern for others through their support for charities.
11. The school provides a daily act of collective worship for pupils in assemblies, which are planned through the year to support the exploration of religious, moral and social issues, although some assemblies lack sufficient spiritual dimension. Pupils have very good self-knowledge and older ones are able to talk about the values of the school and their own contributions to them in a very mature way. Spiritual awareness is evinced in some lessons, an example being the pupils' work based on the artist, Kandinsky, which embraced dance and music as well as the more obvious use of colour and shape. The walls of the school provide varied display of pupils' work, whilst there are regular opportunities for pupils to develop their self-confidence, such as the very popular residential trips. Topics in religious education help pupils to develop their views on the world, and personal, social and health education provision contributes well to pupils' development as individuals. Pupils' appreciation of their own and others' cultural traditions is good. They learn about features of various cultures, including hearing from a range of visitors who come into school. There is a balance between different cultures; provision has included an Indian dance workshop, whilst pupils also learn country dancing in the school's club. Although cultural provision is good, the proximity of multicultural Leicester is not fully reflected within it.
12. Pupils want to come to school. Parents are very co-operative in ensuring their child's very good attendance, with few taken out of school by parents for holidays in term time. There is a prompt start to the school day and little time is lost as a result of lateness.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.2	School data	0.0
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school, and often very good. The curriculum is broad, well planned and much enriched through extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors. Teaching and support staff are skilled and well trained, but the accommodation is too cramped. Arrangements for pupils' care, welfare and the support and advice provided are very good. Pupils' views are valued and sought, and they have considerable influence on school life. Links with parents and with other schools and colleges are very well developed. There are also good links with the community.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good. A considerable proportion is very good. Assessment is good and used well to guide teaching and to monitor pupils' progress in reception and throughout Years 1 to 6, especially in the core subjects of English and mathematics.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan and structure lessons well to achieve a good balance of whole-class discussion and group or individual work.
- Lessons are very challenging; most are adapted well for the range of pupils' abilities, but occasionally they are too challenging. Scientific enquiry skills are not extended enough in Years 5 and 6.
- Learning support assistants work closely with teachers and are very effective in supporting targeted pupils, both within lessons and in small groups.
- Pupils respond well and enjoy learning because the contexts and methods chosen engage their interest and capture their imagination.
- Homework is used well to extend learning. Marking is effective and focused on clear objectives so that the comments provided help pupils to improve.
- Pupils are set clear targets in English and mathematics, their progress is assessed and those needing additional support are identified, but assessment in other subjects is not so systematic.

Commentary

13. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently at least good throughout the school and a good proportion is very good. There are strengths in the teaching of mathematics, and the teaching of English, science and ICT are consistently good. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection. Teaching quality has improved since the last inspection, partly because it is more closely monitored and supported by the headteacher and deputy.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 27 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	10	16	1	0	0	0

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

14. Lessons are well planned and structured to achieve a good balance of whole-class discussion and group or individual work. Teachers choose stimulating contexts for lessons and provide lively tasks and, as a result, pupils respond enthusiastically and

enjoy learning. This was seen in a very good Years 1 and 2 science lesson where pupils explored a very well chosen range of musical instruments and grouped them according to how the sounds were produced. By the end of the sequence they had linked sound with vibrations and were ready to investigate sound vibrations further. Time and resources are used well to help pupils grasp new ideas through first-hand experience. A strong feature is the way pupils use individual whiteboards to show their answers and working methods during whole-class discussions so that everybody's response can be checked.

15. The quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is good overall. Teachers have a good understanding of the needs of this age group and have established very warm and positive relationships with the children. The nursery nurse and other support staff are used well to interact with the children and this helps these youngsters develop their speaking and listening skills. Resources are used well and this stimulates the children's levels of concentration. Adults use lots of praise to encourage children and support them in their learning. This was evident in a good communication, language and literacy lesson where the teacher positively reviewed the children's work and praised them for their efforts. Activities are challenging and this motivates the children's learning. For instance, in a good knowledge and understanding session the children were required to discuss with their partners how different types of fabric felt to touch.
16. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Routines are well established, for example, form-time is used very well as pupils settle quickly to chosen tasks such as quiet reading, handwriting or using the computers to complete tasks set for the week. The school's accommodation is very cramped and access to some resources such as the ICT suite could potentially be disruptive to other classes. However, pupils behave very well and work independently and responsibly within and away from the class to lessen this constraint. Teachers and their support assistants have good ICT skills and, consequently, use ICT well as part of their teaching. Teachers' knowledge is generally good and this is evident in the clarity of their explanations and questioning in most subjects. Some higher skills of scientific enquiry are not taught systematically enough in Years 5 and 6 to help raise the higher attaining pupils' standards in the subject.
17. Teachers make lessons very challenging and their expectations of pupils' productivity and behaviour are high. Most tasks given are adapted very well for the range of pupils' abilities, especially in English, mathematics and science. This was seen in a very good Years 5 and 6 mathematics lesson, which included tasks at four levels of difficulty, including very effective use of laptop computers for one group who were doing a very challenging problem solving activity. In most lessons, learning support assistants are available, especially for English, mathematics and in reception/Year 1. They are briefed well and make a very effective contribution to pupils' learning through their prompting and questioning of pupils as they work. Pupils with special educational needs and those targeted for additional support to help raise their standard to the expected level are well taught by learning support assistants, both within class and in small group booster sessions. Occasionally, however, the level of challenge in lessons can be too high for some pupils, especially where no additional adult support is available. Teachers do monitor pupils as they work, but groups work more slowly where they are unsure of a way forward until they receive additional guidance from their teacher.

18. Homework is set regularly and contributes much to pupils' learning. Marking is good. Teachers provide useful feedback to help pupils improve their work. The school has been working to improve the quality and impact of marking by focusing comments on the objectives for pupils' learning and on the curriculum objectives they are given in English and mathematics. As a result, most pupils have a very good understanding of how they can improve. There are regular assessments in English, mathematics and science in particular. Pupils have targets for their attainment by the end of each year and their progress is monitored and reviewed towards these. Additional sessions for literacy and numeracy are provided for targeted pupils as a result of analysis of these assessments. Assessments in science are generally devised by individual teachers and are not always systematic enough to help track pupils' progress towards the targets set and to analyse patterns in them. Assessment arrangements in other subjects are also less well developed, although teachers do undertake reviews of pupils' work and retain portfolios of their typical standards. In ICT, pupils' basic skills are not yet assessed systematically as they move through the school.

