

INSPECTION REPORT

ST EDBURG'S CE (VA) PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bicester

LEA area: Oxfordshire

Unique reference number: 123188

Headteacher: Mr D Booth

Lead inspector: Mr P Rayers

Dates of inspection: 17–19 May 2004

Inspection number: 257636

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 Aided
Age range of pupils:	4–11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	149
School address:	Cemetery Road Bicester Oxfordshire
Postcode:	OX26 6BB
Telephone number:	01869 252393
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Dr A Wright
Date of previous inspection:	11 July 2002

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Edburg's C of E (VA) Primary School is situated in Bicester, Oxfordshire and takes pupils from the ages of 4 to 11 years. There are 149 pupils on roll in six classes; this is below the average size for a primary school. The roll has fallen slightly since the previous inspection in July 2002. Just under a third of the pupils have been identified as having special educational needs; this is well above the national average and similar to that at the time of the last inspection. Three of the pupils have Statements of Special Educational Needs. The proportion of pupils who qualify for free school meals is low (8.3 per cent). Nearly all pupils have white UK heritage backgrounds and none of the pupils comes from a home where English is an additional language. A significant proportion of the pupils come from areas of social and economic disadvantage and many start school with attainment below, and a significant minority well below, that which is expected for their age. Mobility of pupils in and out of the school, other than at the normal time of admission, is well above the national average, with up to 50 per cent in some year groups. The school gained the Healthy Schools Award and School Achievement Award in 2003 and the NAACE Kite mark in 2004.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
17851	P Rayers	Lead inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Physical education English as an additional language
9003	B Findley	Lay inspector	
15690	J Allen	Team inspector	English Music Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage Personal social and health education and citizenship
12954	P Claxton	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Geography History Special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This school provides satisfactory education for its pupils. Although standards in English and mathematics are below the national average, pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall and good in Key Stage 1. The high number of pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Teaching is satisfactory overall. The leadership and management of the headteacher are effective and the proficient governing body supports the school well. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The leadership and management of the headteacher are good.
- The well-informed governing body supports the school well.
- Standards in art and design and design and technology are unsatisfactory.
- Provision for music is unsatisfactory.
- In Key Stage 1 many pupils achieve well from a low starting point on entry into the school.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.
- Monitoring and evaluation of standards and teaching and learning are not sufficiently robust to support longer-term planning.
- Subject management, except in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT), is unsatisfactory.
- Achievement in science and ICT has improved since the last inspection and the use of ICT across other subjects in the curriculum is good.
- Pupils are well cared for, have a positive attitude to learning, good relationships with staff and each other and generally behave well.

The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection less than two years ago. There have been a number of changes in staffing and leadership of the school. These have hindered the implementation of effective strategies to assess pupils' progress and to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning in particular. This has meant that longer-term planning and the setting of targets for improvement in the raising of standards have not been as secure as they should be. However, there has been good progress in a number of priority areas identified at the time of the last inspection, notably the improvement in standards in the Reception class and of reading, ICT and science across the school. The new headteacher, with the support of the governing body, has already gone some way to putting in place processes to improve both the tracking of pupils' progress and the monitoring of teaching and learning.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	E*	E	E	E
Mathematics	C	B	C	C
Science	E	C	D	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.*

In the above table, the relatively low grades shown do not reflect a number of important factors. Many of the pupils start school with attainment below that which is normally found. There are high rates of pupil mobility in and out of the school other than at the beginning and end of term and high numbers of pupils with special educational needs within each year group. Taking all these factors into account the **current achievement of pupils is satisfactory overall**. The majority of pupils make satisfactory progress by the time they leave school at the end of Year 6. They make good

progress in Key Stage 1 because of the consistently high quality of teaching in the class with both Year 2 and 3 pupils in it. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress owing to the accurate assessment of their needs and the good support they receive. Standards in ICT and science have improved since the time of the last inspection and are satisfactory across the school. This is because activities are planned with a good emphasis on investigation. Standards in art and design and design and technology are unsatisfactory owing to the inconsistent opportunities offered to pupils to systematically develop their skills in these subjects. The relatively small numbers of pupils with higher abilities are often insufficiently challenged and work at a pace too slow for them. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The pupils' attitude to their work and the behaviour of the majority are good. They have good relationships with adults in the school. Attendance is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education offered is satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. It is very good in the upper Key Stage 1 class and the lower Key Stage 2 class, with examples of excellent practice in both classes. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and helps them make good progress. The curriculum is broad but the imbalance of time allocated to some subjects means that the development of skills in some subjects is unsatisfactory. There are good opportunities through links with other local schools and the community to enrich the curriculum in art, music and sport. The pupils are well cared for and have good relationships with adults in the school. Pupils generally behave well but a minority do not. Incidents of disruptive behaviour are handled well by staff but the high numbers of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties in one Key Stage 1 class sometimes hinder the teaching of the curriculum. Assessment in areas of learning in the Foundation Stage, and in English and mathematics across the school is satisfactory. However, it is unsatisfactory in other subjects because strategies to identify what pupils have learned are not consistently applied to ensure that accurate information is available to set targets for future learning. The school has generally a satisfactory partnership with parents.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall leadership and management are satisfactory but the leadership and management of the headteacher and governors are good. The new headteacher has quickly grasped a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and has already implemented a number of effective actions to improve procedures. The governing body is well informed and is effectively involved in all aspects of school. The staff, with the good support of the local education authority, are developing their professional skills well to further raise pupils' standards. The role of subject manager is not sufficiently developed, as responsibilities are not clearly defined and few checks have been carried out to identify what improvements are needed in their subjects. The management of provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Assessment of their needs is accurate and support is well targeted. However, the overall unsatisfactory assessment and monitoring procedures prevent the school from having accurate information to effectively plan longer-term improvements.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents generally feel pleased with most areas of the school's work. They are kept well informed and have good access to teachers, particularly at the start of each school day. However, although targets are shared with parents in some subjects, insufficient guidance is given to them about ways in which pupils can improve in subjects generally. Pupils like the school and feel safe in it. They feel the headteacher and staff listen to them.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- Raise standards in art and design and design and technology.
- Improve the provision for music.
- Improve procedures that evaluate clearly how teaching and learning can improve.

