

# INSPECTION REPORT

**NORTHLEACH CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED PRIMARY  
SCHOOL**

Northleach, Cheltenham

LEA area: Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 115641

Headteacher: Mrs D Harris

Lead inspector: Mr D Byrne

Dates of inspection: 8<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> November 2004

Inspection number: 276412

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: 132

School address: Mill End  
Northleach  
Cheltenham  
Gloucestershire

Postcode: GL54 3HJ

Telephone number: 01451 860274

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of Mrs S Wills  
governors:

Date of previous 19<sup>th</sup> April 1999  
inspection:

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

This is a small school situated in a small town in rural Gloucestershire. It educates 132 boys and girls aged from four to 11 years of age. The attainment of the majority of children when they start school is above average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is close to the national average with a very small number with Statements of Special Educational Needs. Virtually all pupils are from English White backgrounds and none require support for English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The school population is relatively stable with most pupils completing their primary education in the school. In 2004, the school achieved Quality Assurance status for its work in the Foundation Stage. In 2003 the school gained the Investors in People Award and in both 2001 and 2002 it merited an Achievement Award.



## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
28076	Mr D Byrne	Lead inspector	Science, information and communication technology, design and technology, religious education, physical education.
9334	Mr B Harrington	Lay Inspector	
18027	Mrs S Mawer	Team Inspector	Foundation Stage curriculum, mathematics, geography, history, music.
17640	Mrs S Walker	Team Inspector	English, art and design, special educational needs, personal, social and health education and citizenship.

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

### **OVERALL EVALUATION**

This is a **good** school with some excellent features. It is at the heart of the community with which it has excellent links. Pupils achieve well and reach high standards overall and benefit from good teaching that is inspired by a stimulating curriculum. The school is well managed and governed and very effectively led. It gives good value for money.

#### **The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:**

- Very good leadership from the headteacher and effective management and governance ensure that the school is constantly moving forward and improving.
- Good teaching and learning overall results in pupils achieving well in English, mathematics and religious education but they could do better in art and design and geography across the school and in information and communication technology and science in Years 3 to 6.
- There are good levels of support for pupils with special educational needs and higher-attaining pupils.
- Systems for assessment are good in the Foundation Stage and in English and mathematics but could be better in most other subjects.
- Despite pupils having good levels of initiative they are not as involved as they might be in evaluating their own progress and setting targets for improvement.
- Pupils develop high levels of self-esteem and this, coupled with excellent relationships, contributes to pupils behaving extremely well and developing very good attitudes
- Pupils do well in performing arts and benefit from access to a good range of sporting opportunities supplemented by a very good range of out of school activities.
- The school is very caring and ensures that pupils feel safe, secure and well supported.
- Links with the community are excellent and these, coupled with very good support from parents, benefit the education of all pupils.
- Aspects of the accommodation are unsatisfactory with a lack of suitable resources for outdoor activities in the Foundation Stage, cramped space for all pupils' indoor physical education and poorly designed space for the headteacher and administrative staff.

Since the last inspection, the school has made good improvement overall. Standards have risen in English and mathematics across the school and in science by the end of Year 2. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are much better and levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development have improved. The contribution of the

community has been strengthened and links with parents are even more productive. The provision for information and communication technology is better and improvements have been made to the quality of school buildings.

## STANDARDS ACHIEVED

### Year 6 results

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

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

Pupils start school with an above average attainment and as a result of good improvements in the last two years pupils achieve **well** at each stage of their learning. In recent years, however pupils in Years 3 to 6 have done very well in English but could have done much better in mathematics and science. In 2004 standards at the end of Year 6 national tests in English were well above average in comparison with all schools nationally but in mathematics and science standards were below the national average. In both mathematics and science, the rate of improvement in recent years between the pupils' time in Year 2 and Year 6 has been well below that occurring in similar schools. The school recognises these weaknesses, and improvements have been made to teaching and the curriculum to boost learning in Years 3 to 6 in mathematics and science. Inspection evidence shows that standards at the end of Year 6 are currently very high in English and mathematics. Standards in mathematics have risen significantly in the last two years as a result of better planning and higher expectations by teaching and support staff. Standards in science, however, could be better being satisfactory overall.

At the end of Year 2 standards in reading, writing and mathematics have been mostly good. From an above average attainment when pupils start Year 1, pupils have improved at a good rate and achieved well. Inspection evidence shows that pupils are currently achieving well. Standards are well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. The 2004 national test results show that in reading pupils were in the top five percent of all schools nationally and in comparison with similar schools. Standards in science are currently above average. Across the school the achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good overall. Higher-attaining pupils are now being suitably challenged in English and mathematics but could do better in science and information and communication technology in Years 3 to 6. Pupils achieve well in religious education with many pupils having a very mature knowledge and understanding for their age of Christianity and world faiths. The knowledge and understanding of art and design is relatively weak across the school and pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory.

Children benefit from a good start to their education in the Foundation Stage. Inspection evidence indicates that children start school with levels of attainment that are above average overall and as a result of good teaching, pupils achieve well in most areas of their learning. They well exceed the expectations for their age in

personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy development, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Children achieve satisfactorily in their physical and creative development and reach standards that meet the expectations for their age by the end of the reception class.

Pupils have **very good** levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development overall and excellent levels of spirituality. These contribute to very good attitudes, and excellent behaviour and relationships. Attendance and punctuality are both good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The school provides a **good** quality of education with some excellent features. Teaching and learning are **good** overall. Effective assessments are made of pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics and these are used effectively to improve the quality of teaching. Very good teamwork between teachers and support staff makes sure that pupils with special educational needs achieve well and are fully involved in all parts of school life. A good curriculum, with good levels of enrichment and a very good range of extra-curricular activities stimulates pupils to learn at a good rate. The accommodation is satisfactory overall but some parts of the school need improving to reach acceptable standards. Resources are satisfactory overall in terms of quantity and quality. Pupils receive very good levels of care with very good attention paid to their health and safety. The school involves pupils well in the running of the school but pupils are not as involved as they could be in evaluating their own performance. Very good partnerships exist with parents and there are exceptional links with the community.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are **good** overall with good governance. The leadership of the headteacher is very good and together with an effective staff team there is a clear vision for the school's development. High standards are expected of pupils and staff and effective monitoring of teaching and learning results in a good system of school improvement. The headteacher creates a very good ethos in which pupils and staff feel valued. The school is a very caring and happy community that constantly strives to do better.

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

Parents have very positive views of all aspects of the school. Responses to the inspection questionnaire were overwhelmingly supportive of the school. A very small number of parents would like to be kept better informed about how their children are getting on at school. Inspection evidence shows that this view may have been valid in the past but the school now has very effective ways of keeping parents informed. Pupils are also very positive about the school. Given the opportunity they would change little. In discussions with pupils, they all stated that they like their lessons and teachers and enjoyed playing in the outside areas.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Raise standards and achievement in science and information and communication technology in years 3 to 6.
- Raise standards in art and design and geography across the school.
- Devise and implement strategies for improving assessment and develop ways of involving pupils in their own self-evaluation.
- Strive to improve the quality of provision in the Foundation Stage for outdoor activities, for indoor physical education and for administration.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Pupils achieve **well** overall and by the end of Year 6 reach **well above average** standards in English and mathematics and **average** standards in science.

