

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **KING'S MEADOW PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Shakespeare Drive, Bicester

LEA area: Oxfordshire

Unique reference number: 123011

Headteacher: Mr A Instone

Lead inspector: Ian Nelson

Dates of inspection: 24<sup>th</sup> - 26<sup>th</sup> November 2003

Inspection number: 256620

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:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	342
School address:	Shakespeare Drive Bicester Oxfordshire.
Postcode:	OX26 2LU
Telephone number:	01869 323525
Fax number:	01869 322505
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Townsend
Date of previous inspection:	22 <sup>nd</sup> June 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Number on roll	342 (Above average)
Pupils entitled to free school meals	2.6% (Well below average)
Pupils whose mother tongue is not English	1.0% (Well below average)
Pupils on the register of special educational needs	10.5% (Below average)

This is a large primary school serving an area of predominantly private housing on the edge of Bicester. The great majority of pupils are of white British backgrounds, with only a very small number from a range of Asian backgrounds. Nearly half of the pupils with SEN have moderate learning difficulties, with around a fifth having emotional and behavioural difficulties and another fifth having speech or language problems. Local community groups make very good use of the school building out of school hours. Of the pupils who left Year 6 in 2003, around three quarters had been in school since Year 1. The school is reducing in size because there are fewer children in the area. Children start school according to the date of their birthday, in line with the policy of the local education authority, which means that those with Autumn birthdays get longer in the Foundation Stage than those with Summer birthdays. Attainment on entry is broadly average.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2220	Ian Nelson	<i>Lead inspector</i>	Science; Religious Education.
11041	Marvyn Moore	<i>Lay inspector</i>	
30544	Gill Battarbee	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; Art and design; Design and technology.
22831	Clive Lewis	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics; Information and communication technology; Special educational needs.
19765	Pauleen Shannon	<i>Team inspector</i>	The Foundation Stage; Geography; History; Music; Physical education.

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# REPORT CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>4</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>7</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>27</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good** school. Achievement is **good**, with pupils starting school with average attainment and making good progress to reach above average standards by Year 6. The **very good** leadership of the head has resulted in a very clear vision for the future of the school, shared by all the governors and staff. Management is **good** overall, although the co-ordinators of subjects other than English, mathematics and science do not have enough time to check how well their subjects are doing. Teaching is **good** throughout the school, and interests and motivates pupils so that they enjoy their lessons and are keen to learn. Parents and pupils have positive views of the school. The school provides **good** value for money.

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

- The head provides very good leadership that results in a very positive and caring ethos, so that pupils enjoy coming to school, behave very well, work hard and have excellent relationships.
- The staff and governors ensure that all pupils are fully included in the full range of activities provided by the school.
- Management is good overall but co-ordinators of subjects other than English, mathematics and science do not have enough time to check how well their subjects are doing.
- Teaching is good and pupils achieve above average standards by Year 6, but there are not enough opportunities for them to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Parents and pupils have positive views of the school and staff take their views into account, although a small number of parents think the school does not consult them well enough.
- More able pupils have not achieved as well as they might by Year 2 but the school has introduced procedures to tackle this issue recently.

Overall improvement since the previous inspection has been good. The school has successfully tackled the key issues from the previous inspection, although it has not developed the monitoring role of all subject co-ordinators as fully as it might have done. It has raised standards in the national tests for Year 6, introduced all the national initiatives, including the literacy and numeracy strategies, and improved the quality of teaching since the last inspection.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	B	A	A	C
mathematics	C	A	B	E
science	C	A	A	C

*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.*

Achievement by Year 6 is good overall. In the national tests at Year 6 in 2003, pupils attained standards in English and science that were well above average compared with all schools. In mathematics, standards were above average. Compared with schools that attained similar results when these pupils took the national tests at Year 2, standards were average in English and science and well below average in mathematics. However, around 20 per cent of those who took the Year 6 tests in 2003 started this school after Year 2 and did not take the Year 2 tests here. Government figures for the value added by the school during Years 3 to 6 show that pupils achieved well compared with similar schools and with all schools in 2003. The school's results have got better

over recent years at the same rate as results nationally. The work of the current Year 6 pupils shows standards above average in all three subjects and pupils achieving well. The school exceeded its target in the tests in English at Level 4 or above but narrowly missed it in mathematics. Standards attained in the tests for Year 2 pupils in 2003 were below average in reading and well below average in writing and mathematics compared with all schools, reflecting the results of assessments of these pupils when they started school. Compared with schools with similar numbers of pupils eligible for free school meals, standards were well below average in reading and very low in writing and mathematics. The standards of the current Year 2 pupils are judged to be above average in English and science, and average in mathematics, and achievement is good for most. Achievement is satisfactory in information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education, with average standards throughout the school. Achievement and standards are good across the school in art and history, and by Year 6 in design and technology. There was not enough evidence to judge standards in geography, music or physical education. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) are well supported and achieve well in lessons. Those for whom English is not their home language receive good support and also achieve well.

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons and around the school are **very good**. Their relationships with each other and with staff are **excellent** because provision for their moral and social development is very good. Provision for their spiritual and cultural development is good. Attendance is good and punctuality very good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The school provides a **good** quality of education. Teaching is good overall. However, more able pupils have not always been given hard enough work in mathematics in Years 1 and 2, and teachers do not give older pupils enough responsibility for their own learning. The school is developing a teaching and learning policy to raise the quality of teaching further. Assessment arrangements are good in English and mathematics but are only satisfactory in other subjects. The school provides a good curriculum overall that teaches all the required subjects. Provision for pupils with SEN is good. The overall quality of care for pupils is very good. The school has good links with parents and local schools, and satisfactory links with the community.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Governance, leadership and management are **good** overall. The head, governors and staff share a clear vision for the future of the school based on a caring ethos that includes all pupils. They have a clear view of the school's strengths and areas for development based on effective self-evaluation and the rigorous analysis of performance information. The school meets all statutory requirements.

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

The parents' views of the school are **good**, although a minority feels that the school does not consult them enough or take their views seriously. The inspectors disagree with that minority. The school has good arrangements for consultation. Pupils have very positive views of the school.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Complete the teaching and learning policy it is currently developing to ensure that:
  - \* the recent initiatives to improve the achievement of the most able by Year 2 are fully implemented and the results monitored regularly;
  - \* there are more planned opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning;
  - \* the management of subjects beyond English and mathematics is improved so that co-ordinators have clear evidence of how well the school is doing in them.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Achievement is **good** overall. Standards are above average in English, mathematics and science by Year 6 and in science by Year 2. Standards in English and mathematics are average in Year 2. Standards in ICT and religious education are average throughout the school. Pupils with SEN achieve well in lessons.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Achievement overall is good.
- Standards are above average in English, mathematics and science by Year 6.
- Standards in ICT have improved at Year 2 since the last inspection when they were judged below average.
- Standards in religious education were judged above average in the previous inspection and are average now in Year 6.
- Attainment in English and mathematics at the higher levels in Year 2 has not been good enough in recent years but the school has recognised this trend and initiated procedures to improve the situation.

#### Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.3 (29.1)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	27.6 (28.3)	26.8 (26.7)
science	30.0 (30.8)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 58 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.0 (16.8)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	12.7 (15.1)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	14.3 (16.6)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 68 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

1. Pupils enter the school with broadly average attainment, make good, and sometimes very good, progress, and leave the school with standards above, and in some years well above average at Year 6. In the 2003 national tests in Year 6, pupils attained standards that were well above average in English and science compared with all schools and above average in mathematics.
2. Compared with similar schools on the prior attainment measure, standards in the Year 6 2003 tests in English and science were average and those in mathematics were deemed to be well below average. However, the school's tracking systems show that during Years 3 to 6, around 20 per cent of this group of pupils changed, including the loss of a significant proportion that had attained Level 3 in Year 2. These pupils were replaced with pupils who attained lower scores at Year 2. The school's figures show that the average points score for those who actually took the 2003 tests in Year 6 would put them into a lower bracket for comparisons with similar schools, producing a rather different picture and pointing to good achievement overall. Standards have been rising

broadly in line with the national trend. The new value added measure is above average, indicating good achievement in Years 3 to 6.

3. The school has increased the proportions of pupils gaining the expected Level 4 or above since the previous inspection, as shown in the following table.

**Percentage at Level 4 and above at the last inspection and in the latest national tests.**

	1997 SATs	2003 SATs
English	65%	91%
Mathematics	66%	81%
Science	65%	95%

4. Although the proportion gaining the higher than expected Level 5 in 2003 dipped from the 2002 levels it was still above the national average in English and mathematics and well above in science. Compared with similar schools, however, attainment at Level 5 in 2003 was average in science and below average in English and mathematics, having been well above average in English and science, and above in mathematics, in 2002. This is shown in the tables below.

**Proportions reaching Level 5 in 2002.**

	School	National	National	Similar schools
English	43%	29%	A	A
Maths	33%	27%	B	B
Science	61%	38%	A	A

**Proportions reaching level 5 in 2003.**

	School	National	National	Similar schools
English	31%	27%	B	D
Maths	33%	29%	B	D
Science	55%	41%	A	C

*(A indicates well above average, B is above, C average and D below)*

5. The school exceeded its target in the tests in English at Level 4 or above but narrowly missed it in mathematics. It has set realistic but challenging targets for 2004 to reflect the abilities and aptitudes of the current Year 6 pupils. On a wider range of work than that tested in the national tests, the current Year 6 pupils are attaining standards that are above average in English, mathematics and science. Achievement in English and mathematics has benefited from the re-introduction of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. These had been allowed to lapse before the current head arrived. The standards of work seen in art and design, design and technology, and history were also above average.

6. Standards seen in ICT and religious education were broadly average. Standards in religious education are not as high as at the time of the previous inspection because the school has focused on the two national strategies and religious education has not been seen as a priority. There was not enough evidence to judge standards or achievement in geography, music or physical education.

7. In the 2003 national tests for Year 2, standards in reading were below average and those for writing and mathematics were well below average compared with all schools. Compared with similar schools, the results were well below average in reading and very poor in writing and mathematics. However, these results reflect those of tests given to these pupils on entry to school. A high proportion of them have SEN and half of them entered school at Year 1 with no full-time Foundation Stage experience because their birthdays fall in the Summer months. Given these factors, this group is judged to have achieved satisfactorily. The results of this group of pupils are not typical of the standards normally attained at Year 2. In 2002, the standards in the national tests were above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. In 2001 they were above

average in reading, and average in writing and mathematics. Standards rose from 2000 to 2002 before the decline in 2003.

8. The work of the current Year 2 pupils shows that they are achieving well and attaining average standards in English, mathematics, ICT and religious education. Standards in ICT have improved since the last inspection due to greater staff confidence and competence and an improvement in resources. Standards in science, art and history are above average by Year 2. There was not enough evidence to judge standards or achievement in design and technology, geography, music or physical education.

9. Children enter the Foundation Stage with broadly average standards but within a very wide range of ability. They achieve well because they are well supported and staff have a good understanding of the needs of children of this age. The development of a Nursery unit since the last inspection is an improvement in provision and helps to ensure that most children reach the expected standards in the Foundation Stage.

10. Achievement is particularly good in children's knowledge and understanding of the world, and in their personal, social and emotional development, because of the effective systems for welcoming them into the Foundation Stage.

11. One of the difficulties the school faces in its attempt to raise standards is the phased entry to school of the five year olds. This means that those born in the Autumn have longer in formal education than those born in the Summer. As the 2003 Year 2 national tests results show, this can have a marked impact on the standards these children attain further up the school, even though they achieve well in lessons and over time. It also creates difficulties in trying to attract high quality staff for a short period each year for the Summer intake.

12. Pupils with SEN achieve well because teachers and teaching assistants support them effectively in lessons and help them to achieve the targets in their individual education plans (IEPs). There are very few pupils for whom English is not their home language but the school provides effective support for them in lessons. As a result, they make good progress in acquiring English and consequently achieve well in the tasks they are set.

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

Pupils have **very good** attitudes to school and display **very good** behaviour both in and out of lessons. Their spiritual, moral, social and culture development is **good**. Attendance is above the national average and is **good**.

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

- Pupils behave very well.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are excellent.
- Pupils are enterprising and ready to take responsibility.
- The school sets high expectations for pupils' conduct.

### **Commentary**

13. Pupils' attitudes are very good and they enjoy their learning. Staff are very successful in promoting pupils' confidence and self esteem. Lessons are well planned, stimulate pupils' interest and involve them in class discussion. Consequently, teachers and support staff are successful in promoting a caring atmosphere. The school effectively creates in pupils an enthusiasm for learning that encourages good concentration and perseverance on the tasks they are given.

14. Behaviour in school is very good and as a result pupils learn well and with confidence in a calm atmosphere. Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour so that lessons proceed at a

brisk pace without disruptions. Pupils have created the class rules, which they easily understand and respect. They are confident that their views will be listened to and considered, and that staff

will offer them advice, help and support if needed. Lunchtimes and playtimes are pleasant social occasions where pupils relate successfully to each other and mix well. There is very little bullying at school and pupils and parents express confidence in the way the school deals with the rare instances that do arise. There have been no exclusions during the past year.

15. Relationships throughout the school are excellent. Adults and pupils relate well to each other, which has a very positive impact on teaching and learning. The school has created a positive learning ethos where pupils develop their speaking and listening skills well, celebrate the success of others and express views and opinions with increasing confidence. Pupils care for each other and support others with physical or learning difficulties. They are at ease with visitors, warmly welcome them and talk with pride of their achievements and their school.

16. Pupils respect the feelings, values and beliefs of others as a result of the school's very successful promotion of good relationships, including racial harmony and the very high expectation the school sets for pupils' conduct. They enjoy being given good opportunities to take responsibility, including membership of the school council, being appointed as mentors (Playground Players and Lunch Bunch Members), class monitors and librarians and helping to formulate class rules. They are expected to respect their own property, other people's property and school property. Pupils have good opportunities to visit a range of cultural establishments, including art galleries, museums and places of worship, and also have a good knowledge of other cultures through assemblies, art and guest speakers of other faiths and cultures. Many pupils actively join in the large range of after-school activities available and they all benefit from the good provision made for the teaching of personal, social and health education (PSHE).

