

# INSPECTION REPORT

**BLETCHINGDON PAROCHIAL C of E PRIMARY  
SCHOOL**

Bletchington

LEA area: Oxfordshire

Unique reference number: 123115

Headteacher: Mrs. K Amos

Lead inspector: Marianne Harris

Dates of inspection: 24<sup>th</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> May 2005

Inspection number: 266446

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary  
School category: Voluntary controlled  
Age range of pupils: 4 -11  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 43

School address: Weston Road  
Bletchingdon  
Kidlington  
Oxfordshire  
Postcode: OX5 3DH

Telephone number: 01869 350393  
Fax number: 01869 350393

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of  
governors: Mr M Blades

Date of previous  
inspection: 6<sup>th</sup> May 2003

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

With 43 pupils on roll, Bletchingdon is a very small village school. It has recently been designated a voluntary controlled church school and has close links with the local community. When they join the school, children's attainments vary from year to year, but they are generally below average because many do not have any pre-school experience and are not used to being in an environment where there are many other children. Most of the children are from a white, British, socially average background. There are no children learning English as an additional language. Very few pupils leave or join the school part-way through their education. The proportion eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is average. Most of these special educational needs are for specific learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of need is above average. In 2001 the school received an achievement award for its work.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23288	Marianne Harris	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage English Geography History Religious education Special educational needs
1165	Peter Dannheisser	Lay inspector	
27654	Robina Scahill	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology (ICT) Science Design and technology Art and design Music Physical education Citizenship

The inspection contractor was:

Serco QAA  
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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

Bletchingdon is a **very effective** school that provides a high quality of education. It is very well led and managed and governors make a very significant contribution to the work of the school. Pupils of all abilities achieve very well. Teaching is organised effectively, allowing a variety of subjects to be taught at the same time during English lessons. Although the cost per pupil is high, the school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils of all abilities achieve very well because work is accurately matched to their needs.
- The school is very well led and managed and this has secured very good improvement since the last inspection.
- Teachers have high expectations that all pupils will make good progress, although there is too much dependence on printed worksheets in some subjects.
- Lessons are very interesting and all pupils participate enthusiastically.
- There are more opportunities for pupils to learn beyond lessons than is normally seen in a small school.
- Parents make an exceptional contribution to the life of the school.
- Pupils are very keen to learn and know that they are valued.

The school was last inspected in 2003, when it was judged to be underachieving. Since that time it has secured very good improvement. The weaknesses identified have been very effectively tackled. All pupils now make very good progress in their work, planning is now good and marking helps pupils improve. The strengths that were identified last time have been maintained. So, for example, the local community continues to make a significant contribution to the pupils' broader education, and music remains a strong feature of the school.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

The very small number of pupils who take the national tests means that the performance of just one child can affect overall results significantly. As a result, great care must be taken when comparing Bletchingdon with other schools. In this school standards and achievement have been judged by looking at the systems that exist for tracking how well each pupil is doing, and by looking at work currently being undertaken in the school. Inspectors also take into account how hard pupils work in lessons. Based on this evidence, pupils' overall **achievement is very good**. Standards are average overall, although they vary from year to

year in line with pupils' varying ability. In Year 2 and Year 6, standards in reading and writing are currently average and pupils are achieving well. In mathematics, standards are above average in Years 2 and 6 and achievement is very good, because very good teaching ensures that the needs of all pupils are particularly well met. Achievement in science is good, and better than indicated in the similar schools test results above. The children currently in the Foundation Stage joined the school with below average skills and abilities and are achieving very well. Most are likely to reach the expected goals for children's learning, and some will exceed them. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because work is well matched to their abilities. The school has identified those pupils who are more able and work is set that challenges and stimulates them so that they, too, can make very good progress. Pupils also benefit from good exposure to subjects other than English and mathematics, because many of these are effectively taught through English lessons.