The curriculum

The school provides a good breadth of curricular opportunities. These are enhanced by a very good provision of enrichment activities for a school of this size. There is a good match of staff to the curriculum and there is a satisfactory range of resources available in all subjects. The school's accommodation is unsatisfactory because it is so cramped.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a curriculum that emphasises links across subjects in imaginative ways.
- Pupils do not apply their literacy skills, especially extended writing, enough in other subjects, particularly humanities to help raise standards.
- There is a good match of teachers to the needs of the curriculum and the school has a very good number of effective teaching assistants.
- The school site is very awkwardly arranged and the accommodation for reception and Years 3 to 6 is unsatisfactory; staff work hard to overcome its limitations to deliver the curriculum.
- There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities, which are popular with pupils and enhance their learning.
- The school has an inclusive provision within which all pupils are treated equally.
- Pupils with special educational needs are supported and assessed effectively.

Commentary

19. Pupils benefit from a good and broad curriculum. The curriculum in the reception class is based on the Foundation Stage, a nationally recommended programme of work and is of good quality. The reception team work well together and the number of support staff available to meet the needs of the children are good. However, the indoor accommodation is cramped and the outdoor area is not used sufficiently well as an integral part of the school day. Throughout the school, the teachers are particularly successful at building links between subjects to make the work more interesting and to help pupils to learn. For example, in a science lesson, pupils were making a quiz machine, but using maths or geography questions as their examples. However, opportunities given to pupils to practise extended writing in subjects other than English are too limited. Much of their work in subjects such as history or geography is based on worksheets rather than encouraging pupils to write longer pieces on the topics covered.
20. The school provides a very inclusive education for its pupils, including those few from minority ethnic groups. Pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in all aspects of school life and receive very good support through well-planned work delivered by highly effective teaching assistants. The number and training of these support staff are very good and they make an important contribution to the education the children receive. Pupils requiring assessment of their needs are identified quickly on entry to school; the school's special educational needs co-ordinator is also the teacher of reception. Clear criteria are used to decide on appropriate courses of action for specific pupils and good use made of outside agencies to help assess their needs where necessary. Education plans are clear and specific in their objectives; they are agreed and reviewed termly with the full involvement of parents and the pupils concerned. The school prepares its pupils well for the demands of secondary education and parents report that pupils from the school have the self-confidence to settle quickly into Year 7.
21. The curriculum is enriched by a very good range of clubs and sporting activities, including competitive games with other schools. A very large proportion of the eligible pupils participate in these and they are enthusiastic about them. For example, a watercolour painting club was attended by nearly all pupils in the eligible age range. In addition, special events and visitors are used to offer pupils an opportunity to develop their skills and perspectives. Residential trips for Years 2, 5 and 6 extend their personal development and help achieve the school's teambuilding objectives. The provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is good, being addressed through activities such as circle times, but also through aspects of religious education and other subjects. For example, in history pupils have been asked to review the morality and heroic status of figures such as Sir Walter Raleigh.
22. The number and match of teachers to the curriculum is good; in particular, there are sufficient teachers to allow classes to be split on occasion so that different year groups are taught separately. The school also makes good use of individual teachers' subject expertise. The school has sufficient resources to deliver the curriculum in all subjects, with arrangements for the sharing of resources with other small village schools in the area helping to maximise the utilisation of some equipment.

23. The school site is very difficult, being two parts linked by a footpath, but the good management by staff and the sensible behaviour of pupils both work largely to overcome the difficulties this presents for learning. Despite the fact that a new classroom has been added since the last inspection, the school remains cramped. In reception and Years 3 to 6 classes space remains limited, making it difficult for teachers to circulate or for pupils to access resources on occasion. It is a credit to the good sense of the pupils and the professionalism of staff that these problems do not impact more on the school's ability to deliver the National Curriculum. The hall has a limited height, restricting the PE apparatus that can be used safely within it, and the library remains, as it was at the time of the last inspection, a very small mezzanine that is totally inadequate as a learning resource for pupils. The ICT area for the whole school is a bank of computers at the back of a classroom; it is only the good behaviour of pupils passing through the class to access them that limits the disruption that inevitably ensues. The outdoor area for reception children is not used effectively and resources for promoting physical development are inadequate.

Care, guidance and support

There are very good arrangements to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. The school provides pupils with very good support, advice and guidance and involves them well in its work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have very good and trusting relationships with their teachers and other staff.
- Pupils have access to well-informed advice and guidance when they need it.
- Health and safety and child protection procedures are effective.
- There are good induction procedures, which ensure that pupils have a smooth start to their formal education.
- Pupils' views are valued and they are able to contribute their ideas to improve their school.

Commentary

24. The school provides a safe working environment. The governors are active in monitoring the site and procedures. The school's risk assessments for the site are thorough and risk assessments are also completed to cover school trips. Routine safety procedures are all in place, with appropriate support from the local education authority. Child protection procedures fulfil requirements and are effective; staff are regularly briefed on their responsibilities and appropriate records are kept. The school has appropriate links with agencies such as social services to ensure that pupils get additional help when they need it.

25. Pastoral care of pupils is very good. It starts with good induction arrangements for reception children and the support they receive in their first year of schooling. All through the school, teachers and other staff know their pupils very well. Their relationships with their charges are very good and, as a result, the pupils are confident that there is an adult they could confide in if they have a problem. There is a very effective system to monitor pupils' personal development based on the strong relationships and teachers' very good knowledge of their pupils in this small school.

This includes class teachers regularly writing a brief sketch of their pupils; this ensures that they consider the progress and needs of middle-of-the-road pupils as well as those at the ends of the spectrum who can often receive a higher profile. Staff are able to pick up problems quickly and also to recognise success. The good assessment procedures in the school ensure that the teachers have a clear view of each pupil's achievement and they use this knowledge very well to provide additional help and guidance when it is needed. There is well planned, additional support for pupils with special educational needs, targeted at their specific needs, so that the children involved can progress in line with their peers.