### Attendance

17. Attendance at 95.7 per cent is above the national average. It has improved dramatically since 2000 and is now good. Punctuality is very good.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.3	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.*

### Exclusions

There have been no exclusions in the past year.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

18. The school provides a **good** quality of education. Teaching is good overall, with some very good teaching in most year groups so that pupils achieve well in their learning. However, more able pupils are not always given hard enough work, particularly in mathematics in Years 1 and 2, and teachers do not give older pupils enough opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning. Assessment arrangements are good in English, mathematics and science but are only satisfactory in other subjects. The school provides a good curriculum overall that covers all the required subjects and is enriched through visits to places of interest, visitors to school, and a good range of well supported after-school clubs and activities. Provision for pupils with SEN is good. The overall quality of care for pupils is very good. The school has good links with parents and local schools and satisfactory links with the community.

## Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good** throughout the school. This marks an improvement since the last inspection when teaching was good but learning was mainly satisfactory. There are some strengths in the school's assessment arrangements, which are **satisfactory** overall.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teaching is good overall and most pupils achieve well.
- Pupils with SEN are well taught and make good progress.
- The very few pupils who use English as an additional language are well taught and make rapid gains in learning to speak English.
- Although planning takes into account pupils' different needs, in some lessons pupils do not have enough opportunities to extend their own learning.
- Assessment arrangements are good for English and mathematics and satisfactory for other subjects.

## Commentary

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 39 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	12 (31%)	20 (51%)	7 (18%)	0	0	0

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

19. Teaching and learning are good for Reception age children, who achieve well. At the time of the inspection there were no full time Nursery children in school. Records show that they made good progress last year. Teaching is imaginative and fun. Trips, visitors and resources are used well to capture children's interest. The Nursery nurse staff are a real asset. Their expertise is used very well to support children's learning in both formal and informal situations. The staff have very good knowledge of the requirements for the Foundation Stage. Ongoing assessments are used well so that children with different abilities and needs are well catered for. Children's personal, social and emotional development is promoted very well. Staff have high expectations of children to take responsibility for their own learning. As a result, children learn to make choices for themselves.

20. Teaching is good in Years 1 to 6 and most children achieve well. There are some common strengths in teaching that underpin the good quality of pupils' learning. For example, there are very good relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils trust their teachers and support staff to help them. Good use is made of ICT to extend learning. Pupils are taught in ability sets for English and mathematics from Year 2 to 6. This helps teachers to focus on pupils' particular learning needs, enabling them to achieve well in lessons.

21. All pupils are included in all school activities. Teachers take care to include all pupils when asking questions and when checking progress, rather than just those who like to offer answers. The teaching of pupils with SEN is good overall. Class teachers plan appropriately for pupils with particular learning needs and give extra support where it is needed so that these pupils achieve well in lessons. The very few pupils who use English as an additional language are taught well and consequently make rapid gains in acquiring English speaking skills. Learning support assistants work well with class teachers, providing good support for pupils, monitoring their progress and offering an appropriate blend of help and challenge.

22. In the most effective lessons, teachers have very high expectations and really challenge all pupils so that they achieve very well. For example, in a highly effective Year 6 history lesson the high quality discussions by the class teacher and a visitor provided excellent challenge. The questioning and response really helped pupils understand that history can be interpreted in different ways.

23. Where lessons were identified as satisfactory, generally the pace was slower and work planned did not sufficiently take into account pupils' different needs.

24. In some lessons, work is not always planned to challenge all able pupils enough to extend their learning. Expectations for these pupils are not high enough. Consequently, there are able pupils whose achievement and progress in some lessons are only satisfactory. The school has identified this issue through its monitoring of lessons and pupils' work, and is developing a teaching and learning policy to raise teaching quality further.

25. Children in the Foundation Stage are encouraged to take responsibility for aspects of their own learning, like choosing activities or materials to use for a task, which enhances their personal and social development. However, older pupils do not get enough such opportunities because teachers set tasks, prescribe how they will be carried out and how the results will be recorded and do not encourage pupils to make such choices for themselves.

26. Assessment has some strengths and is judged satisfactory overall. Assessment arrangements are good for the Foundation Stage, English and mathematics. They are satisfactory for all other subjects because there is less evidence of how the results are used to plan future work. Monitoring of assessment results has enabled the school to become aware of the need to improve the percentage of Year 2 pupils attaining the higher Level 3. Too few pupils have been targeted to attain the higher level. Consequently, some higher attaining pupils only make satisfactory progress and achievement by Year 2 because more could be expected of them. The school has recognised and begun to address this issue.

27. Teachers' marking is generally helpful and constructive. In some subjects, pupils acknowledge teachers' comments to show that they have read them. However, marking is not in the same depth in all subjects. The school has identified the need to update the marking policy as part of its work on developing a whole school teaching and learning policy. Year 6 pupils say that they are given help and encouragement in lessons if they find any work difficult. Termly 'snapshot' assessments are focused and useful. The headteacher and senior staff are very good at analysing the test results and which aspects of national tests pupils found most difficult. This helps teachers know what to focus on in future years.

## **The curriculum**

Provision for meeting the curricular needs of pupils is **good**.

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

- The school provides a broad, balanced and coherent curriculum, with a good range of opportunities for enrichment.
- Provision for SEN is good.
- The quality and spaciousness of accommodation is very good.
- The school provides a very good level of opportunity and access for all its pupils.

## **Commentary**

28. Curriculum provision is judged to be good. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements, including provision for religious education and collective worship.

29. Learning in the Foundation Stage is well planned and appropriate to the needs of young children.

30. After a delayed uptake, there are now consistent whole-school approaches to teaching and applying the literacy and numeracy strategy and for the development of literacy, numeracy and ICT through other subjects. Long term planning helps to ensure pupils build upon earlier learning systematically.
31. The quality and spaciousness of accommodation is very good, and it is used well. The school has a satisfactory range of good quality learning resources with particularly good provision for ICT and the school library.
32. The curriculum provides effectively for PSHE, including sex and drugs awareness, with the result that pupils display very good social skills and are well aware of what their bodies need to stay healthy. Pupils are prepared well for later stages of education through the school's good links with the secondary school to which most of them transfer at the end of Year 6. The curriculum is enriched well by a good range of after-school activities and visits, and visitors to the school. Pupils are enthusiastic about the range of activities and say they are well supported.
33. Provision for SEN is good and pupils are supported well, largely within the classroom, by teaching assistants. The school has made significant changes and improvements in provision and management systems since the previous inspection when provision for SEN was based totally on withdrawing pupils from lessons for extra help. The new systems reflect the requirements and expectations of the Revised Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs. Now, all pupils with SEN are supported within the classroom, except for a small minority who need some specialised support. Class teachers have taken on full responsibility for writing, monitoring and reviewing the IEPs for each pupil with SEN.
34. The positive atmosphere and ethos of the school ensures that all pupils, whatever their ability, disability, gender or cultural background are fully included in all aspects of school life.
35. All the school's policies and practices promote a very good level of equality of opportunity for all pupils. The school goes out of its way to ensure that every pupil feels valued.

