

INSPECTION REPORT

PADBURY CHURCH OF ENGLAND FIRST SCHOOL

Padbury, Buckingham

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 110413

Headteacher: Mrs L James

Lead inspector: Mr S Hill

Dates of inspection: 13th to 15th September 2004

Inspection number: 267461

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: First School
School category: Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils: 4 - 9
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 23

School address: Main Road
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Buckingham
Buckinghamshire
Postcode: MK18 2AP

Telephone number: 01280 813070
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Appropriate authority: Governing Body
Name of chair of governors: Dr Neil Rowley

Date of previous inspection: 17th May 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a very small school in the village of Padbury. It is a first school, able to cater for pupils up to the age of nine, but for the last two years almost all pupils have left at the end of Year 2, when they were seven. This is a change from the last inspection, when most pupils took the option of staying on until the end of Year 3 or 4, and largely accounts for the fall in numbers since then. Pupils still have the option of staying on for Years 3 and 4 if their parents wish. The fluctuations in the number of local children in each year group, as well as the very high proportion of pupils who start or leave the school at other than the expected times (over a third of the school population last year) make for considerable difficulties in planning. This means the school often has to make major modifications both to its class arrangements and to its finances. At the time of the inspection, the school had two children aged four in the reception year, who attended part time. Another 21 pupils, aged from five to seven, were in Years 1 and 2 although the number in Year 1 was almost double that in Year 2. There were no pupils in Years 3 and 4.

The social circumstances of pupils, while varied, are better than average overall. Most current pupils are of white British origin, with a few pupils from other ethnic origins. All pupils have English as a mother tongue. The number of pupils with special educational needs is below average overall, but varies considerably from year to year, with the proportion in particular year groups sometimes high. One pupil currently has a Statement of Special Educational Need. The range of pupils' attainment when they start at the school is correspondingly very wide, but overall attainment on entry is above average. Since the last inspection there have been considerable improvements to the accommodation, particularly in the provision for the Foundation Stage children.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21277	Mr S Hill	Lead inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Physical education Music
9052	Mrs H Barter	Lay inspector	
19994	Mrs L Bradley	Team inspector	English History Geography Religious education Foundation Stage curriculum Personal, social and health education Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good school** that provides well for all its pupils through committed teamwork from the staff. Good teaching and achievement lead to good standards within a real family atmosphere. The school is well led and managed and, despite the high costs associated with such a small school, provides **satisfactory value for money**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are above average in English and mathematics because of good teaching.
- Good leadership from the headteacher and the governors contributes effectively to the school's success.
- Pupils enjoy school, form very good relationships and behave well.
- Links with parents and the community are very good.
- The school is well managed but subject leaders are not sufficiently involved in systematically checking on the quality of teaching and learning.
- Pupils are supported and cared for well and their individual progress is tracked thoroughly.

Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. The good provision and standards have been maintained despite many difficulties with funding because of unpredictable rolls. Since the last inspection, the age range of pupils attending the school has changed and numbers have fallen. During the inspection there were 21 full-time pupils aged from four to seven in Years 1 and 2 and two four-year-olds in the reception year, who attended part-time. The main issues identified at the last inspection have been dealt with effectively. Assessment has been improved for all pupils and is now good, and the recording of the progress of pupils with special educational needs is more systematic.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Achievement is good. Pupils achieve well both in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. Children start in the Foundation Stage with standards that vary from year to year but that, overall, are above average. Almost all children meet the standards expected by the end of the reception year (the early learning goals) and the majority exceed them.

Standards by the end of Year 2 vary from year to year because of the different abilities of pupils in the small cohorts and varying levels of special educational needs. However, standards have usually been better than average, as shown by the results of national curriculum assessments below. Caution is needed in interpreting data where numbers are so small.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
reading	A	A	A*	A*
writing	D	A	A	A
mathematics	A	C	A*	A*

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

A* means results were in the top 5 per cent nationally. Preliminary results for 2004 are not as strong as in 2003, but national comparative figures are not yet available. However, almost all pupils reached the expected standard in all the assessments, although few exceeded them except in reading. Analysis of pupils' records and the work in their books show that they made good progress overall in the light of their previous attainment.

Current standards in Year 2 are above average in reading, writing and mathematics and average in science. Standards meet national expectations in information and communication technology (ICT). Standards in religious education meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. In other subjects, which were not inspected in detail, work seen was at least satisfactory and the standards observed in physical education and design and technology were good.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is **good**. Their attitudes to school and their behaviour are good and are underpinned by very good relationships, both with adults and with each other. Attendance and punctuality are very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good** in each year group. English and mathematics are taught well because work is matched carefully to the needs of different pupils. Classes are managed well so pupils behave well and are keen to learn. Assessment is good and is used effectively to plan work in English and mathematics. Support staff are used effectively to help pupils to learn, particularly those with special educational needs. The school provides a full and interesting curriculum despite the difficulties of varying numbers and having a very small staff. Often the curriculum has to be modified considerably each year to cope with the differing numbers in each age group. This is done very well and flexibly, and staff are now continually modifying and refining the curriculum for the very small number of children in the reception year to ensure they get the best possible provision. Provision for enrichment of the curriculum is good. Provision for pupils' care, guidance and support is good and all pupils are fully included in the life of the school. Links with parents and the community are very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good**. The headteacher provides clear leadership to a committed team of staff and governors. Management is good. Subject leaders are working hard to support each other, but need to be more involved in systematically checking up on provision and standards in their subjects. Governance is good. Governors have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are focused on improving standards. All statutory requirements are met. Financial management is clearly targeted on the school's educational priorities, but the unstable roll has made planning difficult and resulted in a deficit budget. A recovery plan to deal with this has been agreed with the local authority.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very positive about the school and appreciate particularly the personal care and attention that their children receive. Children enjoy school and are confident that the adults will support them if they have problems.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important thing the school should do to improve is:

