

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **FOXMOOR PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Stroud

LEA area: Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 115572

Headteacher: Mrs Nanette Maycock

Lead inspector: Mr Peter Sandall

Dates of inspection: 25<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> April 2005

Inspection number: 266843

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Middle deemed primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	274
School address:	Hunters Way Cashes Green Stroud Gloucestershire
Postcode:	GL5 4UJ
Telephone number:	01453 757251
Fax number:	01453 758190
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr George Workman
Date of previous inspection:	22 <sup>nd</sup> February 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Foxmoor Primary School is slightly larger than the average primary school and serves a residential area on the outskirts of Stroud. Virtually all the pupils come from the surrounding district, and parents and governors regard the school as being important to the local community. There are slightly more boys than girls on the school's current roll of 274 pupils, virtually all of whom are of white, British descent. There are no pupils with English as an additional language. The school serves areas of both owner-occupied and rented housing, and pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds. The percentage of pupils identified as being entitled to a free school meal is below that found nationally. Children's attainment on entry to the reception class is broadly average, although there is a significant number who come in with below average skills and knowledge. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above average, having almost doubled in the last five years, but the percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is below average. Numbers on roll have remained similar over the past five years, and the school is over-subscribed. Most pupils joining the school remain in it until it is time to move to another school. The school is currently negotiating significant new building which it hopes will markedly improve its cramped and, for some classes, temporary accommodation. Both before- and after-school care is available for pupils whose parents request this. The school achieved 'Investors in People' status in 1999 and has maintained this since then.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
25771	Mr Peter Sandall	Lead inspector	Mathematics Geography History
9146	Mr Mark Brennand	Lay inspector	
20230	Mrs Jenny Clayphan	Team inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education The Foundation Stage curriculum English as an additional language
10611	Mr Martin James	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Personal, social and health education Religious education Special educational needs

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## REPORT CONTENTS

Page

### **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

6-7

### **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS**

#### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

8-11

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses  
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

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

11-17

Teaching and learning  
The curriculum  
Care, guidance and support  
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

#### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

17-19

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

20-31

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

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

### **PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS**

32

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Foxmoor is a very effective school** which gives very good value for money. The pupils achieve very well and reach standards that are well above average, overall, due to very good teaching within a very good climate for learning. Leadership and management are very good and have been instrumental in raising both standards and expectations. The headteacher's leadership is outstanding.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Excellent leadership by the headteacher is the mainspring of the school's success.
- The school is managed very well by the headteacher, senior staff and governors.
- Teaching is very good overall.
- Pupils of all abilities achieve very well by the end of both Year 2 and Year 6.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to school are very good, and relationships are excellent.
- A very good curriculum offers excellent opportunities for enrichment.
- A high priority is placed on pupils' care and welfare and there are very good systems of support.
- There are very good links with parents, the community and other schools.

The school has made very good improvement overall since the previous inspection in 1999. Standards have improved since the previous inspection, as has pupils' achievement. The issues that arose then, concerning progress made by the children under five, monitoring standards, improving information and communication technology, and the consistency of teaching have all been met. Teaching in particular has improved.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A\* - very high; 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.*

**Pupils' achievement is very good.** Children start the reception year with a range of abilities, but there is a significant number who are below average. The children are in line to meet the expected goals in all six areas of learning by the end of the reception year, exceeding them in personal, social and emotional development and physical development, and they make satisfactory progress overall. More able children make good progress. By the end of Year 2, pupils reach standards that are well above average in reading, writing and mathematics, as they do by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. Standards in information and communication technology are above those expected by the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils make very good progress from Year 1 to Year 6 because they consistently receive good and very good teaching. Pupils of all abilities achieve very well because expectations are very high, and because lower-attaining pupils, and those with special educational needs, receive very effective support from teaching assistants. The school's trend of improvement, as measured by national tests, is below the national trend at Year 2. This is because, despite the results in all three subjects having been consistently better than national results, those in 2000 were exceptionally high. The trend of improvement at Year 6 is better than that found nationally.

**Pupils display very good personal qualities, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also very good.** They have excellent attitudes to school, and their relationships, both with each other and with all the adults in the school, are also excellent. Together with very good behaviour, these social strengths contribute to an excellent ethos and a very good

environment for learning. The school works successfully to promote good attendance, and punctuality is very good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides its pupils with a very good education and the quality of teaching and learning is very good overall.** Over 90 per cent of the teaching seen was at least good, with almost half of this being very good. While teaching was good in the Foundation Stage, overall, during the inspection, it has not been as strong over time, so most children are making satisfactory progress, although for some it is good. Examples of good teaching were seen in every class. Strengths in the teaching include high expectations of pupils in both their response and behaviour and the provision of challenging and interesting tasks. As a result, pupils work with interest and enthusiasm. Lessons have a very positive atmosphere and pupils show confidence and are engaged in their work. Skilled and well-trained support staff are used very effectively and make a strong contribution to the learning of lower-attaining pupils and those with special needs, some of whom make exceptional progress. Assessment procedures are very good, and the data obtained is used very effectively to ensure that individual learning is at an appropriate level.

A very good and innovative curriculum supports learning very well. Opportunities for enrichment, outside formal lessons, are excellent. They involve most of the staff and pupils and, in some areas, such as dance and music, lead to pupils achieving exceptional standards. The use of visits and visitors to the school contributes to very good links with the community. The very good partnership with parents and carers contributes strongly to the ethos of the school. Pupils are cared for very well and have ready access to very good support and guidance.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are very good.** The headteacher's excellent vision ensures that all staff are fully involved in building on success which leads to excellent teamwork throughout the school. Despite its success, the school is constantly looking for ways to improve further. The headteacher is supported by a very effective senior management team, and by teachers and support staff who identify strongly with the school. There is an excellent commitment to meeting the needs of all pupils. Management is very effective. There are clear roles and responsibilities which result in everyone feeling valued. Opportunities for continuing professional development are excellent for both teaching and non-teaching staff. Procedures are carefully evaluated and are clearly directed at ensuring that all aspects of the pupils' education are as good as they can be. Governance is very good. Governors have a very good understanding of the school's needs, both from the information they receive and the questions they ask. Individual governors work closely with teachers and are often in the school. They are fully involved in planning for the future and work hard in the school's best interests. All statutory requirements are met. Financial management is very good and is closely linked to priorities for improvement.

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

The pupils and their parents are very happy with the school. Positive responses to the pre-inspection parents' questionnaire were endorsed by a well-attended parents' meeting and by the comments of parents. Parents are made very welcome, kept well informed, and given every opportunity to be partners in their children's education. They believe, and inspectors agree, that their children are receiving a very good education, academically and socially. Pupils are also very positive about the school, where they feel safe and secure and enjoy their lessons. This is also supported fully by inspection evidence.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

There are no areas where improvement is needed which are significant enough to be key issues for the school. However, it is expected that governors will read the report carefully for the relatively minor areas of improvement needed in this very effective school and plan accordingly.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Achievement is very good overall. It is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage, and very good in Years 1 and 2, where pupils attain standards which are well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Achievement continues to be very good in Years 3 to 6, and by Year 6 standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science remain well above average.

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

- Pupils of all abilities achieve very well over their time in school.
- Achievement in Year 2 and Year 6 compares very favourably with that of similar schools.
- Progress made by children in the Foundation Stage is not as marked as in the rest of the school.

