

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **FLAX BOURTON CE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Flax Bourton, Bristol

LEA area: North Somerset

Unique reference number: 109194

Headteacher: Miss Jane Bennett

Lead inspector: Mrs Pat Cox

Dates of inspection: 31<sup>st</sup> January – 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2005

Inspection number: 272936

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:	72
School address:	Station Road Flax Bourton Bristol
Postcode:	BS48 1UA
Telephone number:	01275 464468
Fax number:	01275 464077
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Nigel Sommerville
Date of previous inspection:	29 <sup>th</sup> June 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Flax Bourton CE Primary School is a small school, situated in a village to the south-west of Bristol. There are 72 pupils on roll; almost all of whom are of white British heritage. The proportion of boys and girls is balanced in almost all years, but there are few girls in Years 5 and 6. All pupils have English as their first language. Twenty-four per cent of the pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, of whom three have a statement of special educational needs. Their needs mainly relate to communication or emotional difficulties. These proportions are higher than the national average. About two per cent of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, a low proportion that reflects the mainly favourable socio-economic circumstances of many of their families. The attainment of the children on entry to the reception class has been higher than usual for their age in the past two years, but, as is often the case with very small schools, attainment on entry varies considerably between year groups. In addition, there has been a significant turnover of pupils, particularly among the older ones and, therefore, the composition of the year groups, especially with regard to the proportion of pupils with special educational needs, has changed considerably since entry to the school. There has also been turbulence in the staffing in the past, but this has stabilised since September 2003. The rebuilding programme in 2004 has resulted in new accommodation for Key Stage 2.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
19178	Mrs P Cox	Lead inspector	English Information and communication technology Geography History Religious education Special educational needs English as an additional language
32675	Miss Margaret Cain	Lay inspector	
22856	Mrs Kath Campbell	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education Personal, social and health education The Foundation Stage curriculum

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Flax Bourton CE Primary School provides its pupils with a satisfactory standard of education, and improvement has accelerated recently, however, it is underachieving.** Although the children achieve well in the reception class and achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 to 4, the pupils in Years 5 and 6 have not done well enough because of the turbulence in previous years. Teaching is satisfactory overall, and the pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. The headteacher provides good leadership and the school is managed and governed satisfactorily. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are too low in English, mathematics, science, and information and communication technology in Years 3 to 6, and in religious education throughout the school.
- Provision for the children in the reception year and for those with special educational needs is good.
- The headteacher provides good leadership and the school has recently been supported well by the local education authority.
- The subject leaders are developing their leadership skills, but they are not yet taking full responsibility for driving up standards.
- The school has a satisfactory range of assessments, but they are not yet used well enough to plan work for the range of age and ability in the class.
- The pupils have good attitudes to school and behave well.
- The school cares for its pupils well, and there are close links with parents, the community and other schools.
- There is a good range of extracurricular activities.

The school has made satisfactory progress since the previous inspection. The last inspection took place in June 1999 and improvement was slow until the appointment of the present headteacher a year ago; in part because of the high turnover of staff, governors and pupils. Progress has accelerated recently and the fall in standards has been arrested, so that the pupils in Years 1 to 4 are achieving satisfactorily. The issues identified in 1999 have been addressed thoroughly: leadership, management, governance and attendance have improved and the responsibilities have been allocated suitably. The accommodation has been significantly enhanced, although the rebuilding programme disrupted the school's efforts to move forward rapidly and consistently. There is sound capacity for further improvement.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

**The pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory overall.** It is good in the reception class, and satisfactory in Years 1 to 4. However, it is unsatisfactory in Years 5 and 6. Although the pupils are now making satisfactory progress, the improvement is not yet rapid enough to compensate for the previous underachievement among the older pupils. As is usual with small schools, standards vary greatly from year to year. The test results have been below average and falling at the end of Year 6. In 2004 they were in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally because there was a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. The school's targets were not met. The pupils presently in Year 6 are on course to do better than this, but standards in English, mathematics and

science and many other subjects are still below the national average. Literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills are not developed well enough across the curriculum. The test results at the end of Year 2 have been mainly well above the national average, and often very high in reading, writing and mathematics. The pupils now at the end of Year 2 are working at a level similar to the national average in reading, writing and mathematics and are achieving satisfactorily most other subjects. It was not possible to make an overall judgement on standards in design and technology, music or physical education. However, the pupils' achievement is good in singing and swimming throughout the school. The children in the reception class achieve well and most are on course to exceed the standards expected of them in all areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1.

**Provision for the pupils' personal development is satisfactory overall;** for their moral and social development it is good and for their spiritual and cultural development it is satisfactory. Consequently, the pupils have good attitudes to school and behave well in class and around the school. Relationships between pupils and with adults are good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall.** Provision for the children in the reception class is effective and, consequently, they make a good start to their school life. Through the rest of the school, the teachers plan their lessons competently and often use interesting methods to engage and involve the pupils. However, expectations are not always high enough, particularly of the more able and the older pupils. Therefore, while most pupils build on their skills and knowledge satisfactorily, the more able sometimes do not. There are sound procedures for assessing standards and progress, although these are not yet used adequately to plan for the range of age and ability in the classes. Although it was previously unsatisfactory, the curriculum is now satisfactory, overall, and there is a good range of extracurricular activities. The school takes good care of its pupils and involves them satisfactorily in its work. Partnerships with parents, the community and other schools are good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are satisfactory overall.** The headteacher's good leadership has stabilised the staffing situation and created strong teamwork and a commitment to raise standards, so that the decline in attainment at the end of Year 6 is being arrested. Management is satisfactory overall. There are suitable methods for monitoring the work of the school, identifying the key areas for improvement and planning for development. The subject leaders are developing their roles satisfactorily, but most are new to their roles, and have many subjects to manage. Consequently their leadership and management are not yet developed well enough. The local education authority has provided good support recently. Governance is satisfactory and the governing body is led well. All statutory requirements are met.

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

Parents have a positive view of the school and feel that there have been improvements since the appointment of the present headteacher. There were some concerns about the consistency of homework, but this is mainly appropriate for the pupils' ages. The pupils enjoy school and are happy to be there.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Raise standards in English, mathematics, science, and information and communication technology for the older pupils, and religious education, and the pupils' literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills across the curriculum, throughout the school.
- Develop the role of subject leaders.
- Improve the provision for the more able pupils in each class, through a more focused use of assessment.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is unsatisfactory overall. Although the children in the reception class achieve well, and those in Years 1 and 2 achieve satisfactorily, there is a substantial inheritance of underachievement among the older pupils and, consequently, standards are too low in most subjects.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, art and design and history at the end of Year 6, and in religious education and geography throughout the school.
- The children in the reception class do well.
- The more able and the older pupils in each mixed-age class do not make as much progress as the younger, less able.
- The pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

#### Commentary

1. As is common with small schools, the test results tend to vary from year to year, depending on the proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the year group. The test results at the end of Year 2 have been above, and often well above, the national average for some years and the trend of improvement is above the national trend. The 2004 results were above the national average in reading, well above in writing and in the highest five per cent in mathematics. Compared to schools in similar circumstances, the results were average in reading, but well above the national average in writing and mathematics. A large proportion of the pupils reached the higher level in all subjects. The teachers' assessments in science placed pupils in the top five per cent of schools nationally and when compared with similar schools. The attainment of the pupils presently in Year 2 is similar to the national average in English, mathematics and science and they are achieving satisfactorily. This is also the case for most other subjects, where the pupils' attainment is similar to others of their age. However, standards are lower than they should be in geography and religious education, because these subjects have not been given sufficient attention and the curriculum was previously unsatisfactory.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	17.0 (19.2)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	17.0 (18.5)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	18.6 (19.2)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 11 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

2. The results at the end of Year 6, in English, mathematics and science, have been below average, and declining, for some years. In 2004, they were in the bottom five per cent nationally. No pupils reached the higher level in any subject. The trend over time has been below the national trend and the results suggested that the progress since the Year 2 tests had been poor. The school did not meet its challenging targets for that group. However, this was a small year group, with a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, and there had been a turnover of 50 per cent of the pupils in that group since they were in Year 1. In addition, the pupils had experienced a high turnover in staffing, making their progress disjointed.