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

- Children do well in the Foundation Stage and, with the exception of physical and creative development, well exceed the expectations for their age by the end of reception.
- Standards in English have been consistently high and in mathematics, after a time of decline, standards have improved and are now well above average.
- Standards in science could be higher at the end of Year 6.
- Pupils achieve well in religious education across the school and in information and communication technology in Key Stage 1 but pupils could do better in art and design and geography across the school and in information and communication technology in Key Stage 2.
- Higher-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well.

#### **Commentary**

##### **Foundation Stage**

- 1 Children start school with standards that are above expectations. Many children have good speaking skills and a relatively wide vocabulary. Children make a good start to their education in the reception class and achieve well overall. Most children reach the standards expected for their age well before they complete the reception year in their personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy development, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Restrictions in terms of resources for outdoor learning reduce children's achievement in terms of this element of their physical development. Although children reach the standards expected for their age by the end of the reception year, they only achieve satisfactorily and could do better given better resources. Children achieve well in some areas of creative development but expectations are too low for them to take responsibility for their learning and express themselves without adult guidance. This depresses their achievement to being satisfactory overall.

##### **Key Stage 1**

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	18.4 (17.9)	15.8 (15.7)

writing	16.8 (14.3)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	17.0 (17.1)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 20 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- 2 In the 2004 national tests, pupils performed very well overall. In reading and writing a very high proportion gained standards that exceeded the expectations for their age in each subject. This placed the school in the top 5 percent of all schools nationally in reading and in writing pupils' performance was well above average in comparison with both the national average and the average for similar schools. Pupils also did well in mathematics, the percentage reaching the above expected standard of level 3 was only average but standards were above the national average and the average for similar schools. In science standards were above the national average overall and that of similar schools. Teacher assessments show that the percentage reaching the standards expected for their age placed the school in the top 5 percent of all schools nationally and in comparison with similar schools.
  
- 3 The results in 2004 represent a significant improvement in standards in writing after a three year decline. Standards in reading have been consistently well above average compared to both all schools nationally and similar schools. Standards in mathematics have been maintained at a good level over recent years being mostly above average both in terms of the average for all schools nationally and similar schools. Pupils also do very well in science based on the assessments made by teachers. Inspection evidence supports the positive picture about standards at the end of Year 2 indicated in the national test results. Standards are currently very high in reading, writing and mathematics and in each subject pupils achieve well. Standards in science are currently above average at the end of Year 2. There is no statistically significant evidence to indicate a difference between the performance of boys or girls.
  
- 4 In other subjects, pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 in religious education and in information and communication technology and reach above average standards but could do better in aspects of art and design and elements of geography. Limited inspection evidence indicates that good standards are being set in design and technology.

## Key Stage 2

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.9 (29.4)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	26.4 (26.6)	27.0 (26.8)
science	27.6 (27.9)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 19 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- 5 Standards at the end of Year 6 have been much higher in English than mathematics and science in recent years. In the 2004 national tests, standards in English were well above the national average and the average for similar schools but in mathematics they were below the national average and the average for similar schools. Standards in science were below the national average and well below the average for similar schools. Over the last four years, results in the national tests for Year 6 have been steadily declining in mathematics and in science they have been low for the last two years after a time when they were high. The school has recognised this decline and is acting decisively to rectify the trends.
- 6 Inspection evidence shows that standards are currently well above average both in English and mathematics. In both of these subjects pupils are currently achieving well, although in recent years assessment data shows that achievement had been unsatisfactory in mathematics. In science, standards are currently in line with the national average and pupils achieve satisfactorily. Whilst many pupils have a good knowledge of scientific ideas, the majority lack the confidence to work on their own in planning, performing and recording scientific investigations. There is no statistically significant evidence to indicate a difference between the performance of boys or girls.
- 7 Standards in information and communication technology, although broadly in line with expectations, are lower than they could be. Despite recent improvements in resources and evidence of improved standards, these changes have been too recent to raise achievement sufficiently and achievement is currently unsatisfactory. In art and design, pupils lack a real knowledge and understanding of the full range of skills expected for their age and gaps in the past in the curriculum for geography have depressed standards in this subject.
- 8 Across the school, pupils with special educational needs are given good levels of support that ensures that they are totally included in all that the school offers and that they make good progress towards their educational and personal targets. They make good progress in literacy and numeracy and this is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs achieve well in terms of the targets in their individual education plans. There is close liaison between teachers and teaching assistants so that support is good for pupils of different abilities. This contributes to good challenge for higher-attaining pupils. This is an improvement that has resulted from the the headteacher's very good leadership over the last two years.

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

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. This promotes amongst pupils **very good** attitudes and levels of personal development with **excellent** behaviour. Attendance and punctuality are **good** overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**



- Pupils are keen to learn and enjoy school.
- The very caring and sensitive attitudes of the pupils contribute to excellent levels of behaviour.
- Pupils have excellent levels of spiritual development.
- Parents work closely with the school to make sure that attendance is good.

## Commentary

- 9 Pupils are very happy in school and display very good attitudes to school and sensitivity and care to others. Pupils are eager to learn and when challenged, apply themselves very well to lessons. The very good attitudes are a key factor in the good achievement. Within the caring and supportive atmosphere developed by the strong leadership of the headteacher and staff, all pupils feel valued and this contributes to excellent behaviour. Pupils are polite and courteous to one another and very co-operative and helpful to adults. Pupils with special educational needs are warmly welcomed into all elements of school life by other pupils and there is no evidence of any verbal or physical harassment or bullying. The school has such an ethos of care and support that pupils respond by being caring and thoughtful to each other at all times.
- 10 Pupils' personal development is very good. Their self-knowledge and spiritual awareness is excellent and is promoted through the very high quality of school assemblies which enable pupils to reflect upon their feelings and opinions and to become aware of their place in the school community and beyond. During the inspection a whole school assembly held outdoors 11.00 a.m. on the 11<sup>th</sup> of November created a very powerful atmosphere of utter respect for those who have given their lives in war. Through their studies of other religions and cultures pupils respect the values and beliefs of others. They have benefited in particular from opportunities to question the faiths of practising Christians and Jews who have visited to contribute to their lessons. Pupils of all ages have a very good understanding of the responsibilities that arise from living in a community. In lessons they are encouraged to make choices and, on occasions, these choices involve moral conflicts. The school council provides opportunities for pupils from Year 6 to contribute to the development of the school. School council members are on hand to mediate in the playground if any issues arise between pupils and there is no aggressive behaviour and pupils are seen to be caring for each other, polite and cooperative. Relationships are outstanding and evolve from the self-esteem instilled in pupils from a very early age.

## Attendance

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.7	School data	0.1
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.*

11 The rate of attendance for last year was above the national average. Parents are very supportive of their children and successfully ensure that good attendance has a high priority. There was one temporary exclusion during the last school year but this has been successfully resolved.

## Exclusions

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	127	1	
White – any other White background	2		
Mixed – White and Black African	1		
Any other ethnic group	1		
No ethnic group recorded	1		

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

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good** overall. There is a **good** curriculum with **good** levels of enrichment and a **very good** range of extra-curricular activities. The school provides **very good** levels of care, support and guidance. There are **very good** links with parents and **excellent** links with the community. Links with other schools and colleges are **good**.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **good** overall. Assessment procedures are **satisfactory** overall.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and support staff form an effective team that ensures that all pupils are fully included in school life and makes sure that pupils are confident and want to learn.
- Teaching is particularly good in the Foundation Stage and in English and mathematics in Years 1 to 6.
- Lessons are well planned and resourced so that they are lively and interesting thereby motivating pupils to learn and to think for themselves.
- Although assessment is very good for English and mathematics, in other subjects, it is weak and does not provide a clear picture of pupils' strengths

and weaknesses or involve pupils sufficiently in evaluating their own achievement.