- make more systematic provision for subject leaders to check up on provision and standards in their subjects.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is **good** and pupils make good progress throughout the school. Overall standards are **above average** by the time pupils leave.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most children in the Foundation Stage exceed the expected standards by the time they start Year 1.
- Standards in mathematics and English are above average in Year 2.
- Achievement in ICT is improving thanks to new equipment.
- In most years, many pupils exceed the expected standards in national assessments, although few did in 2004.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in the light of their difficulties.

Commentary

1. Good achievement and standards have been maintained since the last inspection. For several years the scores in national tests in Year 2 have generally been above average (and often well above average) when compared with all schools nationally and with similar schools (those with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals). The trend in scores over several years up to 2003, when overall results were in the top 5 per cent nationally, was better than the national trend. In 2003 all pupils reached the expected Level 2 and a large proportion exceeded this in reading, writing, mathematics and science. The significance of scores from any individual year should be treated with some caution, given the very small numbers of pupils involved.
2. Results in 2004 were weaker, although national comparative figures are not yet available. Although almost all pupils reached the expected Level 2, none exceeded this except in reading. However, the school's detailed assessments show that this small group had no real high fliers at the start of Year 1. The work in their books, as well as the school's records of their progress, shows that the results obtained represent good achievement in mathematics and English, particularly in reading. Achievement in science was satisfactory.
3. Children in the Foundation Stage get off to a good start and achieve well. By the end of the reception year almost all have met the expected standards for their age (the Early Learning Goals) and the majority have exceeded them. This is because of a carefully planned curriculum and good teaching that builds effectively on pupils' generally good standards when they start.
4. Inspection evidence shows that pupils in Year 2 are continuing to achieve well, particularly in English and mathematics where standards are above average. They are fluent and keen readers and write well for a range of purposes. Their poetry work is of a particularly high standard, although their handwriting is only satisfactory. In mathematics they have a good grasp of number and place value, and are starting to use this to deal with numbers up to a thousand. Standards in science and in information and communication technology are in line with national expectations. Achievement in ICT has been hampered by poor

equipment. Standards are improving because of new resources and pupils are now achieving well. Standards in religious education meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Other subjects were not inspected in depth, but were sampled. The standard of the work seen was at least satisfactory and was good in design and technology and physical education.

5. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the extra help they get from support staff and the careful tailoring of work to their needs. This is why so few pupils fail to attain the expected levels in national tests.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils of all ages get along together really well.
- The school places good emphasis on pupils' personal development.
- Pupils behave sensibly in lessons and are keen to learn.
- Pupils sometimes rely too much on adult support in small classes.
- Attendance and punctuality are very good.

Commentary

6. This small school has a real family atmosphere and is an extension of the village community. Parents say that their children treat it as their second family. The pupils enjoy having lots of friends at school and say that learning is fun. Relationships are very good throughout the school and pupils take good care of each other, especially the very youngest children. Lunchtimes and playtimes are sociable occasions and pupils with special educational needs are very well integrated and play a full part in every aspect of school life.
7. Pupils behave well at work and at play. Behaviour at lunchtimes is particularly good with little need for any action from staff to sustain the good discipline. Pupils know the rules and are keen on the sticker system that rewards good work and thoughtful behaviour. They like the fact that it is fair and that it recognises individual achievement. Parents said they were unaware of any bullying in the playground and trusted the dinner supervisors to nip any unkindness in the bud. Pupils said that they felt safe in school.
8. Pupils are keen to learn and to take part in the additional activities that the school provides. Although eagerness sometimes means that pupils call out in class, they listen sensibly to their classmates and appreciate each other's good work. This was shown particularly well in a poetry lesson in Year 2, where pupils listened attentively to each other's poems and explained thoughtfully which lines they liked best and why.
9. Pupils' all-round personal development is central to the school's good ethos. Each one is seen as an individual and their successes are celebrated. The school's policy for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development ensures that all aspects are successfully built into lessons and assemblies. Spiritual, moral and social development are good and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils are encouraged to be reflective about their own and others' effect on the world and to take responsibility for themselves and the

school environment. They work well collaboratively and their ability to work independently is satisfactory. At times, the very small size of classes makes it easy for pupils to rely too heavily on adult support, which is often readily available.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	1.1	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