3. The decline in standards at the end of Year 6 has been halted because the teaching the pupils receive is satisfactory and the pupils are now making sound progress overall. The pupils in Years 3 and 4 are achieving satisfactorily. However, there remains a considerable degree of underachievement in Years 5 and 6 that there has not been sufficient time to eradicate. Nevertheless, standards this year are higher than in 2004, in spite of the high turnover of pupils that has also been the case for this very small year group. The pupils throughout the school have good speaking skills and their listening skills are similar to those in other schools except in Year 6 where they are above average. However, the standards in reading and writing of the present pupils in Year 6 are below average and achievement is unsatisfactory. The pupils are not presently on course to meet the school's challenging targets this year. Much underachievement is also evident in Year 5, but standards are closer to those expected for the pupils' ages in Years 3 and 4.
4. Standards in Year 6 are also not high enough in mathematics, information and communication technology, and art and design. In science, religious education, history and geography, the pupils' attainment is well below that expected and achievement is poor. It was not possible to make an overall judgement about standards in design and technology, music or physical education, although it is apparent that the pupils sing well and that their achievement in swimming is good.
5. The children in the reception class make a good start, building on the secure knowledge and experience they bring to school. Because they are taught well, in a small class, they progress well in all the areas of learning for their age and, consequently, their attainment is above that expected for their age in personal and social development, communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world, and mathematical, creative and physical development. This is a similar picture to that seen at the time of the previous inspection.
6. Because there are careful and structured strategies for supporting them, the pupils with special educational needs, particularly those with statements of special educational needs, do well and make better progress than their classmates. The more able pupils sometimes make insufficient progress because the teachers do not always ensure that the work is sufficiently challenging for them. Test results suggest that the boys' performance at in Year 3 to 6 is worse than that of girls, but there is no evidence that their achievement is inferior. It is more likely that the difference in attainment is because almost all the pupils with special educational needs are boys.

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

The pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Provision for pupils' social and moral development is good, while it is satisfactory for their spiritual and cultural development. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- All staff have high expectations of the pupils' behaviour and apply the system of rewards and sanctions consistently.
- There is a family atmosphere in which pupils can develop their social skills well.
- Pupils are confident, keen to take responsibility, and have a clear sense of right and wrong.
- There are too few occasions across the curriculum when the pupils are able to develop their spirituality.
- Opportunities for learning about the multicultural nature of British society are limited.

### **Commentary**

7. Attendance levels and punctuality are satisfactory. Rates of attendance and unauthorised absence are broadly in line with those of other schools. Procedures for recording and monitoring attendance are satisfactory and the school takes appropriate action to prevent absence or unpunctuality becoming habitual. Registration is brisk and efficient. The school

has recently begun to focus on improving attendance and has, appropriately, adopted a firmer stance on pupils taking holidays during term time.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.6	School data	0.0
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

8. Provision for the pupils' social and moral development is good. The pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to school, as was the case at the time of the previous inspection. They have a clear sense of right and wrong, as a consequence of the good provision for moral development. The pupils enjoy coming to school and appreciate the high levels of attention they receive as a result of small class sizes. The older pupils feel the school has improved during their time and will be sad to leave. All pupils are keen to take responsibility, and perform their duties conscientiously, including those acting as 'playground pals', who befriend the lonely, or those who are school council members. The school has a clear and escalating system of rewards and sanctions, which all staff apply consistently and to which the pupils respond well. Parents feel that behaviour has improved significantly since the appointment of the headteacher. There was one, fixed-term, exclusion last year, for which the school followed the proper procedures.

**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	64	1	
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1		
Mixed – White and Asian	1		
Mixed – any other mixed background	3		
No ethnic group recorded	1		

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

9. Pupils' social development is also good and they thrive in the school's family atmosphere. They learn to tolerate one another's differences, understand why some pupils may find it difficult to behave well, and listen well to others' views in lessons. Relationships are good; the pupils form firm friendships, often across the age range, and the older pupils enjoy caring for the younger ones. Pupils have amicable, trusting relationships with adults at the school and offer a confident welcome to visitors. The recent introduction of the school dog has added an extra dimension to this aspect of the school's work by providing an incentive to behave well and opportunities for pupils to exercise responsibility.
10. Provision for the pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. However, there are too few opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to develop their spiritual awareness. The school recognises the importance of preparing pupils to live a multicultural society, but is at an early stage in developing provision. Resources and displays for learning about other cultures and beliefs are limited.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

### **Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. They are good in the reception class and satisfactory throughout the rest of the school.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good in the reception class.
- Teachers encourage their pupils well and often use interesting methods to motivate them.
- Teachers' expectations of what their pupils can achieve are not always high enough, particularly for the more able and the older pupils in the class.
- The teachers maintain good discipline in their classes.
- Although the school has a sound bank of assessment data for English and mathematics, its use is inconsistent in planning further work.
- Some of the older pupils have not developed good learning habits.

### **Commentary**

11. The teaching and learning are good in the reception class; the teacher has a secure understanding of the way in which these young children learn and, consequently, they build consistently on their knowledge and skills in all areas of learning. Throughout the rest of the school, teaching and learning are satisfactory overall; they are occasionally good, but very occasionally unsatisfactory for the older pupils. Overall, the quality of teaching is about the same as it was at the time of the previous inspection.
12. When the teaching is most successful, as was seen in a history lesson for pupils in Years 1 and 2, there is a brisk pace and high expectations are demonstrated by challenging tasks. The pupils are prepared well for their work, with clear explanations. The teaching is lively, energetic and enthusiastic, with teachers showing good subject knowledge and inspiring the pupils to be totally involved. Consequently, the pupils concentrate well and are fully involved in the activity. They work well together and are eager to respond to questions. Activities are interesting and in some lessons are set at suitable levels for the range of attainment in the class. In other lessons the activities are open-ended, enabling the pupils to learn well at their own level. The teachers sometimes use questions well to promote thinking, draw out and check understanding, and develop concepts. In all classes, the teachers have good relationships with their pupils and maintain discipline well, so that the lessons are rarely interrupted by the need to admonish pupils.
13. The teachers have sound subject knowledge and mainly enable their pupils to build on their skills and knowledge consistently. The school has developed a sound range of assessment data in English and mathematics, so that there is clarity about the level at which the pupils are working. However, the use of this information is inconsistent in planning work at the appropriate level for the wide range of age and ability in their mixed-age classes. Consequently, the work is sometimes not pitched at the appropriate level for the pupils. Assessment is being developed in other subjects, but is not yet adequate. The school has begun to set group targets for the pupils, but this is at an early stage and is yet to make a significant impact on the progress they are making. Marking is improving but is also inconsistent; although the pupils' work is usually marked carefully, the comments do not always show pupils how well they have succeeded or what they need to do to improve. Consequently, it does not make as much of a contribution to the teachers' day-to-day assessments as they could.
14. In most lessons, the teachers were clear about what they wanted their pupils to learn and shared these intentions with them. On a few occasions, the teachers referred to these at the end of the lesson and used a sound range of strategies for the pupils to evaluate their own progress. However, these intentions sometimes show only the activity that is to be undertaken, so that the pupils are not clear about what they were to learn from the task and the teachers

have limited ways of knowing that the purpose of the lesson had been achieved. Occasionally, the tasks set for the pupils were not linked sufficiently strongly to the purpose of the lesson. The whole-class teaching is usually sound and often prepares the pupils well for their work. However, the final part of the lesson is not used as effectively, so that opportunities are missed to move learning on further. English and mathematics are taught satisfactorily, but neither literacy nor numeracy skills are used or developed well enough through the rest of the curriculum, particularly as there is an over-use of worksheets.

