

INSPECTION REPORT

GROVE CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Wantage

LEA area: Oxfordshire

Unique reference number: 123149

Headteacher: Miss Julie Carr

Lead inspector: Mrs Carole Skinner

Dates of inspection: 6th-8th December 2004

Inspection number: 266930

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	105
School address:	North Drive Grove Wantage Oxfordshire
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body, Grove CE Primary School
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs R Hicks-Green
Date of previous inspection:	January 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Grove CE Primary School is smaller than average compared to other primary schools. There are 105 pupils on roll, of whom 12 were attending the Reception class part-time during this inspection. The school has similar numbers of boys and girls overall. There has been a significant decline in the school's roll since the previous inspection. Approximately two per cent of the pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds, which is similar to the national average. There are no pupils who are at an early stage of learning the English language. Fifteen pupils are identified as having special educational needs (14 per cent), which is lower than the national average. Most of these pupils have speech, communication and moderate learning difficulties. Three pupils have statements of special educational need (3%), which is higher than the national average. Approximately eight per cent of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is below average. The annual turnover of pupils is higher than that seen in most schools and varies from year to year. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average, but varies from year to year as the number of pupils in each year group is relatively small. Most pupils come from the local area, which includes a mixture of owner occupied and local authority housing. Approximately 13 per cent of pupils come from army families. The school renewed its Investors in People recognition for the second time in 2004. It is involved in several initiatives, including the Family Learning Programme and Achieving Excellence in PE. The school has experienced a period of upheaval and uncertainty since the previous inspection due to changes of leadership, staff turnover and a falling roll. Prior to the appointment of the headteacher in September 2002, the school was identified by the Local Education Authority (LEA) as a cause for concern. It has now been removed from this category and is recognised as a developing school.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23160	Carole Skinner	Lead inspector	Science, information and communication technology (ICT), art, music, foundation stage curriculum.
9446	Helen Griffiths	Lay inspector	
10808	Alan Britton	Team inspector	Mathematics, design and technology (DT), history, physical education (PE), special educational needs (SEN).
18083	Judith Howell	Team inspector	English, English as an additional language, geography, religious education (RE), personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE).

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Grove CE Primary School is an improving school which provides an acceptable standard of education for its pupils and has a number of good features. Pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science is in line with national averages in Year 6 and their achievement is good, but standards are too low in Year 2. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall but varies from unsatisfactory to excellent. The headteacher leads the school very well and is well supported by staff and governors. Although its costs are high, the school gives sound value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher's very good leadership has brought about rapid improvement in the past two years as a result of very effective strategic planning and action to address the school's weaknesses.
- Pupils achieve well in Years 4, 5 and 6 as a result of good teaching.
- In Year 2, weaknesses in teaching result in underachievement, particularly for more able pupils.
- Standards in ICT are rising but remain below average, especially in control technology and modelling.
- Good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development contributes effectively to their good behaviour, positive attitudes and harmonious relationships.
- There are good levels of care for all pupils, especially those with special educational needs (SEN).
- The curriculum is enriched by a very good range of additional activities.
- There are good procedures for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school works well in partnership with parents and has good links with the community.

Improvement has been satisfactory since the school was inspected in 1999. There was a decline in standards following the previous inspection, with the result that the Local Education Authority identified the school as giving cause for concern. Since the appointment of the present headteacher in September 2002, there has been rapid improvement. Standards have begun to rise, although they are still lower than they were in 1999 in Year 2. Achievement in Years 3 to 6 is much improved. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are still below average but rising as a result of improved resources and teaching. There have been improvements in the quality of teaching and learning, especially in Years 4, 5 and 6 although some weaknesses remain in Year 2. Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour have improved significantly. Leadership and management are more effective in analysing and tackling the causes of underachievement and are successfully reducing the large budget deficit that had accrued in 2002.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average

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

Achievement is satisfactory. It is good in Years 3 to 6 and standards in Year 6 are in line with national expectations except in ICT where they are below average. Pupils make the most progress in Years 4, 5 and 6 where teaching and learning are consistently good and expectations are high. Standards in Year 2 are below average in reading and mathematics, and well below average in

writing and science, and pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. This is because the teaching is not of a consistently high enough standard to promote good progress. Standards are also below average in ICT but improving. Achievement is satisfactory in Year 1 and in the Foundation Stage. In Reception, pupils are on course to reach the goals they are expected to reach in all areas of learning. They achieve well in communication, language and literacy. Pupils with SEN achieve well because the school meets their needs effectively.

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils show interest in learning and most apply themselves well to their work. Their behaviour is generally good in lessons and around the school. Relationships and racial harmony are good. Pupils show initiative and enjoy taking responsibility. Attendance in 2003/4 was in line with the national average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. It is good in Years 4, 5 and 6 and unsatisfactory in Year 2. Where teaching is good, teachers have high expectations of the pupils and plan lessons effectively to meet their differing needs. They make lessons interesting, so that pupils enjoy learning and work hard. Teaching for Year 2 pupils is unsatisfactory because it is not of a high enough standard to make up for the slow progress they have made in previous years. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall in Reception, but the teaching of language and literacy skills is good. Assessment procedures are good but the use of assessment information to match work to pupils' needs is not consistently rigorous in all classes. The curriculum is enriched by an interesting range of visitors, visits and other activities which add to pupils' enjoyment and learning. The pupils are well cared for because adults know them well and form trusting relationships with them. There are good systems for recording and checking pupils' progress from term to term. The school works closely with parents to support their children's learning and makes effective use of its links with the community to broaden pupils' experiences.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher's dynamic and energetic leadership has created a fast pace of improvement. She provides an outstanding role model both in teaching and in leading development of the curriculum. Governors make a good contribution to the management of the school, support the headteacher well and meet all statutory requirements. The headteacher is effectively developing leadership skills among the staff. An impressive school improvement plan is founded on expert knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and sets out a very clear agenda for raising standards in all areas of school life. There are very good opportunities for all staff to increase their professional knowledge and expertise.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have very positive views about the school and speak highly of the headteacher. Pupils enjoy school and feel secure and well cared for.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards of attainment in Year 2 in English, mathematics and science.
- Continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school, until it is consistently good, and particularly for the more able pupils in Year 2.
- Continue efforts to raise standards in ICT, especially in control technology and modelling.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Overall, achievement is satisfactory. It is satisfactory in Reception and standards are in line with those expected for children of this age. Achievement is satisfactory in Year 1 but unsatisfactory in Year 2. It is satisfactory in Year 3 and good in Years 4, 5 and 6. Standards are well below average in English, mathematics and science in Year 2. Standards in English, mathematics and science are average in Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in Years 4, 5 and 6 due to good teaching and high expectations.
- In Year 2, standards in English, mathematics and science are too low, especially for more able pupils.
- Standards in ICT are below average in Years 2 and 6 but are improving.
- Pupils with SEN achieve well because they receive good support.

Commentary

1. Achievement in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. This reflects the satisfactory nature of the quality of teaching and learning the children receive. Children are on course to reach the goals they are expected to reach by the end of Reception in all areas of learning. As a result of an increased emphasis on teaching language and literacy skills, children are making good progress and achieve well in this area of learning.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.3 (13.4)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	13.1 (12.3)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	15.4 (15.6)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 14 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. In the end of Year 2 national tests in 2004, standards were well below the national average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics compared with all schools. They were well below the average for similar schools in writing and mathematics based on the number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, and very low in reading. Standards have been consistently low for the past three years, although in 2004 the downward trend was reversed in reading and writing and the results showed some improvement. Even though these pupils registered lower than average scores in their assessments on entry to the school, their overall achievement was unsatisfactory.