#### **Commentary**

1. Children in the Foundation Stage enter school with a range of ability. While this is broadly as expected for children of this age, overall, assessments show that, in most intakes, a significant minority are below average, both nationally and when compared to other children in the local education authority. Most children have the benefit of some pre-school education; many in the nursery, which operates on the school site and with which there is good liaison. Children make satisfactory progress overall, and are on course to achieve the expected standards in all six areas of learning, and to exceed them in their personal, social and emotional development. In this area, progress is good, and children benefit from the excellent relationships which are a feature of the school. Progress is, however, restricted by limited opportunities for children to be independent in their learning in areas such as writing and creative work. Progress is also good in physical development, where children are also exceeding the expected standard.
2. The school's results in the most recent national tests in Year 2 were above the national average for reading and well above average in writing and mathematics. For the previous three years, standards in all three subjects have been well above the national average, and at times in reading and mathematics they have placed the school in the top five per cent of schools nationally. Despite attaining and maintaining such high standards, the school's trend of improvement has been lower than that found nationally. This is because schools generally were starting from a much lower baseline and there has been an overall improvement in national results. The school's results in the year 2000, from which the trend of improvement is calculated, were exceptionally high. Differences exist between the achievement of boys and girls, but they are not consistent, either over time, or in subjects, and there is nothing in the school's approach or teaching to account for them.
3. Results in tests last year were not quite as strong as in the previous year in reading and writing, due to fewer pupils attaining the higher Level 3, although almost all pupils attained the expected Level 2. Writing is a focus in the school's latest improvement planning. Attainment in mathematics was better, with every pupil gaining the expected Level 2 and almost half the higher Level 3. Mathematics has been a recent focus for the school, particularly in encouraging pupils to use and apply the skills they have learned, and this has had a positive effect, not just on test results but on pupils' confidence. Many pupils, including some who do not find mathematics easy, say that mathematics is one of their favourite subjects. Teacher assessment in science indicates that an above average proportion of pupils are at both the expected Level 2 and the higher Level 3. Inspection evidence confirms this, showing pupils to have good levels of knowledge and the ability to use their skills of enquiry effectively.



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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.8 (17.8)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	15.9 (16.5)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	18.2 (17.9)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 36 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

4. The picture by Year 6 is even stronger. Results in tests for the past four years have almost invariably been well above the national average in English, mathematics and science, making the school over this period the 84<sup>th</sup> most successful primary school in the country when measured by test results at Year 6. Last year, test results in mathematics and science, and in the core subjects overall, were in the top five per cent nationally. Science results were quite exceptional, with all the pupils attaining the expected Level 4 and 94 per cent the higher Level 5. When compared to the standards they attained at Year 2, four years ago, their progress was very good overall. The pupils currently in Year 6 are achieving standards which are well above national expectations.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.1 (29.5)	26.9 (26.8 )
Mathematics	30.7 (29.2)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	32.6 (29.7)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 34 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

5. These standards are achieved for a variety of reasons. The leadership of the headteacher plays a significant part, because her expectations are high and are clearly communicated to both staff and pupils. All those with a leadership role in the school take their responsibilities seriously and work hard to achieve the best possible standards. This is particularly the case with the senior management team who, between them, are responsible for English, mathematics and science. However, the excellent teamwork of everyone involved in teaching the pupils ensures that expectations are consistent through the school. Pupils are increasingly involved in their own learning through the setting of short-term, achievable targets to which they respond well. Although progress is not as marked in the Foundation Stage, by the time of the inspection the children were developing the attitudes to learning which are proving so effective later in the school.
6. Standards in information and communication technology are above those expected at both Year 2 and Year 6. This is a distinct improvement on the findings of the previous inspection, when they were average at Year 2 and below average at Year 6. The school has invested well in new equipment in both the classrooms and the information and communication technology suite, and all teachers use interactive whiteboards effectively to support learning in the classroom. Skills are taught well by all teachers and pupils are confident users of new technology.
7. Standards in art, which were judged to be below those in other schools at both Year 2 and Year 6 by the last inspection, have improved and are now average. While this is an improvement, the school is anxious to raise standards further. Good use has been made recently of visiting artists to work on whole-school initiatives, and the subject is a focus in the next school development plan.
8. The school has maintained the high standards in music found at the last inspection. Music lessons are taught very well, again by a specialist teacher, and pupils are confident, whether playing instruments or singing. A variety of choirs and extra musical tuition take place, while the quality of the brass band, 30-strong, and taught by a learning support assistant, is quite

exceptional. Music is part of the fabric of the school. Although physical education was not a focus for the inspection, there are also many opportunities for pupils to take part in a variety of games and sports, and the school does very well in competitive events.

9. Standards in religious education are above those expected by the locally Agreed Syllabus at both Year 2 and Year 6, again an improvement on the judgement of the previous inspection. Other subjects were not a focus for this inspection, but evidence suggests that standards in these are at least similar to those found nationally. The school's use of whole-school topics, involving many different areas of learning, has a positive effect on standards overall because the pupils are enthused by this approach and find learning fun.
10. Pupils with special educational needs are given a high level of very good quality support and as a result make the same very good progress as their classmates, often achieving national standards in tests. Assessment information indicates that some do exceptionally well, attaining above average standards from a very low baseline. There are currently no pupils with English as an additional language in the school, but the school has catered for these pupils in the past and has a well-constructed policy in place. Gifted and talented pupils are not formally identified, but results and pupils' attitudes indicate that such pupils are catered for effectively.

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

Pupils' attitudes are excellent. The way the school promotes personal development through its spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision is very good, as is the standard of behaviour. Attendance is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' excellent attitudes are encouraged by outstanding relationships between pupils and staff.
- The high levels of expectation by staff lead to very good behaviour by the pupils.
- Pupils are given a very wide range of opportunities to take and demonstrate responsibility.
- There is limited focus on multi-cultural education.
- The level of attendance is consistently good.

### **Commentary**

11. Foxmoor Primary is a school where the consistent emphasis on setting high expectations produces pupils who have excellent attitudes both towards school and to other people. A recurring theme in lessons was the presumption that pupils would rise to the challenges set by their teachers and they did this, both in terms of their attitudes to the work and the way they behaved. This is to the school's credit and it marks an improvement on the position found at the last inspection. Pupils enjoy coming to school and, over the last three years, their attendance has been well above the national average.
12. Conversations with pupils show that they have a high opinion of the school and its staff. The very strong support for the numerous extra-curricular activities, and particularly the wonderful brass band, is a further indication of the stimulating diet which the school provides. A direct consequence of this very positive atmosphere is that behaviour is very good. In the nearly all lessons observed, behaviour was either very good or better, and around the school pupils are polite, helpful and considerate. The result is a very calm and well ordered community in which pupils feel secure. There were no exclusions during the last school year.
13. The drive for high standards is supported very well by the way that teachers relate to pupils. The strength of relationships between staff and pupils was seen in many lessons. For example, in an English lesson in Year 4 the way in which the class teacher looked for the positive aspects of answers which were not entirely correct, helped to retain pupils' confidence. The planning of many lessons encourages groups to work together to solve problems by exchanging ideas and sharing resources. This was particularly evident in the Year 3 class, where pupils rotate between different activities during the week. Staff are aware that pupils may not always relate to one another as well as they should. A class assembly in

the Years 4 and 5 class was effective in encouraging pupils to discuss concerns raised through the 'worry box' to which all pupils can contribute.

14. In a school which places great emphasis on creating an atmosphere in which all pupils have the opportunity to reach their full potential, it is not surprising that numerous avenues are provided for pupils to take on responsibility. House and team captains, school councillors, paired readers, playground mentors, the volunteer gardeners, and classroom monitors are just some of the many ways in which pupils are able to influence aspects of their school.
15. There is no better example of the very good means by which the school promotes spirituality than the brass band. The wonderful sounds emanating from the hall during lunchtime were both uplifting and very moving. Given the number of pupils who also take part in the various choirs and dance groups, it is clear the school offers very good opportunities for pupils to experience the creative impulse through combining with others. The strong moral code and an emphasis on compassion and consideration for others are central to the way in which the school instils pupils with a sense of right and wrong. Pupils' excellent attitudes and very good behaviour indicate it is very successful in this.
16. Provision for pupils' social development is also very good, being firmly rooted in the very good relationships which teachers have with their pupils. The many planned opportunities in lessons for group and paired work further encourage pupils to share views and opinions with consideration and respect. This open attitude also supports cultural understanding. Pupils are used to debating different ideas and listening to what others have to say. The school promotes the study of the pupils' own culture very well through music, and also through a range of valuable visits linked to the study of different subjects. Other faiths and the cultures surrounding them are carefully considered as part of the curriculum in religious education. However, apart from this, and the occasional issue in geographical studies, there are limited opportunities for pupils to gain an understanding of what it is like to grow up in a modern multi-cultural society. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good overall.

***Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)***

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.7	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.*

17. Attendance for the previous year was good, and has been so for several years. Parents are keen for their children to attend and are also quick to inform the school when their children are absent. Punctuality is very good, with pupils arriving well in time for the start of the school day. The school contacts parents on the first day when a pupil is absent without a reason, but such events are rare.