## Commentary

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 45 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	17 (38%)	23 (51%)	5 (11%)	0	0	0

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

- 12 The quality of teaching and learning is good overall with some very good features. The inspirational leadership of the headteacher, some astute deployments of staff and improved systems of school self-evaluation have resulted in some notable improvements in teaching in recent years. There is now much more attention given to challenging higher-attaining pupils and expectations have been raised for pupils to act and think for themselves. This has contributed to better standards in mathematics and improving achievement in many other subjects. The quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage has been maintained since the last inspection. It is good overall. There is a particular strength in children's personal, social and emotional development, their communication, language and literacy development and mathematical development but at times children are not given enough opportunities to express themselves creatively. Whilst teaching is good in terms of children's physical development, the lack of a suitable outdoor area has reduced the effectiveness of this on pupils' achievement.
- 13 In Years 1 to 6, the quality of teaching and learning is good overall with very good teaching in English and mathematics. Teachers are working hard to provide the best possible quality of education. Effective teamwork between the teaching staff and teaching assistants means that pupils of all abilities including special educational needs and higher-attaining pupils are well catered for. The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection, particularly in English and mathematics and there have also been improvements in the way that information and communication technology is taught and planned. Across the school, teachers do a good job in building pupils' self esteem and confidence. The personal development of pupils is considered to be just as important as the academic achievement. An indicator of the good levels of commitment amongst staff is the way that many hours of the teacher's own time is given up to provide extra-curricular activities for their pupils. Lessons are well planned in English, mathematics and science in particular and good use is made of some inventive ideas to spark off pupils' imaginations. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the National Curriculum and use this to guide effective lessons planning. In English and mathematics work is planned effectively enough to meet the range of needs in each year group so that everyone is challenged at the right level. Resources are used well to support learning. Computers are effectively used to help learning in class and pupils are constantly expected to use whiteboards to

express their thoughts and ideas. The lack of interactive whiteboards reduces the impact of the teaching of information and communication technology but good use of class laptops goes some way to rectifying this.

- 14 Lessons are often brought to life through the skilled use of educational visits and visitors. The rich resources found in the locality, for example, a Roman Villa, are used to add meaning to pupils' historical understanding and by their involvement in the local dance festival, pupils develop the confidence to perform in front of others. Because teachers work so hard to make learning interesting, and set high expectations, pupils enjoy lessons and generally work hard in lessons and try their best. Good levels of pride in pupils are clearly demonstrated in the way that the vast majority of pupils take great care in the quality of presentation of their work. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and effective in ensuring that good progress is made by them towards their targets which are mostly in literacy with some in mathematics and for personal, social and emotional development. Teaching assistants work effectively with teachers to make sure that the good quality support compliments work in lessons.
- 15 Until recently expectations for pupils to think for themselves have been too low and this has affected pupils' past performance in science and mathematics in particular. This is being rectified now with teachers making much more effort to provide activities that demand that pupils start to plan, record and evaluate practical activities. This has boosted standards in mathematics but there is still more to do in science. The teaching of art and design has been weak in the past because of a lack of detail in planning. In religious education teaching and learning is good. Close links with local places of worship and also with parents of different religions bring learning alive for pupils.
- 16 Assessment is satisfactory overall. In the Foundation Stage assessment is good and informs planning so that it takes good account of the differing ability levels of the children. Good procedures for assessment in English and mathematics help teachers to monitor the impact of their teaching on learning so that work is planned to match pupils' needs. In other subjects, only basic systems for assessment exist. Whilst teachers know pupils well enough, the lack of systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress and achievement reduces the ability of staff to use assessment data to inform planning. Pupils are not as involved in the assessment of their own learning as they might be.

## **The curriculum**

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

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school's provision for pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education is very good.

- The needs of all pupils, including higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are well met.
- There are well planned links between curriculum subjects but planning does not identify progressive skills against which to efficiently assess pupils' achievements in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Very good equality of opportunity is provided for all pupils.
- Pupils benefit from a very good range of extra-curricular activities in a wide range of subjects.
- The provision for indoor physical education for all pupils and for outdoor play for the Foundation Stage children is unsatisfactory.

## Commentary

- 17 The good curriculum provided for all pupils at the time of the last inspection has been maintained. All statutory requirements are fully met. Children in the Foundation Stage benefit from a good curriculum that challenges and extends their skills and knowledge. In Years 1 to 6, the national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been effectively established with sensible adaptations to meet the needs of pupils. Good planning of these subjects ensures that good opportunities are provided for all pupils, including higher-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs, to achieve well overall. Since the last inspection most schemes of work have been improved and the school has made a good start in making planned links between different subjects across the curriculum. There is, however, a weakness in the planned development of pupils' skills particularly in art and design and geography. Since the appointment of the new headteacher, much work has been put into extending activities that demand that pupils think and act for themselves. This has had a marked impact this year on standards in mathematics but there is some way to go yet in science. The school has developed its programme for personal, social and health education and citizenship and now includes well planned programmes for health and drugs education and sex and relationships education. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good overall but the individual education plans, although satisfactory, are rather brief. There have been improvements recently in the provision for higher-attaining pupils which is benefiting such pupils by ensuring that they are usually challenged sufficiently. The school ensures that there are very good levels of equality and opportunity for all pupils
- 18 Pupils benefit from a good range of educational visits which support learning across the curriculum, and includes an extensive programme of residential visits for pupils in Years 3 - 6. There is a very good range of after school activities available at some point in the year for all pupils from Year 1 upwards and these are well attended by pupils. There is very good provision for sporting activities and good opportunities for pupils to take part in the arts through participating in local art festivals, learning from visiting artists and participating in good quality school productions.
- 19 The accommodation is satisfactory overall and there has been very good improvement since the last inspection through the addition of new classrooms.

There is a weakness in the provision of a suitable outdoor play area for children in the reception class and the school hall provides unsatisfactory accommodation for indoor physical education. The arrangements for administrative work are unsatisfactory. A strength is the provision of an outdoor swimming pool that is used extensively by all pupils in the warmer weather. Since the demolition of a mobile classroom the library is situated in a corridor and this is unsatisfactory because of the lack of space. Resources are satisfactory overall although the school recognises the need for more computers and software to further improve provision for information and communication technology.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff provide a very high level of care for all pupils including very good support and provision for pupils' health and safety.
- Pupils with special educational needs receive good levels of support.
- The views and opinions of pupils are valued and influence some of the ways the school is run.

### **Commentary**

- 20 The school provides pupils with a safe and secure place to learn. Procedures for maintaining child protection are very effective. All members of staff, including the lunchtime supervisors, have received training in first-aid and, in addition, all staff and some parents have received training in water safety. All risk assessments are effectively performed with good emergency procedures for alerting staff to any concerns that may arise within the classrooms or at the swimming pool.
- 21 There are good procedures for supporting pupils' personal development. The headteacher puts a lot of time and effort into making pupils feel valued and secure and all pupils know that they can talk to her or other staff at any time. The school's good provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship gives pupils an additional outlet for expressing concerns about their emotional or social needs. The needs of pupils with special educational needs are effectively met through good day-to-day support often led by effective teaching assistants
- 22 Pupils' views are sought through a good variety of ways. Formal procedures exist such as the views sought through the school council and a leavers' questionnaire but also incidental activities such as the way pupils wrote messages in their own time on the Remembrance Day poppies. Induction arrangements are effective and reception children settle in quickly and there are good arrangements for easing the transition of pupils into secondary education.