26. The school has a school council that is an effective means of ascertaining pupils' views and ensuring that they are able to contribute their ideas to the way the school is run. The school also conducts regular surveys to ascertain the views of all pupils more directly. Less formally, much of the strong ethos of the school depends on the way that pupils are encouraged to articulate their views and the way that teachers are sensitive to their feelings and needs on a day-to-day basis.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There are very good partnerships with parents and other schools. There are good links with the local community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very supportive of the school.
- There are very good links with other schools and Cossington contributes well to local partnerships.
- The written reports on pupils' progress are not detailed enough.
- The information provided to parents is comprehensive and keeps them in touch with the life of the school.
- The school is an important part of the local community.

Commentary

27. Parents are generally very supportive of the school; perhaps the main recommendation is the high proportion of parents who bring their offspring to the school from outside its designated catchment area. Parents think that their children are receiving a very good education; they believe the staff help to encourage pupils to become mature and independent. They see the school staff as approachable and hence any issues are resolved quickly. In reception, the partnership between home and school is really valued and parents are informed well and successfully reassured when their children start school. Parents are encouraged to help in the classroom and make regular comments in the home/school reading diaries.
28. Parents are kept informed about what is going on in the life of the school through colourful regular letters and a good website. For younger pupils, reading diaries are actively used as a two-way means of communication. In addition, the school is quick to contact parents if their child is having problems. Parents have regular opportunities to discuss their children's progress at annual parents' evenings in the autumn term,

although this pattern is being changed to meet requests from parents. The school currently produces an interim report in the spring term and a full report in the summer term. The full written reports are quite brief. Some reports do include a clear statement as to how the individual is performing against national norms, but not all reports include this key information for core subjects. Parents support the school well through the parents and friends association, which is very active in organising a range of social and fund-raising events.

29. The school works closely with other schools in the area as part of the local school clusters. Working with other schools benefits the pupils well in a number of areas, for example, in sporting fixtures and links, and in combined extension activities for gifted and talented pupils. There are good transfer arrangements with the local secondary school, involving Year 6 pupils spending three introductory days at the secondary school and pupils starting a piece of work at primary school to complete at the secondary school.
30. Cossington School is an important part of its local community and good links exist. Indeed, the relationship is physically very close in so far as the village hall is situated in the middle of the school site. The school makes use of its local community facilities to support the curriculum and local people are supportive of the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. There is a strong sense of teamwork throughout the staff under the very good leadership of the headteacher. The leadership of other key staff is good. The school's management and its governance are also good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Self-review is systematic and focused on raising standards; the role of subject leaders in reviewing pupils' responses to standard tests is a strength.
- Staff throughout the school work closely and consistently to promote the school's aims and values and this is reflected in its ethos and pupils' achievements.
- The mix of computer and paper records of assessment data makes access and analysis of patterns in pupils' achievements difficult.
- Arrangements for staff's performance management are effective; recent remodelling of their respective roles has led to closer teamwork and support.
- Governors understand the school's strengths and weaknesses and are increasingly involved in monitoring its work and shaping its direction.

Commentary

31. The school's ethos of high expectations for pupils' personal and academic standards is consistently promoted by the staff. The headteacher has united the staff around common aims by involving them all centrally in the school's management and development. She is highly respected, a strong presence throughout the school in determining its culture and is very well supported by the school's deputy. Between them they provide very effective leadership and direction. The school's strategic plan sets out clear priorities for development and is founded on a thorough analysis of the

school's strengths and weaknesses. Much attention has been given to developing the role of curriculum co-ordinators in monitoring and evaluating their areas, especially in the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and ICT. Their evaluations of pupils' responses to questions in standard national tests, for example, are very thorough and have helped bring about further improvements in standards in key subjects at a rate above that found nationally. The Foundation Stage and provision for pupils with special educational needs are also well managed by a knowledgeable and committed co-ordinator.

32. The school's cycle of self-review is systematic and involves all staff and governors. Standards are compared with national benchmarks and pupils' progress analysed in relation to targets that are set for each of them. The staff keep detailed records about each pupil that include reviews of progress towards curriculum objectives and annual targets in English, mathematics and science. Additional booster classes for literacy and for numeracy are focused appropriately on targeted pupils from these records and the well-trained learning support assistants are deployed very well. Some standardised annual assessments are also retained on a central computerised database alongside the paper records about each pupil. This mix of paper and computerised records needs rationalising to make the use of assessment information even more efficient and effective, for example, in assisting the analysis of patterns in pupils' achievements in relation to their targets.
33. Arrangements for staff performance management are good. They encompass all teaching and support staff, and are linked closely to the school's priorities when setting and reviewing individual staff's objectives. Teaching is monitored mainly by the headteacher and deputy, and regular feedback is provided to all staff; this was a weakness at the time of the last inspection and its improvement is a contributory factor to the better teaching quality since then. Training and professional development is mostly linked to the school's strategic plan. Much successful work has also been done in the past year to remodel teachers' and support assistants' roles and responsibilities so that they work more efficiently and closely as a team. Overall, there is a very strong commitment to inclusion throughout the school. There are good levels of support staff. Pupils are closely monitored in key subjects such as English and mathematics, and staff are vigilant in ensuring that pupils of all backgrounds integrate socially and work productively together.
34. Governors fulfil their statutory duties well and are involved in influencing the school's development with the headteacher. For example, they have improved the school's accommodation since the last inspection, although they know there is still much to do in this area. Governors have also consulted widely with parents and the community on a school travel plan that has recently been approved and funded. They receive regular reports from the headteacher and other key staff on the school's work, including detailed analyses of its standards. Governors are also becoming increasingly integral to the school's cycle of self-review; their visits are now linked with strategic plan priorities and written reports are provided to the governing body following each visit. Consequently, they understand the school's strengths and weaknesses and are becoming more involved in challenging its work.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	321,054
Total expenditure	296,548
Expenditure per pupil	2,721

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	27,576
Balance carried forward to the next	52,082

