

INSPECTION REPORT

**KINGTON ST MICHAEL CHURCH OF
ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Chippenham

LEA area: Wiltshire

Unique reference number: 126332

Headteacher: Mr P Cousins

Lead inspector: Mr D Byrne

Dates of inspection: 13th-16th September 2004

Inspection number: 267149

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary

School category: Voluntary controlled

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

Number on roll: 91

School address: The Ridings
Kington St Michael
Chippenham
Wiltshire

Postcode: SN14 6JG

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of Mrs P Orchard
governors:

Date of previous 5th July 1999
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a voluntary controlled Church of England school situated in a small village near to Chippenham, Wiltshire. It is a small school, educating boys and girls aged from four to 11. The majority of pupils come from advantaged backgrounds. The attainment of children starting school in the reception class is above average overall. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average, and a below average percentage of pupils is identified as requiring support for special educational needs. Virtually all pupils are of white British ethnic background and no pupil requires support for learning to speak English as an additional language. The school population is relatively stable with only a few pupils starting and leaving the school at times other than the normal points of admission and departure.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
28076	Mr D Byrne	Lead inspector	English Science Religious education Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Personal, social and health education and citizenship
9334	Ms J Mynett	Lay Inspector	
26714 9	Mr M Egerton	Team Inspector	Foundation Stage curriculum Mathematics History Geography Music Physical education Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good** school that is caring and friendly. Pupils achieve well overall and reach standards that are above average by the end of Year 6. Good teaching successfully meets the needs of all pupils. The school benefits from very good leadership by the headteacher and good management and governance. The school gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6 and in religious education at the ages of seven and 11.
- Achievement could be better in speaking and listening, elements of writing and art and design.
- Standards could be much better in information and communication technology (ICT).
- Good partnerships between teachers and teaching assistants ensure that everyone is well provided for, including higher-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs.
- The headteacher creates very good teamwork between all staff, resulting in a good ethos that is establishing high expectations across the school.
- Good systems of academic assessment are in place for English and mathematics, but the school does not involve pupils enough in evaluating their own standards so that they understand how to do better.
- Pupils behave well, but some pupils, mostly in Years 1 and 2, accept second best in their work and lack the confidence to think and act for themselves.
- The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of additional activities but not enough links are made between subjects across the curriculum and literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology.
- Good links are established with parents, most of whom are very supportive of the school, and very good links exist with other schools.
- Whilst children in the reception class achieve well overall, they lack access to a suitable outdoor learning area, and this restricts their achievement in physical development.
- The budget is carefully managed to get the best value from spending.

The school has made a very good improvement since the last inspection, most notable in the area of leadership and management which was previously unsatisfactory. After carefully evaluating the school's strengths and weaknesses, the current headteacher and governing body have taken decisive action to improve the quality of education, and rates of progress and achievement are rising rapidly. Previous weaknesses in pupils' cultural development, procedures for child protection and aspects of health and safety have been rectified and there have been improvements in the effectiveness of academic assessment and tracking. Pupils are achieving better overall in Years 3 to 6. Although more still needs to be done in Years 1 and 2, there have been some good improvements recently. The quality of communication with parents is much better and is now of a good standard.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Year 6 results

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

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

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

Inspection evidence shows that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and higher-attaining pupils are currently achieving **well** overall in their time in school. Children get off to a good start in reception and reach the standards expected for their age in each aspect of their learning, except physical development where a lack of suitable outdoor facilities holds back their achievement. In Years 1 and 2, standards in the national tests have been low in reading and writing in recent years, although in mathematics, standards have been better. Inspection evidence shows that standards are currently average in reading, writing and mathematics and are rising as a result of recent improvements in teaching. Although most pupils are articulate, a significant number are not used to listening to others in class. Standards in science by the end of Year 2 are in line with national expectations overall with a relative strength in pupils' knowledge but a weakness in carrying out practical investigations. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 have been mostly good in recent years, although in English, pupils could have done better in writing. Pupils have done much better in Years 3 to 6 than in Years 1 to 2. Year 6 pupils have achieved very well compared to the results they gained in Year 2. Such data, however, has to be treated with caution, given the small numbers in some year groups. Inspection evidence shows that pupils are currently achieving well in Years 3 to 6 and reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science. Despite this good profile, pupils are not comfortable with taking responsibility for their learning, and this reduces their performance in practical aspects of both mathematics and science. Expectations for pupils to apply their skills of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum have been low until very recently, and as a result, pupils could do better in this aspect of their learning.

In other subjects, pupils achieve well across the school in religious education, and for their age have a good knowledge of geography and history. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of ICT are well below expectations and pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of art and design and the skills and techniques expected for their age are below expectations, and achievement is unsatisfactory. A lack of space for activities such as gymnastics means that in this area of physical education, children could do better.

Across the school the needs of pupils with special educational needs are effectively met and they achieve well in relation to their targets for learning. Recent improvements in teaching and better use of assessment have boosted the level of challenge directed to higher-attaining pupils. Expectations for these pupils are now high enough, after a period of time when this

was not the case. Although assessment data shows some variations between the performance of boys and girls, the samples are too small to be statistically significant.

Pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good** overall. Pupils behave well and form good relationships with others. Although most pupils have good attitudes to learning, a significant number of pupils in Years 1 and 2 readily accept second best in their work, and this reduces their achievement in some aspects of their learning. Attendance and punctuality are both very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **good** overall. Teaching and learning are **good** overall. High expectations are set for pupils to work hard and achieve as well as they can. Very good teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants makes sure that all pupils with special educational needs make good progress and are included in all aspects of school life. The satisfactory curriculum is enriched by a good range of educational visits and extracurricular activities. The accommodation is satisfactory overall, but the provision for reception children's outdoor physical development is unsatisfactory. Pupils receive good levels of care and attention to their health and safety. Although pupils' views are valued, the school does not yet do enough to involve them in the way the school is run or in evaluating their own performance. Good partnerships exist with parents and the local community, and there are very good links with local schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good** overall with good levels of governance. Key staff have good management expertise. The headteacher has a very good vision for the school's development and works effectively with all staff and governors to ensure that the school improves. Very good procedures for appointing staff have recently been adopted, and these have resulted in good appointments being made, resulting in improvements in standards and achievement across the school.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The majority of parents have good levels of satisfaction with the school, although a small but significant number have reservations about recent changes. Most parents value the "family atmosphere" and feel that their children receive a good education. Pupils like school and state that many positive changes have been made recently. Whilst they feel they are listened to, they would like more opportunities to take responsibility for some of the day-to-day running of the school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

In order to continue to improve standards and achievement further the school should:

- Raise standards in speaking and listening, aspects of writing, art and design and ICT, and improve the attitudes of those pupils who feel that second best is good enough.
- Establish better links between all subjects and literacy, numeracy and ICT.

- Engender amongst pupils the necessary confidence to take more responsibility for learning, to be more involved in setting their own targets for improvement, and to have a greater say in the day-to-day running of the school.
- Strive to develop a suitable outdoor area for children in the Foundation Stage.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils' achievement is **good** overall and they reach **above average** standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. In recent years, pupils have done better in Years 3 to 6 than in Years 1 and 2.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Achievement and standards are better at the end of Year 6 than Year 2.
- In Years 3 to 6, pupils achieve well overall in English, mathematics and science, but could do even better in aspects of writing and practical mathematics and science.
- Pupils exceed expectations for religious education at the age of seven and 11.
- Standards in music and physical education have improved since the last inspection, but have declined in ICT and art and design.
- Pupils do not make sufficient use of their skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT in learning across the curriculum.

Commentary

The Foundation Stage

1. Children start school with standards that are above average overall, but there are weaknesses in aspects of speaking and listening and physical development. Inspection evidence shows that children make good progress in lessons and that they are currently achieving well overall. Most children are in line to reach the standards expected for their age by the end of reception in their personal, social and emotional development, their communication, language and literacy development, mathematical development and in their creative development. Progress in terms of children's outdoor physical development is hindered by the lack of suitable outdoor facilities and in this area of their learning, children do not achieve as well as they could.