3. The findings of the inspection are that standards in Year 2 are well below average in writing and science and below average in reading and mathematics. Standards have declined significantly since the previous inspection. The headteacher identified weaknesses in teaching from Reception to Year 2 as the main cause of the poor standards and has put many initiatives in place to halt the decline. Standards are improving in Reception and Year 1, but those in Year 2 remain low because pupils have not made enough progress over the past two years and are not always given suitably challenging work. Pupils with the potential for higher attainment are not given work at a high enough level to enable them to reach the standards they are capable of. Standards are below average in ICT but are rising as a result of improvements in teaching and resources. Standards are in line with expectations for pupils of this age in RE, DT, history and PE which were the only

subjects where sufficient evidence was gathered to make valid judgements. Where the evidence allows comparisons to be made, these standards are lower than they were when the school was last inspected in reading, writing, mathematics, science and ICT. They are similar in RE, DT, PE and history. The judgements of the inspection are similar to the school's results in the 2004 national tests.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.4 (26.0)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	27.0 (26.2)	27.0 (26.8)
science	28.6 (26.8)	28.6 (28.6)

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

4. In the national tests for Year 6 pupils in 2004, standards were in line with the national average in English, mathematics and science. Compared with schools whose pupils performed similarly in Year 2, standards were above average in English and average in mathematics and science. Standards have fluctuated from year to year but the marked upward trend over the past five years is greater than the national trend.

5. The findings of the inspection are that standards in Year 6 are average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils achieve well as a result of good teaching in Years 4, 5 and 6. This represents similar standards to those found in 1999 in English and mathematics, but lower standards in science. Standards in Year 6 are below average in ICT, as at the time of the last inspection, and in line with expectations in RE, history, DT and PE. Standards in RE have improved and in other subjects they are similar to those seen five years ago. The previous inspection found that pupils' progress was unsatisfactory at Key Stage 2. Improvements in teaching and curricular provision have resulted in good progress for pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 in English, mathematics and science and satisfactory progress in other subjects. Pupils in Year 3 make satisfactory progress.

6. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are sufficient to enable them to make progress in other areas of the curriculum, except in Year 2 where they are not developed to a high enough standard. Pupils' ICT skills support their learning appropriately in most other subjects, albeit not to a very high level, but this aspect is being developed well by teachers.

7. Pupils with SEN achieve well throughout the school. They make good progress towards their targets due to the care and support offered by the adults who work with them. The targets in pupils' individual education plans are appropriate to their needs and are formulated in small steps to ensure that they are achievable. The well planned support provided for these pupils enables them to reach standards in line with their abilities. Higher attaining pupils achieve satisfactorily overall, but their achievement in Year 2 is unsatisfactory because they are not given sufficiently challenging work. These pupils achieve well in Years 4, 5 and 6. The school does not yet identify gifted or talented pupils in a structured way. However, the headteacher makes excellent provision for these pupils in Year 6 when she is teaching extended writing skills.

8. Discussions with pupils showed that they felt they were required to work hard and were doing as well as they could. Parents feel that their children make good progress. The school's results in the national tests over a three year period indicate that boys tend to do better than girls in some areas. However, the findings of the inspection did not reveal any marked pattern of differences.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality is good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The great majority of pupils like school and enjoy their lessons.
- Pupils are enthusiastic and keen to learn. They concentrate well and want to succeed.
- The behaviour of the majority of pupils is good in lessons and around the school.
- Relationships among pupils and between pupils and adults are good.
- Pupils show good levels of respect for one another's feelings and beliefs.
- There is a strong focus on developing pupils' personal and social responsibility.

Commentary

9. Most pupils enjoy school and all it has to offer. Children in the Foundation Stage settle quickly into school routines and form constructive relationships with each other and with adults. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 have good attitudes to learning and want to do well. They are keen to enter into discussion. For example, in a Year 4/5 PSHE lesson about Band Aid, pupils were very keen to ask questions and listened well to others' ideas. Pupils co-operate well and are trustworthy. Most pupils respond well to teachers' expectations of them. However, some boys often find it difficult to maintain attention. When lessons are slow paced and uninteresting their concentration lapses leading to some disruptive behaviour. Pupils with SEN show good attitudes to their work. They usually maintain concentration as a result of well planned activities, teaching and good support.

10. Behaviour is now good throughout the school in the majority of lessons, assemblies and playtimes. This is an improvement on the findings of the last inspection. Pupils are confident, friendly and polite to visitors. Questionnaire responses show that parents feel strongly that behaviour is good. Pupils respect their teachers, who offer them good examples of courtesy and fairness. The school places a strong emphasis on pupils' personal development through its values programme which makes meaningful links between behaviour, learning and Christian values. A key feature of this aspect is the levels of trust and responsibility given to pupils and the positive way they respond, for example, in the work of the school council and the way that every class formulates its own 'Golden Rules' for pupils' behaviour. Most pupils have a good awareness of the behaviour expected of them and the school rules, shared with parents, clearly set out the boundaries between right and wrong. They have a strong sense of justice. The behaviour system, which helps pupils to take responsibility for their actions and consequences of misbehaviour, is effective and valued by pupils. No bullying or harassment was observed during the inspection and pupils knew what they should do if it should occur.

11. Pupils are enterprising and respond well to the many good opportunities for taking responsibility, for example, the School Council and the Friendship stop in the playground. During the inspection, two Year 6 pupils gave a presentation to the team on the work of the Council, confidently using computer projection, and were obviously proud of the work achieved by the council. Relationships between pupils and adults and among the pupils themselves are good and this security gives pupils confidence to ask questions and put forward their ideas. Pupils are keen to take part in school activities and participation in extracurricular activities is good. The positive school ethos provides pupils of all ages with a good understanding of the responsibilities of living in a community. They have participated in raising money for many charitable causes, including a children's hospital in Oxford. Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is well provided for through assemblies and a range of visits and visitors. The school assembly on the topic of 'Caring', taken by one of the school Governors, covered spiritual, moral and social issues and also gave pupils the opportunity to reflect on the true meaning of Christmas. This judgement indicates an improvement from the previous inspection when the provision for spiritual and cultural development was judged as barely satisfactory. The school now places a much greater emphasis on developing pupils' appreciation of cultural diversity within our society.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	5.4
National data	5.1

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.4

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

12. Attendance is broadly in line with the national average. Punctuality is good and unauthorised absence is below average. The very efficient administrative officer monitors attendance weekly and parents are conscientious about informing the school of any absence. There is good support from the Educational Welfare Service. There were two fixed-term exclusions last year.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Asian

No of pupils on roll
100
4
2

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
2	0
0	0
0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory with a number of good features. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall but varies significantly between year groups. Assessment procedures are good but the use made of assessment information varies between classes. Satisfactory curricular provision is complemented by a very good range of additional activities which enrich the pupils' learning. The school's relationships with parents are good and it provides good levels of care and support for pupils. Its ethos is also good.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are good in Years 4, 5 and 6, but they are unsatisfactory in Year 2, especially for higher attaining pupils who underachieve. Assessment is good in the Foundation Stage and Years 4 to 6. It is satisfactory in Years 1, 2 and 3.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching of language and literacy skills in the Foundation Stage is helping to raise standards.
- In Year 2, the quality of teaching is inconsistent, and unsatisfactory overall, as it does not consistently meet the needs of all groups of pupils.
- In Years 4, 5 and 6 teachers have high expectations of the pupils and provide work that is both challenging and interesting for pupils at all levels of attainment.
- Teachers' planning clearly shows what pupils are expected to learn.
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.
- Pupils with SEN are taught well.
- Assessment is used well in the Foundation Stage and in Years 4 to 6 to guide teachers' planning and pupils' learning; it is not used with sufficient rigour in Years 2 and 3.

Commentary

13. The table below shows the judgements made of a sample of lessons during the inspection. In addition, inspectors examined teachers' planning and pupils' work and held discussions with pupils and teachers. Parents have positive views of the teaching in the school and feel it helps their children make good progress. The findings of this inspection are similar to those of the last inspection overall, although there are differences between key stages.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 22 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	1	8	9	3	0	0

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

14. The school identified the need to improve the children's learning in the Reception class in order to raise standards in Years 1 and 2, particularly in communication, language and literacy. It is in this area of learning that the quality of teaching is strongest because of the clear focus on teaching children the links between sounds and letters. This is done in a way that children relate to and enjoy, and the teacher plans activities for different groups of children appropriate to their stage of development. There is also good teaching of reading skills, effective preparation for early writing and well planned role play where the teacher and assistant talk with children to develop their vocabulary. Teaching is satisfactory in other areas of learning. There is a combination of activities that are directed by adults and those initiated by the children, but some of these do not have such carefully planned outcomes for children's learning.

