

INSPECTION REPORT

**LITTLE MILTON CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Little Milton

LEA area: Oxfordshire

Unique reference number: 123198

Headteacher: Mrs Eve Hunter

Lead inspector: Mrs Stephanie Lacey

Dates of inspection: 10th - 11th January 2005

Inspection number: 267219

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

© Crown copyright 2005

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils: 4 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 45

School address: Stadhampton Road
Little Milton
Oxfordshire
Postcode: OX44 7QD

Telephone number: (01844) 279 310
Fax number: (01844) 279 310

Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of Mrs Isabel Fox
governors:

Date of previous 1st February 1999
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Little Milton Church of England Primary School is a small village school south east of Oxford. It has three classes. Until recently, children transferred to Great Milton CE Primary School at the end of Year 4. The school now caters for children until the end of Year 6, but so far, few families have taken advantage of this provision. Most pupils currently leave at the end of Year 4, with a few moving either in or out of the school at other times. This mobility is broadly average. There are two year groups in each class, except for Year 2, which is taught separately. Pupils come from a wide range of social, economic and academic backgrounds. Nine per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is just below the national average and reflects the advantaged backgrounds of many of the pupils. Some pupils come from the village itself and others from local villages nearby. Most pupils are White British, with 13 per cent from other white ethnic backgrounds. One child speaks English as an additional language, but is fluent in English. When children start school, their skills, knowledge and understanding are very wide-ranging; most children have reached the levels expected for their age, with some doing much better. Eight per cent of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, which is well below average. These pupils have a range of learning difficulties and one child has a statement of special educational need. The school gained a government achievement award in 2001 for its success in Year 2 national tests.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
3764	Mrs Stephanie Lacey	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage English Art and design Geography History Music Special educational needs English as an additional language
11104	Dr Michael Fleming	Lay inspector	
30618	Mr Paul Story	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education Science Design and technology Information and communication technology

The inspection contractor was:

Tribal PPI
1 - 4 Portland Square
Bristol
BS2 8RR

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637 833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	4 - 5
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	6 - 8
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	8 - 14
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	14 - 15
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	16 - 28
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	29

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school with many very good features and no significant areas for improvement. The very caring ethos, the very strong partnership with parents, the very good care for the individual and good teaching all underpin pupils' good achievement. The headteacher leads the committed staff team very effectively and there is a clear focus on maintaining high standards. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well because the teaching is good.
- Standards in national tests are well above average.
- Pupils are very positive about school and behave very well.
- There is a friendly and caring atmosphere in the school and all members of the school community are valued and supported.
- The headteacher provides very clear educational leadership.
- The very good partnership with parents is founded on mutual trust and respect.

The school has made good progress since its last inspection in 1999. It has developed and enhanced the good quality provision noted at that time, in spite of a complete turnover of staff. Standards remain high. Issues identified for improvement by the last inspection have been tackled effectively. These included raising standards by improving provision in information and communication technology (ICT), developing pupils' writing, tracking pupils' progress in reading and ICT more carefully, improving the drains and providing more administrative support for the headteacher.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
reading	A*	A*	A	A
writing	A	A	A	B
mathematics	B	A	A	A

Key: A - top five per cent of all schools; A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average. Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals.*

Overall, pupils achieve well. Children in the reception year make a sound start. They achieve well in their personal and language development and satisfactorily in other areas of learning. By the end of the year, almost all reach the goals expected of them, with many doing better. Pupils achieve well overall in Years 1 and 2, and standards are above the levels expected for their age in reading, writing, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. The same is true in Years 3 and 4, where pupils also achieve well, many reaching higher levels than expected in the core subjects. Pupils with special educational needs also achieve well. There is no difference in the achievement of boys and girls, or pupils from minority ethnic groups.

The table shows that standards in national tests have been consistently well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics for several years. In two of the last

three years, standards have been in the top five per cent of all schools in reading. Generally, pupils at Little Milton do much better than their peers in schools with a similar free school meal entitlement. This is a very positive picture, but it needs to be borne in mind that in small schools standards can appear to fluctuate dramatically from year to year because of the impact of one child's performance on the standards overall. In 2004, schools in Oxfordshire were in a national pilot scheme in which teacher assessments rather than tests were used to ascertain how well pupils were doing.

Pupils' personal development is good because of the good overall provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are very positive about school and keen to learn. They behave very well in lessons and at playtimes and their levels of attendance are excellent.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality education. Teaching is good overall and this ensures that pupils learn effectively. Teaching is sound, with some good features, in the reception year and Year 1 and good in Years 2 to 4. Very good relationships, careful planning and good levels of adult support underpin pupils' learning. Consequently, pupils try hard and concentrate well. Most pick up new ideas quickly. Pupils are becoming more involved in evaluating how well they are doing. The work planned is interesting and enhanced by a range of visits and visitors. Planning for different subjects is good, with the staff now working on developing pupils' language, literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. Improvements to the Foundation Stage garden are opening up more opportunities for independent play. Very good attention is paid to supporting pupils' individual needs and the very strong partnership with parents enhances pupils' learning both at home and at school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are good overall. The school is very well led and management is good. The headteacher is very focused on school improvement and is supported well by staff. She has the full confidence of parents and governors. The school is managed well and runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. The school has some sensible systems in place to evaluate how well it is doing and uses these evaluations to plan for the future. Governance is good overall, with some governors making significant contributions. All statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very positive about all that the school does for their children. Many have chosen to send their children to Little Milton even though it is not their nearest school. Pupils are also very positive about the school. They are unanimous in feeling that they have an adult to turn to if they are worried. The areas that some children felt needed improving are: being trusted to do things on their own, teachers listening to their ideas and the behaviour and friendliness of other children. The inspection found that there is room for pupils to have more independence, but that pupils' behaviour and friendliness are very good.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

In this good school, there are no significant areas for improvement, although further work on some areas could raise the overall provision to very good.

The most important things the school should do to improve are already identified in the school improvement plan. These include:

- Improving the planning for the development of speaking and listening skills through the school.
- Developing the use of the outdoor learning environment for Foundation Stage children and increasing their opportunities for independent play.
- Developing the ways in which pupils are involved in evaluating their own progress.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Standards are above average in English, mathematics and science. Children make a sound start in the reception class and Year 1 and achieve well in Years 2 to 4.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have been well above average or very high in national tests for several years.
- Children in the reception year and Year 1 achieve well in the areas of personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy.
- Pupils achieve well in Years 2 to 4.
- Standards in work seen in English, mathematics and science are above levels expected, with reading standards well above those expected.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

Commentary

Standards have been well above average or very high in national tests for several years

1. In very small schools, some caution needs to be exercised in comparing standards in national tests with the national averages. This is because the achievement of one pupil can have a large impact on the overall performance of the group. For that reason, tables showing comparisons with the national average are omitted in schools where ten children or fewer took the tests. Nevertheless, some general points can be made. Standards in Year 2 national tests and assessments at Little Milton have been almost consistently well above the national average, or in the top five per cent of all schools, in reading, writing and mathematics for the last four years. This reflects the good achievement of the pupils. These high standards have been maintained since the last inspection. This year, standards in Year 2 tests might be slightly lower because a few of the pupils in this year group have learning difficulties.