15. On most occasions, the pupils maintain concentration and work together co-operatively, although there are times when the boys dominate paired work. While the younger pupils mostly work hard and try to do their best, many of the older pupils have not developed these habits, and their learning is unsatisfactory. They work slowly and some lack confidence, waiting for support and approval before making further effort.
16. The teachers use their classroom support staff soundly during the activities, to support individuals and groups. However, these assistants are not often being used as effectively during the introductions to, or ends of, lessons, when they often sit unoccupied.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 18 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	0	7	10	1	0	0

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

**The curriculum**

The quality of the curriculum for children in the reception year and for pupils in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory. Opportunities for enrichment are good. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staffing instability and building work have had a detrimental effect on curriculum development.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Current curriculum organisation does not always cater well for the needs of older and more able pupils in mixed-age classes.
- The range of extra-curricular opportunities is good for a school of this size.
- Opportunities for participation in sport are good.
- A wide range of visits and visitors contributes to teaching and learning.
- The new Key Stage 2<sup>1</sup> building has significantly improved the quality of the learning environment.
- The toilets for the children in reception and pupils in Year 1 and 2 are unhygienic.

**Commentary**

17. The school provides an adequately broad and balanced curriculum, and has made satisfactory progress overall since the previous inspection. Provision is enhanced by a good range of interesting extra-curricular opportunities. Curriculum development has been severely hampered by staffing instability in the past, and building work during the last academic year, and has only just got back on track. It is evident that the curriculum was unsatisfactory in the past and that this is a major reason for the underachievement of the older pupils. Swift progress in recent months and innovations, such as a successful ‘Artsweek’, have had a positive impact on provision. Governors are starting to take a more constructive interest in curriculum issues and the recent introduction of a more effective two-year rolling programme of work has gone some way towards eliminating repetition and ‘plugging the gaps’ in the pupils’ knowledge. However, some work remains to be done. The current curriculum organisation

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<sup>1</sup> Key Stage 2, sometimes referred to as the juniors, caters for pupils aged between 7 and 11 and refers to pupils who are in Years 3 to 6.

does not consistently ensure that the older pupils and the more able receive work that matches their needs and ability; consequently, these pupils sometimes underachieve.

18. Until the appointment of the new headteacher and completion of the new building, the school had been making slow progress in developing the curriculum to build consistently on the skills and knowledge of all pupils in mixed-age classes. There had also been too little attention on developing literacy and numeracy skills through other subjects. Information and communication technology opportunities have only recently become an important part of provision and all subjects have suffered. History, geography and, particularly, religious education had been neglected and there had been no strategy to ensure that the pupils developed the key skills in any subject. The school has recently acquired a grant to develop creative arts. This injection of funding is a welcome boost for subjects which had taken a back seat in recent years. Pupils enthusiastically recall previous educational visits and visitors to the school who have brought a new and interesting perspective to their studies. Knowledge acquired through visits is subsequently incorporated into lessons. For example, a teacher in Key Stage 2 showed images of artefacts recently seen at the Commonwealth Museum to illustrate the use of colour, themes and texture in an art lesson.
19. Children in the reception year receive an interesting range of carefully planned activities that adhere closely to the six areas of learning for children this age, enabling them to be well prepared for Year 1. The provision for the pupils with special educational needs is good, as it was at the time of the previous inspection, and, consequently, their achievement is better than that of their classmates. Classroom assistants and those supporting pupils with special educational needs, and the pupils with a statement of special educational needs, are clear about their roles. They work alongside class teachers providing good support for these pupils in lessons and enabling them to achieve well. The individual education plans for these pupils are well organised and focus clearly on the pupils' needs.
20. There is a sound programme for personal, social and health education and pupils' personal development is an important part of school life. Sex education and drugs' awareness form part of the science curriculum and the school is currently involved in the 'Healthy Schools' initiative. Residential trips enhance provision and develop social skills well. The school has good links with other primary and secondary schools. Provision is enhanced by a good range of interesting extra-curricular opportunities, ranging from information and communication technology club to dance. Younger pupils have access to a board games club and children in reception become involved in extracurricular activities later in the year. Parents offer a high level of support by, for example, coaching a highly successful football team. The school's recent involvement in the school sports co-ordinator programme enables further opportunities for participation in sport, and a grant for developing performing arts is raising the profile of the creative curriculum.
21. The Key Stage 2 building, with its library and computer suite, has improved provision for older pupils significantly since the previous inspection. The facilities for pupils in Key Stage 1<sup>2</sup> are poor by comparison and parents were rightly concerned about the quality and cleanliness of the infant toilets. Generous outdoor areas enhance learning well. The recently appointed headteacher has brought greater stability and a sense of purpose to a committed team of teachers and support staff. All staff are well qualified to meet the needs of the age they teach and teaching assistants make a positive contribution towards pupils' learning.

## Care, guidance and support

The school has good measures in place for the care, welfare and safety of its pupils. The support, advice and guidance through which pupils learn and mature are satisfactory. The school takes satisfactory steps to involve pupils in its work and development.

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<sup>2</sup> Key Stage 1, sometimes referred to as the infants, caters for pupils aged between 5 and 7 and refers to pupils who are in Years 1 and 2.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school draws on its formal procedures and the staff's personal knowledge of the pupils to provide good care and protection.
- All adults are vigilant of the pupils' care, welfare, health and safety.
- Pupils' views influence some aspects of school life well, but they are not consulted about the curriculum.
- Reports to parents give a rounded picture of pupils' personal development.

## **Commentary**

22. Since the previous inspection, the school has continued to take good steps to safeguard its pupils' physical and emotional wellbeing. It supports learning by ensuring that the pupils can work in a secure and happy setting. Child protection arrangements are secure and benefit from a governor's professional expertise. The designated teacher for child protection has received appropriate training, and all adults at the school have been trained to recognise and refer problems, and to appreciate the particular need for confidentiality in a small community. The school works well with other agencies, involving them appropriately.
23. The school's procedures for handling accidents, illness and administration of medicines are well documented and implemented carefully. All staff receive appropriate first-aid training and understand when and when not to intervene. Prompt action is taken to liaise with parents on particular concerns. Although the playground is very extensive, vigilant midday supervisors act quickly to prevent incidents and accidents. They liaise well with teaching and learning support staff and apply the system of rewards and sanctions consistently. Good induction arrangements for younger pupils enable them to settle happily. Pupils joining the school later are also helped to integrate quickly into the school community. Pupils feel able to confide in adults at the school. Good transfer arrangements ensure that older pupils look forward to the next stage of their education with confidence.
24. Reports to parents give a satisfactory picture of the whole child. Since the last inspection, reports have been re-designed and usefully chart the pupils' personal and social development. The elected school council provides a satisfactory channel of communication between the pupils and the teaching staff. To date, however, its agenda has focused on lunch-time development, such as the introduction of playground pals, charitable activities, and the school environment. The school has not yet taken steps to consult pupils' views in developing the curriculum.