- Pupils' attendance and punctuality continue to be very good. Pupils want to come to school and their parents make sure that they get there on time. This means that there is little disruption to their learning and has a good impact on the standards that pupils achieve. There have been no recent exclusions.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **good** quality of education for its pupils. Teaching and learning are good and are supported by good assessments of pupils' progress. The curriculum is good and is well enriched by a variety of activities. Pupils are well cared for and supported. Links with parents and the community are very good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good** in both classes. Assessment is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good relationships and effective classroom management support secure discipline.
- Work is usually well matched to pupils' individual needs.
- Good use of support staff helps pupils to make good progress.
- There are very good systems for tracking individual pupils' progress.
- Teachers are good at generating interest and enthusiasm in pupils.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in nine lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	1	6	2	0	0	0

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

- The quality of teaching has been maintained since the last inspection and assessment has improved considerably.
- Pupils are managed well. Classrooms are orderly and purposeful places where pupils work hard and do their best. This is supported by well-established routines. Teachers' expectations of work and behaviour are made clear and pupils try hard to meet them. Although systems of reward and sanction are well understood, pupils' positive responses

are largely due to the very good relationships they have with staff. They like and respect their teachers and are keen to please them by behaving well and working hard.

13. Another factor that supports pupils' progress is the variety of interesting activities which teachers prepare. They have good subject knowledge and plan work that helps pupils to develop their understanding systematically in a variety of curriculum areas. Much of what is done is firmly grounded in practical work or makes use of pupils' own lives as a jumping-off point for new learning. In mathematics and science, in particular, pupils frequently handle practical materials, which helps them to understand ideas more securely. In religious education, teachers make good use of pupils' own experiences of Christenings, for example, to reinforce their explanations. Pupils are encouraged to talk about their own views and knowledge, and their contributions are valued. Good use is made of homework, particularly in supporting pupils' reading skills.
14. An advantage of the small classes is that teachers are generally able to tailor work to match the needs of individuals or groups. Particularly in mathematics and English, often several different tasks are set for different pupils, so that they are all challenged to extend themselves, but are seldom completely lost. As a result, they make good progress in most lessons. Occasionally this falters, as in a lesson observed when the mathematical requirements of the work set were too difficult for many of the pupils. The teacher responded quickly by modifying the lesson to match the capabilities of the pupils and providing a lot of individual attention to help them to cope.
15. Support staff provide effective help to individuals and help them progress quickly. Pupils seldom have to wait long for help if they are 'stuck' and teachers and assistants keep a careful eye on how children are getting on, so they do not waste time over misconceptions. The help given to pupils with special educational needs is particularly valuable in helping them to cope with the work and to contribute their ideas fully to the lessons.
16. The school has worked very hard since the last inspection to improve assessment systems. Systems are now very good and are used well. There is careful tracking of each pupil's progress in reading, writing, mathematics, science, ICT, history and geography. This enables the school to monitor its success and to address the difficulties of any pupils who seem in danger of falling behind their potential. Good use is made of the assessments for preparing work for individuals in English and mathematics, although this is not really established in other subjects. Marking is very thorough in mathematics and writing and gives pupils a clear idea of how they have done. Marking also often helps staff to track each pupil's progress, by showing the context of each piece of work and how much time or help was needed. Good use is made of overall data to modify aspects of the curriculum.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **good** and caters well for all pupils. The enrichment of the curriculum is **good**. Resources are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school responds flexibly to ensure that all pupils get full access to a wide range of interesting activities.
- Great care is taken to provide the youngest pupils with a worthwhile curriculum.

- Good use is being made of assessment data to modify the curriculum, which has not always tackled more difficult topics in mathematics and science.
- The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities for pupils of this age in a very small school.
- Resources are generally good, but poor ICT equipment has hampered progress in the last few years.

Commentary

17. The school fully meets the requirements of the national curriculum and provides a good range of activities for pupils. The elements of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy are used well and are tailored to the needs of these small classes. Good use is made of practical work and the various aspects of different subjects are tackled well. For example, there is a good balance between learning about religions and learning from religions in religious education. In design and technology, pupils have good opportunities for designing and evaluating their work, as well as for making a variety of artefacts.
18. Good provision for pupils' personal and social education is built into all aspects of school life, both in class and outside. All pupils are fully involved in all aspects of the curriculum and special educational needs are not allowed to stand in the way of pupils' participation. Good use of the skilled support staff helps ensure that equal opportunities are promoted well. Health education is effectively supported by work in science and physical education.
19. The school has been very careful to provide a suitable curriculum for the small number of reception children this year. A lot of work and planning went into making sure they had a good start in their new class and feel fully at home there. Separate work is planned for them and they benefit from dedicated help from a classroom assistant. After only a fortnight, staff are already making changes in the curriculum to ensure that there is a better balance between activities chosen by the children and those directed by the teacher. Records show that the much larger group last year, in a very different class arrangement, had full access to the early years' curriculum and plans for this year show that the current pupils will also get their full entitlement.
20. Results of last year's national assessments for Year 2 have been used to identify areas where pupils did not perform well. The school has identified specific areas, such as handling large numbers in mathematics and work in science that is needed for pupils to gain the higher Level 3 scores, as needing development. The curriculum is being modified and pupils in Year 2 are already working effectively with large numbers, for example.
21. Learning is made more interesting by the good enrichment of the curriculum. The school does as much as it can to provide the pupils with opportunities to broaden their involvement in the arts and in sports through clubs and in joining pupils from other schools. A regular programme of visitors and visits serves to bring learning to life in a good number of subjects by giving pupils first hand experiences to talk and write about.
22. Learning resources are generally of good quality and staff use them effectively to make lessons interesting. An exception has been in ICT where both equipment and software has often been of inadequate quality so that, despite good teaching, pupils' progress was only satisfactory. This has now been improved considerably and pupils are starting to achieve well in their lessons. Particular strengths are in the outdoor environment, which