Children in the reception class and Year 1 achieve well in the areas of personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy

2. Most children start school with more developed skills, knowledge and understanding than one would expect for their age. By the end of the reception year, almost all

children reach the goals expected for children of their age in the six areas of learning¹, with many already working within Level 1 of the National Curriculum. Children, including pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, achieve well in the area of personal, social and emotional development because of the good emphasis that the staff place on developing these skills. They also do well in the development of their communication, language and literacy skills: most particularly in the area of reading. Pupils in Year 1 also achieve well in these areas and benefit from the opportunity to work in a small group.

Pupils achieve well in Years 2 to 4

3. Pupils achieve well in Years 2 to 4 in reading, writing, mathematics and science. In the few lessons seen in other subjects, pupils also generally did well. The key factors in this good achievement are consistently good teaching and a low pupil-teacher ratio. All groups of pupils do well, including pupils with special educational needs, those from minority ethnic backgrounds and boys and girls.

Standards in work seen in English, mathematics and science are above levels expected, with reading standards well above those expected

4. In all year groups, almost all pupils are working at the levels expected for their age in speaking and listening, writing, mathematics and science, with some doing better. Pupils speak confidently and clearly, but there is no medium-term planning guidance to ensure development of skills year on year. Pupils make good progress in reading and reach levels that are well above those expected for their age. This means that they tackle difficult texts and make sense of them. Factors that contribute to these high standards include emphasis on pupils sharing books with an adult on a regular basis at home. The very good reading diaries demonstrate the success of this approach and indicate the very good partnership that exists between home and school in relation to developing pupils' reading skills. Staff also teach pupils to make the link between letters, and the sound that they represent, effectively and this helps pupils to approach new words with confidence. Throughout the school, pupils' writing is interesting and imaginative. Pupils are developing appropriate spelling and punctuation skills. The school has worked hard to improve presentation of work, but the development of pupils' handwriting skills remains an area for development. Pupils develop their numeracy skills well and have opportunity to develop these through problem solving and practical activities. Pupils are developing their scientific knowledge and understanding well. Standards are not even higher in Year 2 because pupils do not fully understand the concept of fair testing. In Year 4, standards are not well above average because pupils do not have enough opportunities to plan their own investigations.

Pupils with special educational needs make good progress

5. Four pupils are identified with special educational needs and one of these pupils has a statement of special educational need. All of these pupils achieve well and make good progress as a consequence of the good support that they are given.

Pupils learning English as an additional language

6. Only one child speaks English as an additional language. He is fluent in English and does not need any extra support.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

¹ The areas of learning are: personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development.

Pupils enjoy school. They are very eager to learn and behave very well in lessons and at playtimes. Their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Attendance levels are very high. This area has been maintained well since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are very positive about school.
- Pupils behave very well and get on very well with each other.
- Pupils' personal development is good.
- Pupils are keen to be at school and attendance is very high.

Commentary

Pupils are very positive about school

7. Pupils are very positive about all aspects of school life. They like their teachers and try hard in lessons. They like learning new things. They like the friendly atmosphere and the happy atmosphere in the playground.

Pupils behave very well and get on very well with each other

8. Pupils behave very well. They are polite and sensible in lessons and respond to the staff's requests very speedily. They play very amicably at breaks and lunchtimes and there is no aggressive behaviour, or any evidence of racism. Bullying incidents are rare and dealt with promptly by staff. There have been no exclusions for inappropriate behaviour. Children's relationships are very good. Older and younger ones play happily together, with older pupils caring and protective of the younger ones.

Pupils' personal development is good

9. The school makes good overall provision for pupils' personal development, with some aspects being very good. Children in the reception class settle quickly into school life and reach the goals expected for them by the end of the reception year because of the good provision for their personal, social and emotional development.
10. Pupils' very good moral understanding and developed social skills reflect the clear guidance given about behaviour and the very good role models of the staff. Pupils care for each other and show respect and understanding for those who have special educational needs. Older pupils take on extra responsibilities, but these are not shared out in a systematic way. Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is good. Christian values underpin the life of the school and pupils have opportunities to reflect on values and beliefs. Pupils learn about a wide range of cultural traditions and a recently formed link with a multi-ethnic school in Oxford provides the scope for greater understanding of cultural diversity. Planning for these aspects of personal development tend to be 'ad hoc' rather than systematic.

Attendance

Pupils are keen to be at school and attendance is very high

11. Because pupils and their parents are so satisfied with life at the school, their efforts combine to ensure that no opportunity to attend is missed. As the table shows, attendance levels were very high last year with no unauthorised absence. Procedures

for registration are effective and parents understand what to do if an absence is unavoidable.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.1	School data	0.0
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality education. Teaching and learning are good overall. Planning for work in different subjects is also good and enhanced by interesting activities and events. The school is very well staffed and well resourced. It makes best use of the satisfactory accommodation. Staff know the pupils very well and make good provision for their individual needs. The very good partnership with parents enhances children’s learning.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is good overall and ensures that pupils learn effectively. There are sound procedures in place for checking how well pupils are doing.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good relationships between staff and pupils help children to approach learning tasks with confidence.
- Teachers plan and prepare thoroughly and so pupils develop their skills, understanding and knowledge well.
- Teachers know pupils well and plan carefully for their individual needs.
- Very good staffing ratios underpin effective support for small groups.
- Teachers have very high expectations of pupils’ behaviour.
- Individual teachers have particular strengths.
- There are some minor areas for improvement related to work with different age groups.
- Assessment procedures are satisfactory overall, with some good features and more scope for involving pupils in self-evaluation.

Commentary

12. Good quality teaching has been maintained since the last inspection and this ensures that pupils continue to achieve well. During the inspection, only four of the five teachers were observed because one of the job share teachers was not in school. Teaching is sound with some good and very good features in the Foundation Stage and Year 1 and good in Years 2, 3 and 4. The table below indicates the quality of teaching in the lessons seen.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 16 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
-----------	-----------	------	--------------	----------------	------	-----------

0	1	9	6	0	0	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

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

There are some common strengths evident in all of the teaching seen.

Very good relationships between staff and pupils help children to approach learning tasks with confidence

13. Staff and pupils clearly enjoy each other's company. There are high levels of mutual trust and respect. Consequently, pupils show every confidence in tackling their work because they know that staff value and appreciate their efforts.

Teachers plan and prepare thoroughly and so pupils develop their skills, understanding and knowledge well

14. In all classes, teachers plan and prepare work thoroughly for pupils. Care is taken to challenge the different year groups in the two mixed age classes. Materials are carefully prepared before lessons begin and so teachers and pupils do not waste time sorting out equipment during lessons. Consequently, pupils work on appropriate tasks and move forward well in their learning. Within this positive picture, there are not currently sufficient opportunities for Foundation Stage children to plan and review their activities and to engage in more independent play.