15. Pupils in Year 2 are not achieving as well as they should because the teaching is not of a consistently good standard to promote effective learning. During the inspection, four of the six lessons seen were satisfactory, and two were unsatisfactory. However, the evidence of pupils' books indicates unsatisfactory teaching, overall, in English, mathematics and science due to lack of challenge, particularly for the more able pupils. Some of the work in pupils' books is of a higher standard and shows that, in some lessons, activities are more challenging and promote good progress. Assessments of Year 2 pupils' attainment on entry to the school show that many pupils started with below average skills and knowledge. Even allowing for this, the pupils did not make enough progress in their first two years in school. The headteacher has set challenging targets for both individual pupils and the year group to achieve and is carefully checking their progress. The work in Year 3 pupils' books indicates that they are making satisfactory progress in English, mathematics and science, although standards are below average.

16. The best teaching was seen in Years 4, 5 and 6, where teachers have high expectations and set suitably challenging work for all groups of pupils that promotes good learning. Of the 11 lessons seen in these year groups, one was excellent, one very good, six good, two satisfactory and one unsatisfactory. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection. The unsatisfactory lesson was atypical and resulted from insufficiently firm management of some unacceptable behaviour. Most of the lessons seen were well planned and provided interesting and varied activities that motivated pupils and fully engaged them in learning. In the good lessons, the teacher maintained a brisk pace which moved learning along well. There were good opportunities for pupils to learn through enquiry, investigation, discussion, problem solving and creative thinking. An inspirational extended writing lesson in Year 5/6, taken by the headteacher, illustrated how effectively she demonstrates best practice throughout the school and uses her own considerable expertise in literacy as a tool for raising standards.

17. The quality of teachers' planning is good as a result of a whole school focus on identifying clearly what pupils are expected to learn and how teachers will achieve this. Where teaching is

good, lessons are planned carefully to build on pupils' previous learning and to cater for the differing needs of the various groups within each class. Teachers also plan effective links between subjects to make learning more meaningful and relevant for pupils. For example, pupils' learning in science was enhanced by clear links with their work in history and PSHE. Teachers start lessons by explaining WALT (We Are Learning Today) and WILF (What I'm Looking For), and end them by returning to these so that pupils can assess how well they have done in relation to these objectives. As a result pupils are taking more responsibility for their learning and this is having a good impact on their progress.

18. Another good feature of the teaching throughout the school is the role played by teaching assistants in supporting and enhancing pupils' learning. They have received good training and have been deployed very well to make the most of their talents and individual expertise. For example, one assistant has considerable experience in teaching PE and plays a pivotal role in some lessons. Others are trained to provide specific support for pupils with SEN or to run small group activities in literacy. One provides good support in ICT. All have key roles within the school and work well in partnership with teachers to support pupils' learning and assess their progress during the course of each day. The caretaker has recently undergone training in willow sculpture and was observed working with a group of Year 5 pupils to teach them the technique. He also accompanies pupils on school residential trips.

19. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with SEN is good. All pupils are included well in all aspects of class lessons and extracurricular activities. They are given suitably differentiated work and all teachers consider pupils' individual education plans when planning their lessons. The school uses the national Phonological Awareness Training (PAT) programme and precision teaching to further develop pupils' achievement. Teaching assistants who work with pupils with SEN are experienced and well qualified and give invaluable support.

20. The headteacher has placed significant emphasis on improving assessment procedures and the use of assessment information to guide teachers' planning. As a result, good procedures are in place in English, mathematics, science and ICT. In these subjects, each pupil has a target to achieve by the end of the year. Regular assessments each term help teachers to keep track of how well pupils are progressing towards their targets. These may be adjusted in the light of their progress each term. A consistent approach to marking pupils' work is helping teachers to focus more closely on selected aspects of pupils' learning. Pupils are becoming increasingly involved in assessing their own learning, although this aspect is not yet fully developed throughout the school. However, there are variations in how effectively teachers' use assessment information to provide work that matches pupils' capabilities. Assessment in the Foundation Stage is good. Both the teacher and assistant make ongoing assessments of children's progress during the course of the day which are taken into account when planning their future learning. In this mixed age class, the teacher's good use of assessment enables her to provide appropriately challenging work for all children, ranging from the youngest Reception child to a very able Year 1 reader, who joins older pupils for some reading lessons. In Years 2 and 3, assessment information is not used rigorously enough to ensure that all pupils are sufficiently challenged.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. It is enhanced by very good opportunities for enrichment. Accommodation is good and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is enriched successfully through numerous visits and visitors, and extracurricular activities.
- Personal, social and health education is given high status in the school.
- The curriculum is fully inclusive of pupils of differing ages and backgrounds.
- Curricular provision for pupils with SEN supports good achievement because targets are well matched to pupils' educational needs.

- The development of a more cross-curricular approach to planning is new and yet to become established in all classes.

Commentary

21. The curriculum meets statutory requirements, including those for RE, and provides pupils with an adequate range of experiences and opportunities. There have been improvements to the breadth and balance of the curriculum in Years 1 to 6 since the previous inspection, particularly in the provision for RE and ICT, yet the curriculum remains satisfactory. This is because much of the curricular planning is relatively new and has yet to become firmly embedded into all teachers' practice. However, most teachers seek to plan productive links between subjects to reinforce pupils' learning. This is seen to good effect in Year 6 when pupils study World War 2.

22. A wide range of suitably planned activities provides children in the Foundation Stage with a variety of interesting experiences which promote satisfactory learning. The accommodation and resources are satisfactory for the demands of the curriculum and the needs of the children. However, the outdoor area for the Reception children is in need of improvement. The school has identified this as an area for development.

23. High priority is given to the pupils' personal, social and health education, which is good. This is an integral part of the school's ethos and inclusion strategy, where the staff work hard to provide a calm environment that encourages pupils to mature and develop personally.

24. Educational visits are a particular strength of the school's curriculum. These visits have included the Mary Rose in Portsmouth, the Royal Albert Hall and the Rutherford laboratories. The trips are consciously designed to enrich the pupils' learning across the curriculum. Residential trips to Osmington Bay and to the Christian Adventure Centre in the Forest of Dean give pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 opportunities to develop their independence, inter-personal skills and maturity.

25. The school benefits from the close links with the local secondary school and through the Wantage Area Schools' Partnership, which provide pupils with a wide range of opportunities, particularly in sport. It takes part in competitive sports with other schools, for example, in tag rugby, netball, cross-country and athletics with considerable success. A good range of extra-curricular activities, including sport, music, Spanish and chess, is very well supported. Focus weeks, such as those devoted to humanities, music and book weeks, raise the profile of subjects and are popular events which support pupils' learning well.

26. The school is well staffed with teachers and a good number of teaching assistants who are well trained and give valued support to both the teachers and pupils. An appropriate range of resources supports learning in all subjects and the Reception class. The accommodation is good and includes an art workshop, computer suite and an indoor heated swimming pool with changing rooms. The library accommodation is good and used well by pupils to support their day-to-day learning. Outside, the spacious grounds provide a pleasing environment for work and play.

27. As a result of clear leadership, the school has a positive approach to inclusion. This is apparent in the good provision for pupils with special educational needs and those from a range of different backgrounds. All pupils are enabled to take part in all activities. Curricular provision for pupils with SEN supports good achievement. Targets are well matched to pupils' educational needs and include literacy, numeracy and behaviour management in their individual education plans. Most are given work that is pitched at appropriate levels for their academic development and pupils are fully included in the school's curriculum, both in and out of school. However, pupils of high ability are not always given appropriately challenging work in Year 2.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is good. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on the monitoring of pupils' achievement is good. The involvement of pupils through seeking and acting on their views is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The induction arrangements for pupils in Reception are good.
- There are effective procedures for health and safety and first aid.
- All adults know pupils well and provide good levels of care.
- There are effective procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress.
- The involvement of pupils in the school's work is good.

Commentary

28. There are good arrangements for children when they start school. These include preliminary visits to the school by both children and parents. Parents are given helpful information about the school, and the Foundation Stage curriculum and are welcomed into school to ease their children's transition from pre-school settings. As a result children settle quickly and happily and this helps them to learn more effectively.