Key Stage 1

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	14.3 (13.0)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	14.8 (13.2)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	17.5 (17.3)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 12 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. Inspection evidence shows that pupils are currently achieving satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2. The unconfirmed data from the 2004 national tests for Year 2 in reading and writing supports the inspection judgements. The rate of learning is improving, however, as a result of a recent increase in expectations by teaching and support staff. Between 1999 and 2002, standards in reading and writing were low. Pupils could and should have been doing better, and achievement was unsatisfactory. In 2003, attainment was well below the national average in reading, but in writing it had risen to being broadly in line with the national average. The main weakness in standards in both reading and writing was related to the fact that too few pupils exceeded the national expected levels for their age by the end of Year 2. This was because of weaknesses in teaching and management that had allowed pupils to coast, resulting in gaps in pupils' development of the basic skills of handwriting, use of punctuation and spelling. These gaps are being rapidly filled by establishing an ethos of high expectations. Inspection evidence shows that pupils are currently achieving satisfactorily in reading, although they could still do better in some aspects of their writing and in developing their speaking and listening skills. Even though most pupils in Years 1 and 2 are relatively articulate and have a good vocabulary, many have difficulties in paying attention to others and are often reluctant to speak in front of others.

3. Standards in mathematics at the end of Year 2 have improved over the last few years, and in 2003 they were well above the national average. Unconfirmed data for the 2004 Year 2 national tests indicates that standards were in line with the national average. Comparisons between results in different years are unreliable because of the small number of pupils in each Year group. Inspection evidence confirms that standards in mathematics at the end of Year 2 are currently in line with national expectations. Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall, although higher-attaining pupils could do better. Improvements in the quality of teaching are lifting expectations, and standards in mathematics are starting to rise as a result.

4. In science, pupils achieve satisfactorily. Even though they have a good knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas and a good command for their age of scientific terminology, they lack the confidence and expertise expected for their age in performing scientific investigations and experiments. Standards at the end of Year 2 are currently broadly in line with the expectations for their age.

Key Stage 2

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.8 (29.5)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	29.3 (27.0)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	30.8 (29.0)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 8 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

5. The relatively small number of pupils in some year groups means that assessment data must be treated with caution, as one pupil can make as much as 12 per cent difference in scores. Data does show, however, that achievement in Years 3 to 6 has been better than in Years 1 and 2 for a number of years. Despite some fluctuations

from year to year, over the last five years the results in the national tests for Year 6 have risen in mathematics and science whilst in English the trend has been flat. Generally, standards have been better in mathematics and science than English. Results in the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 6 showed that in English, standards were above the national average, whilst in mathematics and science they were well above the national average. Unconfirmed data for 2004 shows that results in national tests are well above the national average in English, mathematics and science. Assessment data indicates that in Years 3 to 6, pupils make exceptionally good progress based on the results they gained in Year 2. Inspection evidence supports the view that progress is indeed better in Years 3 to 6, but the rate of progress is magnified as a result of comparing results at the end of Year 6 with low results at the end of Year 2.

6. Inspection evidence shows that in Years 3 to 6, pupils make good progress, and achieve well in English, mathematics and science. Standards are currently above average in each of these subjects. There are, however, some relative weaknesses in achievement in performing scientific and mathematical investigations, and achievement should be better. Over the last three years, girls have done much better than boys in English, although in mathematics it was the reverse, with boys doing much better than girls. There is no statistically significant difference between boys and girls in science.
7. Pupils achieve well in religious education and reach standards that exceed expectations at the end of both Years 2 and 6. Pupils also have a good knowledge and understanding for their age in both history and geography. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in design and technology, music and physical education. Across the school, standards in ICT are well below expectations and pupils' achievement is currently unsatisfactory. This is primarily because of weaknesses in suitable resources and a lack of subject expertise in the past. Improvements are now occurring but there is a long way to go to lift standards to the levels expected for pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6. Achievement in art and design is also unsatisfactory because of gaps in the pupils' curriculum in the past. In Years 1 and 2, a lack of access to the hall until recently means that children have not had a chance to achieve well enough in gymnastics.
8. Pupils with special educational needs are achieving as well as other pupils. The needs of these pupils are well planned for, and effectively guided additional support provided by teaching assistants enables these pupils to be fully included in all lessons. There has been a weakness in the level of challenge for higher-attaining pupils in the past, particularly in Years 1 and 2. This is being resolved, and higher-attaining pupils are now being challenged sufficiently in lessons and they are now achieving as well as they can.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**, and is a key factor in the pupils' **good** behaviour. Attitudes are **satisfactory** overall. Attendance and punctuality are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although pupils are generally willing learners, an acceptance that second best is good enough lingers amongst a small but significant number of pupils.
- Pupils conduct themselves correctly and politely, but some pupils, mostly in Years 1 and 2, occasionally act in a silly and immature way, and this reduces their achievement in lessons.
- Attendance is very high in comparison with the national average.

Commentary

9. Although pupils are keen to attend school and are generally enthusiastic about what they learn, there is currently a well-established culture amongst a small but significant number of pupils that second best is good enough. This is particularly evident in Years 1 and 2, although there are elements of it across the school. It adversely affects the attitudes of pupils and is manifested in the way that some pupils have difficulty listening to the views of others and a tendency to chatter inappropriately. This attitude holds back achievement, although good teaching and effective management is starting to address this. During lessons, however, most pupils work well and co-operate well with others. They react positively to the warm and supportive atmosphere generated by teachers and teaching assistants, and they are starting to respond to raised expectations for them to take more responsibility for learning. There remains, however a reluctance among many pupils to use their initiative and to think and act for themselves. They are not used to such expectations and lack the confidence to do so. As a result, many pupils have rather negative attitude at times when teachers quite rightly expect pupils to use their own initiative in, for example, undertaking scientific and mathematical investigation.
10. There is a good code of behaviour that encompasses the school. The Golden Rules and rewards of Golden Time are greatly valued by pupils. Pupils know how to behave and behaviour is generally good, although it can be rather lively during outdoor play. It is noticeably better in lessons, where pupils' practical participation is encouraged. Teachers and teaching assistants are working hard to praise and reward pupils for positive behaviour. Pupils are starting to respond eagerly and this is improving the way that they treat others. Pupils are usually courteous and respectful of others and show good manners, but at times some pupils, mostly boys, behave inappropriately by laughing and chatting during lessons. This can affect the concentration of others and reduce the quality of listening for everyone. Social skills are generally well developed and pupils share and co-operate well, and willingly help others. There is no evidence of physical or verbal harassment amongst pupils, and when pupils disagree, staff effectively work with pupils to resolve any grievances.
11. The headteacher and staff are establishing a good ethos in which a diet of care, respect and self-respect is the norm. Individuality is valued, but many pupils are still unsure of how to handle this and still feel uncomfortable with expectations for them to think for themselves and to accept responsibility. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on a variety of issues. An awareness of beauty is cultivated through art and design and science. The contribution of religious education to pupils' sense of spirituality is significant. The school is aware that it is situated in an area of the country with little ethnic diversity, and has improved its provision for awareness of the multi-cultural diversity of Britain. Links with a mosque in Swindon and studies of other cultures such as a village in India have enabled pupils to develop a secure knowledge and understanding of the similarities and differences between their culture and that of others.