35. The governors' finance committee receive regular reports from the school's bursar and they plan strategically for the school's development. The high carry forward from 2003/4 into the current financial year was due to several factors. Monies set aside to pay for minor building works last year were unexpectedly paid for by the local education authority; finance has also been set aside to pay for new interactive whiteboards and projectors in classrooms and plans are being made to provide additional accommodation. The planned carry forward for this year is much smaller. The school consults parents and pupils annually about its work and compares its performance with national benchmarks; it seeks good value for money in its spending and constantly seeks ways to improve its effectiveness. Spending per pupil is below average, yet pupils achieve well in key subjects and the quality of education is good. The school provides very good value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for the Foundation Stage is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good overall.
- The curriculum is securely based on the recommended areas of learning for this age group and it successfully meets the needs of all the children.
- Children are keen to learn and behave well.
- The Foundation Stage is well led and managed and teachers work in close partnership with parents.
- Resources are easily accessible and used well to promote learning, but there is not enough equipment to develop the children's physical skills.
- The indoor accommodation is cramped and the outdoor area is not used sufficiently well as an integral part of the school day.
- Provision has been well maintained since the last inspection except for the lack of physical development activities.

Commentary

36. There is a large variation in the children's **personal, social and emotional** skills when they start school; a significant minority of them need support and reassurance whilst others are confident. Provision in this area of learning is good. They quickly become familiar with school routines through a well-planned induction process and this ensures that they settle in well. The children enjoy high quality relationships with the good number of adults who work with them. The class teachers liaise very closely with the parents and this ensures that the children's confidence and self-esteem are developed well. At first the children play on their own, but the good quality teaching enables the children to learn to take turns and interact alongside each other. Staff encourage children to take care of their own personal needs and the children respond well to the individual responsibilities they are given. This was evident when the children took turns each day to reveal the picture on the class Advent calendar. Returning the class register to the office is also a favourite job to undertake. Consequently, as a result of the good quality provision, the children achieve well. Most children meet the expected levels by the end of reception and the more capable exceed them.
37. Provision for **communication, language and literacy** development is good and this ensures that the children achieve well in this area of learning. Consequently, by the end of reception, the children have attained expected levels. This is because the quality of teaching is good. Interesting activities are planned. Teachers act as good role models by speaking clearly and using stimulating vocabulary. Good use is made of differing resources such as lively picture books and interactive games on the computers. A significant minority of children start school with weak speaking and

listening skills using simple, immature statements to communicate. Adults help them to build up a wide range of vocabulary to help them express themselves. They also read lots of stories to develop their attention span and help them to listen carefully through the use of challenging questions. Few children can read when they start school, but they quickly learn how to hold books and understand that words on pages carry meaning. This is because they are systematically taught letter sounds and teachers share interesting books with them. The more capable children link these sounds to letters, enabling them to read a range of simple words. The children are taught how to use pencils correctly and form their letters accurately. They enjoy communicating with letter shapes and pictures. For instance, the children were observed writing Christmas cards to their friends on the well-equipped writing table. Most were able to identify the initial letter of their friend's name and enjoyed labelling the envelopes.

38. Children are on course to attain the expected level in **mathematical development** by the time they leave reception because teaching is good and this ensures that they achieve well. The teacher and nursery nurse support the children when they identify the correct number of items to match a numeral between one and ten. They also name and describe basic two and three-dimensional shapes. The teacher and nursery nurse provide the children with a variety of mathematical tasks and games. This gives the children opportunities to develop their understanding with suitable practical activities. The teacher also talks about numbers in the daily routines of the day such as when they work out the numbers staying for school lunch and use appropriate mathematical words like 'small' and 'big' to reinforce skills. This helps the children to achieve well.
39. Children achieve well in **knowledge and understanding of the world** because provision is good. This is because they are given lots of opportunities to learn through first-hand experiences. For example, they look at different types of material and decide which fabrics will keep them warm in winter and dry when it is raining. They learn about the changes in the season by comparing what they wore during the summer to the clothes they are wearing when the weather has turned colder. Teaching is good. They skilfully encourage the children to develop an understanding of the world around them by looking at their own surroundings and comparing these to the places where they go on holiday. Maps and photographs are used well to promote their awareness. They gradually start to develop a suitable understanding of the difference between 'now' and 'in the past' and talk about old toys from the past. The children use computers with confidence to draw pictures and play games that consolidate their learning. Very good use is made of the good number of adults available within the classroom who encourage learning through the good use of suitable questioning skills. Consequently, by the end of the reception year most children will have attained the expected level for this age group.
40. Provision for **physical development** is satisfactory. Children develop hand and eye co-ordination well through the use of pencils, crayons, scissors, glue, paint, small toys and construction kits that staff make readily available for them. The teaching of this particular aspect of physical development is good. However, as at the time of the last inspection, there are not enough resources available to develop the children's physical skills. In addition, the potential of the outdoor area has not been fully realised as a learning resource. There are lost opportunities to practise skills using the larger parts

of their bodies such as feet and arms. This means that, although overall physical achievement is satisfactory, it is not as good as it is in the other areas of learning.

41. Provision for **creative development** is good because adults interact well with the children during the planned activities. They achieve well because of this good teaching and, consequently, by the end of the reception year, most children will have attained the expected level. They are given good opportunities to explore different colour, shapes and textures. For instance, children make collages using a wide range of material. They sing familiar songs enthusiastically and know all the actions to their favourite rhymes. Teachers create interesting role-play areas, such as a class 'post office', and this helps the children develop their imagination. Adults also help to develop the children's language skills by interacting with relevant dialogue.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good, with many very good features.
- Pupils are very keen to learn and behaviour is of high quality.
- Teaching assistants are used well to enhance pupils' learning, particularly those with special educational needs.
- Teachers carefully track pupils' progress through the school and their findings are used well to move pupils forward in their learning.
- Guided reading sessions are effectively used to support the development of reading skills for all pupils.
- The leadership and management of the subject are good.
- Pupils do not use their highly developed skills to support other subjects across the curriculum.