29. The school has good health and safety procedures. Procedures for child protection are also good. The headteacher is the designated person for child protection and all staff are aware of child protection issues and due to be formally trained early in the next term. There are close links with the school nurse and with services social and welfare officers. Arrangements for the administration of first aid and for monitoring pupils' medical conditions are good and there is a rolling programme to ensure that staff are trained in first aid. Security is good. Supervision at lunch and play times is good. Risk assessments are carried out regularly and the conscientious site manager plays an important role in ensuring safety. For example, when, during the inspection, he worked with a group of Year 5 pupils on creating willow shelters, health and safety procedures were exemplary.

30. There is a strong bond of trust between pupils and all adults who work in the school. Nearly all pupils who responded to the inspection questionnaire felt there was at least one adult to whom they could turn for advice. Adults know the pupils well and offer them good support. Personal development is monitored informally through class notes and reports. Parents felt strongly that their children were well supported and cared for.

31. Pupils have individual targets, which are reviewed each term, so that they know what their strengths are and how they can improve. These in turn feed into the Next Steps in Learning and are monitored carefully. The headteacher has introduced a simple but highly effective system of recording pupils' progress in English, mathematics, science and ICT which clearly shows if pupils are not on course to reach their targets or if they are likely to exceed them. Teachers identify specific pupils who may require additional support to help them reach their targets and monitor their progress carefully each term.

32. Pupils with SEN receive good levels of support and guidance. The school has good links with outside agencies, including the Educational Psychologist, who visit the school as required. Pupils' progress is carefully monitored by the special educational needs co-ordinator as they move through the year groups. Children who are likely to need extra help are identified in the Reception class or through liaison with nursery and play groups before entry to the school. The school is working towards a Quality Inclusion Mark and has set up links with a local special school and a centre for adults with special needs.

33. Pupils' views are sought consistently through questionnaires, the School Council, circle time, assemblies and PHSE. As a result of Council meetings, pupils now run the tuck shop and have

contributed to the development of the school playground as well as to the "Playground Friends " scheme and the Friendship Stop. Most pupils feel confident that their views are heard and acted upon.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents, the community and other schools are good.

Strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have positive views of the school.
- The school provides parents with good information and seeks to involve them in its work.
- There are good links with other local schools.
- The school has good links with the local community.
- There are good links with parents of children with SEN
- The School Association is very supportive.

Commentary

34. At the meeting and in response to questionnaires over the last two years, parents and carers expressed positive views about nearly all aspects of the school. They were especially pleased with the way the school had improved over the last two years and in particular with the way the new headteacher encourages a family ethos in the school. They also appreciated the way she had followed up concerns expressed in questionnaires.

35. Information provided for parents is good. The prospectus and Governors' annual report to parents are well presented and comply with requirements. Information to help parents support their children at home is good, and includes information on the curriculum, reading diaries and homework diaries for older pupils. Pupils' end-of-year reports are lively and well-written: they give an honest and diagnostic picture and offer helpful targets. Regular newsletters are friendly in tone and keep parents well informed of events. Parents really appreciate the workshops on mathematics and writing and the open invitations to join ICT lessons. Parents have recently been invited to become representatives for each class. Attendance by parents at consultation meetings is good. Parents are involved early in any behavioural issues.

36. Parents of pupils with SEN have good links with the school. Nearly all parents are involved in planning and reviewing their child's targets and education plans. There is good contact with staff responsible for SEN in both the local secondary schools and cluster of primary schools.

37. Links with the local playgroup are good and being developed further. There are good links with the local secondary school and parents and pupils praised the extensive links through joint curriculum projects, sports and ICT, which help the transition to the next stage of education.

38. The School Association runs a good range of social and fund-raising activities and raises good sums to buy equipment to support children's learning. A good number of parents help in school on a regular basis.

39. The school has good links with the local community: for example, a representative of the church takes assemblies regularly, pupils visit an old people's home and members of a local day centre for adults with learning difficulties help in the school garden. The school is involved in the Comenius project in association with schools in other parts of the European Union. Several local groups use the school for activities and there are useful links with local industries.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. Other leadership roles are fulfilled satisfactorily. The management of the school is good. The school's governance is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Dynamic leadership by the headteacher has brought about significant improvement in a short time.
- Improvement is being driven successfully by a very good school improvement plan.
- The governors know the school well and play an important part in determining its future direction.
- The headteacher is effectively developing leadership capabilities in all staff.
- Rigorous self-evaluation is a key feature of the school's management.
- Effective financial management ensures that all available funds are used to improve the quality of education provided for the pupils.

Commentary

40. When the headteacher was appointed in September 2002, the LEA had identified the school as giving cause for concern and had employed a temporary headteacher for a year to initiate a recovery plan. At that time, there was a falling roll, high turnover of staff and a large budget deficit. The headteacher acted swiftly to address the many weaknesses that had been identified and to build upon the existing recovery plan for the school. Her dedication to raising standards in all areas of school life and her dynamic approach to leading staff in improving teaching, behaviour and the curriculum created a momentum that resulted in rapid improvement. After a year, the LEA acknowledged the great improvements that had been made in raising standards, and improving teaching and learning and the pupils' behaviour, and redesignated the school as a 'developing school'. The headteacher remains committed to raising standards further and her own teaching provides an excellent role model for all staff. She works tirelessly to support teachers in improving their skills and to monitor pupils' progress in each class to ensure that they are on course to reach the targets set for them. Parents speak very highly of the headteacher and the improvements she has brought about since her appointment.

41. The school improvement plan sets out very clearly the school's vision and what needs to be done to reach the targets that have been set. It is an impressive document which focuses on the quality of pupils' learning and how this is to be improved. The plan covers three years and shows how each year's activities will build on the previous year's as staff and governors work towards achieving its challenging targets and objectives. Underpinning every objective are high expectations in every area of school life from academic standards to teaching to pupils' spiritual development. All staff and governors were involved in putting the plan together and all participate in reviewing progress towards meeting its objectives.

42. Governors have become increasingly involved in the strategic management of the school over the past two years and have developed a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. They make an effective contribution to determining its future direction and are fully involved in analysing data and evaluating the success of initiatives that have been undertaken in order to improve teaching, learning and the curriculum. Governors have a wide range of expertise which they use effectively to benefit the school. Each governor takes a lead role in overseeing priorities in the improvement plan and all provide much appreciated support for the headteacher and staff. Governors on the finance committee feel competent to challenge decisions and make judgements about value for money.

43. The headteacher has concentrated on allocating responsibilities to staff to make the most of their expertise. She provides a very good example of how to lead and develop a subject through her own development of ICT throughout the school. Through the Primary Strategy Leadership

Programme, she is working alongside three teachers to nurture their own leadership skills and involve them more productively in strategic management. The leadership and management of SEN are also good and have a positive effect on pupils' achievement. Delegation of responsibilities to part-time teachers in art and science, and to a teaching assistant who has considerable expertise and experience in teaching PE, is helping to improve provision in those subjects. A governor who is also a youth worker contributes significantly to pupils' spiritual, moral and social development through weekly collective worship. The headteacher, herself a former advisory teacher in English, provides strong support to the literacy co-ordinator in tackling some of the major issues that are facing the school. She has also made very effective use of external advisers and consultants to support and train teachers and assistants.

44. There is a rigorous and systematic programme of self-evaluation which covers all aspects of the school and ensures that any weaknesses are quickly detected and acted upon. All staff and governors are actively involved in this process, as are pupils and parents through surveys and consultations. The headteacher leads staff and governors decisively in analysing performance data and identifying what needs to be done to bring about improvement. Subject co-ordinators carry out reviews of pupils' work and colleagues' planning, and use these to identify areas for development. For example, the science co-ordinator's evaluations have led to improvements in the pupils' planning of investigations and their understanding of how to carry out a fair test. Some co-ordinators are not yet fully effective in this role, but all are given appropriate training and support to enable them to increase their effectiveness in raising standards.