Attendance

12. Attendance is even better than it was at the time of the last inspection, and is now very high in comparison with other schools. There are effective systems for checking on attendance and picking out any issues of concern.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.1	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **good** overall. Teaching and learning are **good**. The school provides **good** levels of care and **satisfactory** levels of support, advice and guidance. Links with parents and the community are **good**, with **very good** links with other schools.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **good** throughout the school, and with examples of **very good** teaching in English and mathematics. Assessment is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- High expectations set by teachers, effectively supported by good quality teaching assistants, are lifting standards and achievement of all pupils, but most noticeably of higher-attaining pupils.
- The needs of all pupils of all abilities are effectively planned for, but better links could be made between literacy, numeracy, ICT and other subjects.
- The quality of learning in religious education, geography and history is boosted by the good use of educational visits.
- Assessment is used effectively to drive forward the quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage and in literacy and numeracy across the school, but pupils could be more involved in setting targets for their own improvement.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 26 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	5	15	6	0	0	0

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

13. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Parents reported in the inspection questionnaire some concerns about the levels of challenge given to more able pupils and the negative impact of staff changes in recent years. Inspection evidence is that until recently, higher-attaining pupils were not being challenged enough,

especially in Years 1 and 2. The recent appointments of new teachers and teaching assistants have removed these weaknesses. Improvements in the quality of planning for higher-attaining pupils and increased expectations for them are resulting in rising standards and achievement, most noticeably in Years 1 and 2, but also in other year groups. There have been particular improvements in the quality of teaching of reading and writing in reception and in Years 1 and 2. More rigour is now included in planning so that pupils are now being taught the basics of sound and word recognition, letter formation and handwriting at an early age.

14. The good quality of teaching in reception has been maintained since the last inspection. There have, however, been some significant improvements in the use of assessment to guide planning and raise expectations for pupils to think and act for themselves. The job-share teaching situation is working well. Both teachers meticulously plan together so that activities are suitable for the needs of each child. From the start, high expectations are made regarding children's personal development and social skills. Children in reception are provided with a good range of activities that have a good balance between adult-led and those that children choose for themselves. This results in children learning and achieving well in lessons. Satisfactory support is provided by the teaching assistant who works well under the direction of teachers to support the reception children, particularly when the teacher is teaching older pupils in the mixed-age class. The classroom is very well organised, and clearly defined class routines are being established very effectively amongst children. Bright and stimulating displays of children's work and interesting structured play areas such as a toy shop creates a stimulating and secure learning environment. This security gives children the chance to think for themselves and take some initiative for their own actions.
15. In Years 1 to 6, teachers now have high expectations of pupils. The negative impact on achievement of low expectations in the past and a lack of continuity in teachers is being overcome, but there is still some way to go. The core subjects of English and mathematics are taught well, with some very good features. Most pupils respond well to expectations for them to work hard during lessons, although a small but significant number of pupils, mostly boys, still do not listen as well as they should. Teachers are introducing a variety of effective strategies that are successfully improving pupils' listening and speaking skills. Lessons are very well planned and effectively organised and managed so that all pupils are fully included. Very good support by skilled teaching assistants ensures that pupils with special educational needs are given good support and guidance during lessons, and as a result, these pupils achieve well. Lessons have clear objectives that are shared with pupils. Pupils are not allowed to get bored or lose interest because lessons have a brisk pace and activities are carefully planned to meet the needs of individuals and groups. Effective use is made of assessment to identify different groups of pupils, for example, higher-attaining pupils, and work is matched accordingly, thereby ensuring that everyone works to their potential. Marking is prompt and often geared to supporting and directing pupils to do better, but a more consistent approach by teachers to linking marked work to pupils' targets for improvement is needed. Homework is an integral part of teaching and learning. Inconsistencies in the quality and quantity of homework in the past have been recognised, and effective strategies have just been established to remove the concerns rightly expressed by parents. Across the school, there are not enough planned occasions for pupils to practise their writing, reading, mathematics and ICT skills more widely across the curriculum.
16. In other subjects, the quality of teaching and learning is more variable. It is good in science, although pupils are not challenged enough in the area of performing scientific investigations. Good use is made of educational visits to support learning in geography,

history and religious education; each of these subjects is taught well. In some subjects, weaknesses in teaching in the past have resulted in some pupils not achieving as well as they could. This is particularly evident in ICT, art and design, some aspects of PE and in music. Weaknesses in resources for ICT have restricted the quality of teaching in using computers. A weakness remains in the use of ICT by teachers in lessons, although imminent investments in interactive whiteboards and the long overdue establishment of a dedicated ICT suite are set to improve matters. Improved planning in art and design, music and better facilities for PE is improving achievement in these subjects.

17. Teaching is good for pupils with special educational needs, and is particularly effective in the teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy where most support is rightly directed. Teaching assistants are well briefed, and the pupils' individual education plans are closely related to specific needs, and are effective in guiding the exact nature of support needed.
18. Assessment is satisfactory overall. When children start school in the reception class, good use is made of assessment data to identify the needs of each child and to pick out at an early age any who are potentially gifted and talented or who may have special educational needs. In Years 1 to 6, the procedures for assessing and tracking pupils' progress and academic achievements are good in English and mathematics. The information gathered is being used by the headteacher and staff to identify the needs of different groups of pupils such as lower-attaining and higher-attaining. The data is used effectively to direct support to where it is most needed in order to ensure maximum achievement. In other subjects, assessment procedures are less rigorous, and there are still inconsistencies in the way that teachers carry out their assessments, mainly because there has not been enough time to embed existing systems. A major area for improvement is in involving pupils in their own self-evaluations of how well they are doing and what they need to do to do better. The school is well aware of the need to strengthen further some aspects of assessment and the level of pupils' involvement in the process, and is in the process of tackling the problem.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **satisfactory** with **good** levels of enrichment. Accommodation and resources are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum has improved, but gaps in the past have reduced achievement in some subjects.
- Planning of links between subjects is unsatisfactory and needs to be more consistent across the school.
- A good range of educational visits and visitors enriches the quality of many subjects.
- Children in the Foundation Stage do not have access to suitable outdoor play areas, and this reduces their achievement in their physical development.

Commentary

19. The curriculum is better than it was at the time of the last inspection. Planning is now more rigorous and ensures that pupils' knowledge, understanding and basic skills build progressively as they move through the school. A good curriculum for children in the reception class is carefully planned to develop the children's knowledge, understanding

and skills in each area of learning. A weakness in resources for outdoor learning, however, reduces children's achievement in aspects of their physical development. In Years 1 to 6, detailed planning for English and literacy and mathematics and numeracy ensures that pupils systematically build up their knowledge and understanding of these subjects as they move through the school. The headteacher and staff carefully evaluate the quality of curriculum planning, and intelligent strategies are established to make sure that all elements of the curriculum meet the needs of all pupils. The provision for music and physical education has improved so that each subject now meets requirements. There is a relative weakness, however, in developing pupils' independent learning skills. This is especially evident in science and mathematics, where only minimal time has been given in the past to enabling pupils to apply their very good knowledge and understanding to solving practical mathematical and scientific problems. Gaps in the curriculum for information and communication technology and art and design have resulted in unsatisfactory achievement. These gaps are now filled as a result of better planning and improved resources, but there is still some way to go to ensure that all pupils catch up and achieve as well as they should.