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The school provides a very good education for all its pupils. The excellent ethos supports learning, as does a shared commitment to maintaining high standards and very good leadership and management. Pupils are given a very good level of support and guidance, and an innovative and interesting curriculum includes excellent opportunities for enrichment. Links with parents, other schools and the local community are very good.

## Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are very good overall. They are satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and very good in Years 1 to 6. Assessment procedures are very good and are used very effectively.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Nearly all teaching is good or better, with a high proportion of very good teaching.
- Very effective assessment procedures support pupils' learning very well.
- The skilled teaching assistants are used very effectively.
- Teachers use very good tracking systems to monitor pupils' progress over time.
- Pupils have an increasingly good understanding of their personal targets for learning.
- Children in the Foundation Stage need more opportunities to work independently.
- Very good use is made of pupils' skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology in other subjects.

### Commentary

18. Teaching and learning have improved considerably since the previous inspection, when 15 per cent of teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory, or poor, and only 40 per cent good or better. All the teaching observed was satisfactory, with the great majority being good or very good. It is this consistency, with good and frequently very good teaching in every class in the school, which ensures that pupils make very good progress over time. Improving the consistency of better teaching through the school was a key issue at the last inspection and this has been addressed very effectively. The quality of teaching comes initially from very good leadership which will accept only the best for the pupils. It is supported by the determination of both teachers and support assistants to work together to provide continuity, and by the excellent ethos which produces a very good learning atmosphere.

#### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 40 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	16 (40%)	22 (55%)	2 (5%)	0	0	0

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

19. Teaching in the Foundation Stage was good during the course of the inspection, and children made good progress in the lessons seen. Progress is at least satisfactory, overall, and good for some children, as a significant number enter school with below average attainment. All are on course to meet the expected goals in all areas of learning by the end of the reception year, and surpass them in personal, social and emotional development and in physical development. The quality of children's work through the year indicates that progress over time has been satisfactory, but is now accelerating due to better teaching. There is an effective emphasis on personal and social development and, as a result, the children are very ready to learn. However, at times the challenges they are given are not as high as they could be, particularly in encouraging the children to employ their newly learned skills independently.
20. For pupils in Years 1 to 6 teaching is very good overall, with around 40 per cent of the teaching being very good. Because teaching is good and often better in every class, pupils make continuous progress. Teachers are consistent in their expectations of behaviour and the way in which pupils respond to tasks, and as a result pupils know what to do. As many of the classes have more than one age group teachers plan closely together. The introduction of whole-school topics, where everyone studies the same focus at varying levels of difficulty, has also had a positive effect on learning. Because all the staff plan this together, and assess the results together at the end, there is a very good focus on how well the pupils build on their skills and knowledge over time. Pupils find the approach stimulating, and several parents commented on how interested their children were, discussing their findings together at home.

21. The school's excellent ethos has a strong bearing on pupils' learning. High standards of behaviour are expected and delivered, so little time is wasted on gaining pupils' attention. The excellent relationships throughout the school mean that pupils appreciate their teachers and other staff and usually do their best to please them. Because the pupils get on so well with each other, teachers are able to make very good use of short discussions between pupils, usually in pairs, which encourages them to think and explain reasons for their opinions. There is an atmosphere of mutual trust which gives pupils of all abilities the confidence to answer questions without worrying about being wrong.
22. The very effective use of high quality support staff underpins the learning of pupils with special educational needs, as well as lower attaining pupils. The school employs an above average number of teaching assistants and devotes considerable time and money to their training. The results are very effective. The support staff appreciate the school's efforts on their behalf and form an integral part of the teaching and learning team, working closely with class teachers. The level and quality of the help given means that it is rarely necessary to withdraw pupils for special tuition, which helps to boost their confidence. The teaching provided for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Pupils are provided with clear targets for improvement, and these are used very well by both teachers and teaching assistants to provide a most suitable range of activities and tasks. Pupils are keen to participate and they are given much well-directed support by adults. This helps them to achieve very well in relation to the targets set for them.
23. Teachers make good use of resources, which for most subjects are plentiful and of good quality. All classes are equipped with interactive whiteboards, and these were used very effectively to introduce topics and to work through problems with either a group of pupils or the whole class. Computers in classrooms, as well as the well equipped information and communication technology suite, were employed to check understanding, give further practice and engage pupils in problem solving. The focus on investigations in both mathematics and science is encouraging pupils to think individually and look for logical solutions. Good planning ensures that the skills which pupils acquire in English, mathematics and information and communication technology are made very good use of in other areas of the curriculum. This allows pupils to apply these skills in a realistic way and with an end result. It also raises standards overall.
24. The school has very good assessment procedures which it uses very effectively and which it is constantly refining. Systems are thorough, well organised and embedded in the school's practice. Planning and assessment are closely linked, and both teachers and support staff regularly review the progress of individual pupils. Very clear and achievable short-term targets are set in English and mathematics and are shared with pupils and parents. Pupils know what they have to do to improve and are encouraged to decide with their teacher when they have succeeded. At the end of each whole-school topic each class provides the work from three pupils of different abilities. This is laid out in the hall and then discussed by all the staff to see where it has been successful or where adjustments need to be made. At the same time subject co-ordinators are able to get an overview of progress in their subject across the school. This represents very good practice.
25. Pupils' progress year on year is carefully monitored, through both the school's own tests in reading and spelling and the use of non-statutory government tests annually. The results of both these and statutory tests are analysed carefully to isolate and then address the weaker areas of learning through future planning.

## The curriculum

The school provides a very good range of curricular opportunities. Extra-curricular provision is excellent. The overall provision for staffing, accommodation and learning resources is good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has developed a rich and diverse curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6, where links between subjects are used well.
- The overall provision for English, mathematics and science is very good.
- Excellent enrichment is provided by extra-curricular activities and educational visits.
- The school ensures all pupils have equal opportunities to learn and succeed.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- There is a very good number of teachers and teaching assistants.
- Accommodation is cramped for the number of pupils present.

### Commentary

26. The curriculum has shown very good improvement since the time of the previous inspection. All subjects of the curriculum are most carefully planned, and all statutory requirements are met, including health and sex education, and teaching awareness of drugs. The school provides particularly detailed plans to ensure appropriate work for the pupils in the mixed-age classes. Care is taken to provide a wide variety of activities and experiences within each subject, and subjects are linked together whenever possible. For example, art and design is used well to enhance the work in history. Considerable thought and planning goes into the construction of the whole-school topics, including adapting the school's schemes of work in different subjects. The results are also carefully reviewed by the whole staff to assess their effectiveness and whether the skills that are necessary for each subject have been covered.
27. The school currently makes very good provision for the development of English, mathematics and science, and English, mathematics and information and communication technology are used very well in other subjects. There is also a strong emphasis on music, dance and sport, and the school is justly proud of the standards being achieved in these areas. The staff have worked very hard to produce an innovative curriculum, with the result that the provision for pupils is rich and stimulating. The school also makes every effort to involve all pupils in the full range of school work and activities. As a result, very good provision is made for the equality of opportunity for all pupils and, in doing so, the school allows them to achieve as well as they can.
28. The provision for the pupils with special educational needs is very good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Clear procedures are in place, and they closely follow the Code of Practice on identifying and assessing pupils. The Code has been most carefully and effectively implemented by the school. Individual education plans are provided for pupils, and these are now of good quality, with clear targets being set to help the pupils improve. Considerable care is taken to ensure that the work provided for pupils is closely suited to their needs, and teachers and teaching assistants complement each other very well in their support of the pupils. They are also well supported by the special needs coordinator, when the need arises. Pupils are involved in the full range of school activities in which they participate with confidence and enjoyment.
29. The school provides an excellent range of extra-curricular activities for pupils. These are almost too many to mention, but they include football, netball, cricket, science, dance, orchestra, computers and gardening clubs, as well as the popular and outstandingly proficient brass band. These activities are very well supported by teachers, teaching assistants and parents alike, with as many as 80 per cent of pupils being involved. The school welcomes many visitors, including artists, writers, drummers, police, clergy, fire-fighters and the local Member of Parliament, as well as drama and music groups.