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

**Very good** partnerships exist with parents. Links with the community are **excellent** resulting in some exceptional innovations for involving the town in the life of the school. There are **good** links with other schools.

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

- Parents receive very good formal and informal information about the school and its work.
- Parents are very supportive of the headteacher and her staff and the parents' association raises vast amounts of money for the school.
- The school has an outstanding level of involvement with the community.

## Commentary

- 23 Through formal communications and informal notices the school provides parents with very good quality information. The involvement of the school governors in managing the consultation evenings enables teachers to conduct private interviews with parents after they have reviewed their children's work. Curriculum evenings provide parents with additional information about how and what their children are learning. The provision of a crèche has increased the opportunities for parents to attend, and the use of subsequent questionnaires enables the school to attune itself to the specific needs of parents. Annual progress reports are of good quality in all key stages and provide parents with useful information about their children's achievements and personal demeanour. The school has an effective programme for informing parents about how to support their children at home for example through workshops led by a mathematics consultant to highlight how mathematics games can be used to develop pupils' confidence and enjoyment of mathematics.
- 24 Parents provide significant help in school. Some parents support lessons with their practical skills or by sharing their personal experiences and beliefs. A few parents provide a rota to manage the office when it would otherwise be unattended and by helping to provide learning resources. Parents are aware of the whole school homework plan, which is regular and progressive, and know how to support their children to undertake tasks at home. The headteacher and her staff make themselves available to parents at the beginning and end of the school day to resolve any concerns that arise and the headteacher maintains an open door policy should parents need to consult her in private. The community family worker provides significant support for a small number of parents whose children have difficulty in maintaining regular attendance.
- 25 Links with the community are excellent. An unusual array of trades people unselfishly provide their time and skills to support the school, for example by holding special events to make money that is donated to the school. The school is at the heart of the local community. Many local people, in addition to parents attend school events. The strong links with the local church provide opportunities for pupils to celebrate the major Christian festivals and the leavers' service. The church is used as a resource and the church club is a popular extra-curricular activity. A broad range of educational visits and visitors provide pupils with enhanced opportunities for learning about their own and other cultures and the world around them. There are good links with other schools. Most pupils transfer to the local high school with which there are mature transfer arrangements that include the teaching of French to Year 6, visits to school by the Year 7 teacher and visits to the high school by pupils and their parents.
- 26 The School Association is an extremely effective organisation which promotes the school within the community and is a catalyst for local functions. Through events such as firework displays, very large sums of money have been raised to provide additional learning resources for the benefit of all pupils. The number of volunteers who may be called upon demonstrates the good will shown towards the school by the townspeople.



## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **good**. The headteacher provides **very effective** leadership and together with key staff provides **good** management. The impact of governance on the school is **good** overall.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher gives the school a very clear educational direction which is improving standards and the quality of education.
- The headteacher and staff work together to evaluate the school's strengths and weaknesses accurately so that improvements can be planned and carried through.
- The governing body is very well chaired and ensures that all statutory duties are effectively performed.

## **Commentary**

- 28 The headteacher provides inspirational leadership for the school. The very good judgements for the quality of leadership at the time of the last inspection have been maintained although the direction of the school has been altered under the leadership of the new headteacher. Within a short time since her appointment, a number of areas for improvement have been established with very effective strategies to deal with them. This is resulting in better achievement in many subjects, most notably in mathematics and has also contributed to higher levels of staff morale and better attitudes amongst pupils. A shared vision and commitment to providing as good an education as possible has been developed between all staff, both teaching and non-teaching. This contributes to a very good ethos that is rooted in the philosophy that everyone matters and that everyone has something to offer, be it in terms of academic ability or personal development. This commitment manifests itself in the school by the way that everyone, both pupils and staff are included in all aspects of school life and a shared determination to avoid complacency. The headteacher is a good judge of the professional skills of staff. This has resulted in very astute deployment of staff that has added new impetus to learning in some parts of the school and lifted the attitudes of pupils, especially of higher-attaining pupils.
- 29 Senior staff have a defined role for managing different aspects of the school's provision. Subjects are mostly effectively led and managed with very good management of English and mathematics and strong leadership for provision in the Foundation Stage. Effective systems for evaluating how well the school is doing assist the creation of meaningful targets for improvement and development. A key part of the school's own evaluation is performance management. This is well established and the headteacher works closely with all staff to identify their individual professional needs as well as appraising what the school does well and where it could do better. This process informs good systems for staff training and professional development. Good induction procedures are in place for new staff and the school has good systems for supporting newly qualified teachers and students involved in initial teacher training.
- 30 The governing body is an effective and supportive group. It is very effectively led and managed and this ensures that there is a clear educational direction for the school. There are secure systems to ensure that the budget is kept in check with good strategic planning that anticipates future changes in income, for example

through changing numbers on roll. The premises are effectively managed and governors make sure that the school complies with health and safety requirements. Governors have a good knowledge and understanding of the standards in English, mathematics and science and are in the process of establishing better ways of keeping an eye on standards in other subjects. The governing body makes sure that the school gets the best from its budget.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	360 010
Total expenditure	377 709
Expenditure per pupil	2 819

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	42 324
Balance carried forward to the next	24 625

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

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

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

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

- Good teaching results in children achieving well in personal, social and emotional development and in their language and mathematical skills.
- The leadership and management are effective, resulting in a well-planned curriculum that results in children being highly motivated to learn and behaving excellently.
- Outdoor provision is inadequate and at times not enough emphasis is given to children making their own choices and decisions in creative activities.
- Assessment information is effectively used to monitor the quality of teaching and learning.

#### **Commentary**

- 30 There are nineteen children in the reception class and during the inspection they were only in the third week of full-time attendance. Their attainment when they start school is at an above average level overall. By the end of the reception year, the children exceed the expectations for their age in all areas of learning apart from physical and creative development where attainment meets expectations. The good provision at the time of the last inspection has been maintained but standards have risen and there has been good improvement overall.
- 31 The children achieve well overall because of good teaching overall, excellent relationships and a well organised environment in which they quickly feel secure. There is a strong drive for learning because staff set high expectations and the children have a huge capacity to learn. Meticulous planning ensures a mainly good balance of stimulating teaching and time for the children to learn effectively through play. Assessment is good and planning takes good account of the differing ability levels of the children. Although the curriculum is good overall, the outdoor provision is barely satisfactory and there is a shortage of large play equipment. Although this was a weakness at the last inspection, plans are now at an advanced stage to provide a secure outdoor area. Further developments are also needed in some aspects of creative development to give children more choices in their learning. Because improvements are needed in physical and creative development and teaching and learning is not as strong, achievement in these areas is satisfactory. Good leadership and management have built on the strengths of the unit since the last inspection, improving the teaching further and raising standards. The accommodation inside is bright and spacious and resources are satisfactory.