20. Good levels of equality and opportunity exist and all pupils have equal access to the curriculum. All subjects are given ample time, and increasingly teachers are blending subjects together to give learning greater meaning. A good example of this was observed when pupils in Years 3 and 4 used their literacy skills in science to create their own "mini books" about light. The overall planning of such links is unsatisfactory. As a result, opportunities for enabling pupils to develop their basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT in other subjects are not fully exploited. Pupils with special educational needs have satisfactory individual education plans, and the programme of support by teaching assistants is well managed. The school has made great strides recently to identify higher-attaining pupils, and improvements in the quality of teaching means that such pupils are now given enough challenge to achieve as well as they can.
21. Pupils benefit from a good range of educational visits that are carefully selected to extend and improve their education. A good range of residential visits for older pupils in Years 5 and 6 successfully develops a wide range of social and academic skills. Children in reception extend their knowledge and understanding of the world through carefully chosen visits and visitors to school. Weaknesses in the provision for extracurricular activities have been rectified. The current range of such activities is very good for a small school and, depending on the activity, pupils from Years 1 to 6 have access to one or more clubs. There has been a particularly good growth in access to sporting provision and an improvement in art and design-based clubs. Clubs are popular, and pupils are learning that sometimes they have to wait for the next time because clubs are often oversubscribed.
22. The accommodation is satisfactory overall although there is a weakness in the provision of a suitable outdoor area for children in the reception class. The school building is well maintained and improvements in the last two years have provided a much-needed space for administration and for staff. Outdoor play facilities for pupils in Years 1 to 6 are of a high standard and contribute to aspects of the curriculum such as physical education and science. Resources are satisfactory overall although there are weaknesses in the range of non-fiction books suitable for reluctant readers and gaps in resources for information and communication technology.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is **good**. The school provides **satisfactory** support, advice and guidance and has **satisfactory** procedures for seeking the views of pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a safe, caring and supportive environment where pupils can grow into happy, confident individuals.
- Systematic procedures to formally monitor and promote pupils' academic and personal development have yet to be implemented.
- Good induction arrangements ensure pupils settle quickly into school.
- Opportunities to consult with pupils and involve them in decision-making processes in the school are limited.

Commentary

23. Kington St Michael is a friendly and caring school. Parents value the small family community where teachers and support staff provide a safe environment for pupils, and the older pupils have a responsible attitude to the younger ones in their mixed-aged classes. The overall provision for pupils' health, welfare and protection is now good and has improved since the previous inspection. Parents are very pleased that their children are well nurtured and supported. Arrangements for child protection and procedures relating to health and safety are secure, with the governors taking their responsibility for health and safety issues conscientiously. The induction process into the school is well thought out and effectively implemented with very good links being established with local playgroups. Reception children settle in happily because of the small numbers and the kind and caring way they are introduced to their teacher and classmates.
24. Procedures to monitor and support pupils' personal and academic development and progress are satisfactory. The new class teachers are getting to know their classes well. Decisions have already been taken to formalise assessment procedures and involve pupils in target-setting this term. This will help pupils to know how they are doing and highlight areas for improvement. The school has good systems in place offering support and guidance for those pupils with special educational needs, and involves the various outside agencies as necessary. Parents spoke very positively about the school and feel it treats pupils fairly.
25. Pupils are very happy and feel it is a very safe and secure school. They are confident that they can turn to a member of staff if they have a problem or are unhappy and that issues will be dealt with swiftly. Pupils spoke of having forged trusting relationships with adults, and feel that their new teachers know them well. Although there is time to discuss important issues within the personal, social and health education lessons, opportunities to consult with pupils and to take their views into consideration are limited. There are plans to appoint class representatives and introduce a school council later this academic year. This will encourage pupils to become more responsible and give them a greater voice and involvement in the decision-making processes in the school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has **good** links with parents and the community and **very good** links with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The majority of parents hold the school in high regard.
- The school is improving the quality of its communication with parents to ensure that they are kept up-to-date and well informed.
- The good links with the church and local community enrich pupils' education.
- Very strong links with other schools enhance aspects of the staff's professional development and eases the transfer of pupils to secondary school.
- Parents offer valuable assistance to the school through the Friends Association.

Commentary

26. The school seeks to foster a close liaison with parents and keep them fully informed whilst providing them with opportunities to become involved in their children's education, both at home and in school. Most parents expressed a high level of satisfaction about the work of the school and find the headteacher and staff highly approachable. Their children are happy and they feel the school community is like an 'extended family'. Parents like the good teaching and the fact that the high expectations of staff encourage their children to become mature and independent. However, the school has a small number of parents who are not happy with recent changes. A small minority of parents expressed concerns about not being consulted, and feel they are not being kept sufficiently informed about their child's progress. The inspection team do not support these comments, as the school has already taken on board concerns and is in the process of instigating a number of changes.
27. Information for parents is good. The regular newsletters keep parents updated on different school activities and events. Consultation evenings, joint working parties and the 'open door' policy ensure that the school is as accessible as possible. Some very good quality information about what is being taught each term is shared with parents so they can see what is going on. Included also are some valuable hints about how they can help their children at home. Various events such as plays, assemblies, church services and sports days are well attended by parents. The annual reports to parents, whilst good, are already under review. They clearly state what pupils' have covered and indicate what they know, can do and understand, as well as identifying targets for improvement in the main subject areas. Future reports should also include information about how well pupils are progressing in all subjects in relation to what is expected of them, and this may help satisfy those parents who feel that they are not kept sufficiently informed.
28. Links with the local community are good. The school is central to village life with many local people involved in school activities and attending functions run by the school. Strong links with local church groups are fostered through church services and regular visits to the school by the local rector and other church representatives. Visitors, including the Bath University technology team, the school nurse and community groups, such as the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, help enrich the curriculum. Parents offer a great deal of support by listening to reading, helping with swimming, running the library or undertaking various tasks around school. Parents help run after-school activities, such as the recorder club. The 'Friends Association' is organised by an enthusiastic group of parents who arrange a large number of social and fund-raising activities each year, which raises significant funds for the school. This money has been effectively used to help purchase interactive whiteboards
29. Links with other schools are very strong, both on an academic and management basis. There are meetings with headteachers, sharing of expertise, joint staff development activities and a range of sporting activities with neighbouring primary schools. The transition process to secondary school is well managed to ensure that pupils progress

to the next stage of education as smoothly as possible. Links with the three local secondary schools are well developed, with opportunities for visits, including mathematics workshops for the 'more able' pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are **good** overall. The headteacher provides **very good** leadership with a **good** contribution from key staff. Management and governance are **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and is taking effective action to raise the achievement of all pupils.
- Key staff are very competent and effectively share the management of the school and the curriculum.
- A good ethos has been established that values each individual and expects everyone to do as well as they can.
- The governing body knows the school well, successfully combining its supportive role with checking that the school's direction is the right one.

Commentary

30. Leadership and management have improved very well since the last inspection. The recently-appointed headteacher provides very good leadership. He is very caring and sensitive, and passionate about ensuring that the school provides the best possible provision for pupils and staff. He has very clear aims and effective strategies that ensure that the school moves forward rapidly in every area of its provision. The views of external advisers, such as local authority advisers and consultants, are valued and acted upon after careful consideration. As a result of his vision and determination, the culture of the school is changing from one that has accepted lower than possible standards to one in which pupils are expected to do their best. The new headteacher has successfully created a good ethos that includes everyone involved in the school – staff, pupils, parents and governors. Some difficult decisions have been made, but as a direct result, the quality of teaching and learning is steadily improving. This is manifested by the fact that the unsatisfactory achievement of some groups of pupils is being removed, and standards are starting to rise across the school, in particular in Years 1 and 2.
31. The school is effectively managed. An effective staff team has recently been established. The headteacher works closely with governors to ensure that the procedures for appointing new staff are so exhaustive and highly focused that applicants are just right for the school. As a result of this, all staff work together very well to ensure consistency in how pupils are taught and supported. The staff team, under the very good leadership of the headteacher, has developed a thorough way of monitoring. As a result, staff are well aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Areas for development are included in a pertinent and reasonably well-constructed school improvement plan. All staff recognise the need to boost standards in some subjects and in some aspects of subjects. A range of effective strategies is being implemented after carefully evaluating their value. Good use is made of performance management systems to set targets for all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, and to identify areas for professional development. The provision for special educational needs is well led and managed, as is the provision in the Foundation Stage.