30. A wide range of educational visits is arranged to places such as Slimbridge, Stroud Museum, Sudeley Castle and Cirencester. These are carefully linked to current studies and, as a result, play an important part in enhancing pupils' knowledge and understanding. Residential visits are a regular feature for older pupils. The school also makes good use of the local area for various studies in, for example, geography. These activities make a very significant contribution to pupils' personal and social development, as well as enhancing their understanding and skills in different curriculum subjects.
31. The school's accommodation is satisfactory overall, but it has a number of significant weaknesses. Classrooms are generally adequate in size, but a number of them have to accommodate large classes, and then the space becomes cramped. The school has no additional space available for practical activities and small-group work, with the result that the library and staffroom are used for musical activities, and to accommodate the setting arrangements in English and mathematics. The school currently has no medical room, or a specific room for supporting pupils with special educational needs, and the office accommodation is small. Whilst the separate temporary classrooms are reasonably spacious in themselves, they are accessed through 'The Tunnel', which becomes slippery, and potentially dangerous, in bad weather. On the other hand, the information and communication technology suite and library are pleasant, very well resourced areas, and the library in particular is most welcoming. The hall provides a useful central area for a number of activities. Rooms throughout the school are clean and well maintained, and displays of pupils' work greatly enhance their appearance.
32. Outside play areas are both attractive and exciting, with suitable activity areas and quiet areas to suit the needs of different pupils. The grounds are spacious and have been thoughtfully developed with the pupils in mind. They are greatly enhanced by additions, such as climbing equipment, the all-weather track, the 'trim trail' to encourage pupils' fitness and agility, the willow sculptures and the pond. The pupils have been involved in the design and construction of many of these features. The outdoor play area provided for the children in the reception year is a considerable improvement, following the criticisms of the previous inspection.
33. Resources are very good, both in quantity and quality. Storage space is at a premium, but staff work wonders in keeping items stored neatly and tidily, whilst at the same time making them available, both to themselves and to pupils when appropriate. The school is very well staffed, by a dedicated and well-informed group of teachers and support staff, who complement each other very well in providing for their pupils.

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

Procedures to ensure pupils' care and welfare are very good. The support, advice and guidance provided for pupils are very good. There are good arrangements for seeking pupils' views.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff know their pupils very well.
- There are very good arrangements to ensure pupils' health and safety.
- Pupils are encouraged to play a role in the way the school is run and organised.

### **Commentary**

34. The school has very effective arrangements for the care and welfare of pupils. These are built on the very good knowledge which all staff have of the pupils in their charge, a process which begins when children start at the school. There are comprehensive arrangements for the induction of new pupils, including taster days for pupils and information sessions for parents. Parents like the way admissions to the reception class are staggered, believing it to be an effective way of allowing their children to settle into school life. Those pupils who joined the school part way through their education confirmed that when they started at Foxmoor they were made to feel very welcome. The school's assessment systems are in the process of being computerised exactly to the school's requirements, so that there will be a

comprehensive record of each pupil's progress in every aspect of their education, readily accessible to all appropriate staff.

35. The high level of care is particularly evident in the school's approach to health and safety. There are very good arrangements for risk assessments on outside visits and, within each subject, there are clear guidelines on the risks that are likely to be encountered during lessons, particularly in science and design and technology. Pupils are taught how to handle equipment safely as an integral part of their lessons, and are made aware of situations where there is a likelihood of risk. Arrangements for medical needs are very good, with photographs of children who are at risk provided to the relevant staff. The provision for first-aid is also very good. All members of staff have basic first-aid training, backed up by three who are fully qualified. They are well supported by a dedicated group of mid-day supervisors who ensure that children are cared for well at lunchtimes. Some supervisors also hold posts as learning support assistants, which provides a degree of continuity, as well as familiar faces for the pupils.
36. The school is keen to involve pupils in its day-to-day management and is successful in this. Since the last inspection a school council has been established through which pupils' views are sought. Interviews with councillors confirm that they feel valued and that their views are taken seriously. They have only met once at the beginning of each term and the school has acknowledged that they ought to meet more regularly so that their role can be extended. Interesting additions to the school grounds, such as willow planting and a 'trim trail' to promote pupils' fitness and agility, involve pupils in either planning or execution wherever possible. At the beginning of each term pupils are involved in setting their class rules which are reviewed throughout the year. Pupils also get the opportunity to review their work and, together with their teachers, set targets for improvement.

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

The school has established very good links with parents. It has established very good links with the community and other schools and colleges.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The many and varied links with parents promote partnership very successfully.
- There are very good links with local colleges which involves the school in supporting initial teacher training.
- There are close links to both the local high school and local cluster schools.

### **Commentary**

37. Parents have very positive views about the school and the way it relates to them. The parents' questionnaire was overwhelmingly supportive and this positive picture was reinforced both at the pre-inspection parents' meeting and through interviews with parents during the week of the inspection. Parents made particular reference to the staff, whom they consider to be very approachable. They are confident that should they raise a concern it will be dealt with quickly and effectively, and some supported this with examples.
38. Parents were also pleased with the information they receive in the form of newsletters, reading diaries, and an annual parents' questionnaire, through which parents' views are canvassed. The comments form the basis of a report which the Chair of Governors sends to parents, ensuring that there is feedback about any issues raised. The school has organised curriculum evenings in mathematics and English, as a means of keeping parents up to date with current teaching methods. Informal opportunities to meet with parents are provided by an active Friends' Association, which organises regular social and fund-raising events. A number of parents also regularly help out in school during the week.
39. As a member of the Partnership Committee on the development of Initial Teacher Training, the headteacher is keen to promote the school's involvement with the training of new teachers. As a result, there are very close links with Cheltenham College and Bath University, through which the school offers up ten placements a year for trainee teachers. This



involvement ensures that the school keeps its own practice and procedures under review whilst, at the same time, having an input into the future quality of the teaching profession. Both institutions regard the training offered at Foxmoor to be of the highest quality.

40. The local cluster of primary schools meets regularly to promote work on English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, music and special needs. There are also good links to the four receiving secondary schools, which support the development of skills in information and communication technology, science, design and technology and physical education. The transition to secondary school is managed well, with pupils spending a day at their chosen school, together with reciprocal visits to Foxmoor from staff at the secondary schools. The school is particularly sensitive to the needs of pupils who may be particularly anxious, or have special needs, and there is a policy of sending their teaching assistant with them for a few visits, before the end of the summer term, to help them settle in.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher's leadership is outstanding, and she is supported very well by key staff. Governance is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher's excellent vision and sense of purpose is central to the school's improvement.
- Excellent teamwork involves all members of the school community.
- Key staff fulfil their roles very effectively.
- There is an excellent commitment to the needs of individual pupils.
- The school has excellent systems for training teachers, support assistants and students.
- Very good management systems support all aspects of the school's work.
- Governors are fully involved and have a very good understanding of the school and its work.
- Very effective financial management helps the school to achieve its educational priorities.

### **Commentary**

41. The headteacher has an outstanding quality of vision which has been instrumental in developing Foxmoor into a school in which it is a pleasure to both teach and learn. At its core is a clear recognition of the valuable contribution made by everyone connected with the school, which, in turn, enthuses and motivates both staff and pupils. Excellent teamwork ensures that pupils are given a very good deal, and they appreciate this and respond accordingly. The successful emphasis on attaining high standards applies to all aspects of provision, and the school excels in a number of areas.
42. The school is academically very successful, but there is no sense of an institution which is resting on its laurels. While continuing to strive for high standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, there is a commitment to providing a broad and interesting curriculum which will engage and inspire the pupils. Innovative developments are implemented with care and thought, and their effects are carefully evaluated. A tremendous range of opportunities are offered beyond the school day, with the whole-hearted support of all the staff. As a result, exceptionally high standards are obtained, for example in music. More importantly, the school is fulfilling its mission to give all its pupils the chance to succeed.
43. The headteacher is supported very well by her senior management team. The decision to run without the post of deputy headteacher was carefully thought through and has proved very effective in practice. All key decisions are considered first by the headteacher and three staff, all of whom have different areas of expertise and responsibility. For example, the annual school improvement plan, contributed to by the whole staff, is reviewed and collated by the management team. The school buys in support for financial management, but the team is fully involved in making the best use of the money available, helped by the annual audit undertaken by all subject co-ordinators.