**Pupils' personal qualities**, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are **very good**. Behaviour is of a high standard, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils support each other very well and take great pride in their work. They are keen to participate fully in the life of the school and older children are eager to play with, and look after, the younger ones. Attendance is satisfactory and pupils arrive at school on time - many before the start of the school day - so that they can be ready to learn.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The **quality of education** provided by the school is **very good**. **Teaching** and learning are **very effective**. Teachers have high expectations of pupils doing well and plan lessons that are interesting and stimulating. Work is well matched to the abilities of each child so that they can make very good progress. However, there is a tendency to rely on printed worksheets in some lessons, and this reduces the opportunities pupils have to write for themselves. Teaching assistants form a valuable part of the teaching team and support pupils very well. The curriculum is broad and balanced so that pupils are not disadvantaged by being in such a small school. Accommodation is far from ideal with a very small hall, but resources are good and staff make the best use they can of the available space. There are many good opportunities for pupils to learn beyond normal lessons. Pupils are very well cared for and know that there is someone they can go to if they have a problem. The links with parents and the local community are particularly effective and the school is seen as a central part of village life.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management** are **very good**. Despite the fact that the headteacher has a heavy teaching load, she leads and manages very well. She has been successful in building an effective teaching team that has secured very good improvement since the last inspection. Governors are doing a very good job. They are very supportive of the school and are fully aware of its strengths and weaknesses. They play an active part in school improvement and fulfil their statutory responsibilities well.

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

Parents are exceptionally positive about the work of the school and are confident that their children are doing well. They support the school in every way that they can and are passionate about their children being educated in a village school. Pupils are equally

enthusiastic about school and know that their views are taken into account and their ideas are acted upon.

### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Reduce the amount of printed worksheets that are given to the pupils so that they have more opportunities to write independently.

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

*Note: in this report pupils in Years 5 and 6 are often referred to as Upper Juniors, pupils in Years 3 and 4 are referred to as Lower Juniors, and those in Years 1 and 2 are called Infants. This is in line with the school's practice of naming classes. Children who are in their first year at school – the reception year - are considered to be in the Foundation Stage.*

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Pupils achieve very well and standards are currently average overall, although standards do fluctuate from year to year because the number of pupils in the school is so small.

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

- Pupils of all abilities achieve very well because work is very well matched to their abilities and pupils work very hard.
- Pupils do particularly well in mathematics, where standards are above average.

#### **Commentary**

1. Very few pupils take the national tests at the end of Years 2 and 6, therefore no table giving comparative data appears here. To make comparisons with results against those seen nationally, and those of similar schools, is insecure because the performance of just one child can significantly affect the overall results. Judgements on standards have been made by looking at how much progress individual pupils have made, and by looking at work in their books and lessons. From this evidence it is clear that all pupils achieve very well. At the time of the last inspection pupils were judged to be underachieving. Since that time they have worked very hard to catch up in their work under the direction of very good leadership and management, and this has resulted in very good achievement.
2. When they join the school, children's abilities are below those normally expected. Most of the pupils have not been to a pre-school and are not used to mixing with other children or following set routines. However, they make very good progress during their time in their reception year and most are likely to reach the expected goals for children's learning, and some are likely to exceed them.
3. In Year 2, standards in reading, writing and science are average. Standards in mathematics are above average. Overall, pupils have made good progress so that they are competent readers and writers.
4. This good progress continues throughout the school. In Year 6, standards are average in English and science, and above average in mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs make the same very good overall progress as others in their class, and many reach nationally expected standards. Pupils who are gifted mathematicians have very good support and this leads to them working on mathematical problems that are very advanced. Pupils have very interesting work in English that is linked effectively to other subjects. There has been a conscious decision by the staff of the school to teach in this way so pupils have lessons that are interesting and they make very good progress. As a result, pupils use their English skills well in subjects such as

science, history and religious education. All pupils have work that is challenging and stimulating and promotes a desire to learn. Many pupils stay in at break time to carry on with their work because they are very keen to learn. In lessons they concentrate hard and are very keen to finish their activities.

- Standards in singing are above average. This is due to the specialist teaching that promotes high standards in singing and performing.

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

Pupils' attitudes and their behaviour are very good and their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is also very good. Their attendance is satisfactory and improving, and punctuality is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' very good attitudes, relationships and personal development are strongly promoted in this small and very personal school.
- The very good role models of all the adults, both staff and helpers, ensure that pupils quickly know the difference between right and wrong and behave very well.