32. The governing body does a good job. It is keen and very supportive of the changes being brought about by the new headteacher. Governors take a fair share of the credit for the rising levels of achievement. They keep a close eye on what goes on in the school. Regular liaison with the headteacher and a steadily increasing role in visiting the school keeps governors in touch with what is going on. The effective committee structure enables governors to play a key role in decision-making and shaping the school's development. For example, they have given a lot of time to participating in the appointments of staff in order to support the headteacher and ensure that the right decisions were made.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	249 848	Balance from previous year	35 919
Total expenditure	268 275	Balance carried forward to the next	17 492
Expenditure per pupil	3 049		

33. The finances of the school are well managed. All spending decisions are linked to careful evaluations recorded in the school improvement plan, and value for money is high on the agenda. For instance, decisions were made to adjust the hours of teaching assistants in order to make sure that enough money was available in order to keep the budget balanced whilst also raising standards. The budget is carefully planned and spent wisely.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Children achieve well in their personal, social and emotional development, mathematical and creative development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world.
- Children lack confidence in speaking, and their listening skills are poor.
- The accommodation and resources for developing the children's physical development are unsatisfactory.
- A limitation of ICT resources restricts children's progress in using computers.
- Assessment procedures are thorough and are used well to plan the next stage of the children's learning.
- The newly-appointed teachers are having a positive impact on the work in the Foundation Stage.

Commentary

34. The inspection was conducted in the second week of a new academic year. At this time there were four full-time reception children taught in a mixed-age class that includes pupils in Years 1 and 2. The children begin school with levels of attainment that are above those normally expected, with the exception of speaking and listening, where a lack of confidence lowers the level of attainment to that of average children. By the end of the reception year, children attain the early learning goals in all the areas of learning, with the exception of speaking and listening and physical development where achievement is satisfactory. The quality of provision has been maintained since the judgement made at the time of the last inspection.
35. Both teachers ensure that there are ample opportunities for the reception children to work solely with other reception children. At times they work alongside older pupils and benefit from this experience, but their learning is significantly enhanced when they are withdrawn to work with the teaching assistant for group and individual activities. In these circumstances, they have the opportunity to learn through well-planned structured play activities. An example of this occurred during the second part of the literacy lesson when children joined the teaching assistant to take part in a phonic activity. This led into a creative task where the children used a variety of materials and glue to create letter shapes. In this structured play activity, they not only enhanced their knowledge of phonics but also improved their manipulative skills. The quality of teaching is good with particular strengths in planning, support for pupils, pupil management and assessment. Teachers set high expectations for behaviour and, through good questioning skills, they constantly challenge the children. Recently introduced assessment procedures are rigorous. They offer the chance for teachers to track children's progress and achievement, thereby enabling planning to meet the needs of the children. The school works closely with parents and pre-school providers to ensure the children have a smooth start to their education. Information from pre-school providers is collected and recorded in order that an appropriate programme of work is established. At the moment, the reception children do not have a secure play area of their own, nor do they have access to large play equipment or wheeled

vehicles. Staff are very much aware of this and it is one of the items seen as a priority in their development plan for the Foundation Stage.

36. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good, with the potential to be even more effective. Both teachers are new to the school, but already they have a very clear vision of the direction they need to take and have the energy, experience and determination to bring about change in the near future and raise standards.
37. In **personal, social and emotional development**, the children achieve well in many aspects, and teaching and learning is good. The teacher is taking firm steps to raise expectations in the youngest pupils in the mixed-age class. Within the classroom, the children benefit from working alongside the older Year 1 and Year 2 pupils, and quickly learn the routines of the classroom and what is expected of them. The children are so well behaved that when they join the whole school in assembly, it is difficult to tell who the new children are. They work very well together as a group, and have a good understanding of the need to share things with each other and to take their turn. They ask politely to go to the toilet and obey the instructions the teachers give to them. When working together as a group, they are confident and happy learners who enjoy trying new experiences.
38. Children achieve well in most aspects of **communication, language and literacy**, but in spite of the good teaching, and the consistent use of praise and encouragement, children lack confidence in speaking in a large group and lack concentration when listening to each other and to adults. In a small group or in a one-to-one situation, they are articulate, have a good vocabulary and enjoy talking to each other or to an adult. The teachers and teaching assistant are working hard to overcome this weakness and are constantly looking for opportunities to engage the children in large group activities and conversations. The recent introduction of a rigorous phonics scheme is helping the children to gain confidence in their recognition of letter sounds, and parents are encouraged to help their children at home with their reading. Children have their own reading books which they take home regularly along with a reading diary for the parents to complete. Frequent opportunities for children to practise reading in class and the carefully-structured guided reading groups are improving the standards of reading and ensuring that the children achieve the expectations for their age. Good quality displays in the classroom place a strong emphasis on language, and books are attractively displayed to entice children to want to look at them.
39. Children achieve well in their **mathematical development** as a result of good quality of teaching. By the end of reception, children are in line to reach the standards expected for their age. Inspection evidence shows that children have a good understanding of number. They recognise and name common shapes and discuss some of the different properties shapes have. Teachers make good use of incidental events to develop the children's awareness and understanding of mathematics. For example, good use was made of number songs to reinforce the children's counting skills. Children joined in the singing of 'Ten green bottles' and 'Once I caught a fish alive' with great enthusiasm. During the registration period, the children celebrated the sixth birthday of one of the boys and the teacher took the opportunity to develop this into using numbers up to ten. Children were asked the age of the boy will be in one year's time, how old he was the previous year, etc. In this way, children were encouraged to rehearse counting on and counting back in an enjoyable way. Number games help the children to be at ease and gain familiarity with numbers up to ten. Experience of playing in the water helped them to learn through experiences linked to capacity by filling and emptying containers to find out how much they will hold.

40. Children achieve well in terms of their **knowledge and understanding of the world** as a result of good teaching. By the time they start Year 1, they reach the standards expected for their age. The thematic approach adopted by the teacher means that the children are already making links between different aspects of this area of learning. Planning is good and provides opportunities for the children to learn through structured play activities and first-hand experience. The current topic of toys and materials provides a wealth of opportunity and interest. In the classroom, displays focus on the way toys from many years ago contrast with modern toys. In time, the classroom will have its own toy museum and a visit from the curator of Chippenham Museum will help the children to begin to understand the concept of past and present. Children are ready to begin looking at the different materials toys are made of and will shortly be making their own toys in the form of puppets. As part of this work, they will explore different ways of joining materials together by gluing, using fasteners or pieces of tape. Work in this area of learning links with their work in literacy as they read stories about teddy bears, and in creative development, where the role-play area has become a teddy bear shop. Linking of the areas of learning in this way enables the children to have a clearer understanding of the world in which they live and its past. Through group discussions, children develop a satisfactory understanding of the basic ideas of religious education. Opportunities for using ICT are limited because of the poor quality of resources available in the class.
41. In terms of their **physical development**, the children achieve unsatisfactorily, although teaching is satisfactory. By the time children start Year 1, their levels of outdoor physical development are below expectations. The lack of a designated outdoor play area means that the children do not have regular access to large pieces of apparatus and equipment. They do not have the opportunity to use wheeled toys where they can learn control and learn simple aspects of behaving in a safe way. Opportunities to crawl, climb and jump in an open space are not available, nor are there opportunities to engage in outdoor role-play as a policeman or fireman. Although the reception children can join the Year 1/Year 2 pupils in the school hall for physical education, they miss out on their own needs regarding free and structured play. Many children in the reception class have poorly developed manipulative skills and find holding a pencil and forming letter shapes difficult. The teacher is well aware of this and introduces activities which will help the children to manipulate small tools and objects and to use pencils confidently to produce letter shapes.
39. Children achieve well in their **creative development** because of good teaching. They reach the expected standards by the end of Year 1. A stimulating role-play area provides children with opportunities to play together and create their own imaginary world. They have regular access to a range of materials where they can explore colour, create their own patterns and paint pictures. In music, they learn how to maintain a steady beat, control percussion instruments and listen attentively to music. When singing their impromptu number songs, they showed how much they enjoyed music and how much pleasure they gained from these activities.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Good leadership and management are starting to raise achievement so that all pupils do as well as they should
- Standards in reading and writing are good by the end of Year 6, but in Years 1 and 2, pupils could do much better in writing in particular.
- Good teaching is starting to tackle a relative weakness across the school with speaking and listening.
- Teachers make good use of assessment, but could encourage greater involvement of pupils in evaluating how well they are doing and how to do better.
- The quality of planning for the use of literacy and language across the curriculum is weak.