44. The co-ordinator for special educational needs manages the provision for pupils with learning difficulties very well. The Code of Practice has been carefully and successfully introduced and used, extensive and detailed records are kept and the progress made by the pupils is carefully checked. The governor appointed to monitor the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs carries out her work efficiently and helpfully.
45. Foxmoor is also an excellent learning environment for adults, whether teachers, support staff or students. Training needs for individual or school improvement are carefully assessed and managed very effectively. Learning support assistants, for example, are given regular opportunities to train as a group on a fortnightly basis, which is costed into the school's budget. As well as raising expertise, this also builds understanding and teamwork. It is not surprising that some of the current non-teaching staff are shortly to begin training as teachers. Newly qualified teachers receive excellent support, both from their mentor and other colleagues in the school. The link tutor for students undertaking initial teacher training at Gloucester University appreciates the school's very positive attitude towards students on teaching practice. It is regarded as a serious commitment and in many areas, such as the school's use of information and communication technology, teachers provide very positive role models.
46. Very good systems of management support the work of the school and ensure that it runs smoothly. Performance data is regularly used to evaluate the progress of both individuals and groups of pupils. The school improvement plan is a working document which is regularly reviewed. All subject co-ordinators produce annual action plans for their subjects which are targeted at raising standards through improving provision. Performance management targets are linked effectively to both the school's needs and pupils' personal development.
47. Governors are closely involved with the school and contribute fully to its success. They receive a very good level of information from the headteacher and, as a result, are very aware of all aspects of the school's performance. Individual governors with responsibilities, for example, for information and communication technology, literacy and numeracy, frequently discuss their area with the respective co-ordinator. All co-ordinators provide the governors with a document dealing with progress in their subject before the governors' annual report to parents is published. An active finance committee includes the chairs of all the other committees, and is strongly committed to obtaining the best value in all aspects of the pupils' education. An example is the proposed new building to replace temporary classrooms, where governors are devoting a tremendous amount of time and energy to ensuring that the final result will provide the school with the best possible learning environment.

***Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004***

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	709,734	Balance from previous year	202,935
Total expenditure	774,598	Balance carried forward to the next	138,071
Expenditure per pupil	2,827		

48. The school has very good procedures for ensuring that the financial resources available properly support the educational needs of the pupils. Governors, especially those involved in the school's financial management, have a clear picture of the school's position and fully understand their responsibilities. While the current carry forward figure is relatively high, at almost 20 per cent, some of this money is already earmarked, for example, to update information and communication technology equipment. The school is also negotiating a considerable new building programme with the local authority, and it is the governors' intention to use the bulk of this money to upgrade the new building to provide the best possible learning environment for both pupils and teachers. This represents prudent and appropriate use of available finance, especially as the school is already well staffed and resourced, as the current limited teaching space restricts the school's options when considering the grouping of pupils.

49. The school is fully aware of the importance of applying the principles of best value when balancing the needs of staffing, accommodation and resources, and continually challenges itself to improve all aspects of the pupils' education. Governors are aware of the need to ensure that money is spent effectively and have good procedures to ensure this happens. School administration is both helpful and efficient, making a significant contribution to the smooth running of the school. Considering that expenditure per pupil is broadly average, and that high standards are achieved in many different areas, the school gives very good value for money.

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

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

50. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **satisfactory**. This represents a distinct improvement since the previous inspection, when provision was unsatisfactory. Since then, the curriculum has become firmly based on the early learning goals set for children of this age to achieve. There is now detailed, medium-term planning and better use of assessment. The teaching of mathematics has improved, with higher-attaining children making good progress. Some staff absence has affected the quality of leadership and management of the Foundation Stage, although it is satisfactory overall. Other adults have worked hard to ensure that children have made steady progress throughout the year. Support staff are well trained and make a significant contribution to children's progress in both classes. It is evident that teaching and learning have been satisfactory, over time, but have improved recently, so that progress has been satisfactory over time but is now more rapid. Children with special educational needs are supported well, which enables them to make good progress.
51. Children enter the reception classes with a considerable spread of attainment. Overall, it is average, but there is a significant proportion each year that is assessed as being below average. The older children are taught in a mixed-age class with pupils in Year 1. The teacher knows them well and tasks are carefully pitched at an appropriate level. All children in the Foundation Stage achieve well in their personal, social and emotional development and their attitudes to school are excellent. They also achieve well in physical development and in developing speaking and listening skills. In both areas nearly all children exceed the expected standards for their age before the end of the reception year. Children's achievement in language and literacy, mathematical development, creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world is satisfactory.

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

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

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

- Children's attitudes to school are excellent and their behaviour is very good.
- All adults teach well and relationships are very good.
- Good daily routines help children to feel confident and achieve very well.
- There are some missed opportunities to encourage children's independence.

#### **Commentary**

52. Teaching and learning in this area are good. Adults work as a strong team, creating a warm atmosphere, where children know exactly what is expected of them. Thorough planning ensures that the children are engaged in a satisfactory range of activities, while a generous number of support staff helps to ensure they maintain good levels of concentration and understanding. There are high levels of good behaviour in both classes and children are very interested in the activities. Overall, their attitudes to school are outstanding and children of all abilities are constantly attentive to their teachers. Children co-operate well in groups, share resources sensibly and take turns well. By the end of the reception year, most children attain beyond the level expected for their age.
53. Given that the children have very good attitudes to learning, there are too few occasions where they are encouraged and supported to make informed choices, selecting and using resources independently. Tasks tend to be carefully organised with plenty of support. While this works well in areas, such as mathematical development, the level of direction limits opportunities for the children to experiment, for example in writing and creative activities.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers use opportunities to promote children's speaking and listening skills well.
- There is some lack of opportunity for children to practise early writing skills.

### **Commentary**

54. Teaching is satisfactory overall. It was usually good during the inspection and promotes children's speaking and listening skills effectively. Teachers use stimulating questions and give interesting information that intrigues the children. This ensures that children listen attentively and are eager to try to explain their ideas and discuss new learning. By the end of the reception year, most children will attain above the expected level in their communication skills.
55. Literacy topics are appropriate but there is some lack of planned challenge to extend children's writing. There were no examples of children's own writing on display and little in their books. Children were delighted to show how well they know the sounds made by individual letters and the most able children could blend two sounds together. With minimal adult help, they are starting to spell simple words correctly, but there was little evidence of them using the skills to experiment by writing letters, shopping lists, descriptions or stories independently. Most children are on course to attain the expected level by the end of the year.
56. Children are developing their reading skills appropriately and make satisfactory progress. They are interested in books and use pictures as prompts for understanding, but not all are able to apply their knowledge of sounds to build unfamiliar words. While children understand how books work, only a few could explain the terms 'title', 'author' and 'illustrator'. Most children are likely to attain the expected level by the end of the reception year.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good overall.
- More able children achieve well.

### **Commentary**

57. Teaching was good during the inspection. Teachers and other adults use questions well and children are eager to share what they know. The most able children achieve well and show good understanding of how to add and subtract within ten. Average-attaining and some less able children recognise numbers to 15 and many are starting to know which number comes after a given one. In a lesson when the children's task was to count the spots on dominoes, some started to recognise the value of one group of spots and 'counted on' from the first number rather than counting all the spots each time. Some children independently chose to add larger numbers, for instance seven and nine, and when they were discussing the doubles of two, three, five, some children knew the double of eleven. This suggests that some children are capable of meeting further challenges.
58. Many children recognise coins, start to understand time sequences, recognise simple symmetry and name two dimensional shapes, indicating that they are satisfactorily covering a broad range of mathematical topics. Overall, children attain at average levels for their age and most are likely to attain the expected level by the end of the year, with more able children attaining aspects of Level 1.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have good levels of competence in information and communication technology.
  - The use of whole-school topics contributes effectively to children's understanding.
59. Teaching and learning are satisfactory over time. In a well taught information and communication technology session, children followed quite complicated instructions well, which enabled them to log on and open an art program with very little adult help. They used a variety of tools, with increasing confidence, and maintained good levels of concentration as they drew pictures of vehicles and altered colours. Children swiftly learned how to instruct a programmable toy, so that it moved as they wished and expected. The available evidence in classrooms and in children's books indicates that topics are wide and varied and that children's awareness of the world about them is at least at expected levels.
60. Religious education is taught as an integral part of the curriculum for children in the reception class. Children in the mixed reception year and Year 1 class take part in the religious education lessons given to the whole class. As a result, all the children make appropriate gains in their knowledge and understanding.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good.
- Children move with good levels of confidence and co-ordination.