- Improve the leadership and management of subject co-ordinators.
- Improve systems to assess and track pupils' progress throughout the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Standards on entry to the school vary widely but are below average overall, with a significant minority well below. The percentage of pupils who join and leave the school other than at the beginning and end of the school year (pupil mobility) is above the national average and as high as 50 per cent in some older year groups. The number of pupils who have special educational needs is also above that found nationally. From the varied starting points in the Foundation Stage pupils make satisfactory progress and most achieve the nationally set Early Learning Goals by the time they transfer into Year 1. This is an improvement from the time of the last inspection, when achievement was judged to be unsatisfactory. Achievement in Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2 is good. In Key Stage 2 overall, achievement is satisfactory despite the large numbers of pupils with special educational needs and high levels of pupil mobility in all year groups.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved in the Foundation Stage since the last inspection.
- By the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils are achieving well in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The achievement of pupils with special educational needs has improved since the last inspection and is now good.
- Standards in art and design and design and technology are unsatisfactory.
- By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils achievement in science and information and technology (ICT) is good.
- Standards and achievement of the small number of higher attaining pupils, especially in Key Stage 2, is not as good as it should be because of the lack of challenge and appropriate pace set in their work.
- Standards of speaking and listening skills are unsatisfactory across the school because pupils have inconsistent opportunities to develop their vocabulary and confidence in these skills.
- Pupils have unsatisfactory problem-solving skills in mathematics.
- Assessment information in English and mathematics is satisfactory but there are weaknesses in most other subjects.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.8 (11.6)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	13.2 (12.7)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	14.2 (13.4)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 32 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.3 (25.2)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	26.8 (28.1)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	27.6 (28.4)	28.6 (28.3)

Commentary

1. The attainment of children in the Foundation Stage has improved since the time of the last inspection because the teaching is now more securely matched to the requirements of the Reception children. The present pupils in the Reception class had a higher starting point on entry than is usual in the school and are making satisfactory progress. Most are likely to attain the nationally set Early Learning Goals by the end of the school year. In previous years, the starting point on entry of many pupils was below or well below that expected for their age but an increasing number reached the nationally set Early Learning Goals in 2003.
2. After the last inspection, teachers worked very hard to improve standards in reading and this was reflected in the Key Stage 1 2003 national tests. Pupils made good progress from the previous year and attained standards in line with those expected for their age. Although, in the 2003 national tests, attainment when compared to pupils in similar schools in writing was well below average and very low in mathematics, it does not indicate an accurate picture of how well pupils achieved. Progress in writing improved by nearly twice that attained in the previous year and there was a slight increase in mathematics. Standards of work seen in all three subjects, indicates that, apart from those pupils with special educational needs, most will achieve standards in line for their age and make good progress, especially in Year 2.
3. The results in the end of Key Stage 2 national tests have risen broadly in line with the national trend over the past five years. Owing to the low starting point of many pupils when they entered the school, the high numbers of pupils with special educational needs and the high levels of pupil mobility in Key Stage 2, their achievement is more accurately reflected in prior attainment figures when analysing 2003 national test results. In English, standards were below the national average and in mathematics they were very good. Although girls achieved well overall, there was low achievement by boys in English. This can be accounted for by the high number of boys on the special educational needs register with low language skills in that year group. The standards of work seen during the inspection indicate that the attainment and achievement of most of the pupils, other than those with special educational needs and in line with those expected for their age in both English and mathematics. However, standards in speaking and listening are unsatisfactory across the school. This is because, apart from the upper end of Key Stage 1 and the lower end of Key Stage 2, teachers do not plan sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop these skills. In mathematics, pupils are not confident in using their skills to solve both written and number problems. This is because most teachers are planning learning activities around the development of written calculation skills and not enough into applying these skills in problem solving situations. The school did not achieve its targets for 2003 national tests in English and mathematics because they were too high. Assessment procedures were inconsistent at the time and they did not have secure information to set accurate targets or to focus support strategies for learning soon enough.
4. At the time of the last inspection actions were about to be implemented to improve science and information and communication technology (ICT) standards and achievement, which were judged to be unsatisfactory. These actions have been successful in that standards are now satisfactory in both key stages in science and ICT. Achievement is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 in both subjects and good in Key Stage 2. This is an improvement on the last inspection. Standards and achievement are satisfactory in history, geography and physical education but are unsatisfactory in both art and design and design and technology. This is because there are not consistently planned opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in these subjects across the school. Both subjects seem to have been low priorities while the school was addressing the priorities for improvement from the last inspection. Because of this, standards in art and design have declined and remain unsatisfactory in design and technology. There was no evidence available during the inspection to make a judgement about attainment and

achievement in music but provision is unsatisfactory and this indicates they are likely to be unsatisfactory also. Religious education was inspected separately under section 23 of the School Inspections Act 1996

5. Progress of pupils with special educational needs, which are mainly language or emotional and behavioural difficulties, is good. This is because the special educational needs co-ordinator now works closely with all staff in setting appropriate pupil targets for improvement and the support they receive is effective. This is an improvement from the time of the last inspection.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Pupils develop well during their time in school and provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good relationships between pupils and with members of staff.
- Pupils' have positive attitudes to learning.
- There are high expectations of behaviour.
- Behaviour is good in and around school by the vast majority of pupils.
- Personal development is supported well by assemblies.

Commentary

6. The school has successfully developed an ethos of respect and trust among pupils and with members of staff, so that relationships are warm and supportive. Consequently, pupils develop positive attitudes to learning from a young age and are keen to please and do well. This was evident in a Reception class science lesson, where pupils readily demonstrated independence in carrying out sensibly tasks they had remembered from previous work. Year 6 pupils were totally engrossed in a lesson on information and communication technology because of the variety in activities and also the high level of discussion possible.
7. The school has worked hard to achieve consistency in the way it deals with behaviour. Rules and routines are made clear and sanctions applied fairly but with certainty. The strategy of allowing pupils to enter the school twenty minutes before lessons start enables them to settle ready for the day. It also helps them to develop a sense of responsibility and independence and fosters the good relationships that contribute so well to many aspects of school life. Pupils respond positively to the high expectations of behaviour adults have of them and there is little need for interventions by staff, for example during lunch or in assemblies. Although most pupils behave well in class, it is at these times that a few pupils, mostly boys, misbehave and require support from classroom assistants. This is most evident in the Year 1/2 class, owing to the high number of pupils with emotional and behavioural problems in it. No bullying or other form of harassment was noted during the inspection period. Exclusions are few. Every effort is made by the school to avoid this measure. There was just one excluded pupil last year. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory and similar to that at the time of the previous inspection.
8. Pupils' personal development is good. They demonstrate a good sense of right and wrong and acquire sensible and mature values. They are willing to take on a number of additional jobs in the classroom and in assemblies. Older pupils set a good example to younger ones and sometimes help them with their work. Involvement in sports events and the annual residential visit for older pupils helps them to develop social responsibility, leadership and team-working skills. Spiritual, social, moral and cultural development are good and similar to that at the time of the previous inspection. The pupils are encouraged to talk about themselves, and self-knowledge and spiritual awareness are well developed. Most pupils get on well together and distinguish right from wrong. They are very sociable. Pupils work well together in groups or

pairs when required and will share resources sensibly. They have a clear understanding of growing up in a multi-cultural society.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	5.5
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.6
National data	0.4