- 32 **Personal, social and emotional development** is given a high priority and is central to the Foundation Stage curriculum. The teaching is very good and children well exceed expectations and achieve well. Provision and planning are both very good. After only two weeks in full-time education, the children are extremely well settled into classroom routines and self-esteem is high. Staff have managed the transition to school with skill and sensitivity. The rapid progress children make is also helped by good arrangements for gradually introducing them to the reception class through part-time education. The children have a strong desire to learn and are already showing very good levels of responsibility in choosing tasks and working independently. Adults are skilled at knowing how young children learn and plan activities that lead to sustained interest. For example a very confident child as the receptionist in the role play 'vets surgery' organised her friends to sit with their pets in the waiting room until it was their turn to see the vet. Relationships are outstanding and behaviour is excellent. The qualities of caring and sharing are reinforced and practised by all. The enthusiasm shown by the teacher when she introduces a task or teaches a new skill positively influences how the children learn.
- 33 Teaching and provision are very good in **communication, language and literacy** and enable children to achieve well. There is a strong emphasis on gaining language skills across all areas of learning and as a result children well exceed expectations and standards are high, especially in speaking and listening. Most already express their views confidently in discussions and broaden their vocabulary to increase the detail and clarity of their speech. Listening is very well developed, because it receives a high focus in the teaching. Children listen attentively to questions, wait for their turn to speak, and remember what they have been taught. There is an effective focus on 'talking partners' in which children are given time to think and share their ideas with a friend. In reading and writing, the adapted literacy lesson is very well planned and taught. Phonic sounds are practised regularly and children quickly learn the strategies to read words and short sentences from a variety of books. Because the teacher chooses interesting texts and lessons are stimulating, the children develop a good enjoyment of books alongside the development of their reading skills. For example most children by the end of the reception year are not only reading fluently but have strong preferences for the kinds of books they like reading. Children receive very good support at home with reading and this contributes positively to their learning and achievement. The promotion of early writing skills is very good because children are encouraged to write freely. They all write their names and many are confidently writing invitations, lists, menus and notes, using a combination of free writing and some recognisable words. Regular handwriting practice helps them to form their letters correctly. By the end of the reception year they are writing simple stories and diary accounts with a good awareness of punctuation and accuracy in spellings.
- 34 In their **mathematical development**, very good teaching and provision help children to learn mathematical language confidently and develop ideas to solve problems through play. By the end of the reception year they well exceed the expectations and achievement is good. In a numeracy lesson observed, the

teacher taught the children to understand the concept of 'more or less' in numbers through an effective practical session and good resources. By the end of the session the most able children knew 'eight is two more than six and six is two less than eight'. The teacher then worked with three children who were still unsure of the concept, using an exciting 'treasure game'. This game helped to reinforce their learning very effectively and in a stimulating way. Other children gained further valuable experience in identifying 'more or less' numbers by working independently on the computer. Mathematical knowledge and understanding is also developed through stories, songs, and imaginative play. Planning shows a good balance of work throughout the year. Children also have fairly regular access to sand and water to measure and compare sizes and quantities.

- 35 In **knowledge and understanding of the world** the teaching and provision is good and the children achieve well. They are provided with many opportunities to learn about the world through a good curriculum and many visits and visitors. By the end of the reception year they well exceed expectations, although the children's investigative skills are weaker. This is because the follow up from visits are not used enough to help children carry out further investigations. The lesson on floating and sinking was good but there was no opportunity afterwards for the children to initiate their own learning by setting up investigations in their structured play. The play areas are changed frequently, although a greater range of resources are needed to keep interest levels high and challenge their learning. The children's knowledge and understanding of information and communication technology is very good because skills are taught well. The computer is used regularly and supports most areas of learning. During a 'colour magic' task the children used the mouse confidently to experiment with different colours, patterns and shapes and made their own pictures. In religious education, they celebrate important festivals, and especially Christianity. They all baked bread for the harvest festival and during a 'multi cultural' fortnight they celebrated different international days by dressing up, cooking traditional foods and playing and dancing to African drums. A very strong spiritual dimension is often promoted in religious education lessons. In one lesson for example on trust and friendship, the children working in pairs played a game with music, moving each other around the room, with one having their eyes shut. The children showed an extraordinary level of maturity, care and trust.
- 36 The formal teaching of **physical development** is good and by the end of the reception year the children reach expectations and achievement is satisfactory. A few children also exceed the expectations. Although there is a very small outdoor area, it only holds a slide and sand tray and there is no other large equipment or any moving toys. The yard, which is some way from the classroom is sometimes used for out door games. A grassed area nearby is also used in the summer when a trampoline is erected. There are also daily swimming lessons during June and July in the school's outdoor pool. The school is working hard to improve the provision and to provide a secure outdoor area, but at the moment the outdoor provision is barely satisfactory. Nevertheless the provision overall for physical development is satisfactory because children benefit from two weekly sessions for

physical education in the hall and they are taught well. They learn to improve their skills in running, jumping and marching. In the lesson they all worked very hard, showing good levels of energy and were keen to improve. Fine motor skills are taught well and children use pencils, scissors, brushes and other tools confidently.

- 37 In **creative development** the teaching, achievement and provision is satisfactory and children reach expectations by the end of the reception year. When they first start school they need help to learn important skills in art and craft and to develop their imaginations. They are taught to mix paints and make patterns and collages, but sometimes there are fewer opportunities for them to plan and choose what they would like to do. When, for example, they made a bonfire scene together, the materials for the collage had already been chosen. The children would have benefited from opportunities for greater independence and their own ideas could have been valued more. In order to raise standards and achievement further, a better balance is needed between teaching important skills and allowing the children to explore, express and communicate their own ideas. The role-play areas, although they would benefit from further resources, provide good opportunities for imaginative play and particularly speaking and listening. The children regularly take part in planned music making sessions and are quickly learning a good selection of songs and playing the instruments correctly to beat in time with the songs. More occasions are needed for children to play musical instruments regularly in their imaginative play.



## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching promotes good achievement across the school with a very strong emphasis on teaching spelling, grammar, handwriting and punctuation.
- Standards in speaking and in creative writing, in particular poetry, are very good.
- Good links are made between literacy and most other subjects.
- Leadership and management are very good and include thorough ways of monitoring standards and teaching.

#### Commentary

- 38 Across the school all pupils, including those with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well. In the 2004 national tests standards at the end of Year 6 were well above the national average and the average for schools in similar circumstances based on the number of pupils entitled to free school meals. Inspection evidence shows that standards at the end of Year 6 are currently well above average. Creative writing, and in particular poetry, is a strength. Standards at the end of Year 2 have varied in recent years. They have declined in writing whilst in reading standards have been consistently well above average. In 2004 standards in reading at the end of Year 2 were in the top 5 per cent of both all schools nationally and in comparison with similar schools. In writing standards in the 2003 national tests dipped below the national average but in 2004 standards improved and were well above the national average and the average for similar schools. Inspection evidence supports the 2004 test data. Standards are currently well above average in both reading and writing and also in speaking and listening. There is no statistically significant difference in the performance of boys or girls. Standards have improved since the last inspection.
- 39 Speaking and listening skills are very good across the school, with speaking being a particular strength. Pupils of all ages speak confidently and use mature vocabulary to express their thoughts and feelings. They make good progress as they move up the school and by Year 6 they show maturity in listening to others and in relating what they say to what has gone before. They speak clearly and project their voices well. Pupils of all ages work very sensibly in discussions with partners and are confident when expressing their views to larger groups. They respond to good questioning from teachers to consolidate their learning and share their opinions with others. Teachers enable pupils to use drama so that they learn to make links with other subjects, in particular in history and religious education.