### **Commentary**

- Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are very good. This is an improvement on the satisfactory picture described after the previous inspection. Pupils are very well behaved, polite and courteous, and respond very well to the very good ethos of the school. Pupils enjoy school and they say so. They are interested, and often enthusiastic. They are involved in the wide range of activities that the school provides, both in lessons and out of school hours. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good overall. No incidents of bullying were seen during the inspection and no pupil has been excluded. The school involves all pupils in a wide range of activities and often asks the older ones to help younger ones. Pupils, including those who may have come with learning difficulties, are confident and able to communicate well. They are polite, friendly and happy.
- Pupils work very well in pairs or small groups and this was seen to full effect when they worked together in a mathematics lesson, discussing with their 'talk partners' how best to solve problems. The lower junior class were good at working together in pairs on the computer even though they were not being continually supervised by their teacher. Pupils rise to the challenge when they are given responsibilities. Older pupils do jobs around the school.
- Pupils with special educational needs have similar positive attitudes and values to those of their colleagues. These pupils are very well managed by staff so that they always fit in well when they are in class and receive very good support when appropriate. Children in the Foundation Stage are very well supported so that they make very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and all are likely to reach the expected goals for children's learning in this area.
- Pupils' relationships with adults and each other are very good, and have a positive impact on their learning. Pupils of all ages mix well within the classroom and at playtime and lunchtime, and both boys and girls make good use of the large field and the limited equipment. An older girl reacted to a slight mishap to a younger pupil by putting her arm around a shoulder and leading her to an adult who would help. Pupils and adults eat together at lunch time. Most pupils coming to the school have not had nursery experience and although they recall being apprehensive about coming, they say that they immediately felt comfortable at the school.

10. Pupils have a very good understanding of right and wrong that is promoted from a very early age. They benefit from the good role models set by all the adults in school. All pupils are well aware of the school's expectations. Very good personal development is fostered through well-planned assemblies that teach life skills and understanding and through the personal, social and health lessons and accompanying circle time in which pupils say they are encouraged to talk about and explore important issues. The visits from the 'Life Bus' contribute to pupils' personal development and pupils are able to talk sensibly about their learning. Year 5 and 6 pupils have the opportunity of going on a residential visit every two years, further adding to their social and practical experiences.
11. Spiritual values are reinforced through the school's activities, including personal, social and health education. They also manifest themselves in other areas such as music lessons, where pupils spontaneously joined in and sang when the teacher played the recorder. By Year 6 pupils show maturity and self-confidence and say that they are ready to move on.
12. There are opportunities for pupils to enhance their social development by taking part in the school council and in extracurricular opportunities that they very much value. Pupils contribute to events that raise funds for less fortunate people. The clubs, trips and residential visits make a big difference to these pupils' life and cultural experiences.
13. Attendance reported by the previous inspection was well below the national average. This was mainly due to holidays taken in term time. There has been an improvement in these figures and they are now broadly average. Registration practice is efficient and the school's use of electronic data capture enables detailed analysis. The latest figure for the school year up to mid May 2005 suggest that the number of unauthorised absences remains negligible.
14. Currently punctuality is very good. Indeed many of the pupils arrive at school well before the start time. A few parents withdraw their children from school to take holidays during term time after they have asked the school.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.1	School data	0.1
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. Teaching and learning are very good. There are more opportunities to learn beyond lessons than is normally seen in such a small school. The partnership between parents, the local community and the school is very positive and the pupils are very well looked after.

**Teaching and learning**

Across the school, teaching, learning and assessment are very good.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers plan interesting and stimulating lessons so all pupils can participate.
- Pupils are encouraged to assess their own learning.
- Pupils with special educational needs, and those who are more able, have challenging work.
- Teaching assistants are used very well to support all pupils.
- There are too many printed worksheets in some subjects.

## Commentary

15. In this very small school the staff work together very well to ensure that the pupils have full access to every subject. Teachers know the pupils very well and make sure that they make very good progress. Work is planned effectively so that it meets the needs of all pupils in each class. This is achieved through innovative organisation where older pupils work together in English and mathematics and join with younger ones for other subjects such as art and design, and design and technology. This results in lessons that are interesting and work that is very well matched to pupils' ages and abilities. Pupils who are most able, and those with special educational needs, are very well catered for so that they too can make very good progress. Children in the reception year are taught very well so that they can settle into school quickly and make very good progress.
16. Pupils are very involved in their own learning and often discuss amongst themselves, and with the teacher, how well they are doing in lessons. This is very effective in helping them understand how much progress they have made, and what they need to do next to improve. In a very good design and technology session, pupils were very keen to talk about their moving models, how they designed and made them, and then how they were going to improve them. All pupils are keen to learn in all lessons, and take great pride in joining in with discussions and sessions to share ideas.
17. Teaching assistants play a vital role in helping pupils learn in all classes. In the infant class, children in the reception year receive very good support so that they can have access to the right curriculum for their age group. In other classes, pupils who need extra support are confident that there is someone there who will help them to keep up in lessons.
18. Teachers mark work regularly and carefully. They encourage the pupils by writing positive remarks and by giving them ideas of how they might improve their work. However, there are times when too many printed worksheets are used in lessons and this means that pupils do not have the opportunity to write for themselves in subjects such as history and religious education.