Commentary

40. Inspection findings indicate that pupils' attainment is above average overall by the end of Year 6. These findings match the 2003 national test results. Standards are similar to those at the last inspection. The unconfirmed 2004 results indicate that standards are well above average. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and higher-attaining pupils achieve well overall during their time in school. Although pupils write well by the end of Year 6, their levels of creativity and ability to write for a wide range of audiences could be better. In speaking and listening, whilst most pupils are articulate, their skills of speaking maturely in group and class situations are not good enough, with a significant number of pupils lacking the expected standards of listening.
41. By the end of Year 2, inspection findings show that pupils' attainment is broadly average. These findings match the unconfirmed data for 2004 and represent an improvement since the results in 2003 and previous years. Despite a measure of improvement, these standards are disappointing given the relatively good level of attainment when children start school. Assessment data from the national tests indicates that in recent years too few pupils have reached above average standards in both reading and writing. Inspection evidence shows that achievement is currently satisfactory, although pupils could do better in speaking and listening and in writing with reasonable independence. Standards are rising as a result of much higher expectations by teachers and better planning and teaching.
42. Pupils do not do as well as expected in speaking and listening. Although most pupils are articulate and speak well in one-to-one situations, in class groups many struggle to listen to others in a mature way and have difficulty in speaking in front of others. This is a result of a lack of opportunities in the past to speak in class and group situations and, as a result, pupils lack confidence. Effective steps are in the process of being established to build in a wide range of activities and strategies that enable pupils to speak in a variety of circumstances. Teachers now expect pupils to contribute to debates and to give their opinions about features of subjects they are learning. Pupils respond positively to new expectations for them to discuss various issues with "talking partners", and this strategy is already lifting the standard of speaking.

43. Pupils leave school writing well overall, and they perform well in national tests. They are able to communicate using effectively-structured pieces of writing, including complex sentences, mostly good spelling and suitable use of a good range of vocabulary to add interest. Despite this, pupils' confidence and experience of writing for a variety of audiences and for different purposes could be better. Even the best writers in Years 3 to 6 are unsure of how to write creatively and for other reasons, such as presenting an argument for or against an issue. Overall, teachers and pupils have been used to accepting standards of presentation that are lower than they should be, and the quality of handwriting varies enormously between classes. Handwriting is improving significantly in Years 1 and 2, but is still in need of further improvement. There has been a significant increase in expectations by teaching staff recently, and pupils are starting to do themselves justice. Year 2 pupils are starting to write well, but evidence from looking at pupils' books shows that many pupils in Years 1 and 2 have not mastered the basic skills to write neatly, using a fluent linked style. The low expectations for younger pupils explain the reasons why standards at the end of Year 2 have been below or well below the national average in recent years.
44. Reading is currently being taught well. There have been many improvements to the way reading is taught, including a reorganisation of reading materials. An intelligent use of guided reading, and investments in a range of new books, especially relevant to boys, are boosting standards. In Years 1 and 2, standards are rising. They are currently average and represent a significant improvement given the poor standards gained in national tests at the end of Year 2 in recent years. In Years 3 to 6, pupils have confidence to use books to locate information to support research into a range of projects, for example as part of a topic looking at rivers. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a love of books, talk with enthusiasm about a range of contemporary authors and have a well developed ability to describe what they like or dislike about their works.
45. The quality of teaching and learning is currently good overall, and at times very good. Detailed attention is given to lifting the standards of pupils in Years 1 and 2 in particular. Rigorous planning, based upon effective evaluations, makes sure that lessons are well prepared and pupils have work that matches their ability. Very good teamwork between the class teachers and teaching assistants ensures that the needs of all pupils are taken into account in lessons. The individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are carefully fitted together to meet the particular needs of the individual. Lessons have good pace and very good relationships between teachers and pupils enable pupils to feel confident to try new things without fear. The strategies to boost standards of speaking and listening are starting to have a positive effect on pupils' skills as well as on their confidence to speak out. Assessment is used well to evaluate how well the school is doing and to set pupils into groups according to ability. Pupils' work is marked accurately and is often enhanced by constructive comments designed to challenge them so that they do better. Links between marking and target-setting for pupils are not consistently made.
46. The subject is well led and managed. There is a very clear action plan for improvements that is based upon accurate evaluations of standards and achievement. Good support from the local education authority is helping the school, and staff are committed to raising achievement in speaking, listening and writing in particular. Resources are adequate, but the style and presentation of books in the library could be more inspiring. Based on the judgements in the last report, there has been a satisfactory improvement since then, but inspection evidence is that as result of many recent changes in staffing and the curriculum, provision is currently improving rapidly and achievement is starting to rise to the levels they should be.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

47. The application of language and literacy to support learning in all subjects is satisfactory overall, but could be much better. This is because the quality of planning for such links is rather vague and inconsistent. In other subjects, library skills are often used by pupils to locate information associated with topics in subjects such as geography and history. The use of writing skills and the development of speaking and listening through class debates, drama and discussions occur incidentally rather than in a planned and systematic way.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well overall, but higher-attaining pupils could do better in Years 1 and 2.
- Teaching is good overall and lessons are well planned, although in Years 1 and 2, higher-attaining pupils need more challenge.
- Planning does not enable pupils to apply their numeracy skills to other subjects.
- Most pupils enjoy mathematics, although some pupils in Years 1 and 2 in particular have low expectations.
- The co-ordinator has good leadership qualities and a clear vision for the subject's development.

Commentary

48. Most pupils achieve well in their time in school, although higher-attaining pupils could do better in Years 1 and 2. Achievement is good in Years 3 to 6, and satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. In 2003, Year 6 pupils reached standards in the national tests that were well above the national average. Unconfirmed assessment data for 2004 indicates that these high standards were maintained. Inspection evidence shows that standards at the end of the current Year 6 are similar to those at the time of the last inspection. Standards are currently above average but not as good as the 2004 national test results indicate. This is because of a relative weakness in pupils' ability to take responsibility or solve mathematical problems. Standards at the end of Year 6 have improved since the last inspection as a result of better teaching and the good quality support from the local education authority. In Years 1 and 2, standards are not as high as Years 3 to 6, and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. This is because expectations have not been high enough in the past. In 2003, pupils taking the national tests in Year 2 reached standards that were well above the national average. Unconfirmed data for 2004 suggests that standards dipped in that year and were in line with the national average. Inspection evidence is that standards at the end of Year 2 are currently average, with higher-attaining pupils not doing as well as they could. There is a pattern of improvement in Years 1 and 2, and this should have an impact on future results higher up the school. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress due to the quality of support they receive during lessons.
49. The quality of teaching and learning is currently good overall, with some very good features. Expectations for higher-attaining pupils are increasing as a result of a rigorous approach being adopted by the newly-appointed teachers. Lessons are well structured and begin with a lively mental session where pupils are engaged in drawing on previous learning and where the questions are challenging. In a very good lesson, pupils in Year

6 were challenged to answer quick-fire mental questions. The raised level of challenge added much to the enjoyment of the class who clearly did not want to be beaten. The pace was brisk as well as challenging. A very positive aspect of mental mathematics sessions is the way in which teachers use good questioning skills to find out how much the pupils know and understand from previous lessons. If it is apparent that very little has been retained from an earlier lesson or that there are misunderstandings, then the teachers skilfully adapt the content of the lesson. Very good use is made of resources to support learning, for example by encouraging pupils to use their own whiteboards to record their answers. This not only engages pupils' interest but also enables the teachers to see at a glance those pupils who have grasped the idea. In all the lessons observed, a strong feature was the good use of praise and encouragement to raise self-esteem, set high expectations and enable the pupils to face challenge without fear of failure. In every lesson and in conversations, pupils showed that they enjoyed their learning. They responded positively when they were challenged and expected to work hard. Being given a time limit to finish a task added to their level of concentration and interest.