Commentary

42. Standards in speaking and listening are as expected in Year 2 and above expectations in Year 6. Standards in reading and writing are above average in Years 2 and 6. Overall, pupils' achievements are good, including those with special educational needs and the gifted and talented. Standards have been well maintained since the last inspection and progress has been good. This is despite a significant decline in standards in 2001 and 2002 where national test results fell to below average in Year 6. Results in 2003 in the Year 2 tests also fell below the national average, prompting a whole-school focus on improving literacy skills. This has included the systematic checking and analysing of all pupils' work, which makes sure they achieve their full capability. The school has also set individual pupil targets and this has helped them understand what they need to do to improve. These effective strategies have been successfully put in place and have been responsible for the improvement in standards. There are no differences in the attainment between boys and girls or between differing ethnic groups.
43. Overall, speaking and listening skills are as expected in Year 2. Teachers effectively develop these skills by asking focused questions and encouraging the pupils to share ideas with their 'talking partners'. Good opportunities are provided for discussion and debate, and pupils continue to make good progress in acquiring vocabulary and in their powers of expression as they go through the school. By Year 6, speaking and listening skills for most pupils are better than expected for this age group. Pupils are confident in speaking about things that interest them. They listen carefully and respond well to the views of others in class, groups and when working with a partner. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to express themselves. They regularly introduce and reinforce vocabulary and explain the meaning where necessary, thus encouraging the pupils to make detailed explanations. This was evident in a very good lesson in the Years 5 and 6 class where the pupils were engaged in a discussion about

the use of persuasive language. Such comments included opening phrases like “Just imagine” or “One of the possibilities”, which provided clear evidence of the good levels at which the pupils were working.

44. Reading standards are above average in Years 2 and 6. In Year 2 the pupils use a range of strategies to decipher unfamiliar words such as identifying letter sounds and using clues from the pictures. They enjoy reading and know the difference between fact and fiction books. Throughout the school there is a consistent approach to the teaching of reading and all pupils have a daily time, which is dedicated to the development of reading skills. This ensures that by Year 6, all pupils read expressively, taking appropriate notice of punctuation, such as exclamation marks. They talk about their favourite authors and summarise stories, using their reading skills to tackle difficult and complex text. Most pupils scan a text in order to identify key facts in both fiction and fact books. They confidently identify inferences and make deductions from their reading.
45. In writing, standards are above average in both Years 2 and 6 and all pupils achieve well in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. This is because knowledge and skills are taught systematically. By Year 2, pupils have started to write for an appropriate range of purposes, such as reporting on their weekend activities and writing a list of instructions. More capable pupils use an interesting range of words and know that they must set the scene when they write stories. For example, one pupil explained at the start of his story that ‘it was a snowy and frosty day’. By Year 6, pupils confidently write biographies and play scripts. They enjoy creating poems and use a good range of similes, metaphors and interesting vocabulary. For instance, one pupil described: ‘the Sun as fierce as dark sharp blades’. Pupils are also developing effective skills when they write in the style of famous poets such as Ted Hughes or write a play deploying the techniques used by Shakespeare. Standards in spelling are good because skills are taught consistently through the school. Handwriting and presentation skills are satisfactory, but pupils present high quality work when it is word-processed.
46. The quality of teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers are enthusiastic about English and their subject knowledge is good. They enjoy very good relationships with the pupils and work very hard to provide interesting activities that will motivate and include them all. In return, pupils are expected to work hard and they do. The response by most pupils is a high level of interest and involvement in their work. Praise and encouragement are used very well to maintain pupils' involvement in their learning. As a result, they develop confidence in and an enjoyment of language through their positive attitudes. Teaching assistants are committed and very well briefed, and provide valuable support to pupils, particularly those with special educational needs. Assessment is used very effectively to ensure that the wide range of pupils' needs and ages are met. Throughout the school, marking is used very well to move pupils forward in their learning. Teachers' comments give pupils a very clear understanding of how they can improve and older pupils and teachers usefully interact together to evaluate the quality of the work. ICT is used very well to enhance learning.
47. The subject is well managed. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work very well together as literacy co-ordinators. They both have a secure understanding of the subject and act as high quality role models. The results of statutory and non-statutory tests are analysed

very effectively to identify weaknesses in performance. Tracking and checking procedures are used very well to identify individual strengths and weaknesses, and establish individual targets for improvements, which the pupils clearly understand. Pupils' work and the quality of teaching are monitored regularly.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

48. Links with ICT are of high quality. Pupils use the Internet for research purposes and this continually develops their reading skills. Word-processing techniques are also used on a regular basis in English thus promoting keyboard skills. However, pupils do not use their good literacy skills well enough to promote standards in other subjects such as religious education, history and geography. Consequently, standards in these subjects are not as good as they could be because much of the recorded work consists of photocopied worksheets and pictures.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievements have been typically good or better; currently pupils of all abilities achieve very well.
- Teaching is mainly very good. Teachers work closely with learning support assistants to ensure that work is adapted for the range of pupils' abilities.
- Assessment is used very well to monitor pupils towards curriculum objectives and to identify those who would most benefit from additional small group tuition.
- Pupils have many opportunities to apply their very good knowledge and develop their thinking skills by solving problems in real life contexts.
- Lessons are challenging and often fun; games and role plays are used very effectively, although occasionally the level of challenge is too high.
- The subject is very well led and managed; the analysis of pupils' responses to test questions and action taken to address weaknesses is a particular strength.

Commentary

49. Standards in Year 6 in 2004 were above the national average. The results showed a dip compared to the previous two years when they were well above average and high compared with similar schools. Mathematics standards have been consistently above or well above average over the past four years and achievement compared to similar schools mainly good or better. Standards in Year 2 rose in 2004 and were well above the national average and above similar schools.
50. Standards seen in Year 6 during the inspection have recovered compared with the 2004 results and are well above average. Pupils of all abilities are achieving very well. A very good proportion are achieving above the expected level, for example, they apply all four operations to decimal numbers to two or three places. The school is likely to meet its target in 2005. In Year 2, the improvement in standards in recent years is being sustained; pupils' standards are well above average and they are achieving very well. The more able pupils are much challenged, especially through the good range of problem solving activities provided. Less able pupils and those with special educational needs are very well supported in class and through well targeted small group booster sessions led by learning support assistants. Consequently, they make very good progress.
51. There are several reasons for these rising standards and very good achievements. The curriculum is very well planned to develop pupils' knowledge, understanding and thinking skills. They have many opportunities to apply them in relevant contexts to solve demanding problems. For example, more able pupils in Year 6 used a computer application to explore the best way to arrange paving slabs in a garden to achieve the largest perimeter around a flower bed. They were very persistent and deduced that having more corners increased perimeter length. ICT is also used very effectively in other ways, for example, when Years 3 and 4 pupils practise mental mathematics during form-time and when Years 5 and 6 pupils choose the most appropriate way of presenting data in charts using a spreadsheet. Activities in lessons are adapted at sometimes four different levels of demand and learning support assistants are very well briefed to support and guide particular groups. Teachers also make lessons stimulating and fun so that pupils are often engrossed in the activities provided, as when Year 2 pupils in role play chose sweets and tickets for their rides at the fair.