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 13 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	5	8	0	0	0	0

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

## The curriculum

The school provides a good curriculum. Enrichment is good. Indoor accommodation is far from ideal, but resources are good and teachers make the best use they can of what space is available to meet the needs of the curriculum. Outside accommodation is very good.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children get off to a good start in their reception year.
- Good planning ensures that all subjects are taught in an interesting way.
- Staff and parents work hard to ensure that pupils have good opportunities to learn beyond normal lessons.
- Good use is made of the accommodation.

## **Commentary**

19. The school provides a comprehensive and innovative curriculum. The staff have given considerable thought to teaching literacy and numeracy through other subjects such as history, geography and science. These close links between National Curriculum subjects enable the pupils to consolidate and extend their work and to see the relevance of what they are learning. All pupils have equal access and opportunity to all areas of the curriculum. Planning is precise so the small numbers of pupils in each year group progress very well. Higher attaining pupils, including the gifted and talented, have a curriculum that challenges them and allows them to make very good progress. Lower attaining pupils are given good support and all pupils are given encouragement through detailed and helpful marking in their books. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection.
20. The creative aspects of the curriculum are having a positive effect on pupils' learning. This accounts for some work of high quality in art and design and design and technology. The school makes good use of information and communication technology (ICT) across all areas of the curriculum, particularly when pupils have to research their topics on the Internet.
21. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. All pupils with special educational needs are fully included in the life of the school; they are usually taught alongside their peers, often with good support from teaching assistants.
22. A good range of visits and visitors extends the curriculum very well as well as providing important links with the community. A residential trip is arranged for older pupils. Visitors with particular skills provide tuition in music, mathematics and art. This broad range of learning opportunities is contributing very well to pupils' very good overall achievement. Teachers and parent volunteers provide a very good range of after-school activities such as ICT, cricket, netball and gardening. Pupils take part in competitions against other schools in swimming, netball, cricket and orienteering.
23. The staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about their work. Resources, particularly the interactive whiteboards, are used well and bring lessons to life. The indoor accommodation is not ideal, but teachers have made the best use of it. The outside areas are spacious and very well used for sport and science. The well developed outside play area for the youngest children has improved since the last inspection. It now provides a very good space for physical development as well as being an exciting area which enriches all other areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum.

## **Care, guidance and support**

Pupils are given very good support and advice. All pupils have elected school council representatives and pupils' views are taken into account very well. Governors and staff

have very good procedures for checking that pupils and staff work in a healthy and safe environment.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The very good pastoral care of pupils gives them confidence and a close relationship with staff.
- The staff have very good ways of monitoring individual pupils' progress.
- The school has very good systems of introducing new pupils to the school.

### **Commentary**

24. Induction and transition arrangements are very good, both when children start at school and when they move to the secondary school. Parents and newly enrolled children are invited to the school regularly in the year before the children start.
25. Marking in books helps pupils understand what they need to do to make good progress. Individual targets in English and mathematics are set for each child so that they know what they are aiming for. Pupils with special needs are quickly assessed and their progress is well tracked, so that realistic targets can be set and they make very good progress.
26. Pupils are given very good opportunities to be involved in their learning and helping run aspects of the school. This is a small intimate school and staff know pupils' views. Pupils are confident that their ideas are listened to. Although the school council meets occasionally, pupils are still very involved in the life of the school.
27. The school's procedures for ensuring the safety and well-being of pupils are very good. A teacher governor undertakes safety audits to ensure that nothing is missed. The school is well maintained and provides a pleasant and safe environment. First aid provision is good; there are staff qualified to provide assistance in the event of mishap and they keep parents informed.
28. Child protection procedures meet requirements and the school exercises its responsibilities with vigilance and care. The headteacher has had up-to-date training and staff are fully aware of their responsibilities.

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

The school has excellent partnerships with parents. The partnership with other schools and the community is very good overall and plays a positive role in supporting pupils' learning.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are very happy with what the school provides for their children.
- Links with other schools and the community are very good.
- Parents' involvement in the activities of the school is very good.

### **Commentary**

29. The very positive views of parents reflect a very high level of satisfaction with all aspects of the school's provision. There are no areas for which more than one or two

parents disagreed with the positive statements in the pre-inspection questionnaire. Parents feel well informed about their children's progress.