the school makes good use of in a range of subjects, and in the number and effectiveness of support staff, who make a good contribution to pupils' learning.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is **good**. All pupils are provided with **good** support, advice and guidance. The way in which the school seeks, values and acts on pupils' views is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's caring atmosphere is much appreciated by parents.
- The school has good awareness of its statutory responsibilities for pupils' welfare.
- All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are well supported both personally and academically.
- Pupils have very good relationships with adults and have the confidence to air their views.

Commentary

23. This is a very small school where adults know all the pupils and their needs well and monitor their academic progress and personal development carefully. Parents are confident that their children are well cared for and say that their children also care for each other. They feel that this gives their children the confidence to learn and to ask their teachers for help.
24. Pupils' health, safety and well-being are supported effectively. Appropriate child protection procedures are followed correctly if there are concerns. The school has good awareness of its responsibilities for health and safety and is currently working with the local authority to investigate ways of improving car parking and reducing parents' concerns in this area.
25. The school is an inclusive one, which cares well for pupils' individual and special educational needs. Staff are alert and sympathetic to individual concerns and work well with parents when there are difficulties. Assessment procedures are much improved since the last inspection and are used effectively to guide pupils and to improve their work.
26. Pupils say that they are happy at school because adults look after them and help them when they have a problem. Pupils develop very good relationships with adults because they get to know them well in the small school environment. This gives pupils confidence to discuss their concerns and to express their views easily in lessons, assemblies and in the playground. Although there are no formal mechanisms for seeking pupils' views, the school is making good progress in developing more opportunities for pupils to be involved in decision-making, such as during the development of the outdoor area.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents and with the community are **very good**. There are **good** links with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very happy with their children's education and the partnership that the school has with them.
- The school provides parents with good quality written information.
- The school has very good links with its local community.
- Good links with other schools benefit both pupils and staff.

Commentary

27. The school has strengthened its links further with parents who now have very positive views of the school. They are full of praise for their relationships with the staff who, they say, are very approachable and skilled at communicating with both parents and children. Parents praise the improvement over the last two years and say that the school is 'more friendly, with children's work everywhere'. Parents lend considerable support in the classroom, for school activities and for fund-raising. The high quality partnership between home and school has a significant impact on pupils' learning and their well-being.
28. Parents receive good information about what their children are being taught and how they can help them at home. There is good daily communication through the homework/reading diary. Parents feel that they are kept well informed about school activities and the progress that their children are making. Although some feel that pupils' annual reports contain educational jargon, they say that there are many opportunities to talk to staff about how their children are getting on and that teachers explain things well.
29. The school has a well-established place in the village and is very well supported and valued by the local community. Pupils enjoy taking part in regular village events such as the produce show where their art work won prizes. Links with the church are also good. Good use is made of visits, for example to Bekonscot Model Village, to broaden pupils' experiences outside the classroom.
30. The school has good links with other schools in the area. These give pupils the opportunity to learn and to work with others and to participate in events such as music festivals and a science fair at the secondary school. Staff also benefit from these links where they can train with colleagues and exchange views and expertise beyond their own small school environment.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good** overall. The headteacher provides good leadership whilst other key staff, who are growing quickly into their new roles, provide satisfactory leadership. Both governance and the management of the school are good. The school deals well with the difficulties caused by uncertain numbers.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has built a strong team that is committed to improvement.
- Self-evaluation is used as an increasingly effective tool to drive up standards.
- Governors provide knowledgeable support and guidance.
- The management of special educational needs is effective.
- School improvement planning is tightly focused on a few key priorities.
- Subject leaders are not sufficiently involved in systematically checking on the quality of teaching and learning.