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

Links with parents, the community and other schools are good.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school's outward-looking approach has a good impact on provision for pupils' personal development.
- The school has good relationships with parents and responds promptly to concerns and suggestions.
- Although satisfactory, annual reports to parents do not consistently provide specific, measurable targets for academic improvement.
- Good partnerships with other schools enable best practice to be shared and support pupils' transition to and from the school.

## **Commentary**

25. The school has continued to build good relationships with parents since the previous inspection. It communicates well with them through a variety of methods. The governors' annual report and the prospectus fully meet statutory requirements and set expectations of the support needed from parents. The website, regularly updated by a parent, conveys a wealth of useful information and is particularly impressive for a small primary school. A spirit of partnership is evident in all communications with parents. Parents praise the headteacher and teaching staff for being approachable and open to suggestions from parents. The school has a good range of strategies to handle complaints, and parents confirm that teaching staff work well with them to resolve any issues.
26. The school holds valuable curriculum workshops for parents and has also produced a series of informative explanatory booklets on topics, such as mathematics and reading, and exploring different ways to ensure their good involvement in their children's education. For example, the parents are given written commentaries, with reference to their children's own targets, at the autumn and spring parents' evenings. However, while some annual reports to parents contain specific and measurable targets for pupils' academic improvement and advice on how parents can support their children in attaining these targets; this is not always the case. The school consults well with parents on topics of general concern, for example to gain their views on behaviour. The recently introduced RED (Read Every Day) Club is encouraging parents and other members of the community to help pupils to improve their reading skills and is enjoyed by all participants; adults and pupils alike.
27. Links with the community have also remained good since the last inspection. There are close links with the local church, which contributes to pupils' religious and historical knowledge. Members of the church community regularly visit the school to help with assemblies and activities such as the RED Club. The school's links with local businesses are satisfactory and have attracted financial contributions and other practical support to the school. The school is at an early stage in developing these links to enrich what is taught and learnt in the classroom. The headteacher's outward-looking approach in forging partnerships with other local schools makes a good contribution to the social opportunities and resources available to pupils. The use of shared funding makes a greater range of visits and projects possible and the pupils enjoy the musical and sporting activities they undertake with partner schools. Teaching and support staff, and governors benefit from mutual support, joint training and sharing of best practice through the local Small Schools' Cluster. This, in turn, improves provision for pupils at the school.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership, management, and governance are satisfactory overall. The headteacher provides good leadership but the role of the subject leaders is unsatisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher provides good leadership for the school.
- The local education authority has recently provided good support to help the school to move forward.
- A period of instability has had a negative impact on the school's progress until recently.
- The chair of governors leads the governing body well.
- Although they are developing their roles, the subject leaders do not yet lead their subjects effectively.

## **Commentary**

28. The ability of the school to develop has been undermined in recent years by a period of instability in staffing and governance, so that teaching, leadership and management were inconsistent. The situation has been stabilised over the past year since the appointment of the present headteacher, who leads the school well. She has managed the school effectively

through the disruption caused by major building work and has ensured that there is a committed team of teaching and support staff, who work together well and are keen to develop their own practice. Decision-making systems work well. Consequently, the school is now soundly placed to improve. Leadership and management have improved since the time of the previous inspection, when there were shortcomings in the delegation of responsibilities. There is a clear educational direction, with a focus on raising standards, and an evident sense of purpose. The local education authority has recently identified the school as requiring assistance and has provided good support for teaching, learning and management. This is beginning to have an effective impact on the work of the school and the progress being made.

29. There are suitable policies and structures in place and the school runs smoothly. The headteacher has worked closely with the local education authority to identify the key areas for improvement, through monitoring and evaluating teaching, planning and pupils' work. There is an increasing range of data that the school is using to track the pupils' performance and progress and this is used appropriately to identify those who do not make sufficient progress and those who need additional support. Suitable strategies are in place for staff appraisal and objectives have been set. Planning for development is satisfactory and appropriate actions are being taken to bring about improvement.
30. Leadership and management in most subjects are not yet satisfactory. However, most subject leaders are new to their role and have many subject areas to manage. They lead their key subjects: English, mathematics, and information and communication technology satisfactorily and have an adequate grasp of the strengths and weaknesses in those subjects. They have made a sound start in undertaking a basic audit of strengths and weaknesses and preparing a plan for development. There is a whole-school focus on raising standards in English and mathematics, with the support of the local education authority, and this is beginning to have a positive impact. Leadership of special educational needs is good; the co-ordinator has a secure understanding of the pupils' needs and there is a well-organised structure for their support. There are appropriate methods for identifying pupils who need additional support and reviews are carried out regularly. Links with external agencies assist the school in organising support.
31. The governing body has a suitable committee structure and carries out its responsibilities conscientiously. Governors are involved soundly in the strategic direction of the school, and have a satisfactory understanding of its strengths and weaknesses, an improvement since the previous inspection. They take an appropriate role in planning for improvement, and check the progress of the plan regularly through the year. The chair of governors leads the governors well; he is energetic, informed and well involved in the developments that are taking place, providing good support to the headteacher. Governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met.
32. Financial planning and control are good; planning is tied closely to improvement planning and the school's priorities. The school plans ahead carefully, taking into consideration likely future trends. The carry forward sum from the previous year was intended, and has been used appropriately, for the rebuilding work. Taking into consideration the quality of teaching, the pupils' achievement, the progress being made, and leadership and management, the school is providing satisfactory value for money.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	311,021
Total expenditure	319,488
Expenditure per pupil	4,443

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	57,459
Balance carried forward to the next	48,992



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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE<sup>3</sup>**

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good** in all areas of learning.

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

- Provision is good in all six areas of learning.
  - Children achieve well through good quality teaching and exceed the early learning goals<sup>4</sup> by Year 1.
  - Staff promote language and literacy skills effectively in all their work.
  - Activities are interesting and exciting.
  - Assessment information provides valuable information about children's progress.
  - The more able children do not always receive enough challenge.
  - Adults provide good role models.
  - The Foundation Stage is led and managed well.
33. Many positive features from the previous inspection have been retained and there has been steady improvement. The reception-age children are now taught in a separate small class, enabling them to make a good start. The children enter the reception class in the September of the academic year in which they are five. At the time of the inspection, there were 11 children in the Foundation Stage. Good induction procedures ensure a smooth transition into school. Attainment on entry for this year group was above that expected for their age. Currently, there are none with special educational needs. Children of all abilities achieve well and a significant proportion exceeds expectations in all areas of learning by the time they reach Year 1. The children are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
34. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good. Planning is detailed, and well organised activities adhere closely to the six areas of learning. Good teamwork between teaching and support staff ensures successful learning. The generous staffing ratio enables children to make good progress because they receive one-to-one attention. The curriculum provides an appropriate balance of child-initiated and adult-directed activities. All children are provided for well and there is good attention to ensuring that all have equal opportunities.
35. Assessment procedures are good and informative 'Learning Diaries' give valuable insight into children's individual progress. Although further work remains to be done on using assessment with even greater precision, current information is used well to plan the next stages of learning for each child. Leadership and management are good. The Foundation Stage co-ordinator shows strong commitment and is thoughtful and reflective in her work. She knows what needs to be done and sets about tackling priorities with good attention to detail. The children are housed in outside classrooms that are awaiting redevelopment. The accommodation is outdated and does not give the best start to the school's youngest pupils, but staff work hard to ensure that it is satisfactory. Although staff use displays effectively to improve the learning environment, toilets are unhygienic and there is no separate outdoor play area.

#### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

36. The children enjoy coming to school and are secure and confident. Most have a mature approach towards their work and behaviour is good. Those children who find difficulty in waiting their turn and sharing learn quickly to become kind and courteous. There are numerous incentives to encourage positive attitudes and children who are chosen as helpers take their roles very seriously. Good relationships promote independence and self-esteem successfully. The children are comfortable with adults and friendly towards visitors. They enjoy participating

<sup>3</sup> The Foundation Stage caters for children from the age of three to the end of the reception year.

<sup>4</sup> The early learning goals set out what children should achieve by the time they reach the end of the reception year in primary school.

in whole school assemblies, particularly when they are led by the local clergy. Teaching and learning are good. All staff value children as individuals and know their needs well. Children feel part of a very caring community.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

37. Most children are confident speakers when they enter school. When chatting in small groups, they are articulate and well-informed. Their listening skills are not quite so well developed when they enter the reception class. Group activities, such as acting out stories, create good opportunities for improving speaking and listening skills. Purposeful activities focus on individual language development, enabling children to make good progress.
38. Reading is taught well, ensuring good learning. The children develop a love of books and have established favourites, such as 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'. They are interested in print and inquisitive about the characters in stories. They know a wide range of fairy stories and have a mature approach towards reading. Parents make a good contribution to children's reading development and support the school well. Teaching time is well organised, thus ensuring that the children receive activities that meet their needs. They make good progress with writing through a balanced programme of learning letter sounds and trying to write by themselves. They progress from writing their own name to making recognisable attempts at simple spellings. Some children are confident writers and produce lengthy scripts. Occasionally, there are missed opportunities to develop the writing skills of these more able children further.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

39. Children enter the school with secure mathematical ability. They learn effectively through good quality activities, matched well to their needs. Whether sorting pairs of socks or working out which piece of string is longer, children of all abilities show great enthusiasm and make good progress, because activities are fun. They have a good understanding of mathematical vocabulary and talk about weights, scales and balances. Some children display a very logical approach towards their work when, for example, deciding which shoe is the heaviest. Many are confident with numbers well beyond thirty and have a developing understanding of addition and subtraction. They are prepared well for National Curriculum work. As with language work, there are, occasionally, missed opportunities to provide even greater challenge for children who demonstrate mature mathematical skills.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

40. The children enter the school with a very secure knowledge and understanding of the world in which they live. Some have good first-hand experience of plant and animal growth through living in the country. In discussion about 'The Enormous Turnip' story, for example, one boy proudly announced that he knew all about turnips because his dad grew them on the farm. Children receive many exciting experiences, ranging from making a windsock to working with waterproof materials, enabling them to achieve well. They are very articulate in their explanations. When looking at a turnip, for example, they suggested that it smelt like mushrooms and tasted different when cooked. Some children are already interested in historical facts. One boy explained with great accuracy that the shield he was holding needed to be mended in order to ensure arrows and swords did not kill the knight when he was defending his castle.
41. The children learn about their own and other religions and cultures and use discussion time well to express thoughts and feelings. They have good opportunities to develop secure information and communication technology skills, through regular independent access to the interactive whiteboard and good quality programmes linked effectively to class work.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

42. No indoor physical education lessons were observed during the inspection. Although the children do not have access to a separate outdoor area, staff make effective use of the school playground and large apparatus, such as wheeled vehicles, enabling children to make good progress. Staff create an atmosphere of fun successfully, and provide an exciting programme of activities to promote learning. In the classroom, the children develop good pencil and scissor control as they write and cut out during 'free choice' activities. Adults support children well, ensuring they gain greater control in their work. Consequently, the children reach standards higher than expected by the end of the year.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

43. The adults make effective use of the accommodation for creative work, encouraging children to use a wide range of media. The children make good progress because they enjoy what they are doing, whether they are playing in the sand or painting pictures of their favourite fairy tales. Activities, such as acting out the story of 'Goldilocks', provide good opportunities for imaginative play and all activities contribute well to the development of children's language and literacy skills. Children explore and experiment as they carefully try to match the colour of their pastels to the colour of the turnip they are drawing. They link work effectively to other areas of learning by, for example, making clay diva pots to celebrate the festival of Diwali. Their work is displayed attractively in the classroom and in communal areas around the school.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in reading and writing are too low at the end of Year 6.
- The recent initiatives are having a positive impact in raising standards.
- Pupils' literacy skills are not developed well enough across the curriculum.

#### Commentary

44. Results in the national tests in reading and writing for pupils at the end of Year 2 have been consistently above and often well above the national average for four years. In the tests in 2004, results were above the national average and comparable with the average of similar schools in reading. In writing, the results were well above the national average and similar schools. The standards of the pupils now in Year 2 are similar to the national average, because the year group has a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Overall, achievement is similar to the time of the previous inspection. The picture in Year 6 is very different. Test results have fluctuated from year to year between the national average and well below average. In 2004, results were in the lowest five per cent, both nationally and when compared to similar schools. However, the pupils are now making satisfactory progress and the pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to achieve better results, although these are still below average. While the work the school is now doing has arrested the fall in standards, the overall progress since the previous inspection has been slow.
45. The standards at the end of Year 6, over the years, have been lower than those in Year 2 because there has been significant disruption to those pupils' experience and a considerable degree of turbulence in pupil numbers throughout Key Stage 2. In addition, the curriculum was inadequate until recently. Consequently, while the pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 to 4, it is unsatisfactory in Years 5 and 6. In addition, the teachers' assessments of pupils' writing are sometimes over-generous and in their expectations of pupils' day-to-day written

work in English lessons and across the curriculum is not always high enough. Consequently, the more able pupils and the older pupils do not always reach the standards that they should.