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

The provision for pupils' care, guidance, health and safety is **very good**. Pupils have **very good** access to well-informed support, advice and guidance.

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

- The school has very good procedures to ensure pupils work in a healthy and safe environment.
- The involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is very good.
- The school gives good support, advice and guidance to pupils.

### **Commentary**

36. The school cares well for its pupils. Procedures for child protection are very good, with the child protection officer and all members of staff being well trained and aware of current practice and protocol. Health and safety procedures are very good, with regular health and safety audits and risk assessments taking place. The school offers all its pupils, whatever their ability, disability, gender or cultural background, a safe, secure and happy environment. Pupils are very well supervised both in and out of the classroom. Pupils know they can relate to staff if they have any concerns or problems. They are confident that staff will take their concerns seriously and respond

appropriately to them. Pupils' personal development is well monitored by staff, who hold regular meetings to discuss pupils' attitudes, attendance, personal achievements and problems. Induction arrangements, particularly in the Foundation Stage, are very good and enable pupils to start school with confidence and settle well into school routines.

37. The school council provides a valuable way of involving pupils in the development of the school. All pupils have an opportunity to be elected as a council member. The council is well used as a vehicle to obtain pupils' views. Suggestion boxes are placed in every classroom, enabling pupils to request items for discussion by the council. The council recently made a successful application to the parents' association for a grant of £500 to be spent on playground equipment and then produced a spreadsheet of the planned expenditure.

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

The school has **good** links with parents and other schools and colleges, and **satisfactory** links with the community.

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

- The partnership between home and school is very effective.
- Provision for parents of information about the school, pupils' standards and progress is very good.
- Procedures to ensure satisfaction, and to deal with complaints or concerns, are good.
- A significant minority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire (26 per cent), thought that the school did not seek the views of parents or take into account their suggestions or views.

### **Commentary**

38. Home/School partnerships are good. Parents have positive views about the school and feel they can approach the head teacher and staff at any time if they have any problems or matters that they wish to discuss. The school provides very good communication to parents through regular well-produced newsletters, a parent-friendly prospectus, a special prospectus for parents of Nursery pupils and well-written governors reports. Most parents regularly attend parents' evenings. Many parents are involved with reading and homework and most write comments in pupils' reports. Parents help in school in many ways by hearing readers, helping on school trips and coming into school to talk to pupils about their profession or life experiences. The parent teachers association (PTA) arranges social functions throughout the year and annually raises around £5,000 for the use of school funds.

39. Parents are fully informed about their child's learning. Reports are of a very good quality and tell parents what pupils have studied and what they must do to improve. Parents have access to staff at all times to discuss pupils' progress. The inspection findings do not agree with the negative views of a minority of parents who felt that the school does not value their views, or take them into account, or consult them enough.

40. Links with the community are satisfactory. The school has good connections with the church and welcomes the involvement of faith leaders in school. Pupils raise funds for local charities and Year 5 pupils go to a local playgroup to give theatre presentations. Pupils attend the local supermarkets to see food being made. The school arranges two play schemes in the summer months, run by parents for the benefit of the whole community. Community groups make very good use of the building after school and at weekends.

41. Links with other schools are good. The school is a member of a local cluster of schools that discusses items of common interest, like transfer and curriculum matters, at regular intervals. Students from local teacher training courses, secondary schools and National Vocational

Qualification students regularly work in the school, providing valuable help. Transfer arrangements for Year 6 pupils to their next stage of education are very good, with regular contact between the school and secondary schools. As a result, Year 6 pupils start their life at secondary school with confidence.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Governance, leadership and management are **good** overall. The head, governors and staff share a clear vision for the future of the school based on a caring ethos that includes all pupils whatever their ability, disability, gender, or cultural background. They have a clear view of the school's strengths and areas for development derived from effective self-evaluation procedures and the rigorous analysis of performance information. The school fully complies with statutory requirements.

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

- The head, governors and staff are fully committed to including all pupils, whatever their ability, disability, gender or cultural background, into the whole life of the school.
- The head, governors and staff have established a caring ethos and a clear vision for the school.
- The senior staff and governors have a very clear view of how well the school is doing in English, mathematics and science, based on a detailed analysis of performance information.
- The head and governors regularly check how well the school is performing financially and in terms of pupils' achievements in comparison with similar schools.
- Monitoring of subjects other than English, mathematics and science is not structured or systematic enough.
- Some of the targets in the school development plan are not expressed clearly enough.

### **Commentary**

42. Governance, leadership and management are judged to be good. The governors ensure that all required school policies, including those on race equality and SEN, are in place and reflect the school's commitment to ensuring that all pupils, whatever their ability, disability, gender or cultural background, are enabled to take a full part in all school activities. Parents say the caring and welcoming ethos of the school is one of its significant strengths.

43. The head has a very clear vision for the future of the school based firmly upon continuous improvement and has shared this effectively with governors and staff. This has resulted in a very positive and caring ethos and a happy and harmonious school where everyone works hard and tries their best.

44. Through a rigorous analysis of assessment information, the school has a clear knowledge of how well pupils are achieving in the national tests in English, mathematics and science and where it needs to focus on improvements. This helped the staff to identify the under-achievement of more able pupils, particularly in mathematics by Year 2, and begin to tackle the issue. There is a clear commitment to continuous improvement, as shown by the school's determination to improve teaching quality further through developing and implementing a new teaching and learning policy.

45. The governors show a good understanding of how well the school is performing compared with all schools and with similar schools. They have the confidence to seek from staff explanations and reasons for the school's performance so that they can set priorities for improvement and work together on implementing them.

46. The lack of management systems was a criticism in the last inspection report and was said to limit the effectiveness of leadership. The school has addressed this criticism and implemented effective structures for knowing how well it is doing in English, mathematics and science, though systems for monitoring some other subjects are not yet good enough. Some co-ordinators have not had enough time allocated for effective monitoring of their subjects. The previous report also criticised the lack of clarity in management and delegation. These issues have now been resolved so that all staff understand their roles and responsibilities. Performance management has been fully implemented, with senior staff making a significant contribution to the systems.

47. The school manages the support for pupils with SEN effectively so that they achieve well in lessons. The very few pupils for whom English is not their home language are also well supported so that they too achieve as well as their peers.

48. The head and governors check how well the school is doing financially compared with similar schools. They are tackling the problem of falling rolls and have tried to cushion the effect of a reducing budget by carrying forward a much larger than usual surplus for one year to reduce the impact on the following one. They have not shirked their responsibilities in making hard decisions about where to make the required savings to ensure the budget balances.

49. The head and governors have a clear understanding of the principles of best value and apply them when setting the budget. They ensure that financial management systems are effective and that funds allocated for specific purposes, like special needs, are used appropriately. Given the budget and school's overall performance, it is judged to provide good value for money.