- 40 Reading standards are very good across the school. Skills are very well taught so that from a young age, pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of letter sounds. They use their knowledge to decipher unfamiliar words. By the end of Year 2 most pupils are reading confidently and can talk about what they have read, giving opinions and saying what might happen next. Pupils develop an increasing ability to use reference books in Years 3 and 4. All teachers use a very good variety of texts in literacy lessons and use literature that links with topics that are being covered in other subjects to sustain their pupils' interest. They make very good use of poetry and by the end of Year 6 pupils can read poetry and prose with expression and characterisation to hold the interest of their audience.
- 41 Standards in all basic writing skills are very good, particularly in spelling and handwriting. This is an improvement since the last inspection. By the end of Year 2, pupils hold the interest of the reader in their writing and the presentation of their work is very good. They use their knowledge of letter sounds to spell creative vocabulary correctly. Their writing skills develop as they move up the school and they re-draft their work to produce well-structured pieces of writing. They use their word processing skills very effectively to edit and re-draft work. An analysis of pupils' work, however, shows that more use could be made of pupils' writing skills to record information in some other subjects of the curriculum.
- 42 The teaching and learning of English are very good overall. All teachers have a very good subject knowledge. This helps them to structure pacy lessons that maintain their pupils' enthusiasm for learning. Teachers work closely with teaching assistants to devise exciting activities that interest pupils of all abilities including effective support for pupils who have special educational needs. Teachers explain what pupils will learn during the lesson so that pupils know what is expected of them and lessons are effectively planned to challenge pupils' thinking. Across the school, pupils behave very well in response to teachers' high expectations as well as to their high levels of interest in what is being taught. This means that pupils concentrate well and complete their work. Marking is good overall but pupils are not as involved in assessing their own learning as they could be.
- 43 Leadership and management are very good. The subject leader works closely with the headteacher in carrying out a very thorough analysis of test results which is used to monitor teaching and learning. Very effective strategies have been introduced to teach spelling and handwriting and this has raised standards in writing. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Assessment procedures are good overall. The use of information and communication technology to support writing is good and this is an improvement since the last inspection. The national literacy strategy is effectively used to achieve high standards and has been creatively adapted to suit the needs of pupils. Provision is better than it was at the last inspection and there has been good improvement.

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

- 44 The provision for developing language and literacy across the curriculum is good overall. The spoken word, drama and reading skills are used very effectively in all subjects, but the application of writing skills across the curriculum could be better. This is because pupils are not given enough planned opportunities to apply their very good writing skills in other subjects.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good leadership and management and better teaching has raised standards at the end of Year 6.
- Pupils are very keen to learn and enjoy being challenged in their work.
- Although there are good procedures for assessment, pupils could be more involved in evaluating how well they are doing and what is needed to get better. .
- Good improvements have been made in the use of information and communication technology to support mathematics, but better links are needed with other subjects.

### **Commentary**

- 45 Across the school all pupils, including those with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well. Inspection evidence shows that standards at the end of Year 6 are currently well above average even though in the 2004 national tests standards were below the national average and below the average for similar schools, based on the number of pupils entitled to claim free school meals. The contradiction between the inspection findings and the most recent national test results is because improvements in teaching and the curriculum are starting to work their way through the school. Over the last five years, standards at the end of Year 2 have been above average overall both when compared to similar schools and all schools nationally. In the 2004 national tests standards were again above the national average and that of similar schools. Inspection evidence is that standards at the end of Year 2 are higher than the most recent tests results indicate and are currently well above average. There has been an improvement in the last year in the level of challenge given to higher-attaining pupils in particular which has pushed standards at the end of Year 2 up. The improvement has also boosted the rate of improvement that pupils made between Years 2 and 6. In the last two years, progress between Years 2 and 6 has been well below that of similar schools but inspection evidence shows that this is not now the case as a result of the changes made within the school. There is no statistically significant difference in the performance of boys or girls. Standards have improved since the last inspection.
- 46 There has been a rapid improvement in Years 3 to 6 of pupils using their mathematical skills effectively to solve problems and handle data and this is

pushing up standards at a fast rate. Pupils start in Year 1 with a very good mathematical awareness. Their potential is developed further through challenging work, which enables them to reach standards that are very high by the end of Year 2. Pupils who have just started in Year 2 are confidently using different strategies to work out the costs of various articles and the change needed from 50 pence. They are also recording their answers clearly in number sentences. The less able children buy and count the cost of articles up to 30 pence and know what change to receive. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils have a very good understanding of numbers, measuring, problem solving and handling data to enable them to reach standards that are well above average. This is significantly better than the average standards in the 2004 tests. Pupils are confidently using real life problems to find the 'mean' of a set of data and addressing an issue of statistical unfairness in data. Because lessons are interesting, pupils are highly motivated to learn and their behaviour is excellent. This has a positive impact on learning.

- 47 Pupils' work in the past in Years 3 to 6 showed that the less able pupils and those with special educational needs were underachieving and not receiving work that matched their abilities. This was because assessment was weak and there was not enough additional help in classrooms to support these pupils in their learning. In the monitoring of teaching and learning, the co-ordinators identified this significant weakness. As a result learning support workers have been placed in every classroom to support these pupils. Intervention programmes such as 'springboard' are also in place. Assessment and tracking procedures have improved. The tasks planned for all pupils now take into account differing ability levels and are demanding whatever their abilities. Although assessment is good, more still needs to be done to set and share targets with pupils and to help them to know how well they are doing.
- 48 The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall and lessons observed were never less than good. Planning is detailed and caters well for the needs of all pupils, resulting in very good learning in lessons. Teaching assistants are very well briefed before the lesson and keep detailed notes of progress to feed back at the end. All teachers give very careful thought as to how they will explain ideas and use well prepared resources which help pupils to understand. All teachers set high expectations of what pupils can achieve and deliver lessons in a confident and imaginative way. Time is used productively to help pupils to learn rapidly as well as capturing their enthusiasm for learning in the stimulating tasks that are set. Investigations are a strong feature of many lessons and pupils are encouraged to explore different approaches to problem solving and explain their working out using the correct vocabulary.
- 49 The subject is very effectively led and managed. The co-ordinator works closely with the headteacher to ensure that detailed analyses are made of the strengths and weaknesses of mathematics in the school. Assessment is good and contributes to very effective action planning with a good range of strategies for raising standards. This has arrested the apparent decline in mathematics in recent years and made sure that both teachers and pupils perform well. Resources and

accommodation are satisfactory although better resources to support information and communication technology during lessons would benefit both pupils and teachers. There has been a good improvement in provision since the last inspection.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

- 50 The skills of mathematics are taught in a satisfactory way across the curriculum but there is scope for further development. Information and communication technology is now used well to help pupils to handle data and interpret information. In a very good numeracy lesson that was closely linked to a history topic on the Civil War, pupils used the Internet to find out the exact distances between battlefields and converted miles to kilometres. In other subjects such as science and design and technology, there is not enough focus on measuring and recording accurately.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

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

- Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 but they could do much better in Years 3 to 6.
- Teaching and support staff are working hard to successfully provide stimulating and exciting lessons.
- Links with mathematics and information and communication technology are relatively weak.
- The subject leaders are moving the school forward in response to effective evaluations of the subject's strengths and weaknesses.

