

INSPECTION REPORT

COUNTESS GYTHA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Queen Camel, Yeovil

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 123659

Headteacher: Mrs Janet Mills

Lead inspector: Mrs Pat Cox

Dates of inspection: 11th – 13th October 2004

Inspection number: 266679

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

TYPE OF SCHOOL: PRIMARY

SCHOOL CATEGORY: COMMUNITY

AGE RANGE OF PUPILS: 4-11

GENDER OF PUPILS: MIXED

NUMBER ON ROLL: 187

SCHOOL ADDRESS: HIGH STREET
QUEEN CAMEL
YEOVIL
SOMERSET

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APPROPRIATE AUTHORITY: THE GOVERNING BODY

NAME OF CHAIR OF GOVERNORS: MRS JILL MARTIN

DATE OF PREVIOUS INSPECTION: 8TH MARCH 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Countess Gytha Primary School is in the small village of Queen Camel, near Yeovil in Somerset. Some pupils live in the village, but many come from a wide area around it. There are 187 pupils in the school, between the ages of 4 and 11, fewer than at the time of the previous inspection. Almost all have English as their first language and are of white British ethnic origin. Thirty-nine pupils have been identified as having special educational needs. The majority of their needs relate to learning or social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, and the proportion is somewhat higher than the national average. Very few pupils have been identified as being entitled to free school meals, although this statistic is unlikely to be accurate, as the local education authority does not provide school meals. The pupils come from a range of backgrounds, although many are from relatively affluent homes. The children's attainment on entry to the school is, overall, similar to that expected for their age, although their social

and speaking skills and their knowledge and understanding of the world are better than is usual. The school has a number of awards: 'Healthy Schools'; 'Investors in People'; 'International School Award', and a teacher has been awarded 'Regional Teacher of the Year in a Primary School'.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
19178	Mrs Pat Cox	Lead inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Religious education
8971	Mrs Judith Hesslewood	Lay inspector	
22841	Miss Pat Jackson	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Music Physical education English as an additional language Special educational needs Personal, social and health education
22856	Mrs Kath Campbell	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage curriculum Mathematics Geography History

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Countess Gytha Primary School gives its pupils a satisfactory education. The pupils achieve satisfactorily because they are taught soundly. Standards at the end of both key stages are commensurate with most pupils' abilities. The pupils have good attitudes to school and their work, and their behaviour is very good. Leadership and management are satisfactory, overall, and the school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are not high enough in writing and design and technology by the end of Year 6, and throughout the school in religious education and enquiry skills in mathematics and science;
- The pupils do well in English and information and communication technology at the end of Year 2, and in games and swimming throughout the school;
- The school provides well for those with special educational needs, although the more able do not do as well as they could;
- The school has an outstanding programme of global citizenship education;
- The curriculum is not balanced sufficiently and the teaching time in Years 3 to 6 is too short, so that some subjects, such as religious education, do not receive enough time;
- The school provides well for the pupils' personal development, so that they have good attitudes to their work and behave very well;
- The senior management team is not sufficiently focused on the drive for improvement or raising standards;
- Although there are sound systems for assessing the pupils' progress, these are not used well enough to plan further lessons;
- The school has very good links with the parents of its pupils, and with the community.

The school has made adequate progress since its previous inspection, although improvement has been hampered recently by long-term staff illness. Most issues from that time have been dealt with: homework now makes a good contribution to the pupils' learning; attendance is monitored well and all statutory requirements are now met. However, the more able still underachieve. In many areas, the school has maintained many of its strengths and developed others. Nevertheless, the pupils' progress, leadership and management, and the quality of teaching, are not as good as they were previously.

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	C	B	A
Mathematics	B	B	C	C
Science	C	C	B	B

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

Achievement overall is satisfactory. The children make a sound start in the reception class and develop their social skills well. Almost all reach the standards expected for their age. They continue to progress satisfactorily through the school. The National Curriculum test results have varied considerably over the years, as is often the case with small schools. In 2004, the Year 6 results were above the national average in English and science but average in mathematics. The results at the end of Year 2 have been more erratic; above the national average in some years, but below in others. The results in 2004 were average in reading, writing and mathematics and teachers' assessments in science were above average. The pupils presently in Year 6 and Year 2 are working at an average level in all three subjects overall. Standards are higher in speaking and listening but lower in writing, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Pupils throughout the school do not do well enough in enquiry and problem-

solving in mathematics and science. Standards are similar to those in other schools in most other subjects, but are higher in games and swimming, and in information and communication technology at the end of Year 2. However, standards are too low in religious education throughout the school, and in design and technology at the end of Year 6. The pupils with special educational needs and with English as an additional language make good progress.