Teachers know pupils well and plan carefully for their individual needs

15. Classes are small and so teachers know individual pupils very well. As a result, they plan carefully for their individual learning needs. Pupils with special educational needs have clear targets, which are worked on throughout the day.

Very good staffing ratios underpin effective support for small groups

16. In all three classes, there is a very low ratio of pupils to adults. This means that teaching groups are small and that all pupils have the opportunity to contribute to discussions. Staff have the time to provide individual support when it is needed. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the work in classrooms. They are highly skilled and provide very effective support for staff and pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported by staff and make good progress as a result. The only disadvantage is that opportunities for pupils to work independently do not arise as frequently as they do in many schools. Staff are aware of this and planning for some lessons incorporates independent work.

Teachers have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour

17. Pupils behave very well because they are clear about what is expected of them. Consequently, teachers waste little time in lessons managing inappropriate behaviour. This means that lessons are calm and purposeful.

Individual teachers have particular strengths

18. Individual teachers have particular strengths. These include: very clear explanations so that pupils understand quickly; good questioning to challenge pupils to think carefully; very good use of the interactive whiteboard; and good use of the time within individual lessons. In addition to these, very good use is made of the skills and expertise of a parent, who visits weekly to teach French to pupils from Year 2 to Year 4.

There are some minor areas for improvement

19. Within the context of good teaching overall, there are some areas for improvement. These are related to particular age groups. In the Foundation Stage, the current arrangement of the room does not make it easy for the teacher to organise independent play activities for the children. In some sessions in Years 1 and 2, teachers do not develop pupils' mathematical or geographical language sufficiently. In Years 3 and 4, there is scope to use a wider range of teaching methods in the introduction to lessons. Generally, the challenge set for pupils is good, but an even higher level of challenge would help pupils to move ahead even more quickly.

Assessment procedures are satisfactory overall, with some good features.

20. Teachers check pupils' progress carefully and keep careful records of their progress. These are shared very effectively with parents, both through the very comprehensive reading diaries that are used by parents and staff and through the assessed piece of a child's written work, which is sent home to parents each term. Marking of pupils' work is sound overall. In the best examples, it is clear to the pupils whether they have learnt what they were expected to in a particular lesson and what they need to do to improve. The school is developing its use of target setting, both for groups and individuals. Staff are working towards helping pupils to evaluate their own work, but this is not yet embedded in practice.

The curriculum

The school provides pupils with a good curriculum that is enriched well by a range of interesting activities, visits and visitors. Accommodation is good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory overall. The school is well resourced. Good improvement has been made in all areas since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a well-constructed, varied and interesting curriculum, but not enough opportunities for children in the reception year to play independently.
- Careful planning ensures the needs of all pupils, including those in mixed age classes, are met well.
- Good use of visits, visitors, clubs, the locality and other activities to enrich and enliven pupils' learning.
- Very good levels of staffing and the good resources for ICT are key factors in pupils' good achievement.
- The school works hard to make the best use of its accommodation and overcome the lack of a hall.

Commentary

There is a well-constructed, varied and interesting curriculum, but not enough opportunities for children in the reception year to play independently

21. Planning for children in the Foundation Stage is securely based on national guidance and meshes well with the work planned for Year 1 pupils in the same class. The present organisation of the room makes it difficult for staff to plan opportunities for children to play independently. All subjects of the National Curriculum are covered and French is taught in Years 2, 3 and 4. The use of a rolling programme of topics maintains pupils' interest, but in geography there is a long gap between topics in Years 3 and 4. Sex and relationships education, drugs education and a good programme of personal and citizenship education are in place. Statutory requirements are met. Since the last inspection, the school has made good use of the numeracy and literacy strategies and national guidance as the basis for planning the curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 4. Teachers make good use of this to plan interesting, practical activities. Subject skills are sequentially developed and pupils prepared well for the next stages in their learning. Good links are made between different subjects. Good use is made of ICT to support learning, addressing a concern of the last inspection. Appropriate emphasis is placed on numeracy and literacy skills. Recent developments have included a focus on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills, the use of problem solving in mathematics and identifying opportunities for using ICT. Innovations include the introduction of thinking skills and consideration of the implications of the Primary Strategy.

Careful planning ensures the needs of all pupils, including those in mixed age classes, are met well

22. Teachers' detailed knowledge of pupils is used well to plan activities that meet the needs of all groups. Ability grouping for English and mathematics and good use of a two-year rolling programme for all other subjects ensures the needs of pupils in the mixed age classes are fully met. The good provision for pupils with special educational needs and extension tasks for more able pupils illustrate the school's strong commitment to equality of opportunity. Analysing assessment results and auditing the take up of activities help the school ensure practice matches intention.

Good use of visits, visitors, clubs, the locality and other activities to enrich and enliven pupils' learning

23. The school provides special interest weeks, which capture the enthusiasm of staff and pupils. Visitors and educational visits are used well to support, enliven and enrich learning. Regular visits by governors and members of the community are used to support and extend work in French, ICT, geography and history. A good range of extra-curricular clubs and activities in the sports and arts provide good opportunities for pupils to develop skills and interests.

Very good levels of staffing and the good resources for ICT are key factors in pupils' good achievement

24. The well-qualified and experienced teaching and support staff work closely together to the benefit of pupils. Very good levels of staffing mean pupils are taught in small classes or groups and pupils of all abilities are very well supported.
25. Since the last inspection, resources have been improved. Good use is made of links with partnership schools to fund or borrow more expensive items. The book stock has been reviewed and augmented, addressing a concern of the last inspection. There are sufficient resources for all subjects and the Foundation Stage. With several computers in each classroom, the school network and the interactive whiteboard in Class 2, resources for ICT are now good.

The school works hard to make the best use of its accommodation and overcome the lack of a hall

26. Overall, accommodation is satisfactory. It is good for children in the Foundation Stage, who have a spacious classroom and attractive outside garden which has been recently developed. The school makes good use of its relatively small site, main Victorian building and two additional buildings, which are all well maintained. The absence of a hall means classrooms are used for lunches and assembly. Facilities for physical education (PE) are restricted by the lack of a hall and the absence of a field. The school compensates effectively for this by using a local leisure centre and the village field.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes very good care of pupils and they are supported very well. Very effective attention is paid to health and safety and to child protection. Pupils are confident that their views are treated with respect. This area has improved since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have very good personal knowledge of pupils.
- A safe and secure environment is provided.
- Pupils settle quickly at school and feel well supported.
- Relationships are very good.
- Good account is taken of pupils' views.

Commentary

Teachers have very good personal knowledge of pupils

27. The very high ratio of adults to children enables staff to develop a very detailed understanding of all pupils as individuals. Pupils' achievements are monitored carefully. Pupils' background circumstances are well-known to staff and their personal development is discussed frequently. Teachers' intimate understanding of pupils is recognised by pupils and parents and makes a strong contribution to the caring ethos.