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

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Chinese
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
138	1	0
1	0	0
5	0	0
2	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. It provides well for pupils with special educational needs. Teaching is satisfactory overall. It is very good in the oldest Key Stage 1 and youngest Key Stage 2 classes. However, the assessment of pupils' learning is unsatisfactory.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. It is of a consistently very high standard in the upper Key Stage 1 and the lower Key Stage 2 classes. There was an example of excellent practice seen in each of these classes. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was seen. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is now always satisfactory, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Assessment is unsatisfactory in all subjects except English and mathematics, where it is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage has improved since the previous inspection when teaching had significant weaknesses in certain areas.
- There is very good or better teaching in the upper Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2 classes.
- There are weaknesses in the assessment of pupils' progress in subjects other than English and mathematics and areas of learning in the Foundation Stage.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good in all age groups.
- Teaching and learning are good in science in Key Stage 1 and ICT in Key Stage 2.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 30 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (6%)	4 (16%)	10 (32 %)	13 (42 %)	1 (3 %)	0 (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.

9. In the Reception class, the teacher has a secure understanding of the learning needs of young children. She plans carefully, drawing on the requirements of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. This is an improvement on the last inspection, when planning was judged to have significant weaknesses. However, insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to extend their creative and physical skills. Assessment now focuses appropriately on children's progress linked to the nationally agreed Early Learning Goals. The teacher works closely with the teaching assistant in providing good role models for learning and behaviour. Although teaching is generally good, there is not enough teaching through interacting with and extending children's own activities.
10. The percentage of good or better teaching seen across Key Stages 1 and 2 is similar to that at the time of the last inspection. However, there has been an improvement in the teaching of English in Key Stage 1 since the last inspection. There was also an example of exceptional teaching in both the oldest Key Stage 1 and the youngest Key Stage 2 classes. In Years 1 to 6, teachers plan their work on a common format that makes clear what pupils will learn during the lesson. Teachers routinely make these learning intentions clear at the start of lessons and also tell pupils which features of their learning they will be paying attention to. This works well in most lessons and pupils are generally clear about what they have to do to achieve well. The school has worked hard to achieve this level of consistency. In the examples of exceptional lessons, both teachers had prepared a variety of exciting activities linked to the learning objectives over a series of lessons. Pupils were clear about what they needed to do in each activity and how it fitted into the longer-term outcome. The high quality of the direct teaching built on pupils' skills and encouraged them to achieve their best at all times. The teachers' and teaching assistants' enthusiasm for the planned learning was infectious and all pupils made good progress in these lessons. In lessons other than English and mathematics, work was not always matched to pupils' abilities because assessment of pupils' progress is inconsistent across year groups and lacks sufficient accuracy. This sometimes prevents teachers from planning work for different levels and setting individual pupils' learning targets. Work set for the needs of some higher-attaining pupils was too easy. The pace in these lessons was often matched to the needs of the majority of pupils, so that many of the higher-attaining pupils found themselves marking time and not progressing as well as they should.
11. There has been an improvement since the last inspection in the provision for pupils with special educational needs, which is now good. There are now more accurate assessments and the staff use the specific targets in pupils' Individual Education Plans to plan a programme of work to meet their needs. Teachers and teaching assistants work very well together during all phases of the lessons. While the teacher works with all the class, the teaching assistant often works with individuals or small groups by prompting their attention, rephrasing questions and encouraging answers. Pupils respond well. They gain confidence and often offer their own contributions to the group. A good example of this was when a Year 4 boy, who worked with the support of the teaching assistant on his own lap top computer while the rest of the class used whiteboards, was able to come up with a successful solution to a maths puzzle. There are a significant number of pupils who find it difficult to concentrate for longer periods of time and to control their behaviour in whole class learning situations. Most teachers manage these situations well because of their patience, flexibility and the consistency with which any incidents are handled. However, in one class in Key Stage 1 the

high number of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties and the many instances of disruptive behaviour take up a significant amount of the teacher's time, and on these occasions, hinder the progress of the rest of the class.

12. The quality of teaching in other subjects observed is satisfactory, except in science in Key Stage 1 and ICT in upper Key Stage 2, where it is good. The teaching of science for the pupils in Key Stage 1 is creative and captures pupils' imaginations. The improvement in ICT from the last inspection has occurred because resources better match the full ICT curriculum and with the good leadership of the co-ordinator and targeted training, teachers' confidence and expertise has grown.
13. Staff consistently set homework and use it for research in preparation for future work or to practise and secure their skills. However, pupils' reading books are not always changed often enough and opportunities are too few for them to discuss with an adult what they have read.

The curriculum

The school provides a sound curriculum that meets statutory requirements. There are good opportunities for learning enrichment and the accommodation is good. There is an adequate number of teachers and a good proportion of learning support staff. Resources are unsatisfactory for music, design and technology and physical education and barely satisfactory for other subjects and the foundation stage.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides well for pupils with special educational needs.
- The school takes a significant part in leading local community art initiatives.
- The school's provision for personal, health and social education is good.
- The school has good links with local secondary schools.
- Provision for higher attaining pupils is unsatisfactory.
- Resources are generally barely adequate for most subjects and unsatisfactory for music, design technology and art.

Commentary

14. Since the previous inspection the school has developed the curriculum well in English, mathematics and science and recently extended it to other subjects. However, links between subjects are not adequately planned for and often occur incidentally. The school implements the Literacy Hour and the daily numeracy lesson satisfactorily, although literacy skills are not sufficiently promoted in other subjects. The school has significantly improved its provision with the setting up of the ICT suite but the limited resources in classrooms mean that pupils have insufficient access to technology when they need it.
15. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs supports their needs well. This is because it is firmly based in good assessment procedures to identify the needs of individuals and the information is used to create good individual learning plans. Progress is carefully measured over given time scales and reviewed with individual pupils and their parents. Good co-operation between teachers and learning support staff and good record keeping ensures that the curriculum is suitably matched to pupils' prior attainment. However, a significant percentage of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties in one class limits the teacher's ability to teach the curriculum. The curriculum is not customised to meet the needs of higher-attaining pupils and this is unsatisfactory. With the exception of ICT in Key Stage 2, lessons are not demanding enough and opportunities to extend their learning are missed.