50. The subject is effectively led and managed by a newly-appointed co-ordinator. There is a clear grasp of the subject's strengths and weaknesses and a number of well thought through strategies are being implemented to improve the quality of provision. For example, a target-setting process has been introduced, where each pupil will have very clear indicators of what they need to do to improve their work. Effective assessment procedures have been established that contribute to identifying the needs of individuals and groups and enables the deployment of staff to support those in most need. The school has maintained its quality of provision based on the judgements made at the last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

51. The use of mathematics across the curriculum is unsatisfactory, because opportunities for its application are not planned well enough. There is a particular weakness in the lack of opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills to science and ICT.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in the national tests at the end of Year 6, but they are not confident in thinking and acting for themselves.
- Science is not used well enough to apply basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT.
- The co-ordinator has a good grasp of the subject's strengths and weaknesses, and is taking steps to improve provision further.

Commentary

52. Inspection evidence shows that pupils achieve well by the end of Year 6. Standards in Year 6 have improved since the last inspection and are currently above average. Results in the last three years show that standards are well above the national average and above the average for similar schools. The unconfirmed 2004 results also indicate that standards are well above the national average. The contradiction between the

inspection findings and the national test results are explained by the fact that whilst pupils have a very good knowledge and understanding for their age of scientific ideas, their ability to perform scientific investigations is only satisfactory, and could be better. In Years 1 and 2, standards were broadly in line with the national average in 2003, mainly because too few pupils gained standards that exceeded expectations for their age. Inspection evidence is that standards are in line with expectations, but more pupils could reach above average levels. Year 2 pupils have a good knowledge of science, but they too are less secure in performing scientific investigations. Although assessment data indicates that girls do better than boys in the national tests, the statistics are insignificant.

53. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good, although in the past, not enough attention has been given to teaching the skills of practical investigations. Teacher subject knowledge is now secure, and lessons are well planned to meet the diverse range of ages in each class. Good use is made of assessment systems to identify what pupils already know, and this is effectively used to guide planning. Pupils know what they are going to learn because teachers clearly explain the purpose of the lesson and what is expected of them. Good teamwork, involving the teaching assistants, helps teachers to match work to the needs of pupils, so that even those with special educational needs are fully included in all aspects of lessons. In a lesson exploring ideas related to light, pupils in Years 2 and 3 displayed a keen interest in a range of simple practical activities. Whilst looking at the way light can be reflected from a shiny surface, pupils worked very well together and showed good levels of inquisitiveness and curiosity. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 were fascinated by the information presented in a lively and interesting way about how the earth, moon and sun move, and the way that this explains day and night, months and years. Most pupils enjoy science, but when given the chance to make their own decisions about their learning, inspection evidence shows that they are clearly unsure and lacking in confidence to do so. This is because of a lack of expectation in the past for them to work with minimal adult support to gather data and information in order to prove or disprove their own hypotheses. Even though there is recognition by the new members of staff of the need to challenge and improve pupils' existing practical skills, there is much to be done in this area of teaching and learning.
54. Some links are made between science and other subjects, but a lack of access to suitable ICT resources has restricted the use of computers to support learning. Pupils develop mathematics through incidental opportunities, for example, when measuring data and recording their findings. At times, pupils make some good use of literacy skills to record scientific work as well using non-fiction books to find information as part of research projects. Such good links are not, however, a consistent feature of science planning. The overall quality of planning for the use of such basic skills is relatively weak, and this results in some missed opportunities for the development of basic skills through science.
55. The subject is currently well led and managed. The new co-ordinator is determined to retain the good results in the national tests whilst also improving standards in scientific investigations. Effective steps are being taken to extend opportunities for pupils to acquire suitable knowledge and skills of solving scientific problems. A satisfactory assessment system is in place, which helps to inform the school's evaluation systems. The overall quality of provision has been maintained as it was at the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision in ICT is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Weaknesses in the past have resulted in pupils having many gaps in their learning, and contribute to pupils not making enough use of ICT to support learning across the curriculum.
- Strong and effective management and leadership are improving the quality of provision and raising standards.
- Despite weaknesses in resources that have restricted access to the whole curriculum, pupils are keen to explore ICT.

Commentary

56. Achievement is unsatisfactory. By the end of both Years 2 and 6, standards are well below those expected for pupils of their age. Over recent years, the school has not invested sufficient funds to ensure that the provision has kept pace with the rate of change found in most schools. A lack of an ICT suite, weaknesses in software and unreliable equipment have all reduced the progress made by pupils and their ability to use computers to support learning across the curriculum. Standards have declined since the last inspection.
57. Discussions with pupils show that despite being enthusiastic about ICT, their knowledge and understanding is poor. Observations of pupils in Year 2 shows that their experience of using a keyboard is very limited, and their knowledge of basic skills such as typing text and saving their work is also poor. By the end of Year 6, pupils have developed a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of creating text documents and importing images and photographs. They are familiar with using search engines such as Google in order to locate information associated with homework tasks, for example, in completing some high quality projects about mountains. There are, however, big gaps in pupils' knowledge and experience of other areas of ICT. Most pupils are very insecure about how to create and interpret databases and use spreadsheets. There is little experience of creating multimedia presentations or of using sensors to gather information associated with, for example, the conditions of the environment. Whilst pupils are familiar with using the Internet and email, often from use at home, there have been few planned opportunities for them to do so at school as part of their general education. At the moment, the subject's contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is unsatisfactory, even though pupils are keen to learn.
58. The quality of provision is in the process of being improved. Under the very good leadership and determined management of a very knowledgeable co-ordinator, the resources are being updated, facilities for an ICT suite are being created, and the curriculum is being revamped. ICT is now taking a much higher profile in the school and all staff are committed to raising standards. Lessons are now well planned, and more time is being given to tackling the low level of achievement across the school. The quality of teaching and learning is currently good and pupils are making good progress from a low starting point. Gaps still remain in the knowledge of many pupils, especially older pupils in Years 5 and 6, but the curriculum is now much more exciting and harnessing pupils' interest.
59. Under the strong management of the co-ordinator, and with the willing support of staff, pupils are on track to rapidly catch up. The very recent creation of an ICT suite and the

purchase of three interactive whiteboards provide a more secure base to raise standards in the future. There is still a long way to go, but the improvement is tangible. The curriculum is well planned, and a basic assessment system is being developed. Based on the findings of the last inspection report, the quality of provision has declined since then.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

60. The provision for using ICT is unsatisfactory. This is as a result of weaknesses in the resources available for learning, coupled with a weakness in the way links are planned. Some good examples of its use to support learning exist, for example as part of a geography topic, pupils have created some high quality projects about mountains, but generally the use of ICT across the curriculum is poor. Very little use is made of it to support learning in literacy or numeracy. Some good work has occurred in Years 2, 3 and 4, where pupils made use of a paint program to generate computer-designed artwork.