Commentary

31. Since the last inspection, there has been a complete turnover of teaching staff. The headteacher has worked very hard to form a new team of part-time staff who work effectively together to provide a good standard of education in what are often unpredictable circumstances. The wide variation in admissions each year means that the staff have to show ingenuity and flexibility in their planning and organisation of the curriculum from term to term. It is to their credit that good standards have been maintained and key issues addressed successfully in the face of external challenges.
32. The good improvement in assessment procedures has enabled staff to track the progress of each pupil throughout their time in school on a regular basis and to fine-tune the curriculum and individual targets to boost achievement. The management of special educational needs has also improved since the last inspection and is now good. In her role as co-ordinator for special educational needs, the headteacher has established good systems for early identification, support, assessment and review in close collaboration with parents and the local education authority.
33. The headteacher, staff and governors have established effective systems of self-evaluation, which ensure that their energies can be directed to improving a few carefully identified priorities. There are clear links between the school improvement plan and challenging performance management targets, which are correctly focused on raising standards. The recent focus on ICT is leading to raised achievement in lessons. The current improvement plan correctly identifies the need to extend the role of the subject co-ordinators as a major priority. The headteacher recognises the importance of external evaluation to a small school and has made good use of feedback from the local authority and from Her Majesty's Inspectors. She has grasped every opportunity to broaden teachers' and support staff's knowledge of good practice. Professional development is well planned, developed collaboratively and carefully evaluated. Part-time teachers and teaching assistants all show a strong desire to develop their practice.
34. Governors play an important part in the life of the school. Since the last inspection, there have also been many changes in the governing body, which has been invigorated by new members who are keen to contribute and are committed to training. The governing body is well organised with effective structures for managing financial and curriculum matters and for ensuring that statutory requirements are met in full. There is good communication between governors and staff, and effective monitoring visits have been mutually beneficial in moving the school forward. Governors have a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are not afraid to ask challenging questions. The headteacher values their critical friendship and the strong working partnership that has developed between staff and governors.
35. The headteacher provides a very good role model to staff as well as pupils. She is the leading professional in the classroom and also provides a model of effective subject leadership and management. Roles and responsibilities have been clearly defined and teaching staff have already begun to show qualities of leadership by initiating improvements in mathematics and in information and communication technology. Although subject leaders have established ways of tracking progress and analysing results, they are not sufficiently involved in monitoring standards or the quality of teaching and learning on a formal basis.

36. Financial management is clearly targeted on the school's educational priorities and governors apply the principles of best value when making decisions. However, the unstable roll has made planning difficult and resulted in a deficit budget. The governing body is looking actively at ways to improve the sustainability of the school. A recovery plan to deal with this has been agreed with the local authority. Although the school's costs are very high, they are similar to other very small schools in the authority. Because pupils achieve well and reach good standards, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	128,886
Total expenditure	161,499
Expenditure per pupil	5,569

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	- 6,754
Balance carried forward to the next	- 39,367

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Close teamwork ensures that the youngest children are well integrated with their older classmates.
- Good attention is paid to meeting children's individual needs.
- Good teaching ensures that work is pitched at the right level and children achieve well.
- Planning for child-initiated activities is not sufficiently detailed.
- Teaching staff are alert to the need to constantly evaluate the effectiveness of unavoidable changes in organisation.
- There have been good improvements to the accommodation and resources.

Commentary

37. Attainment on entry varies from year to year but is generally above average. Most children have had pre-school experience and have good knowledge, understanding and skills when they start school. Evidence from the moderated Foundation Stage profiles and observations of the children who have just moved into Year 1 indicate that most children reach the goals expected for their age in all six areas of learning and a majority exceed most of them. Achievement in all areas that were inspected in depth is good. This is similar to the findings at the last inspection.
38. Planning for the Foundation Stage is a constant challenge in this very small school as the uncertainty and variability of admissions each year mean that nursery and reception-aged children are sometimes taught together in one class and at other times are taught alongside pupils in Year 1. At the time of the inspection there were only two children in the reception class who attended every morning and no children of nursery age, although four will be joining the school on a part-time basis later in the school year. These two children work in a class with 13 Year 1 pupils. This calls for complex arrangements to ensure that they have ample opportunity to relate socially to a wider group, but also tackle work that matches their developmental age and abilities. There is very good teamwork between the two teachers who share responsibility for the class and the teaching assistant who provides full-time support for these children every morning.
39. Teaching and learning are good overall. The teaching staff plan very carefully together to ensure that children are involved in pertinent parts of the literacy and numeracy lessons and that the separate work they do carefully dovetails. Very good assessment procedures are well established and the progress of individual children is carefully tracked to ensure that they receive the right level of challenge and support. The leadership of the curriculum is good. The headteacher and staff have monitored the new arrangements from day one and are already planning some adjustments to the timetable and to the organisation of the classroom. This is to ensure that the two children have a better balanced curriculum with a wider variety of activities and more time to follow up their own interests and ideas. During the inspection, the opportunities for the children to choose some of their own activities were sometimes too limited.