46. Standards in speaking are above the national average in the pupils presently in Years 2 and 6, and reflect the good language that many pupils bring from home. By Year 2, most pupils are confident speakers who answer fluently and at length when asked questions, and express their own ideas clearly and confidently. By Year 6, the pupils' replies are mature and articulate. Most pupils offer sophisticated, confident responses and few lack the confidence to contribute in question and answer sessions. In listening, standards are similar to the national average at the end of Year 2, and above in Year 6. In Year 2, and in most other year groups, most pupils listen closely to what others are saying, although some have a tendency to shout out and do not easily take turns. By contrast, all pupils in Year 6 listen and reflect carefully when asked questions.
47. Standards of reading are close to the national average in Year 2 but below average in Year 6. The school ensures that the younger pupils develop secure reading skills by structured teaching of the letter sounds and blends and by regular guided reading sessions. Most pupils in Year 2 read familiar stories without help and the more capable pupils achieve above average standards because they read with expression, with due attention to punctuation. The pupils in Year 6 enjoy reading, but they have difficulty in exploring beneath the surface of the text, to identify purpose, reason or character, and to predict what might happen next. Some have weak skills in working out new words, and are not confident in using the sense of the text to support their efforts. They have particular difficulty with complex sentences and this is sometimes a drawback when they need to read or research in other subjects. The school has identified this shortcoming and is already tackling it. For example, a group of parents has been trained to support those pupils whose skills are weaker and the daily reading practice is already having a positive impact.
48. Standards in writing are average in Year 2 but below average in Year 6. Most pupils in Year 2 place events in their correct sequence and write them as clear, recognisable sentences with capital letters and full stops. Some more able pupils achieve higher than average standards because, for example, they regularly use speech marks with accuracy. However, some pupils show poor pencil grips that have not been corrected, and these slow the pupils' writing. By Year 6, some pupils construct and write stories independently, organising their work into paragraphs and are familiar with writing for different audiences, for example, through book reviews or persuasive letter writing. However, there are significant weaknesses in the pupils' writing skills, particularly in spelling, punctuation, grammar and fluency. Few, even the most able, pupils write at length with accuracy using a range of styles appropriately. The use of descriptive language is particularly weak. Most write extremely slowly and some do not yet join their writing consistently. The standards of pupils' handwriting and the care taken in the presentation of their work, both in English books and in subjects across the curriculum, are unsatisfactory.
49. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall throughout the school. The school's recent work on planning and the support of the local education authority has had a positive impact on the quality and consistency of plans. The teachers have a suitable range of assessment data and some use this, and their ongoing assessments, to plan further work for their pupils. However, this is inconsistent and unsatisfactory overall. The strategy for setting targets for improvement in writing is at a very early stage and many targets are too general to be useful. The marking of work is adequate, but inconsistent; while some guides pupils towards improvement and helps teachers to plan the next day's work for individuals and groups of different abilities, this is not always the case. There is too little correction of the pupils' erratic spelling and punctuation at Key Stage 2, and where it occurs, this guidance has little impact on the pupils' performance, so that errors persist. Nevertheless, the pupils with special educational needs make good progress, particularly when they are given individual or group support.
50. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory, because a whole-school plan of improvement is being implemented satisfactorily based on an adequate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of standards and supported by the local education authority.

Consequently, the decline in standards has been arrested. However, the pupils are not, at present, on course to meet the school's challenging targets for Year 6 this year.

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

51. The development of pupils' literacy skills, through teaching in subjects across the curriculum, is unsatisfactory, but is improving. There had been no consistent approach to developing speaking and listening skills across the curriculum, or the pupils' reading skills in areas such as research. The school has recognised that there were few opportunities for pupils to write at length and in their own words and is implementing appropriate plans to improve provision. However, an over-use of worksheets in many subjects still restricts the pupils' ability to set out their understanding in their own words.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are not high enough at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Provision is improving because the school is focusing on raising standards and the local education authority is providing suitable support.
- Teachers' expectations are not always high enough.
- The over reliance on workbook-based activities in Key Stage 1 does not allow pupils to develop a sufficient depth of mathematical understanding.
- Assessment procedures are improving but target setting is not yet firmly established.
- Weak numeracy skills hinder pupils' progress in Key Stage 2.

### **Commentary**

52. The results of the 2004 national tests indicate that standards at the end of Key Stage 1 were very high when compared to all schools and well above average when compared to similar schools. There has been a pattern of improvement since the previous inspection. By contrast, results in Key Stage 2 were very low, with no pupils achieving higher levels. Although results need to be treated with caution, there was a pattern of decline, with girls regularly outperforming boys. This represents unsatisfactory achievement at Key Stage 2 and not enough progress since the previous inspection. Nevertheless, provision is beginning to recover, because the curriculum has been improved and the local education authority is providing expertise and guidance.
53. Standards at the end of Year 2 are similar to the national average this year. All the pupils currently in Year 2 are on course to reach average standards, but a smaller proportion than last year will reach higher levels. Their achievement is satisfactory. To some extent, though not entirely, the fluctuations caused by small numbers explain the variation in standards. However, although the school is making good provision for its most able pupil in Year 2, there is not always enough to challenge other more able pupils, particularly when pupils of all abilities complete the same workbook based activities. In addition, although opportunities for problem solving occur, they are not a strong feature of provision throughout the school. Consequently, although the pupils in Year 2 move into Key Stage 2 with secure numerical competence, they do not always have the confidence to apply their knowledge to practical situations.
54. Pupils currently in Year 6 demonstrate below, rather than well below average standards. Greater stability, after a period of significant turbulence in the school, has started to arrest the previous decline in standards, and this is also evident in Years 3 and 4. Most pupils in Year 6 are on course to achieve average standards, with some reaching higher levels. There is, however, a large proportion of boys in this year group, many of whom find difficulty in applying themselves to work. Although there are encouraging signs that the school's strategies for engaging them more in the learning process are starting to have a positive effect, some are not

achieving standards in line with their ability. The pupils with special educational needs receive good support and often make better progress than other pupils who do not always receive enough to challenge or inspire them. Older pupils sometimes do the same work as their younger classmates. Although they cover an adequate range of topics, they underachieve, because the work is not always pitched at the right level.

55. Until recently, high staff turnover has resulted in the school not analysing information from test results or tracking and assessing pupils' progress, with any regularity or precision. Although there are satisfactory assessments and the use of these is now improving, individual target-setting is not yet satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in both key stages. A small amount of unsatisfactory teaching was observed in Key Stage 2, when the lesson was not planned carefully enough. The teachers work hard to engage and involve their pupils. Lessons run smoothly because teachers ensure that the pupils behave well. The planning is good and teaching assistants offer positive support in group activities, enabling pupils of all abilities to succeed. Occasionally, teachers do not involve support staff sufficiently during the introductory and end part of lessons and many sit unoccupied. Targeted input on improving mental skills is having some success, although pupils in Year 6 are often held back by their lack of numeracy skills. When working on problems, many of these pupils know what to do but have difficulty working out simple calculations. Teachers' expectations are sometimes not high enough and work is often poorly presented, particularly when tasks are undemanding. Marking also varies in quality. Although there are some good individual examples of information and communication technology skills being developed well through mathematics, it is not a strong feature of lessons.
56. The leadership and management of mathematics had been unsatisfactory for some time. The current picture is far more positive and the subject is now led and managed satisfactorily. The new subject leader has a clear sense of direction and a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses. Her good curriculum audit accurately pinpoints areas in most need. The school is aware that much work remains to be done and is already implementing appropriate procedures to bring about improvement.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

57. The use of mathematics across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. The school has yet to focus its attention on developing mathematical skills further through other subjects. There are some good examples of mathematics being used well in topics such as science. However, opportunities tend to happen incidentally, rather than as part of systematic planning.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are not high enough and achievement is unsatisfactory in Key Stage 2.
- Practical investigation and independent learning are weak.
- The coverage of the curriculum has been too superficial and pupils do not gain sufficient depth of understanding.
- Older pupils and the more able do not make as much progress as they should because they do not receive enough challenge.
- The recent curriculum review has started to 'plug the gaps' in pupils' knowledge.
- The school has started to receive good quality support from the local education authority.
- The new subject leader has made a purposeful start to rectifying weaknesses.