They worked out the total amount they needed to pay and how much change they should receive. A particular strength in the teaching is the way in which pupils are encouraged to write sums such as these in number sentences and to show their working methods through diagrams. This is very effective in helping them move on from mental calculation to more formal written methods of working in later years.

52. Teaching is mainly very good throughout. Teachers have good subject knowledge that underpins very clear explanations and they ask probing questions that help pupils explain and compare their working methods. Games are sometimes used and a competitive element encourages very quick mental calculation in effective starter sessions. Resources such as number lines and squares are made readily available to help pupils solve problems for themselves. Occasionally, tasks provided are too difficult for some pupils. Teachers do monitor groups as they work, but where there is no additional adult support available, some pupils progress more slowly until they get help. Teaching by the well-trained learning support assistants is also very effective. As well as helping in most lessons, they often lead small group sessions away from the classroom aimed at boosting the standards of targeted pupils. Assessment is used very well to track pupils' progress towards curriculum objectives set for them and to identify those who would most benefit from targeted support. Learning support assistants assess and record the achievements of those with special educational needs to share with teachers and the school's special educational needs co-ordinator. Teachers' marking is also thorough and focused on objectives set in lessons and for individual pupils. Homework is regularly set and extends learning from lessons well.
53. Good progress has been made since the last inspection; the good standards have been maintained and some resources such as ICT used more effectively to help raise standards. The subject is very well led and managed. The co-ordinators of each key stage provide very good role models in their own teaching. Teaching is monitored and training provided for staff. Parents are also guided in ways of helping their children at home. A very strong feature is the analysis made of pupils' responses to questions in national tests, which has enabled the co-ordinators to target specific areas for improvement. This is one of the key reasons for the recovery in standards since the dip of 2004.

Mathematics across the curriculum

54. Pupils apply mathematics in many contexts within subjects such as science where they regularly measure and record variables such as temperature and time in tables and display it graphically. Pupils estimate and measure when making artefacts in design and technology. Younger pupils in Years 2 and 3 apply their knowledge of angles and direction when sequencing instructions for a floor robot to follow a designated path.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in their knowledge and understanding but the scientific enquiry skills of the more able pupils are not extended sufficiently.

- Lessons are well structured so that pupils learn through first-hand experience. Questioning is used very effectively to encourage pupils to predict and explain.
- Most aspects of ICT are used well to help raise standards, although pupils are not yet using data-loggers linked to sensors when carrying out investigations.
- Cramped classrooms constrain pupils when carrying out practical work.
- Marking is good and targets are set for all pupils, but assessments are not yet systematic across the school to help track pupils' progress.
- The subject is led and managed well. The analysis of standard assessment questions is used very well to identify where improvements are needed.

Commentary

55. Standards in Year 6 in 2004 were above the national average and in line with similar schools, although care must be taken with the latter comparison because the school is on the margin of this cluster of schools nationally. In relation to their attainment when in Year 2, these pupils achieved well. Over the past three years standards in Year 6 have risen. Standards seen during the inspection are also above average in both Years 2 and 6. Pupils are achieving well, although their understanding of scientific facts and principles is better developed than are their skills of scientific enquiry. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress; they are supported well in most lessons, especially where there are learning support assistants. While virtually all pupils achieve the expected level in their scientific enquiry by Year 6, too few achieve beyond this because not enough emphasis is placed on teaching higher skills. This aspect of science is a current focus of improvement for the subject's co-ordinator.
56. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 progress well in their knowledge and skills. Lessons are often exciting and engage pupils in first-hand experiences that enable them to build their skills in observing and comparing, recording and describing what they have found out. In one very well-structured lesson, pupils worked very productively as they explored a range of musical instruments to see how the sounds were made and to group the instruments accordingly. By the end of the sequence, they knew that plucking, striking or blowing produced sound as vibrations and they were well placed to develop these ideas further. The curriculum is planned well to build on pupils' knowledge and skills in this way so that by Year 6, most pupils have a good grasp of basic scientific concepts. For example, pupils in Year 6 compare features of series and parallel circuits and they can predict the effect of switches in different locations within them.
57. Pupils are encouraged to predict and speculate when exploring and investigating in a variety of contexts and by Year 6, virtually all pupils are competent in controlling variables to ensure that their experiments are fair. Many pupils do consider repeating measures and they draw valid conclusions from their evidence. However, too little attention is given to teaching more able pupils higher skills such as considering how many measures to take to obtain a pattern in the evidence, undertaking trial run experiments to determine their working method, explaining anomalies in the data recorded and using their knowledge of science to explain their conclusions. When investigating factors affecting the rate at which sugar dissolves, almost all Years 5 and 6 pupils successfully obtained evidence under controlled conditions, but few in Year 6 demonstrated these higher skills. The very cramped accommodation also made it difficult for pupils to move around safely with their equipment.