16. For most subjects the curriculum is planned over a two-year cycle. The school has recently reviewed this to avoid pupils learning the same content while remaining in the same class. This works soundly overall but the time allocated to some topics within subjects is unbalanced and, as a result, long periods of time lapse between revisiting the subject. Skills are not therefore developed systematically or work is left incomplete, for example in geography and science at the top end of the school. The school uses the resources of the community to support their teaching of drugs and alcohol education soundly.
17. The school offers a variety and range of extra activities that provide good opportunities for learning outside lessons. The school promotes pupils' personal, health and social development well, for example through the Healthy Eating Week. In addition, pupils undertake a citizenship day when they learn to keep safe from hazards such as fire and electricity. An important part of the school's extra provision is the lead it takes in local arts initiatives. The pupils take part in the local carnival, learning to work together to create floats from simple materials. This widens pupils' artistic and social horizons. The school opens from 8.20 a.m. each morning for pupils to prepare for the school day. This means that pupils who have social difficulties can settle before the beginning of lessons and parents can stay with them until they are ready. This makes a significant contribution to the generally calm ethos when lessons start. As well as enriching the curriculum through themed days and weeks the school is involved in the local twinning project with French schools. Staff make good use of the local community with local studies, participation in town events and visits to local landmarks. The school emphasises the value of using the local church and community to widen pupils' understanding of life values and the local clergy are regular visitors. The school has good links with the local secondary schools and staff from the schools visit to familiarise themselves with the pupils and the work they are doing. Shortly before Year 6 pupils transfer to secondary education they begin a bridging project. This work, started in the primary school and completed in their secondary schools, helps to ease the transition from one stage of education to another.
18. The school has an adequate number of teachers to meet the needs of its present organisation of classes. Appropriate actions have taken place to reduce the number mixed-age classes next year and staff the new structure accordingly. Accommodation is good. The new ICT suite is generously proportioned with a central area with tables for pupils to do work away from the computers. The grounds are attractive and the provision for outdoor learning in the Foundation Stage is good, with large outdoor equipment for adventure play. Resources for music, physical education and design and technology are inadequate and this limits the range of experiences pupils have in these subjects. Resources for other subjects are barely adequate, although teachers use what they have well. However, this is an area for development.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is good. The overall provision for academic support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is satisfactory. The school provides pupils with good opportunities to express their views and responds well to their ideas.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is good.
- Pupils enjoy very trusting and effective relationships with staff.
- The School Council includes pupils of all ages and is very effective.
- There is no consistent system for recording and monitoring pupils' academic or personal development.

Commentary

19. The school takes good care of its pupils and has effective arrangements for keeping them safe. Regular site inspections are properly recorded and followed through well. There is ample first aid qualification among staff members and a person is designated with responsibility for welfare matters each day. First Aid Packs are carried by playtime supervisors so that injuries can be attended to as soon as possible. There are effective procedures to deal with child protection matters.
20. The quality of relationships between pupils and staff, combined with the sensitivity of all involved in listening to pupils and responding to their needs, ensures that pupils are well cared for and supported. Each teacher keeps satisfactory records of pupils' learning in literacy and numeracy and uses them to plan further work. Pupils' work is marked regularly and pupils receive feedback on how they can improve, but this is not as effective as it could be because the quality of practice is variable across the school. There is a good programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE) and teachers know how well their pupils are doing. However, this information does not link into a central system for assessment and tracking progress as pupils move through the school. The school has started to analyse national assessment data in order to identify where improvements are needed and staff have introduced learning targets for individuals and groups of pupils. These activities are helping to improve pupils' progress, but they are not yet fully developed and practice is inconsistent across the school. Although pupils with special educational needs receive a good level of support in class, those with higher ability do not. Induction procedures are satisfactory and there are good arrangements for supporting pupils as they transfer to secondary school.
21. The School Council provides very good opportunities for all pupils to influence the life of the school through the involvement of pupils in all classes, from Reception onwards. As a result pupils feel that their views are listened to and respected. They are proud of the changes that they are helping to bring about, such as the plans for water-coolers.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school maintains a satisfactory partnership with parents, who generally think well of what it does. Links with the community and with other schools are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good links with the local community.
- Effective bridging arrangements with other schools.
- High quality of information about the school.
- Reports on pupils' progress do not always indicate enough about ways to improve.

Commentary

22. The school makes good use of opportunities within the local community. Visitors who speak to pupils, such as the local clergy and local authors involved through themed events, make an important contribution to pupils' learning and their personal development. Pupil representatives from the Pupils' Council are involved with BLIPKIDZ, a joint council of school representatives, who discuss community issues within Bicester - for example, whether there is need for another supermarket. The expertise of other agencies, such as the police, is used well to equip pupils to keep themselves safe from harm.
23. The school has formed effective links with the local pre-school and Nursery and also the main secondary school. Members of staff work closely with pre-school providers over the curriculum and joint projects are run with the secondary school. The local school partnership also arranges joint events, such as a girls' football tournament and a swimming gala. The BLIPKIDZ project is a joint school venture.

24. The school promotes an effective partnership with parents, who generally feel pleased with most areas of the school's work. Parents are kept well informed about school activities through regular newsletters and an up-to-date website. Parents also have good access to teachers, particularly at the start of each school day. Curriculum information and individual targets are provided, so that parents have a good idea of how to support their children at home. Home-school contracts are in place and parents also appreciate the feedback from teachers through the reading record. An active and very supportive friends group organises events to raise funds for school improvement.
25. Reports on pupils' progress are very detailed about what pupils can do. Single targets for improvement are set in English, mathematics and science but there is rarely enough information about ways in which pupils can improve in subjects generally. Parents of children with special educational needs are kept informed of their children's progress and are involved in the reviews of Individual Education Plans.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school is satisfactory. The new headteacher provides good leadership following a period of staffing and management instability. Governors carry out their duties well. They have ensured that provision meet statutory requirements. Leadership and management in most subjects are unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership of the headteacher is good.
- Governance is a strength of the school.
- Professional development of the staff is good, with good support from the local authority.
- The school manages its finances well.
- The management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Staff and governors ensure that pupils are all included in the school's provision.
- Leadership and management of curriculum subjects is unsatisfactory.
- The school does not plan strategically for future improvement.

Commentary

26. The headteacher provides good leadership. With the support of the governing body, the headteacher provides determined and dynamic leadership. He took up post this academic year following a period for the school of temporary and brief leadership, staffing changes and a fall in pupil numbers. Working with the governors, he has made clear decisions about the priorities for improvement in the school necessary to raise standards further. He has begun to develop and strengthen the role of the senior management team and subject leaders. He has been active in promoting the involvement of the staff in long-term strategic planning but this is still at an early stage and is not yet effective.
27. The leadership of other key staff is generally unsatisfactory. However, in English and mathematics it is satisfactory and the leadership of the special educational needs provision is good. The responsibilities of subject leaders are not clearly defined and this hampers their effectiveness in developing their subjects. Routine systems to monitor and improve the quality of teaching and learning, including performance management, are not in place. Consequently, good practice is not identified and built on and weaknesses are perpetuated. Overall, subject leaders have little idea of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects. The headteacher has recognised this and has started to develop the senior management team and delegate responsibilities but this is still in the early stages. To accelerate this process the staff have received good professional development and support from the local education authority. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is led well by the co-ordinator. Pupils' progress and needs are well documented and work is closely matched to individuals. As a

result, these pupils make good progress. However, provision for higher-attaining pupils is less effective.