45. The headteacher and governors have worked closely with the LEA to reduce and manage the school's large budget deficit over the past two years. Careful financial management and administration, together with rigorous monitoring of the situation from month to month, are ensuring that the school reduces its deficit and meets the requirements set by the LEA in order to achieve a balanced budget within the timescale agreed. All expenditure decisions are made within the context of the school improvement plan, which includes costings for each action to be taken. The headteacher and governors are proactive in seeking additional funding to support future developments and have recently been successful in acquiring a grant to fund a new Partnership Foundation Stage Unit as a joint venture with the on-site pre-school facility. Having recognised the need to improve the provision for Reception children, this is seen as fundamental to raising standards throughout the school. Good attention is given to consideration of value for money when making spending decisions and when reviewing the impact of these on pupils' learning.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	364090	Balance from previous year	(46336)
Total expenditure	355979	Balance carried forward to the next	(38225)
Expenditure per pupil	3095		

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the foundation stage is **satisfactory**.

46. At the time of the inspection there were 12 Reception children in the Foundation Stage/Year 1 class, all of whom were attending in the mornings. Children start in Reception at the beginning of their fifth year and attend part-time until the term after their fifth birthday. This means that some children have only one term of full-time education before they enter Year 1. When children enter Reception, most are attaining standards that are in line with national expectations for age, although there are some variations between different year groups.

47. Children currently in Reception are on course to reach the officially designated Early Learning Goals for five year olds by the end of the academic year in all areas of learning. Most children make sound progress and their achievement is satisfactory. Samples of planning showed appropriate curricular provision for the Reception class within a mixed age class. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, overall. It is good in communication, language and literacy. The best feature of the teaching is the way tasks and activities are matched to children's needs through careful, ongoing assessment. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are satisfactory but there is a clear vision for its future development through the school's commitment to the creation of a Partnership Foundation Stage Unit.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships between adults and children are good, but sometimes the management of children's behaviour is not firm enough.
- Good teaching of language and literacy skills is helping to raise standards.
- Good assessment procedures inform the teacher's planning.
- The outdoor area is not fully exploited as an extension to the classroom.

Commentary

48. Children's achievement in their **personal, social and emotional development** is satisfactory. They participate with enthusiasm in most activities and show confidence and interest in learning. Most behave well and show the independence they are encouraged to develop. However, a small number of boys sometimes display inappropriately rude or inconsiderate behaviour, both towards other children and adults, and can be disruptive. The teacher's strategies for dealing with this behaviour are occasionally not firm enough, but most children respond well when she reinforces the boundaries that have been set.

49. Children make good progress and achieve well in **communication, language and literacy**. This is because of good teaching of skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing. Children show interest in books and listen with rapt attention to the story of *The Gingerbread Man*, joining in with the repeated refrains. Pupils know that print is read from left to right and know the sounds made by different letters. Higher attaining children work with Year 1 pupils to make simple words from given sounds. Teaching is good because the teacher knows different children's abilities and plans activities to challenge them at an appropriate level. Careful checking of children's attainment in the past two years showed that linking sounds and letters was a weakness which has inhibited children's progress and had a negative effect on their attainment by Year 2. The Reception/Year 1 teacher is addressing this very effectively. Structured teaching of reading, writing and phonics is balanced appropriately with opportunities for children to learn through play, as when they 'write' Christmas cards and gift tags. The teacher and assistant frequently engage the children in conversation while they are playing and this helps to develop their range of vocabulary and ability to express their ideas.

50. In **mathematical development** children make satisfactory progress and show interest in learning. They count jumps and hops up to 10 when working with the teacher and 'buy' goods in the Christmas shop. Activities are not always well matched to children's needs and capabilities; for example, some children were expected to sort coins into groups independently but needed an adult to guide them in order to move them forward in their learning. The teacher does not fully exploit the outside area to devise free choice activities that promote mathematical learning.

51. Achievement in **knowledge and understanding of the world is satisfactory**. Through role play children learn about how adults go shopping, using credit cards and cash and they learn to use a toy scanner and electronic till. They also learn to use the computer to design a Christmas picture. Children learn about forces by pulling and pushing a cardboard sledge and toy vehicles on different surfaces.

52. Children's achievement in **physical development** is satisfactory. Larger movements such as running, cycling, jumping and balancing are developed appropriately by the outdoor activities provided and in PE lessons. However, the outdoor area is not always used to its best effect. Sometimes, too many activities are going on in a confined space which limits the scope for children riding wheeled toys and raises safety concerns. A variety of indoor pursuits, including puzzles and construction toys, support the development of children's manual dexterity.

53. In **creative development**, achievement is satisfactory. Children enjoy the range of activities provided for them, including drawing and painting, role-play, making things from play dough, singing familiar songs and listening to music. Children are given appropriate opportunities to choose activities, but the teacher and assistant also give sound guidance to aid children's progress in developing skills.

54. Each day, time is allocated to 'outdoor play', but this is not always planned effectively enough to promote learning. This is partly because all of the Reception children are outside at the same time and the area is not demarcated into separate activities. In one session, children riding tricycles knocked over equipment being used by other children. The activities are not planned carefully enough to ensure that they are linked to an overriding theme or have a clear purpose for learning. The outside area is used as a separate experience, mostly for physical development, rather than as an extension of the classroom. However, the creation of the outdoor area is an improvement since the last inspection.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 2 are well below average.
- Pupils' achievement and progress in Year 2 are unsatisfactory.
- Teaching and learning in Years 4 to 6 are good and promote good achievement for all pupils.
- The teaching of English by the head teacher is exceptional, and resulted in extremely good achievement in the lesson seen in Year 6.
- The marking of pupils' work is good.

Commentary

55. Results of the teacher assessment data submitted in 2004 show that pupils in Year 2 attain well below average standards in reading and writing. These standards were reflected in the pupils' written work seen during the inspection. However, standards in reading are below average, which shows a slight improvement. This is because the school has made a considerable effort to improve pupils' phonic skills by providing a more structured and rigorous approach to help pupils learn letter

sounds. However, pupils' achievement in Year 2 is unsatisfactory overall. This is because the teaching is unsatisfactory and in particular does not meet the needs of the higher attaining pupils. Pupils with SEN, however, make satisfactory progress with the good support and individual help from the teaching assistants. Although a number of pupils in Year 2 have speaking skills that are average, their listening skills are not developed as well as they should be. This has a negative impact on their learning. Higher attaining pupils have achieved some satisfactory pieces of writing, including instructional writing, but it is not extended to enable them to reach higher standards. Standards are below those reported by the previous inspection.

56. Standards in Year 6 are average overall. This reflects the standards achieved by pupils in the 2004 national tests and in the school's previous report. The achievement of pupils currently in Year 6, including those with SEN is good overall, based on their prior attainment. Pupils' reading skills progress well, with most pupils attaining the expected standards for their age. They show understanding of the main ideas, talk readily about what they read and express views about the books that they have enjoyed. Although a few higher attaining pupils in Year 6 are developing the ability to discover deeper meaning in the text, the majority cannot do so without supportive questioning. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are also average, supported by the opportunities to discuss their views and describe their work. However, there is a significant minority of boys who have difficulty listening for a sustained period of time and as a result their behaviour and work decline. The school is working on how best to support the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills in lessons.

57. Standards in writing are average in Year 6. The analysis of pupils' work showed that they write in a wide range of forms, including biographies, stories and non-chronological reports. In the best writing, examples of their poetry work were particularly mature. Very good examples were seen in their poems titled '*In Flanders Fields*', in which the language used skilfully set the tone and captured the feelings of the writers. In their extended writing however, there are variations in the accuracy with which they use punctuation and paragraphing. There were many examples of pupils using ICT to support their work in English.

58. The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory in Year 2 and good overall in Years 4 to 6. It is satisfactory in Year 3, as pupils' work indicates satisfactory progress overall, but was unsatisfactory in the lesson observed. In the most effective lessons, the teachers have clear views about what pupils are to learn, balanced with their learning needs. The head teacher is a highly skilled teacher who has a very secure knowledge of the subject and high expectations of what pupils can achieve. As a result, she brought an extremely good response from Year 6 pupils in a lesson based on the presentation of their Christmas poems. She clearly enjoys poetry and has an excellent understanding of what pupils need to do to improve their performance when reading aloud. The high level of challenge was evident and the crisp pace of delivery ensured that in a short space of time the pupils were confident and eager to perform their poems to the class. Although this was new to the pupils, she enabled them to learn very well and achieve standards above those normally seen. By the end of the lesson, there was a clear feeling of pride in learning and expression conveyed in their reading. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, the undemanding pace means that pupils do not achieve as much work as they could have done in the activities. Pupils are provided with the same activity and the potentially higher attaining pupils, are not given that extra level of challenge to help them achieve their best. However, throughout the school, good provision for pupils with SEN and those of lower attainment takes the form of good support from teaching assistants, as well as some additional lessons at particular times of the year. The marking of pupils' work is good and explains clearly what they need to do to improve.