30. Inspectors support the positive views of parents. Families of newly enrolled children are well known by the time their children enter the school. They are able to make many visits. Staff take tremendous trouble to send out frequent and accessible newsletters and also make significant contributions to the village newspaper. They also send out termly information about the forthcoming curriculum. This is very good practice, all the more admirable in a small school where the headteacher has a considerable teaching load.
31. Annual reports on pupils' progress are good. They do not always indicate how well pupils are succeeding against national expectation or include self-evaluation by pupils. However, parents in this close-knit community say that through their frequent and personal contact with staff they are kept informed about their children's progress and needs. Parents are fully involved in discussions and planning for those pupils with special needs. Homework books are well marked. Parents contribute to reading records and say that staff respond to their comments.
32. Parents have a very high regard for the school and are involved to a great extent. They are invited to assemblies during the school year and also to special services at the church. Parents and governors are encouraged to participate in class and many do, in ways such as reading and sewing with the pupils, helping to run after-school activities such as the gardening club, and supporting more able pupils with their mathematics. There is an active and effective parents' association, which organises activities and raises useful funds for the school involving the community. Parents feel very close to the school, and their participation is welcomed, encouraged and recognised by the staff. Their views and comments are sought and the school has sent parents detailed questionnaires, the results of which have been fed back. The village shop closed down recently and in no time at all parents had organised an ice cream stall after school – an example of their active participation in this welcoming and cooperative school.
33. Links with the community are very good and the range of visits and visitors provides good enrichment to the curriculum and supports pupils' personal and social development, widening their experience. Pupils have frequently gone out and about in the village with their teachers and have close links with the church, senior citizens and regional musical events such as the festival of voices in Dorchester Abbey.
34. Very good links with other primary schools and the local secondary schools are fostered for pupils through a thriving partnership scheme. This enables shared sports events, shared training for staff and three well-organised visits to the secondary school, before transfer. Pupils look forward to going to the secondary school and several come back to their primary school to share their experience.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher provides very good leadership and is very well supported by all of the staff in the school. The leadership of other key staff is good. Governors are doing a very good job and know the school very well.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has a clear vision for the future of the school.
- The teaching staff work well together to ensure that all pupils make good progress.

- Governors know the school very well.

## Commentary

35. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection. The headteacher has a clear vision for the improvement of the school. Through her very good leadership she has developed very good relationships and built a strong team that is supported by the governing body. As a team, they have a very clear commitment to raising standards, enhancing pupils' personal growth and ensuring all pupils have the very best experiences they can from school. Despite her heavy teaching commitment, the headteacher has tackled all the issues outlined in the last report very well. The inspirational approach of developing an innovative curriculum is successfully aimed at improving pupils' independent learning, and provides challenging opportunities for the most able pupils.
36. The strong commitment by all staff to achieve the school's goals has a positive effect on pupils' achievements. Each teacher manages several areas of the curriculum, and they are able to develop their own particular subjects through observations and open discussion. They monitor colleagues' planning to ensure appropriate coverage of the subjects. Very good management procedures are in place that ensure the highly efficient day-to-day running of the school so the focus is on covering the whole curriculum effectively and on improving the pupils' progress. As a result of these efficient systems, the school was already aware of the relative weakness raised by this report.
37. Care is taken in managing the individual professional development of the members of staff through performance management that ensures very effective deployment of staff according to their strengths. The school's commitment to the total inclusion of all members of its community, whatever their individual needs, is one of its major strengths.
38. The governing body is very effective and overall provides very good support for the leadership of the school. Its members are an integral part of the school community and have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have effectively met the challenges provided by the previous inspection. Governors work closely with the subject coordinators and evaluation is effective through regular class visits, meetings with subject coordinators and analysis of results. Governors are fully involved in the development of the school's improvement plan and regularly monitor the progress towards meeting its priorities. They work closely with the headteacher and are able to both challenge and support within a climate of mutual respect and trust. There is full compliance with all statutory requirements.
39. The management of finances is good. Money available is spent carefully to support the school's educational priorities. The significant recent spending on improving ICT equipment is bearing fruit in the quality of teaching in various subjects, as well as in good progress in ICT.

### **Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005**

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	198,387	Balance from previous year	0

Total expenditure	196,647
Expenditure per pupil	4,274

Balance carried forward to the next	1,740
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## PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS

### AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

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

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils make very good progress because activities are very well planned.
- Basic skills are very well taught.
- All areas of learning are covered very well.