58. Teaching and learning are good and some, very good. Lessons are well planned and sequenced and resources used very well to enable pupils to explore and investigate through first-hand experience. Teachers use questioning very well to encourage pupils to predict and speculate. Where learning support assistants are available, they are deployed very effectively, especially in Years 1 and 2. ICT is also used effectively to help raise standards, for example, where Year 6 pupils use formulae in a spreadsheet to calculate the extension on a spring under different loads and display the results graphically. However, sensors such as sound and temperature linked to data-loggers are not yet used to gather data from investigations due to a lack of resources. Marking is good and homework used well to help pupils learn.
59. Good progress has been made since the last inspection. Standards have gone up and the curriculum has improved in quality. The subject is led and managed well by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who is a very good teacher of science. A particular strength is her analysis of pupils' responses to national standard tests that enabled her to identify scientific enquiry as a relative weakness and an area of focus for her work. Pupils' books are reviewed regularly and targets set for them. However, ongoing assessments tend to be devised by individual teachers for each unit and are not yet systematic enough to help track pupils' progress towards their end of year targets.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in acquiring basic skills across most aspects of ICT and use them productively within subjects.
- Computer resources are used effectively despite the cramped accommodation because pupils have good independent learning skills and help each other.
- Teachers are competent in their own skills and are given good support from well-trained support assistants.
- Pupils' basic skills are not yet assessed as they move through the school.
- The subject is led and managed well by a knowledgeable and experienced co-ordinator and, as a result, good progress has been made since the last inspection.

Commentary

60. Standards are above average in both Years 2 and 6. Pupils achieve well throughout the school. The school makes very good use of the available resources in classrooms and in the small ICT suite to both teach pupils basic skills and to apply them across the curriculum. Pupils of all abilities achieve well because some of the learning support assistants are trained specifically to support ICT so that the overall level of adult guidance is good. Good progress has been made since the last inspection in broadening the ICT curriculum and in its use within other subjects.
61. The school's accommodation is too cramped and this has necessitated the location of a small suite of computers at the back of the Years 1 and 2 class where access by other classes is difficult during lessons. All classrooms have two or three computers that are networked and there are also some laptop computers available for pupils' use.

Teachers use these resources very well and they make very good use of time to enable pupils to develop and practise new skills. Pupils in Years 3 and 4, for example, use mathematics based applications to practise their mental calculations and number bonds during form-time. Those in Years 5 and 6 go to the ICT suite during form-time to enter data into a spreadsheet about water use in the home, plotting the patterns in charts as part of their geography topic work. Two classrooms also have computer projectors linked to teachers' laptop computers that also help them teach new skills in a broad range of contexts and applications. As a result, pupils acquire good skills as they move through the school. Those in Year 2 use graphics to draw portraits to a good standard and learn to create a decision tree to structure their database. Older pupils acquire good skills in researching information from the Internet and present it increasingly by combining text with graphics and images. Year 6 pupils produced good quality slide presentations about famous people such as the life of John Lennon; some contained hyperlinks to other pages, and text was combined well with images and graphics to convey clear messages to their intended audience.

62. The curriculum is broadly based and planned around a national framework. A particular strength is the provision for control technology that enables pupils from reception to Year 2 to learn to sequence instructions for a floor robot. Pupils develop their skills further in later years using computer software to programme other devices such as traffic light sequences for a patrol crossing. Spreadsheets are also used very well to model and derive information using formulae and to present it graphically and standards by Year 6 in these areas are above average.
63. Teaching and learning are good. While no whole ICT lessons were observed, pupils were seen using ICT guided by teachers and learning support assistants in many other lessons. Teachers and their assistants have good ICT competence and are well trained. They teach new skills well and provide pupils with good opportunities to apply them in relevant contexts. Teachers' expectations are high, especially in terms of pupils' behaviour and relationships. Consequently, pupils work collaboratively and purposefully at computers in the classroom and when going to the ICT suite on their own and they do not disturb others during lessons. Teachers ensure that pupils have equal access to resources throughout the week and their achievements are assessed in relation to the objectives for each topic. However, pupils' acquisition of basic skills are not yet assessed and recorded as they move through the school to help ensure that the tasks given match their expertise.
64. The subject is led and managed well by a knowledgeable and experienced co-ordinator who provides very clear direction for the development of the subject. Consequently, teachers are well trained and competent and resources updated and managed well. Good support is provided by well-trained assistants, including technical support. Teaching is monitored and pupils' work retained in a useful portfolio that is analysed by the co-ordinator. As a result, he knows the subject's strengths and weakness and has mapped out a clear programme for its development.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

65. ICT is used very well to help raise standards in most subjects, especially in English and mathematics. Pupils draft and edit their writing such as poems; they use formulae within spreadsheets and choose appropriate styles of graphical representation in

several subjects, including science and geography. The Internet is much used to help pupils research, for example, the lives of people such as Gandhi and Martin Luther King in religious education. However, sensors such as light, sound and temperature are not used enough to gather and present data in science investigations.

HUMANITIES

The inspection focused on religious education. History and geography were sampled.

66. In **history** by Year 2 pupils understand the difference between the past and present, such as the leisure activities available at the seaside long ago compared with those of today. They recognise the differences between old and new toys and have talked in depth about famous historical events such as the Great Fire of London. By Year 6, pupils compare the differences in the lifestyles between the rich and poor during Tudor times and talk confidently about famous people from the 1960s, such as John Lennon. In **geography**, pupils in Year 2 have compared the differences in land use between the nearby village of Sileby and the imaginary Scottish island of Struay. Year 6 pupils have studied the use of water in India in detail and have maturely considered various ways to conserve this valuable commodity in their own lives, having undertaken a survey of their own water use at home.
67. The leadership and management of history and geography are satisfactory. The subjects are delivered in a two-year rolling programme. Assessments take place after the completion of each unit of work. Planning and pupils' work are monitored and appropriate points for action are developed. Very good use is made of pupils' ICT skills in both history and geography. However, insufficient use is made of their literacy skills to extend their historical and geographical understanding and, consequently, there is minimal evidence of achievement in their folders.

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils use ICT well to research information, but their good literacy skills are not used enough to support their learning.
- The subject co-ordinator is knowledgeable, enthusiastic and committed. She monitors pupil achievement and teachers' planning, but has not yet observed teaching at first hand.

Commentary

68. Standards in Years 2 and 6 meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. At the time of the last inspection it was considered that standards were above expected levels. This apparent decline can be explained by the increase in expectations of the new locally agreed syllabus and the fact that pupils do not formally record the knowledge and understanding that they gain. However, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and the gifted and talented achieve satisfactorily.