28. Management is satisfactory. Routines are well established and pupils are encouraged to play an active part in the daily running of the school and future developments. The Pupils' Council is very active, has representatives from all pupil age groups and is well regarded by the school community and parents. Financial planning is good. This has been an important part of the process in formulating the school's improvement plan to meet the key issues identified in the previous inspection. Working with the full involvement of the governors, the staff have chosen many of the right priorities for future improvement in the new school action plan. However, the involvement in this process is new to most subject leaders and the plan lacks completion dates and measurable ways of judging the effectiveness of actions taken.
29. The school does monitor and evaluate some aspects of its work but overall there are significant gaps. Staff use information on pupils' progress to set improvement targets for literacy, numeracy and personal development for classes and individuals. However, there is no whole-school system for assessing and tracking pupils' progress. Consequently, there is a lack of consistency between classes and the match of targets to pupils' needs is insecure. The headteacher has started work to guide whole-school monitoring and evaluation. The work of the learning support staff makes a good contribution to pupils' learning and the inclusiveness of the school. Pupils with special educational needs, identified as learning difficulties, are well managed and supported by staff. Their progress is tracked effectively and their Individual Education Plans are well maintained so that overall they make good progress. The exception to this is when special education needs pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties form a significant minority in a class. Staff have difficulty managing behaviour in this situation and this has a detrimental effect on their and other pupils' learning. The improvement targets for these pupils change little over time and their progress is slow.
30. The competent and effective governing body is a strength of the school. Governors are well organised into committees and take an active role in monitoring the work of the school. The committee briefs are clear and the minutes indicate that decisions are well founded. Individual governors are linked to subjects and aspects of the school's work and actively monitor them, reporting their findings back to the whole governing body. This information helps to formulate future action planning. Inclusion is high on their agenda and this is reflected in the work of the school and composition of the school population. Governors are fully aware of the strengths and the weaknesses of the school and are determined to bring about improvement and raise standards far above the current levels. They monitor finances well and take into account best value issues when making decisions about the allocation of resources. Funding for pupils with special educational needs is effectively targeted and the progress these pupils make is well monitored by governors and staff. Parents' views are fully taken into account and the contribution made by the Pupils' Council is highly valued. The school takes into account parent and pupils' opinions when planning future development through improvement planning.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	444 086
Total expenditure	451 559
Expenditure per pupil	2 656

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	13 476
Balance carried forward to the next	6 003

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision is **satisfactory** overall. All children are making sound, and sometimes good, progress towards achieving the Early Learning Goals. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

Children enter the Reception class at the beginning of the term of their fifth birthday. The trend for attainment on entry covers the expected range but a majority of children arrive with poorly developed skills and abilities, mostly well below those expected for their age. There is a slightly smaller but significant proportion (about 33 per cent) of children with below average attainment in the current year-group. Most pupils have had some form of pre-school experience, the majority at the adjacent pre-school, with whom there are good and developing links. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with many good features and the children are making satisfactory or better progress. The majority are likely to achieve the expected standard by the end of the year. This is because teaching is clearly focused on what they need to learn, drawing appropriately on the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. All adults work well together as a team and provide good role models for children's learning and behaviour. There is now a secure method of observing, assessing, recording and monitoring children's progress linked to the Early Learning Goals. Direct teaching with the whole class or with groups is generally good but there is not enough teaching through interacting with and extending children's own activities. Although the curriculum is satisfactory overall, it is broad but not well balanced because there is insufficient time or planning for good creative and physical development. The accommodation is good, but the outdoor area is not used to its full potential. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are not fully effective, but the new headteacher and Foundation Stage teacher are working together to plan further improvements.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve consistently well because teaching is good.
- Expectations are clear and consistent.
- Teaching and support staff are very responsive to pupils' needs and feelings.
- The relationship between staff and children is very good.

Commentary

31. This area is rightly given due emphasis so that the children are able to take responsibility for their actions, learn to share and get along with others and settle to their learning. All staff help to reinforce the same messages so that children learn routines and feel secure enough to try new things. Children are always expected to do their best. For example, when at the start of an afternoon, children arrived hot and bothered to the classroom, the teacher gently but firmly told them "I know it's hot and you are trying – but you can do better than this" and they did. Children are helped to feel confident about what they are achieving and take evident pride in their activity – as shown when they handled carefully the seed packets they had just been making. They also take care of their classroom and tidy away with very little prompting. Well-planned tasks require the children to take turns and to help each other. They have opportunities to reflect on their feelings and those of others. The whole-school emphasis on PSHE supports this feature of Foundation Stage practice very well.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision for communication, language and literacy is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Thorough planning for reading and writing development, linked to the National Literacy Strategy, enables the majority of pupils to achieve well.
- Good use is made of teacher as scribe for model writing and recording children's ideas but there is too much emphasis on copy writing as a technique for learning.
- There are not enough planned opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills.

Commentary

32. The majority of children are set to attain the Early Learning Goals by the end of the year, but children do not achieve as well in speaking and listening and writing as they do in reading. Many children enter with poorly developed vocabulary and immature speech. They listen attentively but understanding does not always follow. There are too few opportunities for adults to extend children's language and understanding by joining in or talking with them during self-chosen activities.
33. Children enjoy books, stories and rhymes. They love the stories in their "big books" and this gives them confidence to try to read other books for themselves. They are making good progress in understanding how books work and the sort of language used in books. They transfer this learning to their own reading, using picture cues and prediction skills alongside word recognition. Books are regularly taken home but this is not as effective as it might be because the range of books used is narrow and parents are not clear what the school's policy is.
34. Children are given interesting and purposeful things to write about, but some are introduced to formal writing tasks too soon and this slows the pace of their development. Writing continues to be a whole-school improvement priority. In the Foundation Stage this would benefit from more emphasis on:
 - structured, regular opportunities for children to write as part of role-play and self-chosen activity;
 - creative and physical development activities to develop hand-eye co-ordination, control and a comfortable grip;
 - a systematic and continually revisited programme for early learning of letter sounds and combinations.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Planning focuses effectively on the National Numeracy Strategy objectives for this age group.
- Children are motivated to learn through a range of interesting practical tasks, linked to learning in other areas.
- Sometimes there is too much reliance on the completion of work sheets.