The school provides well for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, particularly for their social and cultural development, especially through the global citizenship programme. Consequently, the pupils behave very well and have good attitudes to school. Relationships with adults and between pupils are very good. Attendance is above the national average, although punctuality is only average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides its pupils with a satisfactory quality of education. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory in almost all lessons and good in about a third, but expectations are not high enough overall. The teachers manage their classes well and use sound teaching methods to ensure that their pupils build adequately on most basic skills. On the few occasions when teaching is unsatisfactory, it is not planned adequately to improve the pupils' knowledge and understanding. The teaching assistants give good support to the pupils and teachers, and homework is used well to build on work in class. The teachers use assessment soundly to plan work for the children in the reception class but this is not always the case for the rest of the school. Consequently, although teaching of those with special educational needs is good, the more able do not always receive work that is best suited to their ability. The curriculum is broad but the balance is unsatisfactory. The weekly teaching time for the older pupils is significantly shorter than that recommended, and the time during the day is not organised efficiently, so that some subjects do not receive sufficient time. The school takes good care of its pupils and involves them very well in decision making. There are very good links with parents and the school deals well with their concerns. Links with the community are also very good. The accommodation is satisfactory for most year groups, but not for the reception class at present.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher provides satisfactory leadership. She has a sound understanding of where improvements are needed and planning for development is based on appropriate priorities. Many subject co-ordinators have a secure knowledge of where improvements are required and some have made good progress in developing their subjects. However, the senior management team does not provide a strong enough focus on, or drive for, raising standards. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are involved well in shaping the direction of the school and have a reasonable understanding of its strengths and weaknesses, although they do not challenge the school sufficiently. The school meets statutory requirements.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The parents and pupils have a positive view of the school and parents provide considerable support for it. A few expressed concern about bullying, but the school's procedures for dealing with this is broadly effective.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in writing and design and technology in Years 3 to 6, and in religious education and enquiry and problem-solving in mathematics and science throughout the school.
- Improve the balance of the curriculum, and the time that is spent in teaching, particularly in Years 3 to 6.
- Develop the role of the senior management team in providing a drive for improvement.
- Improve the use of assessment to set appropriate levels of work, particularly for the more able.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

The pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. They make a sound start in reception and maintain this steady progress in most subjects through the school. Standards in most subjects are similar to the national average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are not high enough in religious education, or in enquiry and problem-solving in mathematics and science, throughout the school, and writing and design and technology at the end of Key Stage 2¹.
- Pupils do well in English and information and communication technology at Key Stage 1² and in games and swimming at both key stages.
- The more able pupils do not make enough progress, although those with special educational needs do well.

Commentary

1. As is often the case with small schools, the results of the national tests have been inconsistent over the years and there has been little apparent trend. This pattern was also evident at the time of the previous inspection. This lack of pattern has been particularly marked at the end of Key Stage 1, where the results in reading were above the national average in 1999 and 2002 and similar to that average in 2000 and 2003. The results in writing and mathematics have swung between above, or well above the national average, to below or well below that, from year to year. The results in 2004 were similar to the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. The teachers' assessments in science suggested that standards were above the national average. The overall trend of improvement was below the national trend. Compared to the results of those schools with similar levels of entitlement to free school meals, standards in science were average, but in reading, writing and mathematics, they were well below average.
2. Results at the end of Key Stage 2 have been more consistent, especially recently. They have been above the national average in mathematics and average in science for some years. However, results in English have been variable, below national average in 2000 and 2002, and average in 2001 and 2003. Results in 2004 were above the national average in English and science and close to average in mathematics. The trend in test results was similar to the national trend. Compared with schools whose pupils had similar results at the end of Year 2, the results were well above average in English, above average in science and average in mathematics. The school met its targets for the proportion reaching the expected level in English, but not in mathematics, and it did not achieve the targets for the higher levels in either subject. Based on their prior attainment, the pupils' achievement was satisfactory. The test results suggest that the boys do better than the girls at Key Stage 2, but the inspection revealed little difference in achievement. However, there were instances where the boys dominated discussions and the teachers did not encourage the girls to involve themselves well enough.
3. For the pupils currently in Years 2 and 6, standards are similar to the national average in reading. Writing is also average in Year 2, but below average in Year 6. Standards are above average in speaking and listening throughout the school. However, while the standard in mathematical and scientific knowledge is average in Years 2 and 6, the ability to use and apply mathematics and in scientific enquiry is below average throughout the school. The pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall, as is demonstrated by the progress they make between the Key Stage 1 and