#### Commentary

40. There are very few children in the Foundation Stage so the individual areas of learning have not been fully reported separately, but are sampled below. Teaching is very good and all children are supported very well and make very good progress. Most are likely to reach the expected goals for children's learning, and many will exceed them. Those who are more able work with pupils in Year 1 so that activities are interesting for them and are well matched to their abilities. Pupils with special educational needs also have work that is very well matched to their abilities so that they can make very good progress. Assessment is very good. The teacher knows the children very well and carries out regular and careful assessments. Work is then planned using these assessments, and this results in children making very good progress. The Foundation Stage is very well led and managed and there has been good improvement since the last inspection.
41. Children settle in to school very quickly because the programme for children's **personal, social and emotional development** is very well planned. Most of the children have not had any school experience before they come into the infant class, and this is all taken into account when new children start at the school. They are welcomed in and many come in with their brothers and sisters so that they know the building and the routines. A time is set aside for the children to visit the school formally and get used to the staff and the other children. As a result, children settle into school quickly and learn to share and take turns appropriately. They behave very well and enjoy learning.
42. The programme to develop children's early **communication, language and literacy** skills is very good. Children learn the sounds that letters make and read confidently to adults in the class. They begin to write simple words and sentences and draw pictures to illustrate their work. They listen attentively in class and make relevant contributions to class discussions. They enjoy talking about their work and really enjoy working together in the role-play area. They know that there really aren't wild animals in their pretend jungle, but they enjoy being "scared" as they play at big-game hunting.
43. Children develop early **mathematical** skills very well. They count confidently to ten and beyond and begin to understand about adding and subtracting simple numbers. They can identify the basic shapes, circles, triangles and squares, and explore the ideas of full and empty when playing with the sand and water.
44. In **creative development**, work is well planned so that children can mix paint and make pictures using materials and fabrics. They use tools safely and with increasing control. There are many opportunities for them to dress up and act out their own stories. In **physical development**, children move with increasing control and enjoy using the outside area to play with balls and other small equipment. In **knowledge and understanding of the world**, children learn about trees and mini-beasts, and begin to identify where they can be found.

Most of the children use the computer with confidence. They are beginning to learn to programme a “roamer” so that it can move along a given path.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**.

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

- Standards are average and pupils of all abilities achieve well.
- Lessons are well planned so that all pupils are involved.
- Innovative planning means that learning is linked very effectively to other subjects, though an excessive use of worksheets is holding back standards in independent writing.

#### **Commentary**

45. Standards in English are average overall in Years 2 and 6, although they do fluctuate from year to year, as would be expected with such small numbers. The school's own tracking data and work in books show that all pupils are reaching standards that are higher than could be reasonably expected, given their below average attainment when they joined the school. Whatever their ability, pupils work hard in lessons and are keen to learn and produce neat work. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and some reach the nationally expected standard in reading and writing by the time they leave Year 6. This represents very good improvement since the last inspection because pupils were judged to be underachieving two years ago.
46. In Year 2, pupils speak clearly and confidently and listen attentively in class. They write neatly in their books and can spell simple words correctly. When reading aloud, or to an adult, they are confident when tackling unknown texts and they enjoy reading. By Year 6, pupils have studied a variety of writing and have produced their own poems based on the styles they have been studying. A very good wall display showed that pupils had understood the principles of constructing a Haiku, and of writing free verse. In class, pupils read aloud with expression and enjoyment. Handwriting is neat and formed using a joined style. Pupils take great care with their work.
47. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan very interesting lessons so that pupils can discuss their ideas before writing anything. In a good lesson in Years 5 and 6, pupils discussed where water is found, a good link with geography, and then wrote about why water is important. All of this was possible because the teacher used the interactive whiteboard very well so that all pupils could see the good quality text and illustrations. All pupils were involved in the lesson and used their geographical knowledge well to help them in their writing. Teachers have high expectations of all pupils achieving well. Work is carefully assessed and individual learning targets are set so that pupils know what they are striving for in order to reach higher standards. When marking work in books, teachers give encouraging remarks as well as giving pupils ideas on how to improve their work.
48. English is well led and managed in the school. Since the time of the last inspection much has been done to track the progress that individual pupils make. The weaknesses that existed have been successfully tackled and pupils now make good progress in their work.

## Language and literacy across the curriculum

49. There are good opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills in other subjects. In science, for example, investigations are recorded well, giving careful explanations of the method used and the findings of the experiment. In history, pupils have written letters recalling their visit to a steam museum, and work is very neatly presented. There are, however, too many examples of pupils recording on printed worksheets and this results in messy presentation and pupils not being able to write independently.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Numeracy skills are well used and developed in other subjects.
- Pupils achieve very well throughout the school.
- Assessment is used very effectively to help pupils learn.
- Teaching assistants provide good support.
- There is very good provision for the most able pupils.