40. Children make good progress in their **personal, social and emotional development** because of the good quality of the care and support they are given and the very close working relationship that staff have with children and parents. Staff provide good role models and encourage the children to develop independence, for example in dressing themselves and in getting out equipment and putting it away. Particular care is taken to ensure that the two reception children feel part of a larger group and learn to relate their classmates. Snack time is a special time when they can chat about themselves and talk about any worries they have. They behave well, are keen to learn and have quickly absorbed new routines. In **communication, language and literacy** children have access to a wide range of good quality picture books and thoroughly enjoy 'Big Book' sessions where, prompted by careful questioning, they confidently talk about the story and express their ideas at length. They are learning to form their letters and write their names clearly. Changing role-play areas give them a range of real reasons for speaking and writing. In **mathematical development**, children are provided with a good range of activities inside and outside the classroom to develop their skills and understanding. Good emphasis is placed on developing mathematical vocabulary through stories and rhymes. The children are rapidly gaining a good grasp of using numbers 1 to 10 in a wide range of number games.
41. Although time constraints allowed very little direct observation of other areas of learning, teachers' planning indicates that, when children attend full-time, they will have access to a broad curriculum. There is good provision for **knowledge and understanding of the world** and their **physical** and **creative development**, helped by the improved accommodation and resources. The timetable arrangements during the first two weeks of term did not provide part-time reception children with a good balance between those activities led by the teaching staff and those which children could choose for themselves. During the inspection the staff had already begun to amend their planning in the light of their observations.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in writing poetry.
- Good teaching enables pupils to read and write for a wide range of purposes.
- Assessment is very thorough and ensures that work is well matched to individuals' needs.
- Literacy skills are developed well across the curriculum.
- Pupils do not readily transfer their handwriting skills to independent writing.

Commentary

42. The school has been successful in maintaining the above-average standards at the end of Year 2 since the time of the last inspection. Good provision has been maintained and assessment has improved. Higher-attaining pupils are enabled to reach a high standard and those with special educational needs make good progress towards their individual targets. Boys and girls achieve equally well.

43. Results in national assessments at age seven have varied from year to year because of the very small cohorts, but have usually been above average and sometimes well above average. In 2003, results in reading were in the top 5 per cent when compared with schools nationally and similar schools, with results in writing well above average when compared with both. Provisional results in the 2004 tests were not as high because there were fewer high fliers among the group of pupils who took the tests and more pupils with special educational needs. Almost all pupils gained the expected level, but few exceeded this, except in reading. However, the school's tracking of their progress and their written work indicate that these pupils achieved well.
44. The present Year 2 is a very small cohort of pupils with a wide range of ability, but inspection evidence shows that standards are above average in speaking, listening, reading and writing. Most pupils are articulate and draw on a wide range of experiences and a good vocabulary when discussing different texts. They listen carefully and often respond at length, with some able to hold their ground in a discussion. Almost all pupils enjoy reading both story and information books and most are confident to have a go and use a range of strategies when meeting unknown words for the first time. They are also becoming increasingly confident to have a stab at spelling new words using their growing knowledge of how English is spelt. Most pupils are keen to find an individual way of expressing themselves and strive to find interesting words and phrases in their writing. However, although handwriting is taught on a regular basis, there is not sufficient consistency among staff in promoting a fluently joined style.
45. The quality of teaching and learning is good in both classes. Teachers have good command of the subject and are skilful in planning the development of all skills in a coherent and meaningful way. Lessons are well paced with momentum sustained through the use of a good range of teaching and learning methods. In a very good poetry lesson in Year 2, the teacher carefully selected a wide range of poems that stimulated the pupils' interest and imagination and provided a basic structure for their own attempts. This led to very effective paired work. Pupils knuckled down to create very individual responses that belied their young age, using striking vocabulary to paint a picture with a keen sense of how the poem sounded when read out loud. The pupils were persistent and self-critical in their efforts and produced work of a high standard. In both classes, teachers use assessments effectively to modify their lesson plans and to meet the needs of individual pupils. A significant strength is the quality of teachers' marking which is thorough and informative with time taken to edit work with individual pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are given specific support to help them meet the targets on their individual education plans.
46. The leadership and management of English are good. The co-ordinator has been effective in enabling the teaching staff to take every opportunity to learn from internal and external evaluations and to focus their professional development successfully on specific curricular targets. Assessment procedures are thorough and comprehensive. They ensure that work is accurately targeted at individuals and groups. Pupils' progress is rigorously tracked and the level of challenge and support adjusted on a regular basis.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

47. Pupils use their literacy skills well in other subjects. Teachers provide good opportunities for them to write for different purposes in a number of subjects, particularly in science, design and technology and religious education. Another way in which teachers promote

pupils' literacy skills is in enabling them to discuss ideas and to evaluate their own and each other's work. Both classrooms have well-chosen displays of books relating to the topics being studied and pupils are encouraged to refer to these during lessons.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are good at applying their understanding of number to problems.
- Teachers are careful to give different work to pupils of different attainment.
- Good use of practical work supports pupils' good achievement.
- The subject is well led, but the co-ordinator needs more opportunity to monitor standards and provision systematically.