50. The school development plan is a comprehensive document on which all staff and governors are consulted when it is being drawn up. However, too many of the targets lack clarity and focus. They are expressed in terms of reviewing provision or maximising achievement that do not lend themselves to knowing when the target has been met.

## Financial information

### *Financial information for the year April 2002 to March200*

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	910,178.00
Total expenditure	847,336.00
Expenditure per pupil	2,195.00

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	46,390.00
Balance carried forward to the next	109,232.00

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

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

Provision in the Foundation stage is **good**. Children are provided with a rich imaginative curriculum and achieve well. There has been good improvement since the time of the previous inspection when the school had no Nursery unit.

#### **The main strengths and weaknesses:**

- Teaching is good and at times very good. As a result children achieve well.
- The staff are knowledgeable about Early Years and work very well together.
- The Nursery nurses are a real asset in providing quality experiences.
- Induction arrangements are very good. Children are helped to settle easily.
- Children's individual needs are well catered for.
- The Foundation Stage is well led and managed.
- The school does not have an outside area resourced for the Reception class.
- Due to the arrangements for children starting school, the youngest Reception age children do not receive any full time provision before they enter Year 1.

#### **Commentary**

51. Induction arrangements are very effective and ensure children settle easily. There are very good links with pre- school placements. Staff quickly help children establish known routines, which gives them confidence. Parents are pleased with how quickly their children settle. They are made to feel very welcome and receive good quality information. Parents make a valuable contribution through their voluntary support in the Nursery and the Reception class, and their support for homework and trips.

52. The school has successfully introduced the national guidance on assessing children in the Foundation Stage, and has plans to integrate the information into the school's assessment systems. Staff use their regular assessments well to plan the next activities. This ensures that all children have work with the right amount of challenge. Children with SEN are catered for well, with good systems in place for liaison between parents and staff. The very few children who use English as an additional language are given good support by the staff. As a result, they rapidly develop their English speaking skills.

53. The management of the Foundation Stage is good. The newly appointed co-ordinator has put in place coherent curriculum planning matched to the needs of Nursery and Reception age children. The school has begun the process of moving the Nursery unit and Reception class towards a seamless Foundation Stage.

54. Due to the local authority admission policy, the youngest Reception children do not receive any full-time provision before they enter Year 1. They also have less time in the Foundation Stage than the oldest Reception children. A particular strength is the school's commitment to continuously adapting their staffing and curriculum arrangements. As a result, they meet the needs of all the children, despite the lack of time that some children have in the Foundation Stage.

55. Accommodation, while satisfactory overall, has some weaknesses. Provision in the Nursery building is very good, with indoor and outside areas that are spacious and used well to support learning. However, the Reception classroom has no secured outside area. The staff overcome this difficulty by providing daily access to the Nursery area. Unfortunately, the Nursery and Reception are in different buildings. This means that the Reception teacher cannot provide simultaneous planned curriculum activities for children to undertake both inside and outside throughout the day.

56. During the week of the inspection, there were no full time Nursery age children in the Nursery and no Reception age children in the school's Reception class. This was due to the local authority admission arrangements. All children observed in the Nursery were Reception age. Records show that both Nursery and Reception children made good progress and achieved well over the previous year.

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

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

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

- Achievement is very good because teaching and learning is focused on promoting children's confidence and independence.

### **Commentary**

57. Teaching is very good, and as a result children make very good progress and achieve well in their social development. Most children are on course to exceed their early learning goals and achieve more than might be expected.

58. Most children enter Reception with a wide range of ability and experience. Staff establish secure routines so that children feel safe and confident. This particularly helps less confident children. The staff are very caring and use every opportunity to praise children's independence. Children are given many opportunities to make decisions for themselves. As a result, many children work successfully, both alone and in small groups. Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour. Children respond well to this and their behaviour and attitudes to school are very good. They enjoy school and work hard to receive reward stickers.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

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

- Achievement is good because teaching and learning is focused on developing children's skills through an interesting curriculum.
- Not enough attention is given to improving some weak handwriting.

### **Commentary**

59. Most Reception children enter with the expected communication skills, with some below expectation. As a result of good teaching, most children are on course to achieve their early learning goals, with a minority exceeding them.

60. Children are taught to listen carefully. Staff encourage less confident children to talk in sentences, and more fluent communicators to extend their vocabulary. The very few children who use English as an additional language are given good support by the staff. As a result, they rapidly develop their English speaking skills.

61. Good reading habits are established. Staff promote children's love of books through the use of appealing books and by using the school's excellent library on a weekly basis. Children who need more help in learning individual sounds get high quality support in small groups from the Nursery nurse. She makes leaning fun! Books are shared in a lively and interesting way, which really captures the children's interest. Some children appeared 'to tingle' with delight while listening to the teacher read 'The Dark Tale'. During free choice sessions, however, few children choose to sit in the book corner.

62. A particularly effective curriculum link has been set up by the previous Reception teacher, with her Year 4 class regularly sharing books with children in the Nursery.

63. Daily opportunities are provided for children to write for a range of purposes. Children enjoy making their own unique booklets. Scrutiny of last year's work shows that a minority of Nursery and Reception children have difficulty forming their letters fluently. They develop poor writing patterns. This is not always corrected by staff.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

No judgements about overall provision, teaching and learning, standards and achievement have been made in this area of learning, due to lack of evidence.

### **Commentary**

64. Records show that most children enter with the expected skills in mathematical development and a wide range of experience. Planning shows that Nursery and Reception children have many opportunities to develop their mathematical knowledge and understanding. There is a good balance planned between formal activities and mathematical games, with daily access to sand and water play. Records show that by the end of last year, most Reception children achieved, and a minority exceeded, their early learning goals by the time they joined Year 1.

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

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **very good**.

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

- Achievement is very good because teaching and learning is focused on developing children's skills through a practical and imaginative curriculum.

### **Commentary**

65. Most children enter with the expected skills in their understanding of the world, with some having less knowledge and experience. This area is very well taught, with a focus on first-hand practical activities. As a result, most children are on course to exceed their early learning goals.

66. Curriculum plans show that staff provide an interesting range of experiences for Nursery and Reception age children. A range of topics, such as 'Let's explore', 'Let's celebrate', and 'Pets week', help children to build up their picture of the world. Experiences such as handling ducklings, help children appreciate living things. Care is taken to involve all Nursery and Reception children in planned trips or with visitors to school. Trips, such as to the local supermarket to learn how bread is made, add real excitement. Visits by people with different jobs, such as scientists and dentists, help children to understand the world of work. Children regularly use the investigation table during choice times. For example, one boy was totally engrossed when using a mirror to create symmetrical pictures. Children are used to using equipment to explore their environment. For example, children used their own initiative to get a magnifying glass when they found a worm! Staff extend children's

knowledge of different cultures well. They provide learning experiences, such as a visit to a local Chinese restaurant, and give children the opportunity to learn about cultural similarities and differences in Indian and British weddings. Computer skills are well taught. Staff build up children's pleasure and confidence. As a result, boys and girls have positive attitudes and display equally good skills.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

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

- Achievement is good because teaching and learning are focused on developing children's creative response and physical skills.
- There is no outside area, with large equipment, attached to the Reception class.