### Commentary

61. Teaching is good, with a good understanding of children's needs at this stage of their development. As a result, children of all abilities are making good progress. Children were challenged well in a very good gymnastics lesson in the hall, where they moved with mature control, using both the floor and large apparatus. They had a good awareness of space, and made up simple sequences of movements using different parts of their bodies imaginatively. Children show good levels of control, when using small tools such as brushes, pencils and scissors, and their letter formation is generally clear and legible. Overall, children attain beyond the level expected for their age.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Music is a strength of this provision.
- There are limited opportunities for children to make independent choices.

### Commentary

62. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teaching was good in a music lesson, where the children sang in tune and with great enjoyment. More able children demonstrated a well-developed ability to distinguish the pitch of a series of notes. This suggests that they have been taught well during the year. The classrooms have colourful displays of paintings and simple collages. Children enjoy using paints and their pictures show that their observation

skills are at expected levels. However, the results indicate that these opportunities are quite structured, giving the children little opportunity to choose their own materials or develop their own ideas.

63. There are role-play areas in each of the classrooms with reception-age children, but these were not observed being used during the inspection. In one lesson children co-operated well together to build large wooden constructions of roads. The outside area was not used a great deal during the inspection; although its use was limited by the weather. Children's attainment is average for their age and most are expected to attain the appropriate learning goals by the end of the reception year.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **very good**.

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

- Pupils' achievement in all aspects of the subject is very good.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall.
- Very skilful use is made of literacy in other subjects of the curriculum.
- The subject co-ordinator provides very effective leadership and management.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good, with many really enjoying tackling the range of tasks presented.

#### **Commentary**

64. In the national tests in 2004 at Year 2, standards were above the national average in reading and well above average in writing, and the standards at Year 6 were well above average overall. They are also above average when compared with similar schools. Inspection evidence shows that these high standards have been maintained. At Year 2, in fact, the extra attention that has been given to reading has improved the standards now being seen in that aspect of work. These standards represent very good improvement since the previous inspection, when standards were average.
65. In speaking and listening, pupils at Year 2 listen attentively to their teacher, and to each other, and their responses show that they have a clear understanding of what they have heard. At Year 6, pupils listen carefully in a variety of contexts, including teacher instruction, class discussion and drama. Pupils throughout the school are articulate speakers, who provide detailed answers, explanations and arguments. They speak clearly, and put their points confidently and concisely, using a very extensive vocabulary. In discussions, their response to the comments of others is usually apt and interesting.
66. In reading, most pupils at Year 2 read texts fluently and accurately, with clear understanding. They introduce suitable expression into their reading. In discussing their books, pupils readily refer to the text, clearly expressing opinions about the contents. They also show a secure understanding of letter sounds, as well as recognising a lot of words. Most pupils confidently find information, readily using a book's contents page and index to help them. At Year 6, most pupils read with fluency, accuracy and evident enjoyment, introducing much expression into their reading. They talk confidently about what they read, making very appropriate reference to characters and events in the stories. They identify key events and themes, and use relevant information to support their views. Pupils regularly use reference books, and have good skills to find the information they need.
67. In their writing, pupils at Year 2 successfully convey factual information, sometimes in the form of news, as well as producing imaginative writing in the form of stories and poems. Most pupils produce extended pieces of writing which are clear and follow a logical sequence. Good use is made of interesting vocabulary to bring writing alive. Capital letters, full stops and other

forms of punctuation are used mostly correctly, and pupils' spelling is usually accurate. Where there are inaccuracies, the words are always recognisable. The handwriting of many pupils is neat, legible, and of a consistent size, with most pupils joining their letters appropriately. At Year 6, pupils write for a variety of purposes and audiences. They make very good use of adverbs and adjectives to add detail to their writing, and they successfully employ various forms of punctuation. Pupils' work is regularly sustained to produce longer pieces of writing, introducing very effective imagination, interest and depth through the use of lively and thoughtful vocabulary. Most pupils join their letters in a clear, legible and fluent handwriting style.

68. The overall quality of teaching and learning has improved, and is now very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge. Lessons are planned and organised well, with careful regard to the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to listen to stories and various forms of instruction, and they provide pupils with chances to speak, often at length, which help them to develop these skills. Teachers are careful to provide reading books for pupils which are suitable to their individual needs. There are plenty of opportunities to read, and suitable support and encouragement is provided by teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils are keen to read, and the vast majority clearly enjoy the activity.
69. The teachers throughout the school provide a good range of writing activities for their pupils, including the use of information and communication technology for drafting and re-drafting. They also provide detailed help and support for pupils with spelling and handwriting, as well as clear advice on improving and developing the content of their written work. Further, teachers assess pupils' work regularly, with the result that the new work that is given is well suited to their particular needs. Teachers are keen to provide challenging activities, and they have high expectations of their pupils. The pupils respond very well to the opportunities and challenges provided in all aspects of the subject, and they work well for extended periods. As a result pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve very well.
70. Very good relationships are developed between teachers and pupils, and teachers encourage and praise pupils at every opportunity. Pupils' attitudes to English are very good. They work well on their own, and in groups, when required, and they work hard to complete the work set. Teachers regularly add helpful words of advice and praise to pupils' work, and the quality of the best marking is outstanding. As a result, most pupils are keen to produce a neat and careful standard of presentation in their books, especially in relation to handwriting.
71. The subject co-ordinator supports her colleagues very well with advice when necessary, and she observes lessons to see for herself the standards being produced in the classroom. She is keen, enthusiastic and a very good practitioner. Through studying samples of pupils' work, and their performance in the national tests, she is able to identify any minor weaknesses in their knowledge and skills. In this way, she contributes very effectively to maintaining the current high standards, and to improving them where necessary, and her leadership role is very good.

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

72. The school is keen to develop pupils' language and literacy skills, both within English and in other subjects of the curriculum. Significant amounts of writing are produced in, for example, history, geography and science, and these subjects are used very well to enhance pupils' literacy skills. Much use is also made of information and communication technology, for example, in word-processing pieces of work. Pupils are also given regular opportunities to develop their speaking skills in many curriculum areas. This use of literacy in other subjects is very good, and an improvement since the previous inspection.



## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils of all abilities achieve very well and standards are well above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Teaching and learning in mathematics are very good.
- Many pupils really enjoy mathematics because learning is made fun.
- Assessment procedures are very good and are used very effectively.
- Mathematics is led and managed very well by an experienced co-ordinator.
- Individual targets for pupils make a very good contribution to their understanding and progress.
- The presentation and marking of pupils' work lacks consistency.

### Commentary

73. The national tests in mathematics in 2004 produced outstanding results by the pupils at Foxmoor. At Year 2, every pupil attained Level 2 and almost half the higher Level 3. By Year 6, almost every pupil attained Level 4 and two-thirds the higher Level 5, placing the school in the top five per cent of schools nationally. Test results in mathematics have been consistently well above national standards for the past four years in the tests at both Year 2 and Year 6. This is very impressive; more especially as children enter the school with skills that are average at best. Although the targets set for the pupils currently in Year 6 are not quite as high as last year's, standards remain well above average, both in national terms and when compared with the results of schools judged to be similar. This is a distinct improvement on the findings of the previous inspection, when standards were judged to be close to average, although above average in number work.
74. Various different factors contribute to this success, with perhaps the key one being the way in which the school influences the pupils' attitude to mathematics. The subject has a high focus throughout the school, and is taught very well, and many pupils find it enjoyable because they are encouraged to feel positive about it and their successes are celebrated. This is true for pupils of all abilities. Throughout the inspection, pupils in different lessons talked enthusiastically about what they were doing and were keen to demonstrate their understanding. In discussion it was clear that they were being taught to think mathematically and to reason logically, as well as acquire appropriate factual knowledge.
75. The teaching of mathematics is very good, overall, with consistently good teaching across the school and a high proportion of very good teaching. This is borne out both by lesson observations and, to a lesser extent, by the scrutiny of pupils' work, where, at times, there is insufficient focus on the importance of neat presentation as an aid to accurate calculation. While there is much good marking, with comments which help pupils to understand why they have gone wrong, there is also work which remains unmarked or, occasionally, is marked inaccurately. However, the quality of what happens in the actual lessons is often very good indeed.
76. All teachers make very good use of the interactive whiteboards, both to introduce new topics and to demonstrate mathematical concepts. Pupils respond very well to this, showing good interest and concentration. The use of accurate mathematical language is encouraged and even quite young pupils talk confidently about 'inverse operations'. Basic concepts, such as 'place value', are taught well and understood, and pupils are generally confident with handling numbers. Teachers also make a point of encouraging pupils to explain their reasoning and methods when calculating mentally, which often leads to useful discussion. Teaching assistants contribute strongly to the quality of teaching. They are trained well and enjoy very good relationships with the pupils.
77. Whether pupils are taught as a whole class or, as happens with some older pupils, organised into ability groups, teachers match the work carefully to the needs of individual pupils, so that