Commentary

48. Standards and achievement are good. Good provision in mathematics has been sustained since the last inspection and standards overall have improved. Results of national curriculum assessments at age seven have fluctuated from year to year but overall have risen and have been better than average. In 2003 results were in the top 5 per cent nationally, with most pupils exceeding the expected Level 2. Provisional results for 2004 were not as good and, although almost all pupils got the expected Level 2, none got Level 3. The work in pupils' books and detailed records show that this group nonetheless achieved well. None of them was predicted to get Level 3 on the basis of assessments when they started and several did better than would have been expected.
49. Inspection evidence shows that standards in the current Year 2 are better than average. Pupils are quick to spot patterns and to apply their understanding of number to new situations. Work in last year's books shows that pupils are good at applying their good understanding of basic number to problems. They were able to work out calculations about length, capacity and money, for example, with confidence because they had lots of opportunities to do this.
50. Teaching and learning are good. Good use is made of the assessments of pupils' attainment to plan different work for different pupils. This ensures that they are able to make progress at their own level. A major strength is the use of practical work to support pupils' learning. In a good lesson observed during the inspection, the teacher used practical apparatus well to develop pupils' understanding of large numbers. By constantly linking the written calculations to the physical blocks representing the numbers, she helped pupils to reach a secure understanding of what they were doing.
51. The subject is well led and the subject leader has carefully analysed assessment results to identify any shortcomings. The areas of relative weakness are already being addressed and the curriculum modified accordingly. Management is satisfactory and the curriculum and resources are well organised. However, the subject leader has little opportunity to observe teaching or to systematically check up on standards in her colleagues' lessons.

Mathematics across the curriculum

52. This is satisfactory. Pupils have suitable opportunities to apply their understanding of mathematics in other subjects such as science. Good use is made of graphical work or tables to help pupils understand the data they gather, in science or geography for example.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are good at practical work because they get lots of opportunities for this.
- The tracking of individual pupils' progress is good, but not enough use is made of the information to plan harder work for brighter pupils.
- Good use is made of support staff to enable pupils with special educational needs to take a full part in lessons.

Commentary

53. Achievement is satisfactory and standards are average. Standards and provision have been maintained since the last inspection and assessment has improved. The results of national curriculum assessments at the age of seven vary considerably. In 2003 results were in the top 5 per cent nationally, but in 2004 they were weaker. Although pupils all got to the expected Level 2, none attained Level 3. Detailed inspection of pupils' results reveals that many showed elements of higher attainment in investigative work. However, these scores were all negated by average scores in their knowledge of scientific topics. This picture accords with that in their books, where their work shows an average grasp of scientific knowledge, but a good understanding of investigative and practical work. Over the course of the year they had many opportunities for experimental work and wrote about these well. In the lesson seen during the inspection with Year 1 pupils, and in discussion with pupils in Year 2, this pattern was replicated. Pupils showed a good understanding of experiments and of the idea of a fair test.
54. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the lesson seen they were good and pupils achieved well. There were good opportunities for pupils to have first hand experience in testing different smells and in starting to understand the idea of prediction. Pupils were managed well, tried hard and showed good behaviour. There are thorough assessments made of pupils' attainment but not enough use is made of these to tailor work to the needs of individuals, particularly higher attainers. Evidence shows that last year, in almost all cases, pupils tackled the same work with the only difference being in the writing and recording required of different pupils. Annotations in the work show that pupils with special educational needs get good support to help them cope with the work. In the lesson observed this was also apparent and support staff enable all pupils to keep up with what is happening and to take a full part in lessons. However, there was little sign in any of the work seen of brighter pupils tackling harder topics, which would enable them to attain higher levels in their scientific knowledge.
55. The subject is led and managed satisfactorily. A sound framework for the curriculum has now been established and resources are kept up to date. A good system for tracking each pupil's progress is in place, which shows that pupils' achievement overall was satisfactory last year, for example. However, the subject leader does not have enough opportunity to check up on standards and provision in her colleagues' lessons to help her take the subject forward further.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have made satisfactory progress despite the poor equipment available last year.
- ICT is well integrated into other subjects.
- Good leadership and management have led to improved provision of equipment.

Commentary

56. Standards meet the national expectation by the age of seven and achievement is satisfactory. This has been attained despite a lack of suitable equipment during last year. Pupils are able to use the different elements of programs such as 'colour magic' competently. They use the editing facilities of a word processor to correct work and tackle their own writing on the computer with confidence. The work in pupils' folders from last year was of the expected standard. Teachers and pupils obviously struggled last year with inadequate equipment. This is seen on annotations on pupils' work (when it was often impossible to print out results) and was detailed in a thorough analysis of the situation undertaken by one of the governors. This showed what was lacking and made clear, costed suggestions about what needed to be done.
57. Good leadership and management tackled these issues and have led to significant improvements. The school is now adequately equipped, although staff still await delivery of the final computer. Teaching and learning are now good and pupils are starting to make good progress in lessons. Pupils are given good opportunities to practise on the computers and often have good support from classroom assistants so they get on well. Teachers successfully use other aspects of ICT, such as a digital camera for pupils to make their own 'passports'. Good standards and provision, reported at the last inspection, declined because of the deterioration in equipment and its unsuitability to cope with the more challenging demands of the current national curriculum. The recent improvements have put the school in a good position to make up the lost ground. Despite the problems, good teaching has been maintained and assessment improved.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

58. This is a strength of provision. ICT is used effectively in different curriculum areas and teachers routinely build in opportunities in their planning. This supports learning in a range of subjects, as well as giving pupils good practice in using the computers. Work undertaken includes writing poetry, drawing designs in design and technology, art-work, reinforcement of concepts in mathematics and to give specific help to pupils with special educational needs.