Commentary

35. Teaching is satisfactory. The children learn through an interesting range of planned lessons and mathematical activities, although there is too much reliance on the completion of work sheets. Good use is made of ICT for practice and reinforcement of number. The majority of

children are set to achieve expected standards. Children enjoy using water and earth, to compare the capacity of different containers and flower pots. In this way they learn about 'full', 'empty' and how to estimate 'half-full'. The use of fresh vegetables helps to give children a sense of real purpose in their counting and weighing activities. Good use of resources ensures that all children are able to be actively involved; for example, plastic crates are used as water tanks and a special bowl is provided for a small child who cannot reach. Sensitive support and stimulating questioning from staff enable children to extend their ideas and correct misconceptions. These opportunities are all appropriately linked to their learning about plants and growth. Sometimes opportunities to reinforce or extend mathematical thinking in other activities are missed: for example, while children are making (plasticine) seeds for their seed packets, or when they are constructing models.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision for knowledge and understanding of the world is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- An interesting range of practical activity and first-hand experience captures the children's interests and helps them to learn effectively.
- Access to the computer suite enables all children to learn ICT skills well.
- Sometimes the ICT sessions are too long and children lose concentration.

Commentary

36. Teaching is satisfactory and the majority of children are on course to achieve the expected standards in the exploration and investigation, designing and making and information technology aspects of this area of learning. However, sometimes ICT lessons are too long and children lose concentration. Opportunities to extend children's thinking through interactions with them about their work are sometimes missed. No observations were made in the cultures and beliefs or sense of time and place aspects, but evidence from planning, samples of work and displays shows these to be satisfactory. Children learn how to plant seeds, what conditions they need to grow healthily and how to look after their growing plants. This provides good opportunities for vocabulary extension as the children learn to name the plants they are growing, the fruits they are eating and the vegetables they are weighing.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT AND CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

37. It was not possible to make an overall judgement of provision or standards, but planning, records, work samples, displays and observation of physical activity at playtime indicate that teaching, standards and provision in both areas are broadly satisfactory, but with some weaknesses. There is a very limited range of art activities readily available and some planned activities are too adult-directed to lead to high quality creative development. Although specific lessons in art, music and P.E. are planned well, there is insufficient planning for high quality imaginative play, for child-initiated activity or for the use of the outdoor area. Children have regular access to the outdoor space, with good provision for climbing and jumping, but much of the other equipment is old and worn. Because the children are all out together staff often have to take a supervisory rather than a teaching role and learning opportunities are missed.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.
- Standards in reading and writing are improving.
- Teachers plan an interesting range of reading and writing activities which pupils enjoy and learn from.
- There is high quality teaching in Years 2/3 and 3/4.
- Lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are making good progress and achieve well.
- Speaking and listening skills are not being developed sufficiently well.
- Pupils' progress is not tracked as they move through the school.
- The school receives very good support from the link governor for English.

Commentary

38. Standards in English in both key stages are improving because all teachers are making better use of the National Literacy Strategy. Comparison with national test result data for all schools and similar schools is misleading owing to the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and the very low starting points of most pupils. The work seen during the inspection shows that the majority of pupils are attaining standards that are in line with national expectations.
39. Although pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall, it is better in Key Stage 1 and early Key Stage 2 than it is in upper Key Stage 2. Pupils with special educational needs and lower-attaining pupils are well supported and make good progress throughout the school. More pupils are capable of higher attainment in upper Key Stage 2 than is currently the case.
40. The overall standard in speaking and listening is below average in both key stages. Some pupils are very articulate. However, the expression and understanding of many pupils are limited by a restricted vocabulary and lack of confidence in speaking clearly and audibly. Planning for speaking and listening skill development is improving across the school but is not yet consistently good enough. It is most successful when integrated with learning to read and write and there are very good examples of this in current Years 2/3 and 3/4.
41. Staff have worked hard to bring standards and achievement in reading to satisfactory levels overall. Lower-attaining pupils now achieve well, but there is some underachievement at higher attainment levels. There is a structured reading programme. This is being enhanced by the purchase of more books to encourage a wider range of reading material for consolidation and practice. Good use is made of daily whole-class, individual and paired reading but approaches to guided reading are variable. The class book collections provide an attractive incentive for reading but these are not used consistently to promote a wide range of reading at home. The school library is well organised but its effectiveness is limited because it is under used and library skills are not taught systematically. All teachers keep reading records but practice across the school is inconsistent. Further improvement could be made by:
 - improving record keeping;
 - regular commentary and marking on the next steps for learning;
 - consistent practice in developing the reading partnership with parents throughout the school;
 - explicit teaching of library and research skills.

42. Staff recognise that standards in writing also need improvement and are addressing this successfully through training and more rigorous planning based on National Literacy Strategy goals and objectives. From the work seen during inspection the majority of pupils are reaching national expectations but while lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well, more could be expected of higher attaining pupils. Pupils are learning to write in a wide range of styles and for different purposes because teachers plan interesting topics to inspire them. For example, Year 6 pupils learn about Shakespeare’s play “Macbeth” through becoming “journalists”, preparing gory newspaper articles and shock headlines. Year 2 pupils are inspired to create and perform their own snappy “rap” poetry.
43. The school is set to continue this improvement drive through lesson observation and sharing good practice across the school. Further improvement would be made by:
- raising expectations in handwriting and presentation in upper Key Stage 2;
 - improving the way handwriting and spelling is taught across the school;
 - a more consistent approach to marking, to include next steps for learning so that pupils understand how they can improve.
44. The quality of teaching English is satisfactory and pupils respond well. Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives. Whole-class introductory sessions are generally well taught but the group activities are not always matched to pupils' needs. Higher-attaining pupils are often working on tasks which are too easy for them and they do not make sufficient progress. Teaching is very good in Years 2/3 and 3/4 and all pupils make good progress. This is because teachers are confident and enthusiastic, they focus pupils’ attention on the intended learning and adapt tasks and activities well for differing needs. In Year 3/4, for example, all pupils worked with sustained enthusiasm being “detectives” searching for synonyms. The new subject leader received very good induction support from the deputy headteacher and the LEA. She has made good progress in this demanding role. A range of good monitoring and development activity has taken place but observation and evaluation, to share and further develop classroom practice, has only recently been introduced by the senior management team.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

45. Pupils make satisfactory use of their language and literacy skills across the curriculum. This would be improved by attention to library skills and by identifying literacy and language opportunities in curricular planning for other subjects.

Example of outstanding practice

An English lesson where previous work in drama and music was used as a starting point for writing a humorous poem.

The literacy lesson starts promptly after morning play. The children sit comfortably on the carpet, facing the teacher, who sits by a low table on which there is a music-centre and an attractive display of books. The teacher thanks children who have brought in poems from home and draws attention to the learning objective on display - “to write a humorous poem”. She asks, do they remember their work in drama yesterday? Oh yes, they certainly do! Eager anticipation as the teacher presses the play button – a rap style poem with verse and chorus, so good that at first the observer thinks it is a CD. But no, these are the children’s voices, speaking solo and choral parts, every word crystal clear. Their performance is rhythmical, full of vitality and the most tremendous sense of FUN! This highly motivating introduction sets the scene for successful new learning, about rhyme, alliteration and line structure. The children set off, brimming with confidence, to write their own poems.