## Commentary

58. Standards are similar to the national average overall in Year 2 and achievement is satisfactory. Results fluctuate from year to year because of the small number of pupils involved. The pupils currently in Year 2 are unlikely to reach the very high standards achieved by pupils in 2004, because there are fewer able pupils in this year group. In Year 6, standards are well below average and achievement is unsatisfactory overall. The high standards found at the time of the previous inspection have not been maintained in Key Stage 2 and, until recently, there has been a pattern of decline. There are, however, encouraging signs of improvement. Current standards show a slight improvement on the very low standards achieved in the 2004 national tests. Recent problems associated with staffing instability have now been overcome, but they have left a legacy of low standards and underachievement.
59. The pupils enter the school with good knowledge and understanding of the world. They make steady progress throughout Key Stage 1. The pupils in Year 2 are articulate and well informed about topics ranging from electricity to healthy foods. Their written work, however, does not always reflect ability, particularly when they complete the same work at the same level as their Year 1 classmates. Much of the work lacks challenge, particularly for higher-attaining pupils. At Key Stage 2, the gaps in pupils' knowledge are very apparent. In discussion, pupils' recall of work is often confused and knowledge is superficial. When talking about electricity, levels of understanding are similar to those of pupils in Year 2. They remember factual information about the solar system and the water cycle but have little recall of independent research. Their use of scientific vocabulary is weak.
60. Although teaching and learning were satisfactory in the lessons observed, they are unsatisfactory overall. Evidence taken from samples of previous work and discussion with pupils indicates that the overall quality of teaching and learning at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory, but unsatisfactory at Key Stage 2. The teachers use technology, such as interactive whiteboards and digital cameras, well. There are good information and communication technology links through, for example, graph work and tally charts. Opportunities to develop skills, however, tend to happen more by chance than as a planned part of the curriculum. The development of literacy and numeracy skills occurs in some topics, but it is not specifically planned. There is too little attention to investigation and scientific enquiry. The older pupils do not cover topics in sufficient depth and, consequently, do not acquire sufficient knowledge and understanding.
61. The key to pupils' underachievement lies in the fact that teachers' expectations are not high enough. Work is often undemanding and pupils do not get enough opportunity to think for themselves. The quality of presentation does not reflect ability. One further weakness arises from the lack of challenge for older pupils in mixed-age classes. Although recent revision of the curriculum has eliminated repetition, it has not addressed the issue of providing work that matches the needs of different ages and abilities. All too often, all pupils complete the same work at the same level.
62. The leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory at present. The very recently appointed subject leader has made a positive start and has identified areas in most need. With good support from the local education authority, he has drawn together an effective action plan for future development. This plan provides an accurate view of priorities and a realistic timescale for much needed action. Assessment procedures are developing, but all initiatives are in their infancy and target setting is unsatisfactory. The school has some way to go before pupils in Key Stage 2 achieve the standards of which they are capable.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

63. It is not possible to report on provision in information and communication technology, as only one lesson was observed. Nevertheless, it is evident that standards are similar to those in other schools in Years 1 to 4, but below this in Years 5 and 6, where the pupils are underachieving. However, the pupils are now making sound progress because a satisfactory

curriculum has been implemented, staff have received training, and the resources have been improved. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory overall, and has accelerated recently.

64. The pupils in Year 2 have adequate knowledge of the use of the technology and word-processing programs. They change the size, style and colour of fonts, and have used the technology to boost their mathematics skills and present data in bar charts. They have used computers for making pictures and patterns, and their ability to move items by 'clicking and dragging' is sound. The programme for their work later in the year includes the use of a programmable robot. The pupils in Year 6 use the Internet with satisfactory understanding, but have not communicated by email. They have some experience of using computer programs for data handling and importing graphics. However, they have not had sufficient opportunity to use spreadsheets, or programs to control or measure. Consequently, although standards are as expected in some aspects, they are below in others. Some pupils are working at a higher level because most have access to computer programs at home or they attend the school's weekly computer club.
65. Teaching and learning were good in the one lesson observed in a Years 3 and 4 class; the teacher was clear about the skills to be developed and built very carefully on the pupils' abilities. The lesson was well prepared and the resources supported the pupils in moving on rapidly. It is evident from the pupils' work and discussions with them that they are now making satisfactory progress throughout the school. The underachievement in Years 5 and 6 is a result of the previous turbulence and lack of resources, resulting in pupils' experiences being patchy.
66. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The recently appointed co-ordinator has secure subject knowledge, and has developed her role through preparing an action plan for the development of the subject. She has a sound understanding of the shortcomings in the pupils' skills and knowledge and has introduced an appropriate scheme of work to ensure that these are built on consistently. Assessment is unsatisfactory at present; strategies are being introduced to enable the teachers to match the work more accurately to the pupils' attainment, but there is little evidence at present of different levels of work being set for different levels of ability. The new computer suite is a good resource and the school is gradually acquiring a range of software. However, the suite was underused during the inspection and few resources were in use in classrooms, apart from Years 3 and 4, where the digital camera and interactive whiteboard are integral parts of teaching and learning.

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

67. Although it is improving, the use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. The pupils use word-processing programs to record their writing, and some programs in mathematics and art and design. The pupils in Year 6 record some of their history work in different ways, using word-processing programs and PowerPoint. There is some limited use of the Internet for research in history and geography but this is not consistent. There is insufficient use of the technology in other subjects, such as science, design and technology or music.

## **HUMANITIES**

It is not possible to report on provision in **geography and religious education**, as no lessons were observed in geography and only one in religious education.

68. It is evident that standards in **geography** are below those expected at the end of Year 2 and well below expectations at the end of Year 6. The pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory and standards have declined since the previous inspection. The subject appears to have received little attention in the past and the curriculum has been disorganised. The situation has been rectified recently, so that the pupils now cover the range of the subject, but the older pupils



have not been able to make up the lost ground. A scrutiny of the pupils' work and discussions with them demonstrate that the improvements in the curriculum are ensuring better progress.

69. The pupils at the end of Year 2 display an adequate general knowledge of places in the locality through their own experience, but this has not built on consistently. They have mapped their own route to school but have insufficient experience of using maps or of comparing places. The pupils have little knowledge of the key features of their own area. The pupils in Year 6 have a rudimentary knowledge of many aspects of the geography curriculum. They have little knowledge of key geographical information, such as the location of major rivers, mountains and cities of the world. The pupils' map-work skills are underdeveloped.
70. Much of the pupils' work has been on unchallenging worksheets, restricting their geographical experience, and doing little to support and extend their literacy skills. Because all pupils in the class were usually given the same work, the more able are not sufficiently stretched. Much of the pupils' work is poorly presented. Information and communication technology is occasionally used for research, but its potential is not exploited sufficiently. Numeracy skills are used and extended adequately when the pupils are using maps and grids, but the skills have not been built on consistently.
71. In **religious education**, from the evidence of pupils' work and discussions with them, it is evident that standards are lower than they should be throughout the school, particularly in Year 6, and that achievement is unsatisfactory.
72. The pupils in Year 2 have a limited knowledge of Christianity and of the stories from the Bible. Their knowledge of other faiths is restricted to Diwali, Eid and harvest festival, although they have little understanding of why the harvest is celebrated. The pupils in Year 6 have not developed an adequate knowledge of Christianity and their knowledge of other major world religions, such as Judaism, Hinduism and Islam is limited. They do not have a clear understanding of the impact of faith on the lives of believers and their knowledge of symbols, beliefs and celebrations is minimal. Because the coverage of the curriculum has been very disjointed in recent years, the pupils' knowledge is confused and erratic. The curriculum has recently been improved, so that the pupils are having a more coherent experience.
73. Teaching and learning were satisfactory in the one lesson observed, so that the pupils built soundly on their knowledge of Buddhism and the importance of meditation. However, the range of evidence demonstrates that the teaching and learning have been unsatisfactory overall. The work set is the same for all pupils, so that it is too easy for more able, and others are given tasks which were too hard for them. Much work remains unfinished, and is often careless and untidy. Teachers have had too little guidance on developing the appropriate skills and knowledge for each year group in the mixed-aged classes. The subject leader has had little opportunity to monitor standards in religious education or the quality of provision. In addition, a lack of assessment and recording of what has previously been taught makes it difficult for teachers to know exactly what each pupil knows, understands and can do. These factors contribute to the unsatisfactory leadership and management in the subject.