69. By Year 2, pupils are able to recall the main Christian festivals such as Christmas and Easter with the celebrations of other religious faiths like Diwali, the Hindu festival of light. They compare the Christian tradition of giving presents at Christmas with the Hindu celebration of Raksha Bhandon where bracelets are given to people they care for. The pupils are also able to explain why vows are exchanged during a marriage ceremony. By Year 6 pupils understand that the Ten Commandments are a set of rules and they understand the meaning of 'faith'. Pupils use their ICT skills well to promote their learning in religious education. For example, Years 5 and 6 pupils used the Internet to research facts about famous people, such as Martin Luther King, Mother Theresa and Ghandi, who all showed a strong sense of belief. However, whilst pupils talk confidently about the knowledge they have gained in religious education lessons, there is little written evidence of the skills they have developed. Standards in their work folders do not fully reflect the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.
70. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, but lessons of good and better quality were observed during the inspection. Where teaching is of a high standard pupils are very well challenged by effective questioning and open debate. The pupils are continually reminded of what they are actually learning about and this keeps the lessons focused. Teachers use a good range of interesting techniques to consolidate learning. This was evident in a good lesson in the Years 3 and 4 class when the teacher encouraged the pupils to focus on a special place through the use of music. This also had a positive impact on pupils' spiritual development. The subject's co-ordinator feels passionately that pupils should enjoy learning practically about religious education. Even so, pupils are not encouraged enough to use their good literacy skills to support their learning and this slows their acquisition of knowledge and skills in religious education.
71. The co-ordinator has good knowledge and is very enthusiastic about the subject. The new locally agreed syllabus has recently been published and the subject leader is working hard to develop a new policy and scheme of work that relates to this. She has monitored pupil achievement through work sampling and discussions with pupils. She checks planning on a regular basis, but is not actively involved in observing lessons. At the time of the last inspection resources were considered satisfactory overall, but there were insufficient Bibles. Resources have improved significantly and are now judged to be very good. Overall, progress since the last inspection is satisfactory.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design, design and technology, music and physical education were all sampled.

72. It is clear from displays, sketchbooks and photographic evidence that pupils enjoy **art and design** and are given a wide and varied range of opportunities. Teachers ensure that pupils explore and use a wide range of materials, developing their use skilfully as they move through the school. A good lesson was observed where pupils in Years 1 and 2 were clearly fascinated by the work of Kandinsky and enthusiastically explored in detail this particular artist's style. Pupils really enjoy their art and design lessons and it was particularly impressive the way in which the pupils in the very cramped Years 5 and 6 class organised their required resources in a very mature manner.

73. One lesson was seen in **music** where the subject leader was observed teaching her class how to play the recorder. She used her subject knowledge well to interest the pupils and encouraged them through a good range of teaching methods. Documentary, video and photographic evidence indicates that a satisfactory range of activities is covered throughout the school in music. A programme of annual concerts and performances extends pupils' learning. Pupils sing confidently and in tune. A good number of pupils take advantage of the opportunity to develop their performing skills in extra-curricular flute sessions that are provided by a visiting specialist. One group of pupils was observed attentively preparing for a Christmas performance, confidently playing together 'Away in a Manger' and 'Silent Night'.
74. Both art and design and music are led and managed well by co-ordinators who keep a careful watch over provision. Both subjects have an up-to-date policy and programme of work and resource levels are monitored regularly. Subject leaders analyse samples of work and have prepared practical action plans to enable further development.
75. Although no overall judgement of standards can be made, those seen in **design and technology** were above average by Year 6. Photographic evidence and records of Years 5 and 6 pupils' evaluations show they progressed well in designing and making biscuits for a birthday party. Pupils are provided with well-structured templates to help them evaluate commercially produced biscuits and to design, make and evaluate their own. Evaluation comments showed due regard for the intended purpose and suggestions for how their finished products could be improved. This work builds well on a Year 4 topic about packaging. In the Years 3 and 4 lesson observed, pupils designed labelling for their Christmas sweet boxes, having evaluated some commercially produced examples. Some used computers to produce some striking text designs and backgrounds to reflect the theme well. Others, who had already cut their card accurately to assemble their box, created decorations that enhanced the appearance of their containers in line with the theme. The lesson was well structured. The teacher focused pupils on clear criteria for evaluating their work as it developed through a well-conducted discussion, although the criteria agreed were not displayed to remind pupils as they worked.
76. Standards seen in the two lessons of **physical education** were above average in Years 2 and 6 and pupils made good progress in their knowledge and skills. In the very good Years 1 and 2 lesson observed, some very challenging ideas were introduced around the theme of a Kandinsky artwork and some instrumental music, which pupils were to express through a short sequence of dance. The teacher was very effective in leading a discussion on the theme and structured the lesson well so that key ideas could be developed. She modelled some different movements for them to help generate ideas and assessed and guided pupils as they worked, encouraging them to repeat the movements they had devised to create a sequence. Groups came up with very different ideas for themselves; most pupils were very aware of space and used it well. Overall, this was a very challenging lesson for the age group.
77. In a good Years 5 and 6 lesson pupils practised their ball control and passing skills for netball and made good progress before taking part in a practise game. A strong feature of the lesson was the knowledgeable instruction they received from their teacher so that their skills developed well as the lesson progressed. By the end of the lesson pupils' skills, particularly passing, were improved. Throughout the year, pupils

take part in a wide range of extra-curricular sporting activities and competitive games with other primary schools in the area and are very successful in them. These include football, netball, rounders, cross-country running and athletics. However, the school hall is relatively small and its low ceiling limits the range of indoor activity for physical education.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education was sampled. Citizenship is not taught as a separate subject, although elements of it are included in assemblies, PSHE lessons and in the provision in other subjects.

78. No PSHE lessons were seen. The school's planning for this area of learning emphasises four inter-related strands: developing confidence and responsibility; preparing to be active citizens; developing a healthier lifestyle and developing relationships. The ethos of the school and pupils' attitudes and behaviour suggest that these objectives are being met. Pupils' work shows that many subjects of the curriculum are successfully contributing to this area of learning through the consideration of social and moral issues. Sometimes this is developed through circle times, and at other times more formally. The school council is effective in providing an example of active citizenship.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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