59. There are good assessment procedures for English, so teachers have a clear view of what pupils know and can do. The introduction of 'next steps in learning' for reading and writing inserted in each pupil's workbook is a positive strategy that is used well to support pupils' progress. The school has successfully developed tracking systems that enable the headteacher and co-ordinator to monitor individual pupils' attainment and progress. The information is used well to identify pupils who need an additional boost to enable them to succeed.

60. Leadership and management in the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has analysed the results of national tests in order to identify weaknesses, and pupils' standards are monitored to

evaluate trends. Some successful strategies have been used this year that are having a positive impact on raising standards, but inconsistencies in teaching are slowing pupils' progress and their achievement in Year 2.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

61. The use of language and literacy across the curriculum is satisfactory. Speaking and listening have been a strong focus for improvement and the school has identified several aspects in the teaching that need to be improved if standards are to rise. Opportunities for writing at length in subjects such as history and RE are good but are not sufficiently encouraged in geography or science. Good use is made of pupils' reading skills to carry out research in history, using books and the Internet.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good and very good teaching and learning were observed in Years 4, 5 and 6.
- Pupils with SEN are supported well in their learning.
- Standards in Year 2 are below the national average and pupils' achievement in this age group is unsatisfactory.
- Mathematics is used well in other curriculum areas and teachers make effective use of ICT to enhance pupils' learning.
- The marking of pupils' work is erratic and does not always encourage pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of mathematics.

Commentary

62. Standards of attainment are in line with the national average in Year 6. This is similar to the 2004 national test results and in line with the judgement of the last inspection. Pupils' achievement, which takes into account their capabilities and previous levels of attainment is good, overall. There are no significant gender differences in standards or achievement, although boys perform slightly better.

63. In Year 2, standards are below average. This judgement is in line with the 2004 national test results. It represents a decline in standards since the previous inspection, when they were found to be in line with the national average. The main reason for the low standards is that few pupils reach higher than average standards in any aspect of mathematics. There are no significant differences between the performance of boys and girls in this year group. Pupils' achievement in lessons and over time is unsatisfactory, overall. However, indications are that standards and achievement in Year 1 are average.

64. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, overall, with examples of good and very good teaching in Years 4, 5 and 6. In the lessons observed, one was very good, one was good and one was satisfactory. In the scrutiny and analysis of pupils' past work all teaching and learning were judged to be satisfactory except for Year 2 where they were unsatisfactory. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed during this inspection. Teachers plan their lessons well but some lessons lack high expectations and challenge for pupils' performance especially in the Year 2/3 class. Equality of opportunity is usually promoted well and pupils with SEN are well supported by differentiated work and experienced teaching assistants.

65. All teachers use resources appropriately to give pupils 'hands on' experience of mathematics. In the Year 2/3 lesson, pupils were encouraged to use their knowledge and understanding of number to solve problems or puzzles. The teacher used an interactive whiteboard to demonstrate a 'duck ponds' problem. 'There are 14 ducks waiting to enter four ponds how can

we use them all but only have five or two ducks in each pond?' Pupils were encouraged to put forward their ideas and explain their reasons. Pupils' work was matched appropriately to their differing levels of attainment and all groups, including pupils with SEN, were well supported by an adult. Year 5 and 6 pupils' activities were concerned with shape and space and the lesson was taught in the computer suite giving pupils the opportunity to use their mathematical skills on the computer. Pupils worked with a partner to encourage their speaking and listening skills and their use of appropriate mathematical vocabulary. The pupils' task was to use their knowledge of quadrilaterals to formulate a worksheet using words and pictures for a variety of age groups in the school.

66. Pupils' work books show that teachers plan appropriate work for pupils of different abilities. Most teachers have established good classroom routines. As a result, pupils behave well, remain on task and are generally keen and interested in mathematics. Pupils' progress is better in those lessons which are fast paced and challenging; in those that are not pupils become inattentive and their learning is subsequently slowed. Homework is set regularly and is appropriately matched to pupils' work in classrooms. Comprehensive assessments by class teachers are used well to plan lessons and for responding to the needs of individual pupils.

67. Leadership and management in the subject are satisfactory. The subject co-ordinator has analysed and assessed national and internal test results but has not used these assessments to improve pupils' standards, especially in Year 2. The setting of individual targets for pupils and checking their progress towards them has been introduced for all year groups and is having a positive effect on most pupils' achievement.

68. Standards at the time of the last inspection were reported as average across the school. Standards in Year 6 have been maintained but standards in Year 2 have dropped. The quality of teaching has been improved as it was judged to be unsatisfactory overall in the last inspection and is now satisfactory with better teaching in Key Stage 2.

Mathematics across the curriculum

69. Several examples of the use of mathematics in other curriculum areas were evident during the inspection. These included pupils' work in ICT, science and history. Mathematics also plays a large part in the DT curriculum. All teachers are eager to promote speaking and listening in the subject and they encourage the use of appropriate mathematical vocabulary. A wide variety of data handling work has been produced using ICT and teachers use whiteboards effectively in their mathematics lessons.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in Years 4, 5 and 6 is good.
- Standards are too low in Year 2.
- There is good teaching of investigative science in Years 4, 5 and 6.
- Good leadership is helping to improve provision throughout the school.

Commentary

70. Standards in Year 6 are in line with the national average, which is lower than at the time of the previous inspection. However, they have varied significantly from year to year, ranging from above average to well below average. This has resulted from inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning. Pupils understand the feeding relationships between plants and animals in a habitat, they know that some metals conduct heat and electricity, while others do not and have a sound understanding of gravity and friction. Their learning is good because it grows from practical

investigation and they have a good understanding of how to plan and carry out a fair test. In Year 2, standards are well below average: a significant minority of pupils are not on course to reach average standards (Level 2) by the end of the year and no pupils are working at Level 3. This lack of challenge for pupils at all levels is the main reason for the low standards. Pupils in Year 2 can identify and name external parts of the body but have not learned that animals are found in various habitats or how they are adapted to living in those conditions. Their knowledge of materials and their properties is limited and their understanding of physical forces is mostly to do with pushing and pulling objects. Standards in Year 1 are in line with those expected for those of pupils of this age.

71. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, overall, but good in Years 4, 5 and 6. Achievement is good in Years 4, 5 and 6 because all the pupils are taught by the co-ordinator who has very good subject knowledge and makes learning interesting for the pupils. There is a strong focus on investigative science in these lessons, which are also planned very well to link with other areas of the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 5/6 learned about water resistance by testing wooden boats of different shapes as part of 'Mission Dunkirk', a very effective link with their studies of World War 2. A strong feature of these lessons is the opportunity for pupils to discuss the factors that might affect the outcomes of their investigation. In the Year 4/5 lesson, pupils made and tested parachutes which were intended to drop a shoebox containing gifts for a child in Bolivia. They considered the size of the canopy, the weight of the shoebox and the material used and carried out tests to discover how these factors affected the speed of descent. As a result, their understanding of air resistance as a form of friction was greatly enhanced. The teacher's skilful questioning promotes scientific thinking and use of correct scientific vocabulary.

72. No teaching could be observed in Years 1 and 2, but the evidence of pupils' work and teachers' assessments indicates that the quality of learning for pupils in Year 2 is unsatisfactory. It is satisfactory in Year 1. Expectations of Year 2 pupils are not high enough and the work they do is pitched at too low a level. For example, pupils named external parts of the body and found objects to push and pull in the classroom, which are activities more suitable for Year 1 pupils. Work is not planned adequately to meet the needs of lower, average and higher attaining pupils, and all do the same activities. However, recent changes in the way these pupils are taught show that improvements are being made. Previously, there was not enough emphasis on learning through investigation; pupils have recently carried out an experiment to find out if taller people jump further than shorter ones. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to understand how to make a test fair. The co-ordinator is working with the teachers in Years 1 and 2 to help raise standards and improve the teaching of investigative skills. Pupils in Year 3 are making satisfactory progress.