HUMANITIES

59. There was insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement of provision in either **geography** or **history**. No history was taught during the inspection and timetable constraints meant that it was only possible to observe one lesson in geography. Samples of pupils' work were examined in both subjects, along with planning and assessment records. This evidence indicates that pupils make satisfactory progress and reach the standards expected for their age. Both subjects are enhanced by visits in the locality to bring learning alive. In geography, teachers achieve a good balance between teaching knowledge and skills. In the one lesson seen, pupils showed a good understanding of places they had visited and were able to locate a number of destinations on a globe and a map of the British Isles. There was less evidence of this balance in pupils' written work in history, where there were few opportunities for pupils to write independently. Since the

last inspection, the school has improved procedures for assessing pupils' progress and has introduced a manageable system to identify individual strengths and weaknesses. Although teachers are taking account of individual needs in their questioning, there is little evidence of this following through to pupils' written tasks where work is not always pitched at the right level for either the higher-attaining pupils or those with special educational needs.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development.
- The regular use of artefacts and visits deepens pupils' understanding.
- Improved assessment procedures have still to inform planning for pupils of different abilities.

Commentary

60. The school has maintained satisfactory standards since the last inspection and has introduced effective assessment procedures, which were formerly a key issue. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and they reach the standards expected by the locally agreed syllabus by the age of seven.
61. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, although in the one lesson observed pupils in Year 1 achieved well and attained above average standards because of good teaching. The teacher built on a visit to the local church in enabling pupils to gain a good understanding of the nature and importance of the christening ceremony. She successfully generated a sense of reverence and keen involvement in the pupils by her sensitive use of pertinent artefacts. A good balance was achieved in enabling the pupils to learn about religion as well as to learn from religion. Discussions with pupils and scrutiny of their books indicate that this balance is maintained throughout the year. Pupils in Year 2 could recollect simple facts about special places, books and customs of the different religions they had studied. They showed a mature appreciation of the way in which children of other religions expressed their beliefs and appreciated how the subject enabled them to understand how other people lived.
62. Leadership of the subject by the headteacher is good. The subject has a central place in the curriculum and does much to contribute to the strong ethos. Management is satisfactory. Good strides have been made in implementing assessment procedures that tie in well with the locally agreed syllabus and teachers are beginning to make valuable diagnostic comments on individual pieces of work as well as making assessments at the end of each unit of work. This information is informing lesson planning in general, but is not always used to provide the right level of challenge for pupils of different abilities.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

63. There was insufficient evidence available to make secure judgements about overall provision in these subjects. One lesson was seen in each of music and physical education, pupils were heard to sing in assembly and samples of pupils' work examined in art and design and in design and technology. The work seen in **design and technology** was of a good standard.

Pupils had made a range of artefacts, which showed good skills in using tools and materials. These included wheeled vehicles, puppets and a working model of a spider in a drainpipe. Their work showed care and some originality and was backed up by their own designs and evaluations that showed how work could have been improved. Their work also showed good use of their literacy skills in writing instructions for someone else to make their model. Work seen in **art and design** was of the expected standard for this age. Pupils have used a variety of media, including collages for the village show and clay models of owls with button 'eyes'. They also have good opportunities to draw from life and sketch carefully what they can see. They make good use of computer programs for art work, such as the interesting self-portraits undertaken by Year 1 pupils, which show great care as well as good skills in ICT. In **music** the standards observed were satisfactory overall. Pupils' singing skills are developing effectively and they sing tunefully with a good emerging sense of dynamics. In the lesson seen, pupils in Year 2 tried enthusiastically to accompany music both by clapping and using percussion instruments, but many found it very difficult to keep to the beat. Teaching was good. The teacher maintained pupils' interest with a good pace, involving everyone, and by using a wide variety of interesting recorded music. In a **physical education** lesson with Year 1, pupils showed good skills in throwing, bouncing and catching balls. Teaching was good with all pupils thoroughly involved; effective use of a support assistant helped a pupil with special educational needs to take a full part in the lesson. Pupils were given clear teaching of specific techniques and improved their skills as a result.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

64. The family nature of this small school ensures that pupils' personal and social education is a key part of their all-round education. Pupils of all ages play a very active part in community events throughout the year. Circle time, when pupils have the opportunity to discuss matters of concern in a supportive setting, is a regular feature in both classes. Pupils are encouraged to contribute their views about school developments and are active in raising funds for people less fortunate than themselves. Health education is effectively promoted in both science and physical education lessons and good emphasis is placed on encouraging pupils to eat healthily.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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