MATHEMATICS

The provision for mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 from the low starting points many of them have on entry. However, few pupils achieve higher grades at the end of both key stages.
- Planning relates well to the National Numeracy Strategy.
- There is consistently very good teaching in the upper Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2 classes.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to apply their learning to problem-solving situations.
- Pupils' attitudes to this subject are good.
- Leadership is good.
- The monitoring of teaching and standards is not sufficiently developed.

Commentary

46. At the time of the last inspection, few pupils were expected to reach the nationally set Early Learning Goals at the end of the Foundation Stage. From the work seen, these pupils are likely to achieve the mid-range for their age level in 2004 national tests, except for those with special educational needs, who make the progress expected of them. This indicates that achievement at the end of Key Stage 1 is good for the majority of pupils. This is an improvement from the time of the last inspection when it was judged to be satisfactory. Although the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2004 is likely to decline from that at the time of the last inspection, it is only the equivalence of two pupils. There has been a high percentage of mobility within this group of pupils, with over 50 per cent leaving or joining the school since the national tests at the end of Key Stage 1. The number of pupils in this year group with special educational needs is also well above the national average at 28 per cent. The majority of pupils have made satisfactory progress in this key stage. However, there are too few pupils in both key stages who reach higher grades. This is because the school has concentrated on raising the attainment of those pupils who are below average. Too often, opportunities to extend the more able pupils are missed and they find themselves working at a pace below their capabilities.
47. The overall quality of teaching in all classes seen during the inspection was judged to be satisfactory, with very good teaching in the class with Year 2 and 3 pupils and in the class with Year 3 and 4 pupils. All teachers effectively match their planning to the National Numeracy Strategy and ensure that pupils are aware of what is expected of them and how they are to achieve it. Lessons follow a logical sequence, beginning with a mental warm-up and ending with useful summing-up. The features of the better teaching include good subject expertise, challenging activities set at an appropriate pace for all abilities, and the use of searching questions to confirm or extend understanding. The impact of these features, combined with the very good relationships that exist between pupils and staff, encourages pupils of all abilities to put considerable effort into their work and learn well. However, although good opportunities were seen in the Year 3 and 4 lesson for pupils to solve problems practically using their knowledge of number bonds and mathematical logic, pupils' investigational skills are not developed enough. The system of marking and recording pupils' progress, introduced at about the time of the last inspection, has not been applied consistently. It does not provide information of what pupils need to do next to improve nor indicate clearly to pupils how they can make better progress. Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are good and most behave well and are keen to learn.
48. The co-ordinator has made good progress in her leadership skills. She was well supported during her first year as subject leader while in her second year of teaching. Since that time she has developed her subject knowledge and skills and is able to provide a role model of very

good teaching for the rest of the staff. However, few opportunities are provided for this to take place. She has worked well with LEA consultants in analysing information and in setting half-termly targets for improvement. The recent development of booklets for each year group to enable parents to be better informed and more effective partners in their child's learning in mathematics is a good example of this. However, the analysis of assessment information and the monitoring of teaching are not yet sufficiently established to ensure that actions taken always contribute to the raising of standards.

Mathematics across the curriculum

49. Overall this is satisfactory. There are examples of pupils producing graphs in science and measuring accurately when making templates for trainer designs in design and technology. Younger pupils measure boxes and pieces of dowling rod to make moving models and they sort and reproduce information about plants and animals in simple graphs. Using mathematics in these ways helps pupils to understand well what is being taught in a visual way and increases the accuracy and operation of products being made.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By Year 6, pupils' progress has improved over recent years and achievement is good.
- Investigative and practical work is good throughout the school.
- Teaching of the older Year 2 pupils is good.
- Recording of work is unsatisfactory in both quality and quantity in Year 6.
- Work for more able older pupils is at too low a level.
- Leadership of the subject is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

50. By Year 2 pupils are enthusiastic about science and eager to carry out investigations. This is because teaching is creative and captures the pupils' imaginations. A lively introduction, followed by searching questioning, encourages the pupils to think carefully about what they will need to find out and how they will go about it. They work with care, ask thoughtful questions and present their findings with confidence. Activities are well planned with a good emphasis on investigation. Pupils are encouraged to share their findings with each other at the end of lessons and to consider and evaluate different outcomes. Pupils' scientific knowledge is sound. By Year 6 pupils are making good progress and standards are average. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the support they receive in small groups from learning support assistants. The work set for more able pupils in Years 5 and 6 does not present any greater challenge than that set for other pupils.
51. Teaching overall is satisfactory. It is good in Years 1 to 3 and satisfactory in Years 4 to 6. The teacher's depth of subject knowledge in the Year 2 and 3 class leads to very good teaching. Teachers make sound use of national guidance to help them plan lessons. Since the previous inspection there has been a greater emphasis on teaching and learning through investigation. The skills of scientific enquiry are taught systematically, enabling pupils to talk knowledgeably about their work and findings. However, teachers' expectation of high-attaining pupils is too low and they set work that is too easy for them. By Year 6 most pupils have made good progress in science investigations. In discussion, older pupils show a good knowledge of the work they have covered on aspects such as the human body and the structure of plants. However, there is not enough emphasis on careful recording of investigations in Key Stage 2. Work is frequently incomplete and presentation hurried. This is because insufficient time has been allotted to complete work before moving on.

52. Leadership of science is unsatisfactory overall. The subject manager is new to the role and is being supported by the previous science manager. The school's response to the previous inspection has led to a good improvement in investigative science. Some monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning has been carried out since the previous inspection, as has the analysis of statutory test results from previous Year 6 pupils. However, assessment and tracking procedures to inform future planning are not consistent across the school. As a result, the subject action plan and understanding of pupils' progress from year to year are insecure.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement in Years 5 and 6 is good, because the teaching is good.
- Although the subject leader's expertise is very good, leadership of the subject is unsatisfactory.
- Control technology is not sufficiently promoted.
- Use of ICT with SEN pupils is good.
- Use of ICT for teaching and learning in other subjects is good.
- Use of support staff for technical support is very good.
- Resources have improved since the previous inspection but classroom resources remain unsatisfactory.