the level of challenge is appropriate. Pupils are encouraged to discuss what they are doing, often with a working partner, and they usually make good use of these opportunities. There is a very good focus currently on investigating and problem solving, both in lessons and in mathematical challenges which are displayed in classrooms for pupils to have a go at. Pupils show increasing confidence to 'have a go' and use their existing knowledge in different areas. Mathematics homework is set regularly in Years 3 to 6, and is related to the topic pupils are covering at the time.

78. Assessment is thorough and well organised. Pupils complete written assessments at the beginning of each half term so that teachers can set appropriate targets which are shared with pupils and parents. These assessments are repeated at the end of the half term to check individual progress. Pupils also have a test every half term to record their progress in mental arithmetic. As well as national tests, pupils take the optional tests in Years 3, 4 and 5; teachers in Years 1 and 2 are currently producing their own tests to mirror this process. Results are carefully analysed to highlight areas needing further attention.
79. The co-ordinator, who is experienced and well qualified, provides very good leadership and management in mathematics. All staff have had the opportunity to watch her teach, and she has seen teaching taking place in all classes. The curriculum is planned very well to ensure that all aspects of mathematics to support a Level 4 standard are taught by the end of Year 5, so that pupils in their final year have a solid base to build on. The co-ordinator organises training for the whole staff on a different aspect of mathematics each half term. She has a positive attitude and love for the subject which underpins the quality of provision.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

80. Very good use is made of pupils' mathematical skills and knowledge in other subjects, such as science, geography and information and communication technology. The use and interpretation of graphs, measuring length and weight, the use of scale and co-ordinates and calculating spreadsheets all make practical demands on mathematical skills in these subjects. The school's commitment to cross-curricular learning through whole-school topics ensures that mathematical opportunities are carefully planned to match the level of skill and knowledge at different age groups.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are consistently good throughout the school.
- Assessment is strong and data is analysed rigorously.
- Leadership is strong, knowledgeable and very enthusiastic.
- There is very good emphasis on investigation procedures.

### **Commentary**

81. Standards were judged to be high at the end of Year 2 at the time of the last inspection. Teachers' assessments now indicate that the number of pupils who attain at the expected level is usually well above the national average, but fewer than expected attained the higher Level 3 last year. More pupils in Year 2 are likely to attain at the higher level this year, as a result of routine analysis of their strengths and weaknesses, and the emphasis that is placed on correcting weaker areas. An examination of the pupils' work completed during the year, as well as lesson observations, confirms that pupils show good understanding of all the topics they have met and that they are used to thinking and reasoning clearly. Standards have been generally maintained since the last inspection and pupils who enter Year 1 with average knowledge achieve well by the end of Year 2.
82. Standards have remained above the national average at the end of Year 6 in recent years and they were very high last year. The school attributes this to an exceptional year group who

were accustomed to carrying out complex investigations and who, therefore, responded well to the greater emphasis placed on this area in the tests. It is likely that results will be above average again this year. Pupils have worked consistently hard during the year and show good ability to think scientifically.

83. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teaching during the inspection was consistently good and there were numerous very good features. Samples of pupils' work indicate that this good quality has been maintained steadily throughout the year. Lessons are planned very carefully and the aims of the lesson are shared with pupils so they know exactly what they are going to do. There is a very good emphasis on scientific investigation, with a well devised format that pupils use to record their discoveries. Activities are interesting and motivate pupils, so that they concentrate hard and achieve well. The use of technical vocabulary and the constant input of challenging questions by teachers, help pupils to channel their thoughts clearly, while the encouragement of discussions and group activities leads pupils to 'spark' ideas between them. This was illustrated very well in a lesson in Year 4, where pupils discussed what they were going to do in order to investigate the movement of shadows during the day, decided on resources and thought about how to ensure that it would be a 'fair test.' Their explanations of shadows were simple, but of high quality, and their predictions showed good understanding and good general observation. Marking is mostly of good quality, but it is not always clear if pupils take note of the points teachers make for improvement.
84. The co-ordinator is very experienced and hard working and provides very good leadership and management. Assessment has become more thorough, since the last inspection, and its use is now very good. National tests are analysed, as well as pupils' work during the year, and adjustments are made to the curriculum in order to correct relatively weak areas. The emphasis on pupils doing their own investigations creates a lively approach to the subject, and very good use is made of pupils' literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills in lessons. A conservation area, which has been established recently, and a 'solar system walk' provide high levels of interest and promote scientific enquiry well, outside the classroom. There has been good improvement in the subject since the last inspection.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are higher than expected by both Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils achieve well.
- Very good use is made of information and communication technology in the other subjects of the curriculum.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Pupils show very good attitudes towards their work and greatly enjoy the subject.
- Leadership and management have been good over time.

### **Commentary**

85. Pupils show good skills in all aspects of information and communication technology. This is a very considerable improvement since the last inspection, when standards at Year 6 were below average. Younger pupils are able to produce most appropriate text on a variety of topics, and older pupils confidently vary size and font to suit their needs, and skilfully add illustrations and tables to provide detail. Suitable programs support work in art, and whilst pupils in the infants carefully draw houses and flowers, those in the juniors confidently produce pictures in the style of famous artists or illustrations of important historical figures to a high standard. Suitable modelling activities are undertaken, and, whilst younger pupils follow instructions in adventure games, older pupils produce spreadsheets relating to arranging a party, or to calculate the answers in multiplication tables.
86. Pupils have a good understanding of control technology, with pupils in Year 2 competently planning and giving instructions to a programmable robot, and those in Year 6 confidently

using a computer to control the movements of a lift and to work traffic lights. Pupils in Year 6 develop a range of skills further, for example, through using sensors to detect changes in light and temperature, or by producing multi-media presentations about their visit to the Isle of Wight.

87. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers' subject knowledge is good, and they provide a very good range of resources for pupils to use, both in the information and communication technology suite and in the classrooms. Teachers provide clear advice and demonstration for pupils, and keep them involved throughout. They are particularly confident in showing pupils different techniques and procedures using the new interactive whiteboards, which has a very positive effect on pupils' learning in a number of subjects. Teaching assistants, who are becoming increasingly confident users of technology, through the school's support, make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning. This well-informed provision enables all pupils to achieve well, including those with learning difficulties.
88. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are very good, and they greatly enjoy their work. They listen carefully to the instructions being given, and they show good concentration when working with the computers. They work well alone, and with partners when required to do so, readily taking turns and helping each other. They behave very well, and are most keen to accomplish whatever task is set them. They handle all forms of equipment with great care. Pupils' attitudes contribute strongly towards the good progress they are making.
89. The coordinator has been in post for five years and has received very good support from enthusiastic colleagues, all of whom are interested in the subject and keen to improve. She has a clear understanding of the many current strengths of the subject, and she is now working on further developments. The very good levels of improvement that have been made in the subject indicate that leadership and management have been very good between the previous and present inspections.

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

90. Teachers are increasingly confident in their application of information and communication technology skills in different areas, and they make very good use of it in their teaching of all subjects wherever it is applicable. For example, pupils are regularly encouraged to use the internet to find a range of information, and this enhances the overall curricular provision. All classes are now also equipped with interactive whiteboards, and the teachers use them very well in the delivery of their lessons.