### **Commentary**

67. Most children enter with the expected skills in their physical development. Teaching is good and, as a result, children achieve well. Children are on course to achieve, and a significant number, exceed, their early learning goals.

68. Children have regular sessions in the hall to help them develop their physical skills and learn to respond to music. In a well taught lesson, the children furthered their physical skills by imagining and recreating the movements of animals, such as elephants and monkeys. As there is no outside area, with large equipment, attached to the Reception class, the staff plan daily sessions in the Nursery so that all Nursery and Reception children have access to fixed outdoor climbing equipment and three-wheeled vehicles.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **good**.

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

- Achievement is good because teaching is focused on children's creativity.

### **Commentary**

69. Most children enter with the expected skills in their creative development. This area is well taught, with a focus on first- hand practical activities. There is daily access to good quality materials, with many opportunities to paint and draw, and make models. Planning shows that staff provide Nursery and Reception children with a good range of role play experiences to extend their imagination. Children are provided with a range of musical instruments to handle and explore informally. Many occasions are provided for children to join in well- known rhymes. As a result, most children are on course to achieve, and a significant minority exceed, their early learning goals.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH

#### English

Provision in English is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards of listening skills, reading and writing are above average by Year 6, although the standard of speaking skills is average.
- Teaching is good overall.
- The recent focus on using English skills for writing across other areas of the curriculum has been effective.
- The overall leadership and management of English are good and the vision, knowledge and innovation of the subject co-ordinator are very good.
- There are some inconsistencies in applying the marking and handwriting policies across the school.
- Further techniques need to be developed to extend and challenge the more able pupils.

#### Commentary

70. Achievement is good. Overall standards in English are good by the time pupils reach Year 6. Although standards in speaking are average, standards in listening, reading and writing are good.

71. Pupils are achieving well against their Year 2 national test results because teachers use a good range of teaching strategies to motivate and engage them.

72. By Year 2, standards in reading skills are good, this is because there has been a school focus on improving reading, with the re-organisation of the reading resources and staff training. However, reading records, as yet, give parents little information about the progress of their children. While pupils have good listening skills and speak well in formal conversation, they are less articulate when speaking informally and some pupils lack confidence when speaking in front of the class. There are also some common inaccuracies in both spoken and written grammar, such as `we done`. The school is currently focusing on improving writing, and several initiatives are beginning to create improvements, although the standard by Year 2 is not yet good enough.

73. Teaching is good overall. Teachers encourage and engage pupils, use their time well and use resources very well. As a result, the great majority of pupils concentrate well, are keen to answer questions and produce a good amount of work during lessons, showing good achievement. Pupils are proud of their work.

74. Most teachers are implementing the new handwriting system effectively and the quality of writing and spelling shows a marked improvement as a result. However there are still some inconsistencies in practice for the school to address.

75. Teachers form good relationships with their pupils and have high expectations of pupil behaviour during lessons, encouraging pupils to concentrate well and enjoy their learning. Lessons are well planned and teachers use a good range of strategies and resources, including the new interactive white boards, individual white boards, practical activities, discussions, videos and well designed accommodation. The activities make the learning relevant and enjoyable, and motivate the pupils to achieve well. For example, Year 4 wrote play scripts based on a short extract from an historical video about the finding of Tutankhamun's tomb and Year 1 learned about written instructions and ingredients by making jam sandwiches.

76. Throughout the school there are some good examples of assessment. The best marking of work encourages and praises pupils and gives ideas for how they can improve. It also requires the pupils to indicate that they have read and understood the comments, helping them to develop some responsibility for their own learning. However, not all the marking is consistent, and some pupils do not have this level of support, which reduces their potential to achieve well. Older pupils have useful target sheets in their books, to which they refer regularly as a means to help them focus on specific, individual areas for improvement. However, such targets are not yet used effectively enough to challenge and extend the higher achieving pupils at Year 2.

77. Teachers develop good use of vocabulary with the pupils, encouraging them to use correct technical language. For example, the words 'utensils', 'phonemes' and 'sequencing' had been introduced and were being used by younger pupils. In the best lessons, teachers use open-ended questioning to encourage the pupils to think about what they are learning. However, these strategies need to be developed further in order to challenge and extend the different ability groups and to capitalise on useful mistakes. At times some teachers also over-explain ideas. This slows the pace of lessons, and reduces opportunities to develop pupil independence and to extend and assess pupil knowledge.

78. Pupils with SEN make good progress due to the quality of support they receive from their teaching assistants. They work in small groups and have well planned work linked closely to their IEPs. The professional relationship between teaching and support staff provides a good role model for the pupils.

79. The leadership and management provided by the subject leader over the last two years have been good. He has developed the curriculum content, structure, resources, training and assessment, has implemented innovative strategies to raise achievement and has a very clear vision for the future. He now needs to ensure that policies are consistently applied across all classes, that assessment is used to extend and challenge the most able and that the challenging targets the school has set itself are reflected in the development plan.

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

80. The school has implemented an effective strategy for teaching English across the curriculum. Pupils use their English skills well. For example, Year 6 pupils wrote to an imaginary confectionery factory outlining the results of their science experiments on dissolving in order to practise their letter writing skills. Pupils in Year 2 focussed on report writing, questioning, sequencing and written explanations in their history work. Teachers plan this work carefully and imaginatively, ensuring that pupils achieve well because they have a wide range of opportunities to practise the skills they learn in English lessons. They make good use of the facilities in the ICT suite in their English lessons.

81. There are also opportunities for pupils to use their speaking and listening skills in a wide range of contexts. Pupils listen to adults and to their peers with concentration and are able to respond appropriately, but opportunities are sometimes missed to develop the pupils' speaking skills.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

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

- Achievement by Year 6 is good and standards are above the national average.
- Teaching is good overall with the result that pupils learn effectively and make good progress.
- The subject leader is enthusiastic and committed, has identified improvements needed to raise standards further and is taking appropriate steps to address them.
- Improvement since the last inspection has been good.
- Expectations of, and provision for, potentially higher-attaining pupils in the Infant classes need improvement.

### **Commentary**

82. Provision in mathematics is judged to be good. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is broadly average, and by the time they leave the school, in Year 6, attainment is above average. Attainment has been above or well above average in three of the last four years in the national tests at Year 6.

83. Teaching is good overall and is characterised particularly by very good relationships which result in a high level of pupil motivation and good progress in lessons. Thorough planning of lessons ensures that time is well used and pupils are kept busy. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution, particularly when supporting pupils with learning needs, so that they achieve well.

84. Pupils learn basic skills effectively because they are taught methodically and confidently. Pupils are 'set' into two ability groups from Year 2 upwards and this ensures, particularly in the junior years, a good level of challenge for the more able. However, teachers do not always expect enough of more able infant pupils, so they do not achieve as well as they should in the national tests at Year 2.