### Commentary

50. Standards vary greatly from year to year because of the variation in numbers in each year group and the different proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Overall, standards of work seen during the inspection were above average in Years 2 and 6, and pupils in all classes achieve very well. This is because their individual needs are so well catered for and work is closely matched to their ages and abilities.
51. Teaching and learning are very good. Lively counting and a variety of mental activities motivate pupils and they learn very well. These skills are systematically developed through the group activities and they reflect what the teachers expect the pupils to learn. For example, the upper juniors used the results of their mental arithmetic questions to work out the mean, median and mode of the results, so the numbers they were working with were relevant to them. All lessons include clear, step-by-step teaching that involves all pupils and challenges them to work things out for themselves. The interactive whiteboards are used well as part of this teaching. Work is well planned for pupils' differing levels of ability and this helps to ensure that all pupils are challenged and achieve very well. Teachers have high expectations of pupils working independently. For instance, Year 4 pupils were set work that involved accessing a program on the computer to solve mathematical problems. Teaching assistants work effectively with pupils with special educational needs so they are fully included in the lessons. High attaining pupils show a very good understanding of applying what they have learnt to solve complex and challenging problems. Pupils' work is always well marked and gives clear advice about how to improve standards. Because of the small numbers in each class, teachers have the opportunity to talk to each pupil during the lessons. Pupils have targets relevant to them and have the responsibility of marking them off by writing the date on which they are achieved. Homework is set regularly. It both reinforces what has been covered in lessons and extends pupils' learning.
52. The subject is very well led and managed. The co-ordinator has observed lessons and looked at planning and pupils' work. As a result, pupils' needs are carefully monitored

and additional help is given to those who need it. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection, particularly in the standards of the higher attaining pupils.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

53. Teachers make very good use of mathematics across the curriculum. In ICT, pupils consolidate their mathematical skills very well when making calculations using spreadsheets. In science, they make careful measurements and record their work in tables and graphs. In geography they measure distance on a map to work out how far it is from London to Cardiff. In design and technology they make very careful measurements when completing their models.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision for science is **good**.

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

- There has been good improvement in pupils' achievement since the last inspection.
- Motivating teaching ensures that pupils are enthusiastic and work hard.
- Good use is made of the environment to help pupils learn.
- Teachers make good use of ICT to support the subject.

#### **Commentary**

54. Standards of work seen during the inspection were in line with national expectations in Years 2 and 6. However, the good systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress through the school show that almost all pupils are achieving well and all areas of the curriculum are covered.

55. Teaching and learning are good. Science lessons are usually based around an investigation so that pupils quickly become accustomed to working in a scientific way. Sessions are very well organised to ensure that all pupils cover all aspects of the lesson. In a lesson seen, upper juniors observed and identified the different animals found at different depths of the pond. They planned how they would collect the evidence, recorded their results on a database and did detailed observational drawings of the animals as seen under a magnifying glass. The teachers have high expectations of pupils working independently or in pairs. As a result, pupils respond well to this responsibility and complete the work expected of them. Interesting displays stimulate pupils' curiosity. Some lower juniors were fascinated by the appearance of a leaf under the microscope. Teachers' very good questioning encourages pupils to predict outcomes and think for themselves. When asked how they would know if a snail would like to eat leaves, an infant pupil answered, "It will go mad for it".

56. The subject is led and managed well and this has resulted in very good improvement since the last inspection. Provision is carefully monitored and the curriculum is now covered in depth. Also, pupils are now encouraged to write using the correct scientific vocabulary and this is extended in literacy lessons. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are developed through paired discussions and they are encouraged to find good descriptive language when recording their observations. Very good use is made of the

school's outside areas, and the gardening club extends pupils' knowledge and understanding of living things.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

57. No lessons could be observed in ICT during the inspection, so it is not possible to make secure judgements on teaching and learning. However, the computers in the shared area between the upper and lower junior classrooms were in constant use. Pupils were confident and competent in ICT skills. There is strong evidence from displays and pupils' work that shows the good use of ICT to support pupils' learning in a range of subjects across the curriculum. This represents good improvement since the last inspection, when this aspect of ICT was underdeveloped. The youngest pupils were able to program a floor roamer due to the very good teaching on turning and directions in a previous lesson in mathematics. Lower juniors took notes in a history lesson and used word processing on the computer to produce the finished article. They worked independently on accessing a web site on the internet to solve time and distance problems which they had learnt about in mathematics. Older pupils use spreadsheets to calculate changing costs, using the appropriate formulae. In science they created a database of the animals they found in the pond. The subject is being continually developed. Resources have been systematically improved and the expertise of staff developed so that the use of the interactive whiteboard in every classroom is a useful aid to teaching and pupils' learning in all subjects.