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

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

Key Stage 2 tests. However, it is evident that progress for pupils in Year 2 is better than it was last year, particularly in English, where the pupils are doing well. Standards are lower in Year 6 than they were in the 2004 test results, as there is a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs in this year group than was previously the case. Nevertheless, they are making insufficient progress in writing.

4. Overall, the children enter the school with attainment similar to that of others of their age, but higher than that in speaking, knowledge and understanding of the world, and personal and social skills. In the reception class, the children achieve soundly in all areas and achieve well in their personal, social and emotional development. Most reach the level expected in all the areas of learning, by the end of their time in the reception class, and standards are higher than usual in mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. However, the children do not do as well as they did at the time of the previous inspection.
5. Although progress is steady overall through Key Stages 1 and 2, the pupils' achievement is patchy. The pupils with special educational needs and those who use English as an additional language do well throughout the school, because they receive a good level of support, but the more able do not make sufficient progress in many lessons because they are not challenged sufficiently. Achievement is also inconsistent between subjects. The pupils do well in games and swimming throughout the school. In art and design, geography, history, music, gymnastics and dance, at the end of both key stages, standards are similar to those in other schools, and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The pupils are now making good progress in information and communication technology at both key stages and standards are above average at the end of Key Stage 1. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards are similar to those in other schools, as the pupils have started from a lower point. However, standards are lower than this in religious education throughout the school, and in design and technology at the end of Key Stage 2. The school has identified pupils who are gifted and talented in many areas of the curriculum and caters reasonably for them, particularly those whose talents are musical or sporting.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores³ in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.0 (15.5)	16.0 (15.8)
Writing	14.7 (14.4)	14.8 (14.6)
Mathematics	16.7 (15.9)	16.4 (16.3)

There were 30 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 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.1 (27.4)	27.0 (26.8)
Mathematics	27.0 (27.7)	27.2 (26.8)
Science	29.4 (28.7)	28.9 (28.6)

There were 27 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to learning are good and their behaviour is very good. Personal qualities are developed well: provision for social and cultural development is very good, while that for moral development is good and spiritual development satisfactory. Attendance is good and punctuality satisfactory.

³ **Average Point Scores.** The average point scores table compares the school's performance with the national results. The calculations are arrived at by using the total of all test scores gained by pupils, and dividing the total by the number of pupils with a test result. This calculation is carried out for each subject tested.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All staff collaborate to uphold the consistent, positive approach to school routines and behaviour management.
- Pupils are very willing and enterprising and take their positions of responsibility seriously.
- Relationships with adults and between pupils are very good.
- Pupils' confidence and self-esteem are high.
- Extensive opportunities are provided to appreciate cultural traditions.

Commentary

6. Pupils are happy at and enjoy coming to school. Their attitudes to school and learning are good. They take pleasure in singing during assemblies. In lessons, the pupils are attentive and settle quickly to their work. In the best lessons, they are productive and work well collaboratively in pairs and groups. However, in some slower-paced lessons, or when the pupils are sitting on the carpet for long periods, their attention begins to wander and interest wanes.
7. Because all staff use a positive but firm approach to behaviour management, the pupils' behaviour throughout the school day is very good. Clear rules formulated in conjunction with pupils, consistent day-to-day classroom routines, high expectations of behaviour in the playground and efficient movement from place to place, all contribute well to developing the high levels of social skills, keenness to take responsibility and good attitudes displayed by pupils. The reasons for the fixed-term exclusions in the previous school year were appropriate. A pastoral support programme in conjunction with the local education authority has helped pupils reintegrate into the classroom after a period out of school. Relationships between pupils and with adults are very good. A few parents and pupils expressed concern over bullying, but the school's procedures for dealing with this is broadly effective.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	161	2	
White – any other White background	2		