## **HUMANITIES**

**History** and **geography** were not inspected in depth and, therefore, no judgements are made on the quality of provision.

91. Standards are good in these subjects. Pupils are offered a wide range of experiences, through the whole-school topics, and planning in these subjects is adapted to support this. While class teachers decide on the historical or geographical aspects most suited to their pupils' age group, co-ordinators ensure that there is an appropriate progression of skills and knowledge over time. Good use is made of visits, visitors and practical experiences wherever possible. The school is in effect developing its own curriculum while, at the same time, ensuring that the key aspects of the National Curriculum are suitably addressed. Evidence from pupils' work indicates that they benefit from this 'joined-up' approach to humanities. As well as being informally assessed through their response in lessons, a written assessment is made of their understanding at the end of each topic.

## Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well, and standards by Year 2 and Year 6 are higher than those expected.
- Teachers provide a wide variety of learning experiences and teaching is good.
- The attitudes of pupils towards the subject are very good.
- The coordinator provides good leadership and management.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of the importance of respecting different beliefs.

### Commentary

92. Standards at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 are higher than those expected by the locally Agreed Syllabus, an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection, when standards were average overall. By the end of Year 2, pupils are most familiar with two major world faiths, the Christian and Jewish faiths. They are familiar with some of the stories of famous religious figures, such as those of Jesus and Moses. Pupils explain clearly that religions have different religious books, and they readily name and describe the Bible and the Torah. Pupils understand that religions have various ceremonies and special occasions and days, and they describe in detail why Sunday is so important to Christians and Shabbat is important to Jews. Pupils understand the importance of friends, and what makes a 'good friend'.
93. By Year 6, pupils have a good understanding and knowledge of a number of world religions, successfully explaining many aspects of the Christian, Islamic and Jewish faiths. Pupils know that all religions have distinctive traditions and celebrations. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 recognise the importance of the Passover to Jews and those in Year 3 explain the relevance of Eid to Moslems. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have a secure understanding of the need for rules and laws in our lives, and they explain the importance of the Ten Commandments, especially to Jews. Pupils in Year 4 are increasingly knowledgeable about a number of religious figures, for example, describing the life of Mother Theresa. Pupils recognise the need for love and understanding in their dealings with others, and they recognise in particular the importance of their own families. Pupils throughout the school clearly understand the need to be tolerant of other people's dress, lifestyle and ritual.
94. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons throughout the school are planned well, and interesting ideas and information are presented to pupils. Teachers have good subject knowledge and provide interesting and stimulating learning experiences. As a result, pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good gains in their knowledge and understanding. Teachers ask thought-provoking questions, make good use of religious artefacts and visits to religious buildings, and give pupils plenty of opportunity to express their thoughts at length, both through writing and discussion.
95. Because they are interested and engaged, pupils provide a variety of thoughtful answers and observations. They enjoy the range of activities and experiences provided, especially handling religious artefacts and joining in drama activities. They work well with other pupils when necessary, and are keen to complete the tasks set. Discussions with pupils show they have a real interest in the subject, and their attitudes are clearly very good. Pupils usually take care with the presentation of their work, and teachers regularly add comments to praise or advise in their marking.
96. The subject coordinator is enthusiastic and well informed, and her leadership of the subject is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. She has no opportunity, at present, to observe lessons in other classes, but she has a clear understanding of the standards being achieved and provision being made. She has supported her colleagues well, whenever possible, and she has contributed much to the improved provision through developing the planning for the subject. This, in turn, has led to higher standards.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

**Art and design, design and technology** and **physical education** were not inspected in depth, therefore, no judgement is made on the quality of provision.

97. Standards in **art and design** are broadly in line with those expected in Years 2 and 6. Work is related to topics that pupils are studying in other subjects, wherever possible, and this creates good levels of interest. There is satisfactory coverage of the curriculum, which is being updated at present to ensure that pupils are able to build their skills progressively; at present this is not always the case. Pupils particularly enjoy working on three-dimensional projects. Last term, in connection with work in geography, the whole school contributed to a striking 'Rain Forest' display, which gives a graphic impression of the height of tropical trees, their density, and the creatures, such as monkeys and parrots that live there. An artist recently visited the school and taught groups of pupils how to make hangings from felt. This resulted in lively pictures of 'Thomas the Tank Engine' by the youngest children and local scenes by older pupils.
98. There were few opportunities to evaluate the overall quality of **design and technology** in the school. Pupils in Year 6 take part each year in a design and technology challenge with other local schools which last year was on the subject of food from different countries. Pupils in Year 5 recently made rucksacks, and the accompanying collection of plans and evaluations indicate that teaching is thorough and that the pupils develop appropriate skills. In several classes, topics involving electrical circuits overlap with science, and the pupils' diagrams show good levels of basic understanding.
99. No lessons were observed in **physical education**. However, in discussions with staff and pupils it is clear that the full range of the curriculum is covered. In addition to the normal curriculum, there are several extremely popular clubs and pupils regularly win matches and athletics events and bring back trophies. Pupils thoroughly enjoy lessons including swimming and the majority of pupils are able to swim 25 metres by the time they leave at the end of Year 6.

### Music

Provision in music is **very good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good.
- A highly developed curriculum ensures that music is an integral part of school life.
- Leadership and management have been very good over time.
- Dance, choral and orchestral clubs are outstanding.

#### Commentary

100. Standards in music are above those expected in Years 2 and 6 and teaching is of high quality throughout the school. Last term, the pupils in Year 2 composed pieces of music, evocative of the Rain Forest, using a wide variety of tuned and untuned instruments. Their non-standard method of recording was accurate enough to ensure that, after a very brief rehearsal, every group played with good recall and sensitive use of crescendo and diminuendo. Pupils are accustomed to use technical language appropriately. For example, during a lesson pupils in Year 4 understood 'bass', 'tenor' and 'soprano', as they built layers of sound using the pentatonic scale and three different rhythms. There is high enthusiasm for singing throughout the school and again standards are high. In Year 6, the class divided into two parts and sang two contrasting songs at the same time. Pupils were able to analyse their performances, very precisely, for areas needing improvement and gave suggestions as to how improvements could be achieved. A strength of pupils' singing at all ages is their ability to perform with sensitivity. This was demonstrated during a singing assembly, when the whole school warmed up with singing exercises and then performed a number of songs with great clarity and

unusual attention to expression to suit the meaning of the words. The result was both exciting and moving.

101. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 gave a performance of the dance they had perfected last term which used graphic and often menacing movements as interpretation of a very dramatic and atmospheric piece of music. Their ability to move as close-knit groups, sometimes in unison and sometimes in opposition, was beyond that usually found in pupils of their age and was memorable and highly enjoyable. Two choirs met during the inspection. Both performed very well, producing the clear, tuneful tones that form a backbone to class and school singing. The brass band was practising for a competition the following week and performed to a standard more commonly produced by pupils twice their age. The numerous pupils who belong to these musical groups all display unusually high levels of enthusiasm and willingness to persist in order to attain high standards, while the staff show great dedication and have the ability, in outstanding measure, of being able to inspire and transfer their skills to each group.
102. There have been recent changes in the subject leadership, but it is clear from the standards attained and the level of participation by the pupils that leadership and management have been very good over time. The breadth and depth of the music curriculum offers all pupils the opportunity to engage in all aspects of music and achieve as well as their capabilities allow.

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

Only one lesson was observed in **personal, social and health education** and **citizenship** during the inspection and therefore no judgement is made about the quality of provision.

103. In the lesson seen, which took place in Year 5, pupils discussed their feelings in different situations, and they recognised the need to be positive in their feelings towards others, as well as being positive about themselves. The teaching was good, and the pupils contributed to the discussion thoughtfully. A study of teachers' planning, as well as talking to pupils, shows that the subject has a firm place in different areas of the curriculum. Pupils learn about sex education, drugs awareness, and the importance of healthy eating and living. Other issues, such as the importance of caring for one another, and showing loyalty, how to deal with sadness, and the need to confront and deal with bullying, are also suitably emphasised. The coordinator is contributing well to the implementation of this subject. The excellent quality of relationships throughout the school indicates that very good attention is paid to developing pupils' attitudes and understanding in this area. Leadership is very good.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	2
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)</b>	<b>1</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	1
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	1
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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