A safe and secure environment is provided

28. Suitable procedures to ensure pupils' health and safety are in place. These include careful instructions for pupils, and risk assessments when appropriate. The problem with drains evident at the last inspection has been resolved. Pupils benefit from external expertise, for example, from the local authority and the school nurse. Child protection arrangements are well considered.

Pupils settle quickly at school and feel well supported

29. A large proportion of pupils come to know the school through siblings who attend, local pre-school experiences or community events in which the school participates. Procedures for induction, which include pre-visits, revised information for parents and a sincere welcome for newcomers, are very effective. Together, these allow new pupils quickly to feel at home in the school and to feel comfortable turning to staff for help.

Relationships are very good

30. Very good relationships between pupils and staff are evident in lessons and throughout the school. This supports pupils' feelings of security and helps staff to

communicate clearly and effectively their expectations of high standards of work and behaviour.

Good account is taken of pupils' views

31. In the short time since the pupil council was started it has already established itself as an effective body through which pupils can contribute to the life of the school. Inspectors observed pupils' response to the recent Asian tsunami, which involved the sharing of sensible ideas about how to raise funds to support the victims. The school has also used questionnaire responses to help staff understand pupils' feelings about their school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has developed a very effective partnership with parents. Good support for pupils' education results from the school's relationships with other schools and with the local and wider communities.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents demonstrate great confidence and commitment.
- Parents are consulted very effectively.
- Parents receive good information about their children's progress.
- Very good use is made of the wider community to support the curriculum.
- The local community is supportive of the school.
- Pupils benefit from links with other local schools.

Commentary

Parents demonstrate great confidence and commitment

32. Parents are unanimous and effusive in their praise for virtually all aspects of the school's work. They are delighted by improvements in the school's openness to them. They praise the teaching, care and management in the school and particularly value the friendly and intimate atmosphere. For their part, parents are happy to support their children's education in any way the school suggests, for example, by hearing them read at home or by helping in lessons or on school visits. There has been no difficulty in recruiting parent governors. The activities of the Friends of Little Milton School raise very significant and useful funds which have contributed to coach trips and playground facilities.

Parents are consulted very effectively

33. The school canvasses parents' views thoroughly, including through regular biannual questionnaires, which encourage them to consider the school's work and how it might be improved. Parents' opinions and observations are treated seriously and care is taken to respond to issues that are raised or suggestions that are made. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in reviews of their progress.

Parents receive good information about their children's progress

34. Annual reports on pupils' progress give parents a clear indication of what their children have learnt and how well they are doing. There are also interim indications of progress in the form of marked pieces of work, which are sent home for examination and discussion twice a year. Parents are very comfortable to approach the school for any further information they might require.

Very good use is made of the wider community to support the curriculum

35. Pupils enjoy a much-enhanced range of experiences because of their frequent visits and visitors. The whole school visited, for example, the Sheldonian theatre and places of worship of different religions, and has participated in a range of arts and sports events. Visitors have introduced pupils to African drumming and the fascination of pottery.

The local community is supportive of the school

36. The school is seen as an important component of the local community. There are good links with the church. News about the school is printed in the regular local community newsletter (parents of pupils from out of the catchment area can read this on the internet) and some community use is made of the school premises. Local benefactors supported a project to install stained glass windows designed by pupils.

Pupils benefit from links with other local schools

37. The school's good relationships with other primary and secondary schools results in productive meetings of staff who discuss aspects of the curriculum and share training and expertise. Pupils are also able to use secondary school science resources, to work with secondary pupils in sports training and to participate in multi-school arts events. Good links between Little Milton and receiving schools mean that pupils are supported effectively when they transfer to their next school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall leadership and management of the school are good. The school is led very well. It is managed well and governance is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a very clear vision for improvement and is supported effectively by a committed staff team.
- There is a strong focus on ensuring that pupils of all abilities are supported well.
- Governors are closely involved in the life of the school and have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses.
- Teaching and learning are monitored well in English, mathematics and science but less closely in other subjects.
- Well-developed systems ensure the school runs smoothly.
- Finances are managed well, but long-term planning is difficult because of uncertainty over pupil numbers.

Commentary

The headteacher has a very clear vision for improvement and is supported effectively by a committed staff team

38. The headteacher provides very clear, strong leadership for this very small school. Her vision is focused on improvement. It is firmly based on the support and development

of the individual and embedded in a culture of Christian values. She provides a very good model for colleagues and is keen to introduce and develop new ideas. Parents and governors appreciate the quality of her work. A committed, cohesive staff team support her effectively through their work and areas of responsibility. Currently, individual staff take responsibility for work in different subjects and areas. Clearly, with at least 14 of these areas of responsibility and only two full-time teaching staff, this arrangement puts unreasonable pressure on staff.

There is a strong focus on ensuring pupils of all abilities are supported well

39. There is a strong commitment to ensuring all pupils achieve equally well. Audits of provision and careful data analysis ensure all abilities and groups enjoy equal access to activities. Parents, governors and staff are rightly proud of the family atmosphere and the school's caring approach. Pupils' achievements and the good standards they attain reflect this.

Governors are closely involved in the life of the school and have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses

40. Governance is good. Governors are very supportive and proud of their school's achievements. They are also aware of the need to pose challenging questions. Their regular visits mean they have a good understanding of its work, although these do not always have an agreed focus for the visit. Many have specific areas of expertise, which make a significant contribution to the development of the school. Through their committees, they share ideas and play an important role in shaping the direction the school takes. Time is used efficiently and governors attend training as they are able. All statutory requirements are met.

Teaching and learning is monitored well in English, mathematics and science but less closely in other subjects

41. Good use is made of termly lesson observations to monitor the quality of learning in English, mathematics and science. Test results and tracking of pupils' progress are used well to tease out strengths and what needs improvement. The school does not yet have rigorous systems in place for other subjects, although there has been a recent focus on music.

Well-developed systems ensure the school runs smoothly

42. There are good systems in place to ensure the smooth day-to-day running of the school, with staff at all levels, and especially the school secretary, making a valuable contribution. Staff training is closely linked to the school development plan and used to develop expertise and identify new ideas. Involvement in teacher training and close links with partnership schools enhance this. The school development plan is a clear, concise document reflecting input from parents, staff, pupils and governors. However, success criteria, whilst measuring the achievement of tasks, do not indicate the impact of initiatives on pupils' achievement.

Finances are well managed but long-term planning is difficult because of uncertainty over organisation and pupil numbers

43. Good financial controls and systems are in place. Careful husbandry has ensured that the school has not needed to operate a deficit budget, despite considerable changes in its structure and roll from year to year. Future forecasts are also difficult to prepare because of this variation and the prospect of a potential Year 5/6. During the annual budget preparation scenarios are explored and considered against the school's needs. Purchases are carefully researched to obtain best value for money. The school has

adopted local authority advice and increased the carry forward for the coming year to cater for projected need.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	174,254
Total expenditure	168,645
Expenditure per pupil	3,833

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	17,937
Balance carried forward to the next year	23,546

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

There are eight children in the Foundation Stage, who work in a classroom with ten Year 1 pupils. The class is staffed well with a teacher and an experienced teaching assistant. Reception children are offered a place in the September before they are five years old, but some parents choose to let their children start later in the year. Two children had only been in school a few days when the inspection took place.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good relationships between staff and children help children to be confident.
- Staff have high and clear expectations of how children should behave.
- Children do not have sufficient opportunities to play and work independently.