73. The co-ordinator is a part-time teacher who is having a good impact on the development of the subject throughout the school, and particularly in Years 4, 5 and 6 where her influence is greatest. She has carried out a detailed analysis of pupils' work in all classes and produced a comprehensive report to inform staff and governors of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning in all year groups. This has led to a clear plan of action for raising standards which is driving development in science throughout the school. The school has identified the right priorities for improvement, and these include making sure that planned activities match pupils' widely differing levels of attainment in each class, greater use of ICT in science and an increased emphasis on investigative work in Years 1, 2 and 3.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although standards are below average in Years 2 and 6, they are steadily improving throughout the school.
- Weaker aspects are control technology, using databases and modelling.
- Good improvements in resources, teachers' knowledge and expertise and curricular planning are having a positive effect on pupils' learning.

- Very good leadership provides a firm direction for the subject's development throughout the school.

Commentary

74. It was only possible to observe one ICT lesson during the inspection. Judgements are also based on a scrutiny of samples of pupils' work and teachers' planning, discussion with pupils and the co-ordinator and evidence of an external review. Indications are that standards are rising as a result of improvements in the school's resources, training for all staff, an improved scheme of work and higher expectations of what pupils can achieve.

75. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are below national expectations, though approaching average in some aspects of the subject, namely word processing and communicating ideas through words and pictures. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection in Year 6 but indicates that standards have fallen in Year 2. The weaker aspects of the subject are control technology and modelling, although pupils in Year 2 reach average standards in controlling a programmable toy robot. In Years 2 and 6, standards are below average because of weaknesses in teaching and curricular provision in the past. For example, pupils in Year 2 have not had enough opportunity to learn to use CD-ROMs or the Internet, while those in Year 6 have not had sufficient experience of using spreadsheets, databases or control technology programs.

76. However, work done in the current term shows that pupils are now being given an appropriate range of experiences in all aspects of the ICT curriculum, which is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection. Their achievement is now satisfactory as they are building soundly on previous learning. Indications from pupils' work, teachers' planning and assessment records are that the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and that pupils are now making steady progress in developing their ICT skills and capability. Year 2 pupils have produced eye-catching designs based on the work of Piet Mondrian and have used ICT in their mathematics work to sort two-dimensional shapes by their features and identify lines of reflective symmetry. In Year 6, pupils have researched the lives of children during World War 2 using Internet websites and presented the information using a combination of text and pictures. They have also created Power Point presentations about how people of different faiths talk to God.

77. Pupils' learning is improving because the subject is being taught in a more interesting and systematic way. Curricular planning is much better than it was at the time of the last inspection, and pupils are also benefiting from the refurbished computer suite, which is well used and provides opportunities for all pupils to get plenty of 'hands on' experience. Interactive whiteboards in each classroom are also used as an effective tool to enhance pupils' learning. There are now sufficient resources to teach all aspects of the ICT curriculum and there has been an extensive programme of staff training, which is continuing to raise the levels of teachers' expertise.

78. The headteacher provides very good leadership in the subject and has taken advantage of external advice and support to support her in improving the school's provision. She has set challenging targets for both the whole school and individual pupils to attain, has put in place a three year development plan for the subject and carefully monitors pupils' progress. Good assessment procedures and systems for tracking individual pupils' progress help to ensure that learning progresses at a suitable pace. A lunchtime computer club provides further opportunities for pupils to increase their skills.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

79. This is a focus for improvement throughout the school and is developing well. Some good examples were seen of pupils using ICT to enhance their learning in a range of subjects. For example, pupils in Year 1 made effective links with both art and mathematics when they designed Christmas wrapping paper with a repeating design. The Year 4/5 teacher uses a digital movie camera to record pupils' achievements in PE so that they can watch the recording and decide how to improve their performance in the next lesson. The school has identified the need to improve the use of ICT in RE, DT and music and is already taking action to address this.

HUMANITIES

80. During the inspection, no **geography** lessons were timetabled. However, from pupils' previous work and teachers' planning it was clear that the pupils study a suitably broad curriculum. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 have an adequate knowledge of their own area through work carried out in Grove and Wantage. They develop a wider sense of the world through the study of foreign places, such as the Caribbean. Good use is also made of 'Spencer Bear' to further pupils' knowledge of places beyond their own locality. A scrutiny of pupils' work however, indicates that links with other subjects are not well established and there are missed opportunities to use literacy and numeracy skills. There are however, good links with cultural education. There was not enough previous work available in order to make a reliable judgement about standards in Year 6. Although leadership of the subject is satisfactory, the co-ordinator has not promoted recent development and innovation in the subject.

81. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection but an analysis of pupils' work and classroom displays indicates that standards in **history** are in line with those expected throughout the school and pupils are achieving satisfactorily. In the Year 2/3 history lesson observed, pupils were learning about time lines and most could identify events that happened a long time ago. They understood the term 'eye witness' and a teaching assistant was used well to act as an eye witness of the Great Fire of London, describing to pupils the scene at the time. Pupils with SEN were supported well in both the discussion and recording tasks. The history lesson was well linked to literacy when diaries were discussed and pupils' speaking and listening skills were encouraged. Year 5/6 pupils are studying World War Two and how it affected children's lives. In discussions, they showed a sound ability to see links between children's experiences during World War Two and today. The history topic is well linked to other curriculum subjects including DT when pupils constructed air raid shelters and cooked from a 1940 recipe. Pupils' study of the period has also been enhanced by a visit to the Imperial war Museum and a comprehensive classroom display of artefacts and books. Pupils have made good use of ICT for independent research.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity is well established.
- Learning makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The quality of teaching is variable.
- At times, older pupils are immature in their response to the opportunities they are provided with to discuss RE issues.

Commentary

82. Pupils' attainment in the subject is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus in Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils' achievement, including those with SEN, is satisfactory. Improvement since the last inspection is good, as the subject was identified as a key issue for action. Pupils now have a better understanding of some major world faiths as a result of improved teaching and curricular planning.

83. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Discussions with pupils and the analysis of pupils' work showed that pupils have a sound understanding of the basic concepts of world religions and faiths such as Christianity, Judaism and Islam. They are aware of the universal values and messages of festivals like the Jewish celebration of Rosh Hashanah and the Muslim festival of Ramadan and how parables like 'The Good Samaritan' relate to what they can do as a Christian in their own lives.

84. Pupils become increasingly aware of the importance of prayer and special times for believers. This was seen in a Year 2/3 lesson about Advent and Christmas, when pupils were asked to think about what a gift is and why we give them. The teacher brought along a selection of gifts that included, a box of hope, a box of friendship, a box of love, a game and a book and asked the pupils what they would choose to give to baby Jesus. This promoted some thoughtful discussion as pupils considered that a gift may not be an object but can show how much you care for someone. Similarly, the work of pupils in Year 6 showed they had a mature grasp of the significance of festivals such as Harvest and Remembrance Day. However, the same quality of learning was not seen in the Year 6 lesson, where pupils were asked to discuss a range of cards depicting the Incarnation and consider the way Jesus is portrayed. A significant minority of boys in this lesson simply lost interest, became restless and their behaviour deteriorated. As a result it disrupted the learning of others until the teacher eventually engaged their interest through the good use of an RE website for pupils to search for pictures in support of their work. Overall, good use is made of ICT to support pupils' learning.