HUMANITIES

61. A judgement about the quality of provision in **geography** and **history** was not possible due to time constraints and lack of evidence. Only one lesson was observed in each subject.
62. A satisfactory curriculum is in place in **geography**. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of geography for their age. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make good use of the local environment during visits they make to the locality. At the time of the inspection, 'Barnaby Bear', the class teddy bear, had spent the weekend with one of the pupils and had visited Legoland near Windsor. This prompted the need to get out the map and to find out where the pupils lived, where Windsor was and then to work out how Barnaby Bear and his friend got there. In Years 3 to 6, pupils have a good knowledge of the main features of the Earth, and the position of the United Kingdom. Teachers make good use of homework, with pupils using and applying research skills to generate good quality studies of mountains. Good links with the local library supplement the range of books available, and a loan service extends the school's range of artefacts to support learning.
63. The curriculum for **history** is satisfactory. Discussion with pupils indicates that they have a good knowledge of history with a strong sense of changes in society over the years. A strong feature of teaching is the commendable way in which teachers use visits and visitors and plan events that put the learning into an enjoyable context. For example, following the topic on Greeks, the pupils in Years 5 and 6 are organising a Greek Feast where they will design and make authentic clothing to dress in. Visitors came into school to talk about how life had changed since the 1930s, and this was coupled with a visit to the museum. A suitable range of opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their skills of enquiry through the use of a good range of books, pictures, videos and artefacts. However, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to use computers to aid their research. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop a sound understanding of the past through looking at how things have changed over the years. Currently, the pupils are looking at toys and the materials they are made of. Over the next few weeks, the pupils will build up a toy museum so that they can compare old toys with the ones they have at home. The curator from Chippenham museum is visiting the school to talk to pupils about examples of old toys. In discussion with pupils, it is apparent they enjoyed many aspects of history.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good curriculum ensures that pupils build progressively on their learning as they move through the school.
- Standards are above average at the end of Years 2 and 6.
- Good links with the community benefit pupils' learning.

Commentary

64. Achievement has improved since the last inspection. Attainment in both key stages is now above the expectations set by the locally agreed syllabus, and is a result of good quality teaching and learning. The syllabus is well embedded, and there is a comprehensive scheme of work that focuses on three world faiths – Christianity, Islam and Judaism – as well as touching on the basic beliefs and celebrations of Hindus and Sikhs. Teachers plan thoughtfully to ensure pupils learn about events in Christianity and other faiths, and appreciate similarities as well as differences between them.
65. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. Pupils benefit from the close links between the school and St Michael's church. At least three visits occur each year, for Harvest, Christmas and Easter. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of the features of Christian worship and the significance of events such as Christ's birth, his crucifixion and subsequent resurrection. Pupils all speak with reverence about the Bible, and are very aware of the basic structure of the Old and New Testaments and the different origins of each. The regular visit of local clergy to lead assemblies provides pupils with a broader view of some of the teachings of Christianity. Older pupils have a good knowledge for their age of events from the Bible. For example, they competently discuss possible reasons behind events in the parables. A study of other religions is taught well. Pupils are knowledgeable about the significance of the Qu'ran to Moslems. As a result of a visit to a mosque in Swindon, Year 6 pupils talked about the difference and similarities between a church and mosque, and the ways of worship. A lively discussion with a group of pupils from Years 4, 5 and 6 showed that they have respect and maturely give due deference to the philosophy and cultural events of those with beliefs other than their own.
66. The subject is well led and managed. Resources for the subject are satisfactory, and a small but good quality range of resources is being developed to support work on world faiths. Provision has improved since the last inspection.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

67. The limitations of time made it impossible to make secure judgements about provision in **art and design**, **design and technology** and **music**. Evidence from looking at display of art work in the school, discussions with a selection of children from Years 4 and 6, a review of key school documentation and talking with staff gave an insight into some aspects of each subject.
68. In **art and design**, the curriculum is weak. Discussions with pupils indicate that their knowledge and understanding is below expectations for pupils at the end of both Years

2 and 6. In the past, they have not been given a fair go at experiencing all parts of the curriculum. Whilst pupils are given ample time to develop their skills of sketching, drawing and painting, they have little chance to develop their knowledge and understanding of the style of a range of famous artists; nor are they given enough experiences of developing expertise in three-dimensional art. The school is well aware of the need to improve standards, and is in the process of doing so. A particularly skilled teacher has instigated a number of strategies, such as leading an extracurricular art club. Work of a high standard is being produced, which is very well displayed as a way of setting an example and encouraging learning.

69. In **design and technology**, pupils are given a satisfactory range of activities. From a young age, pupils are introduced to the way that design and technology is a way of satisfying needs. By using materials such as card, fabrics and exploring various ways of joining materials, pupils develop skills related to designing and making money carriers or purses, and also create simple moving puppets. Older pupils developed an understanding of another culture by designing and making some good quality cushions in an Indian style. The curriculum is effectively planned to meet requirements, and whilst resources are satisfactory, equipment to develop pupils' ideas related to mechanisms and structures is relatively weak. Links are made between design and technology and some other subjects, for example, where pupils designed and built cam-based toys associated with science, but overall, such planning is not as detailed as it might be. The lack of suitable computers means that computer-assisted design does not occur.
70. Pupils receive a satisfactory curriculum for **music**, which is an improvement compared to the recent past and the quality of provision at the last inspection. Lessons in music are now a regular feature on the timetable. A new scheme of work has been introduced, and all teachers share responsibility for the subject. A satisfactory range of extracurricular activities is available to pupils, including opportunities to learn musical instruments and access to a peripatetic teacher of the voice. The school is considering extending the role of the voice teachers to include pupils across the school. Pupils enjoy musical activities, as shown by the way that they sing enthusiastically during assemblies.

Physical education (PE)

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision has improved since the last inspection, but achievement in gymnastics in Years 1 and 2 are below expectations.
- The quality of leadership and management has improved significantly recently, and is responsible for rising standards across the school and a higher profile of PE in school life.

Commentary

71. The overall attainment of the pupils at the end of Year 6 is in line with national expectations, but below them at the end of Year 2, primarily because of a weakness in gymnastics. As a result of better facilities for indoor activities, pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6 has improved since the last inspection, and is now satisfactory. In Years 1 and 2, however, standards are below expectations because of weaknesses in the

quality of provision in the past. Based on the judgments made in the last inspection, standards have declined at the end of Year 2.

72. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, with strengths in the teaching of dance and games. In Years 1 and 2, very good class routines are being established to maintain safety in indoor activities. High expectations are being set for behaviour and general conduct. As a result of the high level of organisation, pupils work well together in groups using the benches, mats and a low box. Most pupils, however, struggle to move with reasonable levels of co-ordination, and have a limited knowledge of gymnastic movements, such as the forward roll. In Years 3 to 6, pupils show that games skills are developing well throughout the school. During a very good games lesson observed in Year 5/6, the pace was very brisk and the pupils were really challenged to listen carefully and respond promptly. During the remaining part of the lesson, the pupils improved their skills in handling a hockey stick and controlling the ball. All pupils in Years 2 and 3 have the opportunity to go swimming and all achieve the 25-metre goal by the end of Year 3.
73. The subject benefits from being effectively led and managed by a newly appointed co-ordinator who is very enthusiastic and skilled. The curriculum is in the process of being revamped so that all elements of the subject are now regularly taught. There has been a significant expansion in the provision for extracurricular activities, and for a small school, this is now very good. Efforts are being made to improve the links with other schools in terms of PE activities and events. Assessment systems are not established, but effective strategies are in place to rectify this weakness. The provision for PE has improved since the last inspection with improved access to a hall for indoor activities.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

74. The school is taking effective steps to establish a coherent approach to this area of pupils' development. Under the dedicated leadership of a skilled co-ordinator, the school's provision, which is satisfactory, is being pulled together so that a clearer structure is in place that meets the needs of all pupils. At the moment, the different elements of this aspect of the school's curriculum are taught as part of subjects such as science and religious education and also as part of activities such as circle time, where children are encouraged to share their views and feelings about a variety of things. There is a risk, however, of some pupils missing out on some elements, so the co-ordinator is working with staff to develop and implement a better scheme than is currently in place. Although issues such as drugs awareness and sex and relationships education are included in the science curriculum, there is recognition by staff of the need to review the provision so that it is better planned.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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