Commentary

53. Pupils' achievement in ICT is satisfactory in Years 1 to 4 and good in Years 5 and 6. This is an improvement on the previous inspection when standards were below expectations and pupils made unsatisfactory progress. This is because teachers' confidence and expertise in teaching the ICT curriculum has greatly improved through the school's commitment to ongoing training in the subject. In addition, the new ICT suite has provided teachers and pupils with access to improved resources. Pupils in Year 6 use the Internet confidently to search for information, pictures and activities to enhance both their learning and presentation of work. They can add animation and sound to multimedia presentations, 'resize', drop and drag text boxes. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of how a decision about backgrounds, text, graphics and language is linked to the proposed audience. There are good opportunities for pupils to consolidate and develop their skills and understanding in the use of spreadsheets, digital photography, modelling, simulations and data handling through other subjects. However, the use of control technology is insufficiently developed and pupils have little understanding of its use. This is because resources in this aspect of ICT are limited. Pupils in Year 2 can use paint programs to draw pictures and add graphics. They can add graphics to word documents, and save and print their work. They understand how to left and right click on the mouse to access different functions and how to use it to drag and drop objects on the screen. However, keyboard skills are less well promoted and, as a result, the entering of text is frequently slowed whilst pupils search for the correct keys.
54. The new computer suite is used well both for the teaching of ICT techniques and for enhancing teaching and learning in other subjects. The suite is used effectively to accelerate the learning of literacy and numeracy skills of pupils with special educational needs (SEN). These pupils are ably taught as individuals or in small groups using programs that interest them and hold their attention. As a consequence, SEN pupils make good progress in both ICT and towards their numeracy and literacy targets. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 1 to 4, overall, but the disruptive behaviour of a small number of pupils in the Year 1/2 class limits the progress of the class. Teaching in Year 5 is good and very good in Year 6. This is because the Year 6 teacher, who is also the subject manager, has a high level of expertise and enthusiasm, plans lessons well and provides very good support to groups and individuals. As a result, pupils' achievement is good and they enjoy the challenges he sets them. All teachers make good use

of the interactive whiteboard in the suite for demonstrating skills and ideas clearly to pupils and to set up tasks for the lesson. A learning support assistant provides very good technical and pupil support. She ensures that the suite is kept working efficiently, programs are ready for use and any problems are quickly dealt with. Computers in the classroom are connected to the Internet but are few in number, limiting access for pupils. This limits their opportunities to make independent decisions about when and how to use technology, although they are able to use computers in the suite when they are free.

55. Although the subject manager has very good subject knowledge and personal expertise, the leadership of ICT is unsatisfactory. This is because the assessment of ICT capability is not used consistently across the school to inform future planning. There has not been any monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning across the school to inform the subject action plan.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

56. The use of ICT in other subjects is good. ICT is routinely used in teaching and learning across most subjects. For example, good use is made of the interactive whiteboard in the suite to access web technology and online resources in subjects such as history, literacy, mathematics and science. Art programs, digital photography and Internet research across subjects are well promoted. The new curriculum map does not formally show the cross-curricular use of ICT and the current good practice relies heavily on the decisions of individual teachers. A very good example of Internet research seen in history involved pupils creating multimedia presentations on evacuees, using information and photographs found through search engines. The pupils demonstrated good discrimination skills and were able to discuss, select, cut and paste resources appropriate for the task. The school has recently ordered two more Interactive boards for classrooms to further extend the use of ICT across the curriculum.

HUMANITIES

57. In humanities, work was sampled in **geography and history**. One lesson was seen in geography but none in history. As a result, it was not possible to form an overall judgement about provision in these subjects. From evidence analysed there are indications that standards are average in Years 2 and 6. Both subjects are planned over a two-year programme to ensure appropriate coverage of the curriculum in the mixed age classes. The school makes good use of local visits and to places further afield to enrich the curriculum and pupils' understanding through practical studies. The humanities leader has not monitored and evaluated the school's provision and assessment of pupils' progress is inconsistent across the school.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

58. In **art and design and design and technology** insufficient evidence was available during the inspection from which to form judgements about provision in these subjects. One excellent lesson was seen in the lower Key Stage 2 class in art and design. Samples of work and displays were examined and discussions were held with co-ordinators and with pupils across both key stages. There is no systematic development of skills across the key stages or within many aspects of art and design and design and technology. There was an absence of the effective use of sketch books for pupils to develop their skills and limited examples of exploratory work on sculpture, ICT, painting, printing, and knowledge of artists and craftspeople working in diverse periods and cultures in art and design. In design and technology, evidence from the inspection indicates that pupils have had limited experience of using a range of tools and equipment to make products. They were unclear how to undertake tests to decide which materials were best for which purpose or to evaluate their models against their original design criteria. This indicates unsatisfactory standards and

achievement in both art and design and design and technology. Recent changes in subject leadership in these subjects have provided insufficient time to put in place effective monitoring of teaching and standards or to address the gaps in resources. Therefore, leadership of both is unsatisfactory.

Example of outstanding practice

An art lesson within a sequence of planned opportunities for pupils to develop the skills of researching, making, evaluating and improving their work.

The pupils had previously had opportunities of linking their decorated chair designs to a character within a story they were reading. The teacher had dressed up and played the role of the character encouraging pupils to find out what her likes and dislikes were. They then researched examples of design using the Internet and a variety of source materials both at school and at home. Lively and well-informed discussions took place in small groups and plans were agreed for their design. The pupils' enthusiasm for the task matched that of the teacher, who constantly referred them to the learning framework to ensure that good quality outcomes were achieved at each stage in preparation for the next. The industrious excitement was infectious during the making stage, as pupils selected materials and techniques together, trying them out before finally deciding. Both the teacher and the learning assistant supported groups of pupils by asking them challenging questions, offering encouragement or acting as a resource. This had the effect of giving pupils the opportunities to improve on their first ideas at each stage.

59. It was not possible to make an overall judgement about standards of achievement and teaching in **music** as no lessons were observed. Discussion with the subject leader and with pupils and analysis of resources and planning indicate that overall provision is **unsatisfactory**. Staff are not confident to deliver the full range of the planned curriculum and, as a result, pupils do not experience continuity in their learning. The range of resources is unsatisfactory and many instruments are old and in poor repair. There has been very little development of the subject since the last inspection, despite the knowledgeable subject leader's best efforts, because the school has had to attend to more pressing priorities.
60. There was insufficient evidence available during the inspection from which to form judgements about provision in **physical education**. However, in one class, the pupils have not always been receiving their planned time for physical education due to the absence of their class teacher. The planning shows that the curriculum is being fully covered. Evidence from the lessons observed developing games skills and that provided by the school indicate that standards are **satisfactory**. However, resources for physical education are unsatisfactory and restrict the opportunities for pupils to fully extend their learning in some aspects of the subject. Co-ordination of the subject is also unsatisfactory because pupils' progress is not systematically assessed and subject monitoring is unsatisfactory.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

61. Lack of evidence means that no overall judgement about provision in pupils' personal, social and health education can be made. There is a planned programme and guidance to support teaching from the Foundation Stage onwards. Children in Reception are making good progress towards achieving the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning and the vast majority of pupils in the other key stages show, through their behaviour and attitudes and their willingness to work together and to help each other, that this progress is maintained.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	4
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	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	3
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).