85. The subject-co-ordinator provides good leadership and management. School test results are analysed in detail and amendments to the curriculum are made in the light of what is revealed.

86. Recently, good progress has been made in implementing and resourcing the National Numeracy Strategy, which was introduced to the school much later than in most schools. The result of this delay was that teachers had not been trained to teach the numeracy programme of work, and resources were not provided for many of the strategy's key techniques. Both of these issues have now been addressed.

87. Assessment in the subject is now good. In addition to the detailed analysis of test results and trends noted above, pupils are tracked individually as they move through the school, and older pupils, particularly, have a good idea of what they have to do to improve.

88. There has been good progress in the subject since the last inspection when standards were judged to be average overall, but attainment at higher levels at both Year 2 and Year 6 was criticised.

## Mathematics across the curriculum

89. Pupils make good use of their mathematical skills in subjects such as science and design and technology, where they need to measure and calculate accurately. Good use is made of ICT in mathematics, with pupils using spreadsheets and producing graphs and charts on computers to enhance their work. Mathematics lessons are timetabled for the ICT suite on a regular basis.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards are above average at Year 2 and at Year 6, although more able pupils have not always done well enough in the teacher assessments at Year 2 in recent years.
- Pupils achieve well throughout the school.
- Leadership and management of science are good.
- Teaching is good overall, although there are too few opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Lessons have a strong emphasis on learning facts through practical work.

### Commentary

90. Provision in science is judged to be good. In the national tests for Year 6 in 2003 the school's results were well above average. The standard of work seen during the inspection was above average at Year 6. Pupils showed a good knowledge and understanding of science facts and of how to conduct a fair test, and were able to make generalisations from the investigations they carried out. These elements were criticised in the previous report as not being good enough. The work seen during the inspection showed the current Year 2 pupils achieving above average standards. However, too few pupils have attained the higher level in the teacher assessments at Year 2 over recent years.

91. Teaching is good and in some lessons it is very good. Teachers are confident in their knowledge of the science they are teaching and so teach basic skills well. They make good links with literacy, numeracy and ICT, including the need to measure and record accurately, and generate graphs and charts before writing up their findings.

92. Most lessons include a strong practical element where pupils learn through carrying out investigations. Teachers provide plenty of appropriate equipment and support, and guide pupils so that they can all meet with success. Pupils with SEN are well supported so that they achieve well in lessons. Although much of the science is practical, the teachers generally tell pupils precisely what to do, how to do it and what equipment to use. Consequently, lessons are very well prepared but do not leave much room for pupils to show initiative or take responsibility for planning their own investigations, deciding what equipment they need, how to conduct the investigation, or the best way to record their findings.

93. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the practical nature of their science lessons. Year 2 pupils were really engrossed in working on circuits and trying to make two bulbs light up from one battery. One group methodically tried to work out why they could light one bulb, albeit dimly, but not two, and concluded that the battery was not powerful enough. Year 6 pupils were highly motivated by the task of working out the best distance between a light source and a 'ghost' to give maximum impact to the shadow for a fairground ghost train.

94. Co-ordination of science is good. The co-ordinator has a clear view of the subject's strengths and areas for development. She has a planned programme for checking how well the school is doing in science to highlight priorities for the future. This includes monitoring pupils' work, teachers' planning and lessons.

95. Assessment overall is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has a very good grasp of the standards and achievement in national tests and analyses results thoroughly. However, there is less evidence of day-to-day assessment informing planning and ensuring that all pupils are given tasks well matched to their specific needs, based on regular ongoing assessments.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in ICT is satisfactory.

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

- Standards have kept pace with the national expectations for pupils and are now average by Year 2 and Year 6.
- Teacher s' confidence and subject knowledge, and the quality of resources, have improved significantly.
- Teachers make good use of the school's spacious and well-resourced ICT suite.

### **Commentary**

96. Achievement is satisfactory and standards are average throughout the school. The co-ordinator is committed to continued improvement and, since taking over responsibility, has overseen a significant improvement in teachers' subject-knowledge and confidence. This in turn has resulted in a significant improvement in the use of ICT across the curriculum. The co-ordinator has a clear action plan to develop the subject further, with improving assessment as a priority. Effective monitoring ensures that all required elements of ICT are taught.

97. The range and quality of resources have improved through the provision of a broadband Internet link, digital cameras, a programmable robot and interactive whiteboards in some classrooms. Staff have all received training through New Opportunities Funding to increase their skills and give them more confidence in their teaching. The computer suite is well used by all classes.

98. Teaching and learning are broadly satisfactory. Although only two ICT lessons were observed, one in each key stage, a number of other lessons, including English and mathematics lessons, were seen where learning took place in the ICT suite or included effective use of ICT. Teaching of basic skills and ICT vocabulary is good. For example, in a Year 1 lesson the teacher reinforced terms like 'icon' and 'mouse'. The learning intentions and expectations of behaviour were made very clear and, as a result, lessons were distinguished by the very good attitudes of the pupils and the good pace throughout.

99. The availability of the ICT suite makes a very important contribution to the effectiveness of learning since it allows direct teaching of key skills using the data-projector followed immediately by a very good level of practical experience for all pupils.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

100. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used effectively to support other subjects. In English in Year 6, for example pupils use computers when checking texts for bias. This requires them to practise cutting and pasting text. In Year 4, pupils log on to an Internet site about fractions and work through problems on computers. When producing a bid for funding from the PTA for outdoor physical education equipment, older members of the School Council prepared a multi-media presentation and a 'spreadsheet' to work out their costings.

## HUMANITIES

### Religious Education.

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory** in Years 3 to 6. No lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2, so judgements on provision in these year groups are not possible.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Religious education lessons make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school does not have effective systems in place for checking how well it is doing in religious education.

### Commentary

101. Provision in religious education is judged to be satisfactory and pupils achieve satisfactory standards across the school. This is much the same judgement as at the time of the last inspection. By Year 6, pupils have been taught about Christianity, Judaism and Islam, and know some common facts about each of the three religions. They know that some people's religious faith causes them to act in particular ways, including devoting their lives to the service of others, as in the case of Mother Theresa. In Years 1 and 2, scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that standards are broadly average. Pupils in Year 2 have recorded simple accounts of Bible stories they have heard, like the parable of the lost sheep, and completed worksheets on special people and harvest.

102. Lessons make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, Year 6 pupils relate stories about the life of Jesus to their own lives and those of others, as in considering when it is acceptable to be angry. They look at the story of how angry Jesus became about the money changers in the temple and relate that to the anger some people show about injustices in the world, as in Martin Luther King's campaigns. Pupils have enjoyed visits from religious leaders and trips to places of worship.

103. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers show a secure knowledge of the material they are teaching but lessons tend to be unexciting and rather bland. As a result, pupils' attitudes are satisfactory and they complete the tasks they are given, although they lack the kind of enthusiasm they show in some of their other subjects. While lessons are well planned, are based upon the locally Agreed Syllabus and meet statutory requirements, the tasks pupils are required to complete in them are not particularly challenging and often relate only to recording what they have learned.