Commentary

Standards of attainment	Children reach the levels expected for their age, with a few doing better.
Achievement	Good, including achievement of pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language.
Quality of teaching and learning	Good.
Quality of curriculum leadership	Good.
Other factors affecting pupils' achievement	Children benefit from working in a small group.
Improvement since last inspection	Good provision has been maintained.

Very good relationships between staff and children help children to be confident

44. Children clearly like school and behave very confidently in their new surroundings. They have settled into school very well. They are not afraid to contribute their ideas in whole-class sessions, they ask for help when they need it and they play happily with older pupils at break times. The key factor in children's good achievement in this area is the very good relationship between staff and children. Staff clearly enjoy the children's company and take time to talk to each of them individually during the course of the day. Staff know the children and their families well and this helps children to make the step from home to school with confidence.

Staff have high and clear expectations of how children should behave

45. Children understand what is expected of them because staff have established clear routines and explain carefully what is expected in terms of behaviour in the classroom and outside area. Consequently, children listen carefully to the teacher and assistant, and respond sensibly in whole-class sessions. They try hard in the activity part of the sessions and share and take turns when they need to do so. They look after the equipment carefully and usually tidy away at the end of activities.

Children do not have sufficient opportunities to play and work independently

46. Children do have some opportunities during the day to choose their own activities and a range of appropriate tasks is available. During the inspection, these activities were limited because the current layout of the classroom limits the space available for activities across all the areas of learning. At the moment, there is no expectation that children should plan what they want to do, or review what they have achieved at the end of the session.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning in literacy sessions are good.
- Children enjoy reading and are developing early reading skills well.
- There is not a writing area for children to write independently.
- There is not a role-play area within the classroom.

Commentary

Standards of attainment	Most children reach the levels expected for their age, with a few doing better.
Achievement	Good, including achievement of pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language.
Quality of teaching and learning	Good.
Quality of curriculum leadership	Good.
Other factors affecting pupils' achievement	Children benefit from working in a small group.
Improvement since last inspection	Good provision has been maintained.

Teaching and learning in literacy sessions are good

47. Literacy sessions are well planned with a good level of challenge for the children. The activities are interesting and the children are clearly fully engaged in learning. In the session seen, children were exploring and experimenting with sounds and words. In relation to their topic on 'Noah's Ark', they were writing the sounds that different animals made in a speech bubble. They used their phonic skills to help them to 'sound out' the words and wrote recognisable letters.

Children enjoy reading and are developing early reading skills well

48. Children enjoy books. One of the reasons for this is the good emphasis placed by staff on sharing good quality books with the children in class and group activities. The book area is well stocked and easily accessible to the children. Children have made a good start on reading. Most read simple texts and higher attaining children are well ahead in the development of their reading skills. There are several factors underpinning the good progress made. These include a good emphasis on the teaching of phonics and very good support from parents and carers in sharing books with their children at home.

There is not a writing area for children to write independently

49. Children are beginning to write independently in literacy sessions, but at the moment there is not an area for them to use in independent play with a range of papers and writing tools. This limits opportunities to consolidate their skills and understand the purpose of writing.

There is not a role-play area within the classroom

50. At the time of the inspection, there was not a role-play area within the classroom for children to play imaginatively and make up their own stories. This is not always the case and in recent months a small area has been designated for this purpose. The school has just purchased a small 'house' for the outside area, but this was not used during the inspection.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **sound with some good features**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Songs and counting rhymes are used very well to help children to consolidate their understanding of number.
- Opportunities to help children to develop their understanding through independent play are not exploited sufficiently.

Commentary

Standards of attainment	Most children reach the levels expected for their age with a few doing better.
Achievement	Satisfactory, including achievement of pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language.
Quality of teaching and learning	Satisfactory.
Quality of curriculum leadership	Satisfactory.
Other factors affecting pupils' achievement	Children benefit from working in a small group.
Improvement since last inspection	Sound.

Songs and counting rhymes are used very well to help children to consolidate their understanding of number

51. Throughout the day, children reinforce their understanding of number by joining in a range of counting songs and rhymes. This helps them to learn about numbers in an imaginative way. During the inspection week, many of the songs were related to the class work on 'Noah's Ark' and this made learning particularly relevant for the children.

Opportunities to help children to develop their understanding through independent play are not exploited sufficiently

52. In the numeracy session seen, the teaching assistant used a game well to help children to count up to ten, with a few going beyond this. There is more scope to develop children's numeracy skills through independent play with more games and activities for them to engage in, both in the classroom and in the outside area.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Staff plan interesting activities.
- Insufficient use is made of the outside area to develop children's understanding.

Commentary

Standards of attainment	Most children reach the levels expected for their age, with a few doing better.
Achievement	Satisfactory, including achievement of pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language.
Quality of teaching and learning	Satisfactory.
Quality of curriculum leadership	Satisfactory.
Other factors affecting pupils' achievement	Children benefit from working in a small group.
Improvement since last inspection	Sound.

Staff plan interesting activities

53. Staff plan interesting activities for the children. In one session seen, for example, children went on a 'treasure hunt' in the outside area to find previously hidden objects. They had to decide whether these would have been found on a beach or not. The children were caught up in the activity and there was a good level of discussion about the different objects.

Insufficient use is made of the outside area to develop children's understanding

54. The school has a very rich resource in the outside area that can be reached from the youngest children's classroom. There have been some recent and good developments made, including a new wooden house, a sand pit, a space for children to dig and some natural areas. The area was used well in one group session seen, but the space is not used consistently throughout the day to develop children's understanding in all areas of learning.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **sound**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good attention is paid to helping children to develop their skills with small tools and equipment.
- The outside area provides space for children to move freely, but there are limited resources in the Foundation Stage garden for children to develop their physical skills.

Commentary

Standards of attainment	Most children reach the levels expected for their age.
Achievement	Satisfactory, including achievement of pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language.
Quality of teaching and learning	Satisfactory.
Quality of curriculum leadership	Satisfactory.
Other factors affecting pupils' achievement	Children benefit from working in a small group.
Improvement since last inspection	Sound.

Good attention is paid to helping children to develop their skills with small tools and equipment

55. Staff provide suitable activities for children to use small toys and equipment. Consequently, children are developing their manipulative skills well. In one session seen, children used scissors to cut out paper and material. Some struggled with this task, but improved their skills with good support from staff.

The outside area provides space for children to move freely, but there are limited resources in the Foundation Stage garden for children to develop their physical skills

56. There is space for children to run and play in the outside area, but there is no large equipment for children to use in this space. The staff compensate for this by taking the children to use the adventure equipment in the school playground from time to time. Staff have looked into the feasibility of providing wheeled toys. There is no suitable space to use these in the garden and limited storage space on the school playground, which would provide a suitable surface.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **sound**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are limited opportunities for children to develop their creative skills in independent play.
- Musical and art and design skills are taught systematically.