#### **Commentary**

- 51 Standards at the end of Year 6 are similar to those at the time of the last inspection. They are currently average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. There is a relative strength in pupils' knowledge of scientific content but a weakness in pupils' problem solving ability. In the last two years, pupils have underachieved in the national tests but positive action by the subject leaders is raising standards. Good improvements are occurring. A revamped curriculum and the recognition that pupils need to be given more challenging work in the field of investigational activities are starting to lift pupils' achievement. In both the 2003 and the 2004 national tests, standards at the end of Year 6 were below the national average and well below the average for similar schools, based on the number of pupils entitled to claim free school meals. For Year 2, teacher assessments showed that standards in 2004 were above the national average with relative strengths in pupils' knowledge and understanding of living things and of experimental science. Standards at the end of Year 2 are better than they

were at the time of the last inspection and in 2004 the school's performance was in the top five per cent of similar schools. Inspection evidence shows that all pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 and standards at the end of Year 2 are currently above expectations.

- 52 The quality of teaching and learning observed during the inspection was good overall with some very good features. All staff face the challenge of boosting the pupils' skills of applying their good knowledge of science to solve scientific problems. Throughout the school, lessons are carefully planned to match the expectations for the pupils' age. Some imaginative approaches are being employed by teachers that successfully engage the pupils' interest. In Year 6, for example pupils responded with great enthusiasm to a request by "Professor Potts" to perform an investigation into the way that different liquids can affect the growth of seeds. Throughout the school teachers are starting to use key scientific words to support pupils' learning and from a young age, pupils are now expected to think for themselves and to make decisions about what to do. Even though planning for most lessons is aimed at teaching the whole class, teaching and support staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their pupils. Teachers work closely and effectively with teaching assistants so that the needs of groups and individuals can be tackled. Weaknesses in teaching in the past are still evident however in the way pupils work. This is especially the case in Years 5 and 6 where pupils lack the confidence to plan and perform scientific investigations without constantly seeking confirmation from an adult.
- 53 High expectations are set for pupils' knowledge. Pupils thoroughly enjoy science lessons and benefit from experiencing activities that are placed in a familiar context. In Years 3 to 6, teachers continue to plan their work effectively enough to extend and develop pupils' knowledge of scientific ideas but there remains more to be done to improve the provision for developing pupils' independence. Throughout the school, the standards of pupils' recorded work are high but there is limited use of information and communication technology to support learning and links with mathematics are relatively weak. Teachers recognise these weaknesses and are introducing strategies to raise pupils' knowledge and understanding of the process of data collection and its interpretation. Marking is of a good standard although pupils are rarely involved in using teacher's comments as a way of identifying targets for their own improvement.
- 54 Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Recent changes in staffing have benefited science by increasing the quality of self-evaluation of subjects. The subject leaders have a good action plan for improving standards and achievement including some overdue improvements to the science scheme. Weaknesses in pupils' achievement in performing scientific investigations and in ensuring that pupils develop a good understanding of scientific terminology have been rightly identified as areas for improvement and effective strategies are being introduced to raise standards. Procedures for assessing pupils' achievement are satisfactory overall. Resources and accommodation are satisfactory although better resources for information and communication technology would benefit

teaching and learning. There has been a satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are rising across the school but achievement is unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 6.
- Teachers' knowledge and confidence has improved under the guidance and support of the subject leader.

### **Commentary**

- 55 Standards in information and communication technology are improving as a result of better resources and more confident and knowledgeable staff. In Years 1 and 2 pupils achieve well and standards are currently above expectations but there is still more to be done in Years 3 to 6. Standards at the end of Year 6 are broadly in line with expectations but pupils could do better and achievement has been unsatisfactory over time. Since the last inspection, the school has not progressed at the same rate as other schools nationally and standards at the end of Year 6 have declined although they are better at the end of Year 2.
- 56 The school's need to boost achievement in Years 3 to 6 has prompted significant investment in resources in recent months coupled with better training for staff. The acquisition of a set of laptops has enabled pupils to explore information and communication technology as part of lessons and for computers to be used as a tool for learning. The quality of teaching and learning is currently good overall but the impact of this on standards is yet to be fully manifested in Years 3 to 6. Gaps in resources have held the school back but despite this, pupils at the end of Year 2 are confident in using a computer. They have good skills of using a keyboard by the end of Year 2 and have a good knowledge of storing, interpreting and representing data. In Years 3 to 6 there are strengths in word processing, the use of data, and in design and research but could do better in elements of control, sensing and communicating through multimedia presentations. Throughout the school pupils show very good levels of enthusiasm for learning. They work very well with others and willingly share and help others where needed. The articulate nature of most pupils benefits the way they talk about computers and most pupils show good levels of initiative in their use.
- 57 The subject is effectively led and managed. The subject leader, headteacher and governing body are all committed to improving the quality of provision so that pupils do as well as they can. A well-devised action plan correctly identifies areas that need improving, for example, the need to extend some software and to introduce interactive whiteboards to improve teaching and learning. A suitable scheme guides what is taught and this ensures that pupils steadily build on their knowledge and understanding as they move through the school. A basic assessment system is established but it does not include pupils in the process as much as they could be. The provision is better than it was at the last inspection



as a result of significant investment in resources in the last year or so but there is still more to be done for provision to catch up with that in many similar schools.

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

- 58 Information and communication technology is developing well in terms of its use as a tool for supporting learning and its use is satisfactory. The acquisition of the laptops is enabling teachers and pupils to use computers as part of a range of lessons but most notably to support literacy and numeracy.

## **HUMANITIES**

- 59 The limitations of time made it impossible to make secure judgements about provision in **geography**. However, inspectors spoke to teachers and pupils about the subject and looked at planning and pupils' work. From this information it is clear that the school is only just covering the statutory requirements of the curriculum in Years 3 to 6 and there is too little focus on mapping and fieldwork skills. The rich environment around the school is not used enough to help pupils to gain a better knowledge and understanding of places. A new scheme of work has been written by the co-ordinator but there is not enough detail about the development of skills, which makes it difficult for teachers to plan lessons or to measure progress or assess understanding. The use of information and communication technology, which was a weakness at the last inspection, has not improved sufficiently to impact positively on the provision in geography.

### **History**

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The co-ordinator has established a good range of strategies to enrich the curriculum.
- Although good teaching and learning exists now, pupils have not been challenged sufficiently in the past in terms of thinking for themselves.
- Systems for assessing and tracking pupils' attainment and progress are unsatisfactory.
- Pupils learning benefits from linking different subjects to history.

### **Commentary**

- 60 Standards are in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and achievement is satisfactory. No judgements were made on standards at the last inspection but satisfactory progress has been maintained. Standards are not high enough yet because past work shows lower expectations in the teaching. Provision is now improving and standards are rising with better teaching and a broader curriculum.