104. Some lessons provide sound links with literacy work when pupils are required to write about what they have learned or to find biographical details of famous people. There are satisfactory systems for assessing what pupils know, but the results are not really used to plan future work. As a result, there is little evidence of pupils of different abilities being given tasks well matched to those abilities.

105. The co-ordinator for religious education has a strong commitment to the development of the subject and a clear vision of what she would like to achieve within it. However, the subject has not been a priority for the school recently, so checking the quality of teaching, learning, and how well pupils achieve has not been carried out in any systematic way. As a result, the school does not have a clear grasp of how effective provision is or how to improve it.

106. In humanities, work was sampled in **history** and **geography**, with only three lessons seen in history and none in geography. It is therefore not possible to form an overall judgement about provision in these subjects.

## **Geography**

107. Due to the timetable arrangements, there was very limited work available to judge standards in geography. Work seen was only available from Year 3. Standards of work were slightly above average. The pupils' workbooks show that the local studies topic is studied in depth, with good opportunities for pupils to extend their mapping skills.

108. Year 3 pupils reported that they enjoy their work in geography. They gain a good understanding of how they can influence the environment, for example, by designing features for a local park and considering questions such as 'how can Bicester be improved?'

## **History**

109. In history, scrutiny of pupils' work throughout the school shows that standards are higher than average and have improved since the previous inspection. Three lessons were seen in history, in Year 1, Year 2, and Year 6. All three were well taught, with two judged to be very well taught. As a result, pupils achieved well, and had very positive attitudes, with attainment above average.

110. Teachers show pupils that their work is valued by the way the work is prominently displayed. Marking is usually helpful and positive. From the teachers' planning and work samples it is clear that every effort is made to teach history in an interesting and lively way. The school's use of history to extend pupil's writing skills is particularly impressive.

111. There are good links with other subjects such as geography, mathematics and art to make the learning more relevant. Consequently, pupils are able to make use of current experiences to learn about the past. In a well taught lesson, Year 1 pupils used their own understanding of modern clothing to help them make sense of what clothing may have been worn at the seaside in the past.

112. Pupils have many opportunities to research, using both the Internet and a range of good quality books. In a very well taught lesson, Year 6 pupils researched their own questions. The class teacher and a visitor ensured an excellent level of challenge to help pupils understand that history can be interpreted both from facts and from personal memories and experiences.

113. In both history and geography, the range of visits out of school and visitors to the school help make learning relevant and interesting to pupils. For example, Year 2 pupils talk enthusiastically about their recent visit to Warwick Castle. Their visit clearly helped bring the history to life as they debated what weapons the knight used and if he was a knight from the past or an actor in the present. The planned curriculum for both subjects makes a good contribution to pupils' social development and their appreciation of the wider world.

114. The co-ordinator responsible for both history and geography is enthusiastic and knowledgeable. However, she is limited by a lack of opportunities for systematic monitoring and evaluation.

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

115. Only two lessons were seen in music, one in physical education, one in design and technology and none in art. It is therefore, not possible to make a firm judgement about provision.

### **Art**

116. There was not enough evidence to judge the quality of teaching and learning in art, but evidence from the displays in classrooms and around the common areas of the school show that the standard of work produced by the pupils is good throughout school.

117. Work illustrates a range of techniques and demonstrates care and attention to detail. Pupils explained that they enjoy their art work and showed that they understand a range of different styles and techniques. Year 6 pupils talked about their underground shelter work in the style of Henry Moore, in which they showed good line and movement and very good use of colour and shading. Some Year 4 work used tie and dye techniques to represent African animals. Infant pupils used colour and shape carefully to create large pictures in the style of Mondrian and Kandinsky.

118. The subject co-ordinator is creating a useful portfolio of art work throughout the school but as yet does not monitor pupil progress and achievement satisfactorily.

### **Design and Technology**

119. There was insufficient evidence from which to make judgements regarding design and technology by Year 2 and to make judgements about the quality of teaching and learning by Year 6.

120. However, evidence from the work on display, and the one lesson seen, shows that teachers focus well on the design element of the subject, are well organised and promote the skills of experimentation and improvement. Standards are good and pupils enjoy designing and making items that are often related to other subject areas, such as the twentieth century slippers being designed by Year 6 and the work on cams in Year 5.

121. The subject co-ordinator has organised the curriculum and supporting resources well. This ensures that teachers' lesson plans cover the curriculum and have relevant links to other subjects, so that pupils benefit from good opportunities to develop their understanding of the subject.

122. However, assessment and monitoring of the subject are not good enough to track and support the achievement of pupils effectively and the co-ordinator has not had the time to develop these areas, given the school's focus on literacy and numeracy.

### **Music**

123. In music, pupils were only observed in a Year 5 and Year 6 class. However, all pupils were heard singing in assemblies. In the two lessons and in the assemblies, singing was above average. Pupils enjoy singing. They sing tunefully and with gusto. In lessons seen, teaching was pacy and interesting. As a result, pupils were fully engaged, worked hard and achieved well. Boys and girls, and those pupils with SEN, showed confidence and contributed equally well in both lessons.

124. Good use is made of the subject specialism of the music teacher, who takes both Year 6 classes. The specialist instrumental teaching seen during the inspection was to a high standard, consequently, pupils achieved particularly well. This is a similar positive picture to the previous inspection.

125. The planned curriculum and enrichment opportunities make a good contribution to pupils' social development and cultural appreciation. The school values music and ensures that all pupils experience a wide music curriculum. They are exposed to a good range of music, including music from different times and cultures. Music is also used well to support dance. Parents commented favourably on the school's music provision. They like the care the school takes to include all pupils in productions, together with provision for specialist tuition.

### **Physical education**

126. Planning shows that all strands of physical education are regularly taught, with good use made of the school's spacious grounds. In the only lesson seen, a Year 3 dance lesson, teaching was good. Pupils worked hard and showed enthusiasm. Good use was made of Indian music to stimulate pupils' creative response. As a result, pupils achieved well. Records show that standards in swimming are well above average by Year 6. This is the same positive picture as at the time of the previous inspection.

127. The school values sports and there is good provision for girls and boys to join in sporting events. This is an improvement from the time of the previous inspection. Both girls and boys achieve well in inter-school events. The school adds interest and expertise by arranging for professionals to coach various sports such as football and cricket. Pupils appreciate the range of out-of-school provision and are enthusiastic about sports.

128. Physical education makes a valuable contribution to pupils' personal development. Girls and boys have regular opportunities to compete, collaborate and take part in team events. They learn to accept both success and defeat.

129. Both co-ordinators responsible for music and physical education are enthusiastic and knowledgeable. They give their time generously to out-of-school activities. However, they have limited opportunities for systematic monitoring and evaluation.

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

130. Not enough lessons were seen in this area to be able to make judgements on overall provision, teaching or learning. However, evidence gained from talking with pupils and observing them at work and play indicates that the school provides a good programme for PSHE. This includes work on gender and relationships, health and drugs awareness and opportunities to learn about citizenship through the work of the school council.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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