85. Teachers make good use of visits to local churches, where pupils learn about the symbolism involved in Christian ceremonies. Pupils' social, personal and moral development is well supported through RE. The subject is satisfactorily led and managed by the co-ordinator with the strong support of the head teacher, who has worked hard to implement the new syllabus.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

86. No lessons in **art and design** or **DT** were seen during the inspection and inspectors did not obtain enough evidence to make judgements about provision in these subjects. Samples of pupils' work and teachers' planning were examined and a discussion held with the subject leader. In **art**, which has been a focus for improvement recently, the appointment of a part-time teacher to lead its development and teach the subject to all classes is having a good impact on both provision and standards. Samples of pupils' work and teachers' planning show that pupils are learning skills and techniques systematically as they move through the school. Pupils also learn much about the work of different artists from a variety of cultures; for example, Year 1 pupils draw and paint 'mixed up faces' in the style of Picasso, while those in the Year 4/5 class make Aztec inspired masks in a good link with their work in history. The oldest pupils interpret parts of Picasso's *Guernica* and sculpt clay figures in the style of Henry Moore, using tools to create texture. There is a good emphasis on observational drawing, as seen in Year 2 pupils' sketches of leaves. The standards of work seen were broadly in line with those expected for the age of the pupils. Other factors that are contributing to the improvements in the subject are a new scheme of work, which ensures systematic teaching of skills throughout the school, and the use of a spare classroom for art and DT lessons, which enables the teacher to make effective use of all available resources.

87. Analysis of teachers' planning, subject co-ordinator's records, pupils' work and displays indicates that standards in **DT** are broadly in line with those expected in Years 2 and 6. This judgement is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection when standards in Y6 were found to be well below those expected. There is insufficient evidence to make judgements in this inspection about the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' achievement. Planning is comprehensive and ensures appropriate progression for pupils across the various age groups. This planning also ensures that pupils in mixed age group classes do not repeat areas of work already covered. Pupils in Year 1 made a selection of sandwiches and designed and made Christmas parcel labels. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 responded well to the challenge of designing and making a self supporting structure from paper and masking tape that would support a table tennis ball. Links with other subjects are apparent. For example Years 5 and 6 designed and built a replica of an Anderson shelter in connection with their history work on World War 2. Pupils from Years 4 and 5 have also made sandwiches that they named, 'exploding' or 'squashed', linked to a healthy food project. In the hall a large replica of the nativity scene has been constructed by pupils with assistance from a parent. The issues from the last inspection relating to standards and the curriculum have been fully rectified.

MUSIC

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching in Year 5/6 enables pupils to achieve well.
- Some unsatisfactory teaching contributes to low standards in Year 2/3.
- Pupils take part in a number of activities that enrich their experience.

Commentary

88. Two music lessons were observed. Inspectors also heard children singing in collective worship, and during choir and hymn practice. In the Year 2/3 lesson, standards were below average. This was mainly because the teacher's subject knowledge was inadequate and the pace of learning was too slow. As a result pupils found it difficult to pitch notes at the right level when singing. In the Year 5/6 lesson, standards were in line with national expectations and the quality of teaching and learning was good. In this lesson, pupils sang with enthusiasm a Christmas song from America, and recognised and produced their own different rhythms and styles of music. The quality of singing throughout the school is satisfactory, though it sometimes lacks energy and enthusiasm.

89. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, overall, though it varies greatly according to the expertise of the teachers. The Year 5/6 lesson was taken by the co-ordinator, who has good levels of expertise and sometimes teaches music in other classes. The features that characterised the good teaching were effective planning that built on pupils' earlier learning, a brisk pace that moved learning along well, good teaching of musical vocabulary and effective use of all available resources to promote good learning for all pupils. An effective start, where pupils revised their previous learning about different rhythms, captured their interest and prepared them well for the following activities. The teacher increased the complexity of the initial activities until pupils were performing and sustaining their own rhythm against those of three other groups. She made good use of the interactive whiteboard to show pupils how to use a notation grid for layering rhythms. Pupils learned well because they then had time to work on and improve their own group compositions, making effective use of all available space and a wide range of percussion instruments. Discussions with pupils showed that they were thoroughly enjoying this challenging activity and had a good understanding of what they had learned.

90. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator supports colleagues by helping with ideas and activities for those who lack musical expertise. She also ensures that music enjoys a high profile throughout the school. She runs a choir and a recorder club and arranges for pupils to take part in a number of local and national events, including the School Prom at the Royal Albert Hall. Older pupils also have the opportunity to learn to play brass instruments through specialist tuition.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Approximately 80 per cent of pupils can swim for at least 25 metres by the time they leave Year 6.
- The subject co-ordinator is well qualified and provides good educational direction for the subject.
- Resources for the subject are good and include a good link to a local sports college.

Commentary

91. Standards in games in Year 6 are similar to those found in most schools. In gymnastics, Year 2 pupils also achieved standards in line with those expected for pupils of their age. At least 80

per cent of Year 6 pupils are likely to be able to swim for at least 25 metres by the time they leave the school and this represents slightly above average performance. Satisfactory achievement by most pupils is promoted by satisfactory teaching and learning and good leadership. This judgement maintains the findings of the last inspection when the judgement was that pupils' progress was satisfactory overall.

92. In the Year 2/3 gymnastics lesson observed, pupils were encouraged to develop their ability to travel using their hands and feet. The teacher was actively involved in the lesson and used pupils to demonstrate good performance. She was very well supported by the PE co-ordinator who continually asked pupils how they could improve their performance. Pupils were encouraged to practise floor balances using two or three points of balance and then progress to linking the two balances to form a short sequence. In the good Year 4/5 lesson, pupils learned to develop the range and consistency of their large ball skills by passing the ball in pairs and small groups. The teacher demonstrated a very good knowledge and understanding of health and safety factors when she reminded the class of the reason for changing for PE lessons and for 'warm up' and 'cool down' sessions. All pupils were well supported during the lesson and all adults were actively involved in encouraging pupils' learning. A student on work experience led the warm up and cooling down activities. Year 5 and 6 pupils demonstrated skills progression from the previous year's work by using their passing, handling and catching skills in net games like volley-ball. The class was divided into two to enable pupils to be fully involved in learning and to give half the class the opportunity to practise the hand/eye co-ordination involved in table tennis. Nearly all pupils are beginning to develop the ability to use strategies and tactics in mini games involving a large or very small ball.

93. The subject co-ordinator is experienced and well qualified and gives valuable informal advice to other staff members. She has introduced a scheme of work for medium and long term planning using the nationally recommended syllabus and other commercial schemes to achieve at least average performance by most pupils. She provides good educational direction for the subject evident by the successful participation in local team competitions by pupils. The school is linked to various outside sporting agencies including the local secondary school which has sports college status where pupils visit for some lessons and to make use of its extensive facilities. The college also provides a coach for regular sessions of tag rugby for boys and girls. Resources for the subject are good and include a large indoor swimming pool and extensive playing fields with a fitness trail. The PE curriculum is further enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular activities especially for junior pupils. These include soccer, rugby, netball and dance clubs. Year 5 and 6 pupils attend a five day residential course in the summer term that provides good experience of outdoor pursuits. The school is involved in the national 'Achieving Excellence in Physical Education' initiative in order to improve pupils' achievement in the subject.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

94. Personal, social and health education is given a high priority in the school. It makes a good contribution to establishing good relationships between everyone in the school. Its success is reflected in pupils' good attitudes to learning. Provision includes consideration of sex and relationships and drugs education. It links well to other subjects such as RE and science.

95. The school has participated in a wide range of health education events that make a good contribution to pupils' personal development. Visitors to school, such as the Fire Brigade, Road Safety and the school nurse, play an important part in developing pupils' knowledge of personal safety and responsibility. Pupils in Year 6 also take part in a junior citizen project that helps to improve their health and safety knowledge.

96. As pupils get older, teachers give them increasing responsibility, preparing them well for the next stage of their education. Pupils are keen to assume roles of responsibility as monitors to help with daily routines in the school. In Year 6, pupils assume the roles of Playground Buddies and diligently carry out their duties in caring for others. The School Council is providing many opportunities for pupils to be involved in the running of the school and developing their awareness of citizenship.

97. Planned sessions for discussions in PSHE lessons are used effectively to promote pupils' awareness of others and to raise their own self-esteem. In the Year 4 / 5 class pupils were seen sensitively discussing the value of care. This linked well with the school's sponsorship of a child in Bolivia, as they considered the differences between his Christmas and their own.

98. The co-ordinator has a sufficient overview of the planning, which the school has in place. However, she has only very recently taken on the responsibility and has yet to develop her managerial role.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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