- 61 The teaching and learning seen during the inspection was good. Lessons are well planned and imaginative teaching methods keep pupils engrossed in their learning and highly motivated. The pupils in Year 2 talked enthusiastically about their visit to the canal museum and remembered much of what they saw. They are also beginning to recognise some of the reasons why events happened as they did. For example they knew that canal transport began to decline because the railways were invented and were quicker. In Years 4 and 5, pupils are learning about Oliver Cromwell. The teacher planned a challenging lesson and made very good links with English. Pupils had to carry out research and find some factual information as well as positive and negative opinions about Oliver Cromwell. Pupils worked with very good levels of initiative and independence in their groups and came up with an impressive list of facts. However they found it much harder to justify their opinions and give reasons why Oliver Cromwell's life was interpreted in different ways. This is because the skills of enquiry and interpretation have not been taught well enough through the school in the past, but significant improvements are now being made.
- 62 Teachers make good links between different subjects to enrich learning in history. A range of educational visits are employed to bring learning alive and good innovations are used to add interest in lessons. In Year 6 for example drama and history are linked well together when pupils plan an improvisation of events leading up to the Jarrow March. In Years 3 and 4, the topic on the Romans is extended to include music, when pupils create their own composition based on the story of Boudicca. Information and communication technology is used more widely than before and many examples were seen during the inspection of pupils using the Internet to find information about famous events such as the Civil War and the gunpowder plot. The range and quality of books and artefacts are satisfactory but teachers rely upon loan services to supplement what is available to extend research and enquiry skills.
- 63 Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The subject leader has introduced effective links across subjects and improved the planning of lessons but there is a weakness in manageable and useful procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. The curriculum is better planned than it was but there is a lack of a clear structure for the way that pupils learn skills as well as knowledge. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

## **Religious education**

Provision in religious education is **good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils develop a good knowledge and understanding of major similarities and differences of three world faiths.
- Good links with the community and parents contribute to the quality of teaching and learning.

- Pupils have a mature attitude to considering the beliefs of others.

### **Commentary**

- 64 Pupils reach good standards in religious education by the end of both Years 2 and 6. Standards exceed the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and pupils achieve well. The good standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
- 65 The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Teachers devise and implement a range of well planned lessons that stimulate pupils' curiosity and interest. Very good links with people with a practising faith contribute to the pupils' awareness of the basic tenets of Christianity and Judaism and research based work develops amongst pupils a secure understanding of Islam. Discussions with pupils show that the curriculum develops a sense of curiosity about the meaning of life. By the age of seven they develop a good knowledge and understanding of the key teachings of the Bible, with higher-attaining pupils showing a good awareness of the significance of the Old and New Testaments. In Years 3 to 6, pupils develop a good understanding of not only the differences but also the similarities between three world faiths.
- 66 A study of other religions is taught well. Pupils are knowledgeable about the significance of the Qu'ran to Moslems and the Torah to Jews. Pupils know that people worship and that there are places with different names where they do that for example, a Church for many Christians, a Synagogue for Jews and a Mosque for Muslims. Pupils have a good sense of a greater being and talk knowledgeably about the idea of a prophet being a messenger from God. Pupils are very aware of the Ten Commandments and the way that this offers people a code for living that is common to more than one religion.
- 67 Good attention is given by teachers to celebrating key festivals of major religions. By regularly visiting the nearby church pupils have a first hand experience of the protocol of Christian worship and the excellent contribution of a parent enables pupils to embrace the beliefs of Judaism. Pupils show very good levels of respect for the beliefs of others even though many of them have none of their own. They talk with high regard for example about the way that Muslims practise Ramadan and liken the process to the way that Jesus practised abstinence for forty days in the desert. Some Year 6 pupils suggested that Ramadan enabled people to focus on what matters rather than material things.
- 68 The subject is effectively led and managed. Resources are satisfactory and are supplemented effectively by a local religious education resource centre. Good links exist with the local Church and a synagogue in Cheltenham. Plans exist to establish links with a Mosque although this is yet to happen. The provision has been maintained since the last inspection.

### **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

- 69 Limitations of time meant it was not possible to make secure judgements about the provision **in art and design, design and technology, music or physical education**.
- 70 In **art and design** the curriculum is weak. Discussions with pupils and an examination of their work and of displays around the school, indicate that their knowledge and understanding is below expectations for pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Until recently the curriculum has had many gaps that have resulted in pupils having limited experiences of art and design. Whilst there are ample opportunities for them to develop their skills of sketching, drawing and painting, they have little chance to develop their knowledge and understanding of three-dimensional work using a variety of modelling materials. The co-ordinator has developed a scheme of work for art and design with staff but it has not yet been fully implemented and is not supported by an effective way of assessing pupils' attainment and progress. The school is aware of the need to raise standards.
- 71 In **design and technology** a review of pupils' work and a discussion with Year 6 pupils shows that there are strengths in the standards in Year 2 but by the end of Year 6, whilst most pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of the design process they are unsure of the importance of evaluating what they do. Recent improvements in the curriculum have started to extend the range of activities experienced by pupils. In Year 2, a good range is currently taught with pupils showing high standards of recording their work. However, whilst there is some good work in areas such as food technology and textiles in Years 3 to 6, the overall quality of recorded work is weak. The subject is planned effectively and recent changes have increased the links between design and technology and other subjects. The subject lacks a manageable way of assessing and recording pupils' achievement and attainment.
- 72 In **music**, there have been recent improvements recently in the way the curriculum is planned and taught. Pupils receive a weekly class lesson from their teacher and improved planning ensures that all elements of the curriculum in music are covered. Nearly half the pupils in Years 3 to 6 are learning to play violins, guitars, flute, clarinet or piano. In addition there are several recorder groups for pupils from Year 2 as well as a school choir. The instrumentalists and the choir often perform in assemblies and concerts. More use is being made of information and communication technology to enhance provision since the last inspection. Visiting musicians who lead workshops in the school also enrich music. From the evidence of hearing singing in assemblies, pupils have built up a good range of hymns. They sing with enthusiasm, clearly enjoying their singing together. They quickly learn the words of hymns, diction is good and their singing is mostly in tune. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory, but there has not been any recent monitoring of the teaching and learning to assess the strengths and weakness in provision. However in the one lesson observed in Years 3 and 4, the teaching was very good and high expectations were set. Pupils worked very productively together to create a composition using a variety of rhythmic patterns.

- 73 In **physical education** pupils benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities that suits all ages. Much valued support is given by some parents in coaching after-school events and from coaches from nearby sports clubs such as Cheltenham F.C. The school swimming pool provides all pupils from a young age with the chance to gain confidence in the water so that by time they leave school, pupils swim well with most exceeding expectations for their age. Although the hall restricts what pupils can do, inventive use of the outdoors enables pupils to develop good skills of dance which are used when participating in the local arts festival. Outdoor adventure activities are successfully developed as part of the residential visits for pupils in Years 3 - 6. During the inspection, there were few physical education lessons observed, but those seen were good and teachers made good use of the space despite the hall's limitations.

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

- 74 The school has a very effective programme for this area of pupils' development. A policy has been developed which underpins the school's aims. Links with other areas of the curriculum are identified but there are no progressive skills identified in the scheme of work. Time is given by each teacher to teach the personal, social, health and citizenship curriculum during circle times. In addition, daily opportunities are taken to hear pupils' concerns, for example during afternoon registration in a Year 3/4 class pupils fed back their dinner-time experiences on the playground. Pupils' awareness of personal safety and of the importance of living a healthy life is very high. They demonstrate a mature attitude towards each other and adults and are very well prepared for their future life in the community. The school council plays an active part in decisions relating to the life of the school, for example, in solving problems that occur at playtime. All pupils show consistent and very mature levels of care and consideration for each other. Sex and relationships education is covered in the science curriculum and during specific lessons in Years 5 and 6, when the school nurse contributes to teaching and learning. The school plans to involve a life education project to enhance its drugs awareness programme.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	Grade
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
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
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	1
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
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	3
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	1
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
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).*