Commentary

Standards of attainment	Most children reach the levels expected for their age.
Achievement	Satisfactory, including achievement of pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language.
Quality of teaching and learning	Satisfactory.
Quality of curriculum leadership	Satisfactory.
Other factors affecting pupils' achievement	Children benefit from working in a small group.
Improvement since last inspection	Sound.

There are limited opportunities for children to develop their creative skills in independent play

57. At the time of the inspection there were few activities available for children to develop their creative skills in independent play. Mention has already been made of the lack of a role-play area in the classroom. There is also no opportunity for children to select from a range of media and equipment to make pictures and models and no opportunity for them to make music independently. During the inspection, children did

enjoy playing with animals and the new 'Noah's Ark', using these small world toys to make their own stories.

Musical and art and design skills are taught systematically

58. Regular music and art sessions are planned, when reception children work with their Year 1 friends. At these times, children develop their creative skills in a systematic way.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH AND FRENCH

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have been high in national tests for many years.
- Pupils achieve well because the teaching is good.
- Although standards in speaking and listening are above the levels expected, planning for the development of skills is at early stages.
- In reading, standards are well above expected levels because of the very good attention paid to helping individual pupils.
- In writing, almost all pupils reach the levels expected for their age, with some doing better, although their handwriting is not as good as it could be.

Commentary

	Years 1 and 2	Years 3 to 6
Standards of attainment	Above expected levels.	Above expected levels.
Achievement	Good, including achievement of pupils with special educational needs.	Good, including achievement of pupils with special educational needs.
Quality of teaching and learning	Good.	Good.
Quality of curriculum leadership	Good.	Good.
Other factors affecting achievement	Good arrangements for assessing and tracking pupils' progress.	
Improvement since the last inspection	Good.	

Standards have been high in national tests for many years

59. Pupils have achieved high standards in Year 2 tests and assessments for many years in both reading and writing and this reflects the good progress that pupils make through the school. High standards are also a testament to the good leadership of this subject by the headteacher, who has monitored provision carefully. One of the part-time teachers has just taken on leadership of the subject.

Pupils achieve well because the teaching is good

60. Pupils achieve well because the teaching is good. Strengths particularly related to the teaching of English include:

- Good subject knowledge, which is used to well to help pupils to grasp new ideas.
- Good emphasis on the teaching of phonic skills, which helps pupils to build up words in both reading and writing.
- Good links made with other subjects, which helps pupils apply their reading and writing skills particularly.
- The use of individual targets so that pupils know what they have to do to improve.
- Good support for pupils with special educational needs.

These, together with the strengths in teaching identified earlier in the report, enable pupils of all abilities to achieve well. In lessons, pupils try hard and remain focused on learning tasks.

Although standards in speaking and listening are above the levels expected, planning for the development of skills is at early stages

61. Most pupils are confident and articulate speakers. They have good opportunities to develop their skills in the introductory question and answer sessions in many lessons and some opportunities to discuss work and ideas with a partner. Sometimes, pupils report back to the whole class at the end of a lesson. In sessions seen, high standards were evident. The school is working on a planning framework to identify the development of skills through different activities in successive year groups. Currently, this is at the very early stages of development.

In reading, standards are well above expected levels because of the very good attention paid to helping individual pupils

62. Overall, pupils reach high standards in reading. This is because, in addition to the structured programme of the National Literacy Strategy, pupils are given a good deal of individual attention. The school has engaged parents extremely successfully in supporting their children at home and the very good home reading diaries are a testament to this very good partnership between home and school. Staff also find time to share books with pupils on an individual basis. Consequently, in all year groups, pupils tackle reading confidently. Although most pupils' reading skills are more advanced than other children of their age, their knowledge of books and authors is not. Some pupils have favourite authors, but others could not easily recall any writers' or illustrators' work that they had studied. Staff do share good quality literature with the pupils and there is a reasonable range of books in classrooms, but there are no displays of books to remind pupils of writers that they have studied or to whet their appetite for reading.

In writing, almost all pupils reach the levels expected for their age, with some doing better, although their handwriting is not as good as it could be

63. In all year groups, pupils tackle purposeful writing tasks and use their punctuation and spelling skills well. Standards overall are above those expected in most aspects of writing. Improving the presentation of pupils' work was an issue from the last inspection, and although staff feel that this has improved, it remains an area for development. Pupils' handwriting skills are not so well developed as their other skills, with some pupils' writing being untidy and uneven. Pupils' work shows that there has been some class teaching of handwriting, but not on a regular basis.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

64. The school is currently working on developing pupils' writing skills though work in other subjects. Some interesting writing tasks have been undertaken, especially in history and religious education. The next step is to put in place a planning framework to link the different aspects of writing with work in particular subjects. This is highlighted in the school's development plan. Pupils sometimes use computers to word process their work.

French

Work in French was sampled, with one lesson seen. French is taught in Years 2, 3 and 4. The weekly sessions taken by a parent with suitable expertise provide pupils with a good opportunity to develop their knowledge and understanding of basic French vocabulary. In the lesson seen, pupils in Years 3 and 4 expanded their vocabulary by learning the days of the week and practising responses to the 'ca va' greeting. Pupils' speaking and listening skills were strengthened as they listened carefully to the pronunciation of words before imitating it in their response. They noted details such as the days of the week begin with a capital letter in English but not in French. This oral session made good use of flash cards, games and resources to capture pupils' interest and make learning fun. Careful explanation in English with suitable reinforcement in French enabled all to understand the tasks and participate fully.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make good progress and, in Years 2 and 4, attain above expected levels overall.
- As a result of good teaching, pupils learn and achieve well.
- There is a strong emphasis on applying numeracy skills to problem solving.
- The subject is led and managed well.

Commentary

	Years 1 and 2	Years 3 and 4
Standards of attainment	Above expected levels.	Above expected levels.
Achievement	Good - including achievement of pupils with special educational needs.	Good - including achievement of pupils with special educational needs.
Quality of teaching and learning	Good.	Good.
Quality of curriculum leadership	Good.	Good.
Other factors affecting pupils' achievement	Pupils taught in small ability groups. There is good emphasis on applying numeracy skills.	
Improvement since last inspection	Good.	

Pupils make good progress and, in Years 2 and 4, attain above expected levels

65. In national tests and teacher assessments, Year 2 pupils have attained well above the national average for the past three years. The very small size of year groups means that one pupil leaving, joining or finding significant problems will impact markedly on the year group. As a result, the school rightly focuses on checking the progress of individual pupils. School records indicate that standards in Year 2 are likely to be

above the national average in 2005. Pupils in Years 2 and 4 are making good progress and most are currently working at or above the levels expected for their age. The school has done well to maintain standards since the last inspection.