## HUMANITIES

*It was not possible to see history, geography or religious education lessons during the course of the inspection because they were not timetabled. These subjects were sampled.*

58. In **history**, pupils learn about events in the past so that, by the time they reach Year 6, pupils have a good understanding of what life was like during the Roman invasion, and can discuss the changes that happened to Britain. They know about various aspects of World War II and learn about evacuation and rationing. In the infant class the pupils learn about Florence Nightingale and her contribution to British history.
59. In **geography**, pupils learn about the immediate environment and compare this with a village in Chembakoli, in India. They understand about human and natural features and begin to draw simple maps. In the infant class, pupils use large-scale maps to locate their house and can draw their route to school confidently. Good use is made of visits to enrich pupils' learning in geography. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about their visit to a river, and used their knowledge of the water cycle when discussing where water comes from in an English lesson.
60. In **religious education**, pupils learn about the Christian faith and various facts about Hinduism and Judaism. As a result, by Year 6, pupils can discuss maturely the significance of Christian symbols and know the events of Jesus' life. They know about different places of worship and can compare these. Pupils have thought about what is special to them and how they would like to spend special days

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

*Art and design, design technology, music and physical education were sampled.*

61. **No art and design** lessons could be seen. However the work on display demonstrates that pupils of all abilities produce careful work that is often of a high standard. Pupils have made detailed observations of the work of other artists and copy their styles to create their own landscape pictures. In the history and geography topic on Greece, pupils have studied ancient myths and have made clay masks of various characters, including one-eyed Cyclops. Planning shows that pupils systematically learn the skills and knowledge necessary to become confident artists by experimenting with a variety of media to create their own work.
62. The pupils were observed completing their project in **design and technology**. They were very enthusiastic about their work and were making mechanisms for creating moving puppets. All pupils were fully engrossed in their work and very keen to complete their model. One child was very proud when he modified his model so that his aeroplane flew round and round, instead of going up and down as most models did. Planning is good with skills and knowledge systematically taught, so that pupils can make good progress.
63. There were two **music** lessons seen, and these were singing sessions. Standards in singing are above average and have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils sing tunefully and even the youngest children learn to sing rounds in whole-school singing lessons. They obviously enjoy singing. Pupils achieve well because they respond to the high standards expected of them. They make very good progress as

they move through the school because they are given the opportunity to play a variety of musical instruments and many of them do so.

64. The teaching of singing is good. A specialist teacher teaches all classes and runs a recorder club. She uses a variety of musical activities to stimulate the pupils' interest. Lessons start with a lively warm-up where pupils learn to change the mood and dynamics of their singing. The infant class listened to music and learned to distinguish between woodwind and brass instruments. Older pupils decided on which instruments they would use to accompany a poem they were preparing to perform at a concert. Pupils worked well together and listened to each other's ideas. They learnt to read the notation of different rhythm patterns, which they practised on a variety of drums. Pupils have the opportunity to learn instruments such as clarinet and cornet from visiting teachers.
65. Music makes a very effective contribution to pupils' social and cultural development as pupils attend concerts and take part in local events such as the May Day performance and the Oxford day of dance.
66. No **physical education** lessons were seen. However, planning and discussions with staff and pupils show that physical education is taught systematically under difficult circumstances. The hall is very small, but the school manages to teach all aspects of gymnastics as all the furniture is moved aside to create enough space. Arrangements have been made so that pupils from similarly small schools can join together to make teams for competitive sports. This has the added advantage of being a good way for Bletchingdon pupils to get to know others and makes settling into secondary school much easier because they already know some of their classmates. Residential trips offer a good opportunity for pupils to take part in activities that are not normally available in a small school, and pupils enjoy these opportunities. All pupils swim. The school has excellent arrangements for taking every child to the local pool and all swim the 25 metres expected by the end of Year 6, many doing so even before they reach Year 6. The outside area is substantial and is a very good resource for teaching outdoor games. There has been good improvement since the last inspection because the hall space is now more readily accessible.

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

*This area of the curriculum was sampled.*

67. No lessons could be seen, but from talking to staff and pupils it is evident that the pupils undertake many relevant activities and statutory requirements are fully met. Pupils in the upper and lower junior classes work with the local police force to begin to understand about the rights and responsibilities of living in a community. The "Life Bus" visits the school annually and helps pupils begin to learn about such things as the dangers of misusing drugs and alcohol. Older pupils go on residential trips, where they mix with pupils from other small schools and learn about living in the wider world. Older pupils learn how their bodies will change as they grow..

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	2
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
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	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	1
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	2

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