## History

Provision in history is **unsatisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are too low at the end of Year 6.
- The curriculum has improved recently.
- The subject makes insufficient contribution to pupils' literacy skills.

## Commentary

74. Standards in history are similar to those in other schools at the end of Year 2, but well below this at the end of Year 6 and standards have declined since the previous inspection. This is because the curriculum has not been planned adequately in the past, so that the pupils have studied some topics, such as the Ancient Egyptians, twice, but have not covered others. The planning has been improved recently, and is now satisfactory, but the curriculum is too dependent on a published scheme of work. Consequently, although the teaching is satisfactory overall, it does not support the pupils in developing all the necessary historical skills.
75. The pupils in Year 2 have developed a satisfactory understanding of change over time, for example, in toys and houses, and have made satisfactory progress during the year. They have a secure knowledge of the lives of the famous people and events they have studied. The lesson observed with the pupils in Years 1 and 2 built on their knowledge well, because the teacher used interesting artefacts and focused very clearly on helping them to carefully compare and contrast Victorian houses with modern ones.
76. The pupils in Year 6 have a very confused picture of the past, with little understanding, for example, of how long ago the Ancient Greeks, who they are studying, lived. They remember many disconnected facts, but did have an adequate understanding of how we know about the past. Nevertheless, the provision has improved because the curriculum has been organised adequately, ensuring that the pupils study a programme of work that meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Teaching and learning were satisfactory in the lesson seen for pupils in Years 5 and 6. The use of research from books and the Internet supported the pupils' ability to find information for themselves.
77. Because they were not developed well enough in the past, the pupils' research skills and the use of first-hand evidence are limited and some of the older pupils find it difficult to select the information they need, partly because of uncertain reading skills. While there are satisfactory opportunities for research in Years 3 and 4, this is less evident in Years 5 and 6. Work throughout the school shows some over-use of worksheets, restricting the pupils' ability to present their work in their own way. All pupils in the same class cover the work at the same level, so that the older and more able pupils do not have activities that stretch them sufficiently. Some educational visits, for example, to Radstock, enliven the curriculum. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory; because the school has been focusing on raising standards in English and mathematics, the subject has not been a high priority.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

There were too few lessons in **design and technology, music, and physical education** during the inspection for overall judgements on provision to be made. Evidence was taken from observations, examples of previous work, documentation, discussions and planning.

78. In **design and technology**, not enough evidence of previous work was available to make a judgement on standards at Key Stage 1. At Key Stage 2, photographic evidence of, for example, finger puppets, headdresses and fairground designs, indicate adequate coverage. A recent school logo design competition created great interest in the subject. There is, however, too little evidence of pupils evaluating or refining their work. Standards are not as high as they were at the time of the previous inspection, because the school has focused much of its recent attention on working to raise standards in mathematics and English. Design and technology has not been a high profile subject. The current action plan focuses on building links with industry and developing resources. One recently appointed member of staff has good expertise and the school is better placed than in the past to move the subject forward.
79. In **music**, although no lessons were observed, the whole school was heard singing in assemblies. This singing was of good quality. It was enthusiastic and boys and girls of all ages participated fully, with a good sense of occasion. Many aspects of provision are similar to those found during the previous inspection. The introduction of a commercial scheme provides

adequately balanced coverage and greater security for non-specialist class teachers. Peripatetic instrumental tuition in guitar, violin and piano is available for some pupils, though none took place during the inspection. All pupils receive opportunities to participate in concerts and productions. They were recently involved in a successful combined school music project entitled, 'Raise the Roof'.

80. In **physical education**, pupils receive many opportunities to develop skills through good quality extra curricular sports' activities, ranging from five-a-side football to basketball and dance. Parents provide a high level of support by running some of these clubs. The school is justly proud of its highly successful football team. Arrangements for swimming are good, with pupils from both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 participating. Many positive features of provision, found at the time of the previous inspection, have been retained. A scrutiny of curriculum planning indicates that all strands of the subject are taught, including outdoor and adventurous activities. The recently appointed subject leader is involved in the School Sports' Co-ordinator Programme and has made a positive start to co-ordinating the subject. There is good capacity for future improvement.

## **Art and design**

Provision in art and design is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils in Year 6 reach standards that are below those expected for their age because their skills are not developed systematically.
- The work of older pupils lacks maturity.
- Opportunities, such as 'Artsweek', raise the profile of the subject successfully.
- Recent links with a performing arts status school provide good potential for future development.

### **Commentary**

81. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are similar to those expected for pupils of this age. Evidence taken from a small sample of lesson observations, examples of previous work and discussions with pupils indicates that pupils of all abilities achieve satisfactorily. Standards are below those in other schools at the end of Key Stage 2 and pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. There has been a decline since the previous inspection because art has not been a high-profile subject.
82. Pupils in Year 2 demonstrate a competent range of skills. Their self-portraits are full of character and show developing attention to detail. Topics are linked effectively to other subjects, such as history and design and technology. Pupils in Year 6 are currently working on a tapestry linked to their Ancient Greece topic. In the Key Stage 2 classrooms, although posters and photographs contribute to an attractive learning environment, there is little of pupils' art work on display.
83. While teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, they are unsatisfactory overall in Years 3 to 6. Teachers in Key Stage 1 encourage imaginative work, and pupils in Year 3 and 4 show a strong appreciation of form and colour. Pupils' sketchbooks provide a broader view of standards and give greater insight into why standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are not high enough. They highlight the lack of systematic skills' development. Some work by pupils in Year 6 lacks maturity and is of a lower standard than that of younger pupils. The older pupils' knowledge of famous artists is particularly weak.
84. Leadership and management are currently unsatisfactory. No-one has a clear overview of standards or provision. Consequently, no-one knows whether standards are high enough and whether individual pupils are making progress in line with their ability. There are no portfolios of work and assessment is unsatisfactory. Opportunities to develop pupils' information and

communication technology, literacy and numeracy skills take place but do not make a significant contribution to their learning.

85. The turbulence of the past has taken its toll on provision. Since the new building has been completed the picture is far more positive. The school recognises the need to develop its creative curriculum more effectively and has introduced visits to places, such as the Commonwealth Museum, to improve skills. The mosaic of the school logo, in which pupils had a strong participation, takes pride of place on the entrance wall and initiatives, such as a whole-school 'Artsweek', are starting to raise the profile of the subject. A recent grant for developing arts in collaboration with a local specialist status secondary school has provided the right impetus for future development.

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

Provision in personal, social and health education and citizenship is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- All adults present good role models.
- Recent initiatives are starting to show positive results.

### **Commentary**

86. The school regards pupils' personal development as an important part of its work. A structured programme of work, combined with regular opportunities for pupils to discuss feelings and moral issues, is starting to have a positive impact on pupils' role in the community and on their attitudes towards work. The school council is firmly established, enabling pupils to become involved in making decisions which influence and shape the direction and quality of school life. The school is currently working towards a Healthy Schools' award and has a strong commitment towards fitness and health. Provision for personal development focuses strongly on the importance of relationships. In this respect, good relationships between teachers and pupils ensure the success of many lessons. Leadership and management are satisfactory and everyone within the school values this aspect of provision.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>5</b>
Pupils' achievement	5
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)</b>	<b>4</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	5
The effectiveness of management	4

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