As a result of good teaching, pupils learn and achieve well

66. Teaching and learning are good overall. Small teaching groups enable all to contribute to discussions and work at a pace that matches their ability. The better lessons are well planned and prepared, proceed at a good pace and make good use of different practical approaches to build and consolidate pupils' understanding of specific skills. High expectations and clear explanations support this well, as seen in a very good Year 3/4 lesson. Good use is made of questioning to check and reinforce pupils' understanding. In one satisfactory lesson, instructions were not always so clear and pupils did not have sufficient opportunity for practical reinforcement of the concept. Marking is supportive and encouraging and often refers back to the learning intentions displayed at the top of work. The recent focus on presentation has led to a marked improvement, particularly amongst the older pupils. Teachers have good knowledge of the needs of all pupils. They use this to ensure sufficient challenge in activities and to target support where it is needed, making good use of well-briefed teaching assistants. In mixed age classes, pupils are grouped by age and ability, which ensures all pupils, including the more able and those with special educational needs, work at a suitable level and achieve well.

There is a strong emphasis on applying numeracy skills to problem solving

67. Teachers make good use of the National Numeracy Strategy to plan their lessons as well as drawing well on commercial schemes and unit plans. This ensures suitable challenge for pupils of all ages and abilities and the systematic development of knowledge, skills and understanding, particularly in number. The whole school is focusing on developing pupils' numeracy skills through their application to problem solving. This, and the strong emphasis on practical activities, are significant factors in the good levels pupils attain.

The subject is well led and managed

68. A thorough programme of monitoring through termly lesson observations, assessments and analysing test results is used well by the co-ordinator to identify strengths and weaknesses and plan for improvement. She has identified the need to ensure all teachers have a common view of expectations and levels for different year groups. Increased use is being made of ICT to support learning through identifying opportunities in long-term plans. There is an interactive board in Year 2 with plans to install boards into the other classes shortly.

Mathematics across the curriculum

69. Pupils have regular opportunities to use mathematics as part of their work in other subjects such as geography, design and technology and science. Teachers take advantage of these opportunities to consolidate and extend numeracy skills as they occur, but they are not yet planned systematically.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Pupils in Years 2 and 4 attain above the levels expected.
- Good teaching captures pupils' interest and enables them to achieve well.
- Good use is made of practical approaches to investigations and observations.
- There is good leadership and management of the subject.

Commentary

	Years 1 and 2	Years 3 and 4
Standards of attainment	Above expected levels.	Above expected levels.
Achievement	Good - including achievement of pupils with special educational needs.	Good - including achievement of pupils with special educational needs.
Quality of teaching and learning	Good.	Good.
Quality of curriculum leadership	Good.	Good.
Other factors affecting pupils' achievement	Practical activities are a feature of the work. A good focus on investigation and observation.	
Improvement since last inspection	Good.	

Pupils in Years 2 and 4 attain above the levels expected

70. In 2004, Year 2 teacher assessments showed that standards were well above the national average. Work seen, lesson observations and the school's own records show pupils of all abilities make good progress and achieve equally well. In Years 2 and 4, almost all pupils are working at least at the level expected for their age and many go well beyond this. Pupils make good use of previous learning in their current work. Year 2 pupils drew well on their knowledge of materials, for example, to suggest which samples might be waterproof, and, in Year 4, pupils made good use of specific skeletal features to suggest which creature a skeleton might belong to. Although good emphasis is placed on pupils predicting outcomes, testing ideas and recording results, pupils in Year 2 have not yet begun to apply the notion of 'fair' test and, although those in Year 4 are developing the quality of their measuring and recording, they are not yet designing their own investigations. With very small year groups and different mixes of ability, the school has done well to continue to achieve similar good standards year on year.

Good teaching captures pupils' interest and enables them to achieve well

71. Teaching is consistently good. Lessons are planned and prepared well, with good use made of resources and a practical approach. Questioning is used effectively to explore, reinforce and extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. Care is taken to introduce scientific terms and encourage pupils to use them. Tasks are carefully explained so pupils complete them successfully and teachers and well-briefed teaching assistants provide good support, so that pupils of all abilities achieve equally well. Although all pupils complete the same basic activity, teachers often provide different methods of recording or modify tasks to take account of different abilities or ages. Marking is helpful and often indicates the context in which work was carried out and how well pupils have achieved. The presentation of work has shown a recent improvement, particularly amongst older pupils.

Good use is made of practical approaches to investigations and observations

72. Good use is made of 'hands on' activities to illustrate learning points and develop pupils' understanding of concepts and ideas. Pupils are eager to undertake these tasks, whether testing to find which material would be best for waterproof boots in Year 2 or examining the structure and joints of bones with magnifying glasses and a digital microscope in Years 3 and 4.

There is good leadership and management of the subject

73. Regular lesson observations, use of assessment results and close contact with colleagues mean the knowledgeable co-ordinator has a good overview of provision. Good use is made of this information to inform the development of the subject. The co-ordinator is currently looking at ways of ensuring colleagues have a clear view of expectations and levels. National guidance, augmented by local authority guidelines, provides a good basis for planning. Sufficient resources have been purchased and more expensive or specialist items are shared with partnership schools. The annual science weeks raise the profile of the subject and enthuse staff and pupils. Increasing use is being made of ICT to support learning and there are plans to develop its use for data logging.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been improvement in standards and provision since the last inspection.
- The curriculum for ICT is planned well.
- Good links are made with learning in other subjects.
- There is good leadership, management and development of the subject.

Commentary

	Years 1 and 2	Years 3 and 4
Standards of attainment	Above expected levels in the work seen.	Above expected levels in the work seen.
Achievement	Good.	Good.
Quality of teaching and learning	Good in the examples seen.	Good in the examples seen.
Quality of curriculum leadership	Good.	Good.
Other factors affecting pupils' achievement	Improvement in resources. Increased use of ICT to support learning in other subjects.	
Improvement since last inspection	Good.	

There has been improvement in standards and provision since the last inspection

74. No whole class teaching of ICT skills was seen during the inspection. However, individual pupils or small groups were frequently seen working at tasks on the classroom computers, sometimes supported by a teacher or assistant. Examples of pupils' work, teachers' planning, conversations with teachers and pupils, assessment records and the use of ICT in lessons show pupils are confident users of ICT and have been taught the expected range of skills. Most are working at least at the level expected for their age and often go beyond this. This is a considerable improvement since the last inspection when standards were barely average and the limited use of ICT in other subjects was an area of concern.
75. Pupils in Year 2 make good use of digital photographs to record and illustrate their work, know how to amend and present text and control a floor robot. By Year 4, pupils confidently use a digital microscope to examine bones, select a suitable magnification and combine the image with text before saving the work on their own disk. They know how to send e-mails, download information from the Internet and record information on tables and charts.

76. Resources have been considerably improved since the last inspection and pupils have access to several networked computers in each room. There is a good range of software to use for the planned activities. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special needs, achieve equally well. Teachers often use ICT to support less able pupils, as seen in a Year 2 design and technology lesson, or extend more able pupils, as seen in a Year 4 science session. Teachers explain tasks carefully and correct problems quickly. They are clearly confident and secure in their own use of ICT. The interactive whiteboard provides good opportunities for teachers to use ICT to demonstrate and illustrate teaching points.

The curriculum for ICT is planned well

77. Good use is made of national guidance as the basis for planning. Opportunities to use ICT to support or illustrate work in other subjects are clearly identified on long-term plans. These provide good opportunities for pupils to develop understanding of ICT capability, practise and consolidate skills. Good examples include Year 1 Internet research, Year 2 learning about Florence Nightingale through an illustrated talk and Years 3 and 4 using a web site to investigate chair design. Teachers ensure that ICT use is linked to specific ICT skills.

The good leadership, management and development of the subject

78. The subject has been led and managed well, with developments carefully planned and implemented. Assessment has been used effectively to chart pupils' progress. Pupils' ICT skills are sequentially developed and all strands covered in sufficient depth. There has been a clear agenda for improvement, closely linked to improving resources, staff expertise and raising standards. The school has identified the need to develop the use of data logging to support this further.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

79. ICT is being used to good effect to support learning in other subjects. Teachers make good use of planned opportunities for ICT in their lessons. This includes use of the Internet for research, recording observations in science, interpreting and presenting data in mathematics and word processing text in most subjects. The interactive whiteboard is used well to support teaching and learning. Acquisition of similar boards for the other two classes is planned.

HUMANITIES

80. Only two lessons were seen in the humanities during the inspection and, although inspectors spoke to pupils and looked at their work, there was insufficient evidence to make a clear judgement on provision. Work in **geography** and **history** is blocked within a rolling programme of topics, with pupils working on a topic related to one subject for a period of up to a term. This makes it more difficult for pupils to recall easily what they have learnt previously and to develop their skills in the two subjects in a progressive way.
81. During the inspection, only Year 1 were working on a **geography** topic. In this sound lesson, pupils researched books and the Internet for information about coastlines during the session seen. They were interested and fully involved in the task, with a good level of discussion between pupils about their preferred coastal scenes. Last

term, Year 2 pupils worked on a traffic survey to find out about the volume of traffic that passes the school each day. There are plans for Year 3 and 4 to work with one of the governors later this term to also look into local traffic issues. However, there is no evidence of any other geography work undertaken this academic year and older pupils have a very hazy recollection of work from the past. There are no maps or globes on display to help pupils to think about other places.

82. Work in **history** in Years 2 to 4 shows good coverage overall of the key elements of history. In the good lesson seen in Year 2, for example, pupils developed their research skills by looking at a picture of Florence Nightingale in order to find similarities and differences between women's clothing in Victorian times and today. Work on the Victorians in Years 3 and 4 shows that pupils have developed their knowledge and understanding and chronological skills effectively, as well as providing opportunities for them to undertake personal research. The school uses national guidance to plan their topics and the Victorian topic is designed for pupils in Years 5 and 6, but has been adapted to suit younger pupils.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

83. Only four lessons were seen in these subjects and inspectors looked at pupils' work and spoke to them about what they knew, understood and could do. This was insufficient evidence to make a clear judgement on provision.
84. **Art and design** was a focus for school development last year, with the school enriching the curriculum with visits and visitors in order to inspire the pupils. One of the highlights of the year was the work undertaken with an artist, which resulted in two stained glass windows in the oldest part of the school designed by the pupils. One satisfactory lesson was seen in art and design in Year 1, as well as a small part of a very good lesson in Years 3 and 4. It is clear that pupils in Years 1 and 2 reach the levels expected for their age, with older pupils doing better. In the lessons seen, teaching was stronger in the older pupils' class, with high expectations and very good opportunities for pupils to evaluate what they had achieved. The school is fortunate in having a dedicated art room, although this is not large enough for a whole class. Currently, there are very few displays of pupils' artwork to celebrate the pupils' achievements.
85. Two satisfactory lessons were seen in **design and technology**. Examples of work and teachers' plans show pupils are experiencing a good range of techniques and materials as they are taught to consider, plan, construct and evaluate a variety of different products. National guidance is used to ensure skills are developed systematically and work seen shows pupils are reaching the expected levels.
86. Work on display shows how pupils in Years 3 and 4 had investigated the mechanisms used in pop-up books before making their own well-finished versions of moving pictures. In the Year 2 lesson seen, pupils looked closely at a variety of puppets, identifying features, construction methods and decoration. Unnecessary recording of their observations meant they did not begin to create their own designs. In the Year 1 lesson, pupils sliced and prepared fruit and vegetables and were briefly introduced to health and safety issues, but did not consider how best to complete the task.
87. This year, there is a whole-school focus on **music**. Consequently, the school has enriched the day-to-day provision with visits, such as a trip to the Sheldonian, and has

arranged a school music day involving the schools' music service. The intention is to heighten pupils' interest in and enjoyment of music. One of the weekly class lessons was seen and in this, younger pupils learnt about long and short sounds. Teaching and learning in the lesson were satisfactory and pupils reached the levels expected for their age. Standards in singing were also broadly in line with the levels expected in the assemblies seen. A small group of pupils have the opportunity to have recorder or piano lessons, for which they are charged, although there is a school bursary scheme to support families who would find payment difficult. Pupils are involved in annual music events with other local schools.

88. No lessons in **physical education** were seen. Teachers' planning shows dance, gymnastics and games skills are taught during the course of the year. Clubs for basketball, netball and football provide good opportunities for pupils to follow specific interests and extend skills learnt in lessons. There are also opportunities for pupils to take part in competitive sport. The school successfully overcomes the lack of a hall and sports field by using the village field in the summer and making weekly visits to the Berinsfield leisure centre for indoor and outdoor activities and swimming. By Year 4 most pupils are able to swim at least 25 metres, which is well above the expected level for their age. Links with local schools, including a secondary school, are used well to provide further opportunities for specialist teaching and to enrich the range of activities offered. In view of the small size of the school and the difficulties it faces with its accommodation, there is a good range of physical activities on offer.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

89. The school attaches importance to pupils' personal development and a programme of personal, social and health education is regularly taught. Topics such as emotions, feelings and personal safety are dealt with in discussion sessions. Diet, health, sex and relationships education and the safe use of medicines are linked with topics that arise as part of science work. Good use is made of visitors, including the school nurse, to support this work. During these lessons, pupils benefit from opportunities to share their ideas and feelings. Teachers are sensitive to pupils' needs and create a calm, supportive atmosphere which enables all to contribute. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 readily followed their teachers' lead in explaining to their partners their strongest memory of 2004 and their resolution for 2005. They developed their understanding further when they communicated what they had learnt from their partner to the rest of the class. Pupils regularly support others who are less fortunate by raising money for charity and, through the pupil council, are beginning to plan how to raise monies for the Tsunami Appeal. The Pupil Council increases opportunities for pupils to contribute ideas and be involved in the decision-making process. Work in these areas helps to promote and reinforce the caring and supportive atmosphere of the school very well.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3

Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	2
Attendance	1
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
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	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	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).