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

8. Provision for pupils' personal development has improved since the previous inspection. Pupils take their positions of responsibility seriously and the jobs are done conscientiously. The youngest pupils take registers to the office, and every pupil in Year 6 holds a position of responsibility, for example, as house captain or playground 'buddy', taking care of younger pupils. Supporting and raising money for charity is a high priority for pupils. They organise events such as bring-and-buy sales themselves. Parents agree that the school makes their children mature and responsible and older members of the community praise the confidence and ease with which the pupils interact with adults. The global citizenship programme, in particular the exchange of teachers and projects with the Mufilira Basic School in Zambia, provides extensive opportunities for pupils and the local community to experience and appreciate other cultural traditions.
9. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance that were put in place following the previous inspection are effective and successful. Attendance is good and improvements in the attendance rate and decrease in unauthorised absence have continued year on year. However, while most pupils are punctual, some pupils do not get to school on time in the morning.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	3.1
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.2
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 school provides a satisfactory standard of education. Teaching and learning are satisfactory throughout the school. The curriculum is adequate: although it is broad, it is not balanced sufficiently. The school cares for pupils well. Links with parents and the community are very good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory throughout the school. Assessment is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Expectations of what the more able can achieve are too low.
- The pupils with special educational needs are taught well.
- English skills are not developed well enough through the curriculum.
- Although there are satisfactory assessment procedures, they are not used well enough to plan work.
- Independent activities in the Foundation Stage⁴ do not always have sufficient structure.
- The teachers encourage and engage their pupils well.
- Homework is used well to support work done in lessons.
- The teaching assistants support teaching well.

Commentary

10. Team work between the adults in the reception class is strong, and support staff make a good contribution towards children's learning. Relationships are very good, and children's personal, social and emotional development is taught well. Lessons are planned carefully and staff provide an appropriate range of interesting activities. Group sessions target individual children's needs effectively and children achieve well at these times. Independent activities, however, do not always have enough sense of purpose. There is too little to challenge for more able children. Assessment procedures are good. They are simple but effective, and measure children's progress towards the Early Learning Goals⁵ effectively. Provision for children with special educational needs is good.
11. The teachers at Key Stages 1 and 2 plan their work adequately, although the standard is inconsistent, because while some planning is detailed, other plans are sketchy. The teachers often use interesting techniques to interest and involve the pupils. The teaching of mathematics and English is satisfactory throughout the school. In these subjects, the teachers sometimes plan work that matches all the levels of attainment in the class, although this is not often the case, and is uncommon in other subjects. Consequently, the more able pupils rarely receive the challenge they need in order to achieve their potential. Although mathematics skills are built on and used adequately throughout the curriculum, this is not the case for writing, as there is an overuse of worksheets in some subjects that restricts the pupils' opportunities to develop their skills and ability to record independently. In some instances, much of the work in the pupils' books is very similar, suggesting that too little of it is the pupils' own independent work.

⁴ The Foundation Stage caters for children from the age of three to the end of the reception year.

⁵ The early learning goals set out what children should achieve by the time they reach the end of the reception year in primary school.

12. The teachers ensure that the pupils behave well in lessons. Some put considerable enthusiasm and energy into their lessons, constantly encouraging and supporting the pupils, who respond well and work hard. The relationships in classrooms are very good, so that the lessons proceed smoothly and sometimes at a brisk pace. As a result, the pupils usually concentrate well on their work and are keen to do their best. The purposes of the lesson are shared consistently with pupils, and time is given at the end of sessions to discuss whether these have been achieved. However, these intentions are not always specific enough and, consequently, it is difficult for teachers to develop a clear view of how well the pupils have done. Homework makes a good contribution to pupils' learning because it is often planned to support the work in the classroom and encourages the pupils to carry out their own research connected to work in class.
13. The best teaching in the school demonstrates good subject knowledge and an imaginative range of methods to ensure that pupils work hard and increase their understanding of the topic. The pupils gain a sense of urgency about their work and expectations are high. The teachers sometimes use expert visitors to capture the pupils' total attention and enthuse them, as in a very successful science lesson with Year 5. In some lessons, however, the teacher directs the activities too much, so that the pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to develop or apply their skills of investigation. Some lessons are over-lengthy so that the pupils' attention is not sustained, and, on a few occasions, they spend too long sitting on the floor. In the lessons where the teaching was unsatisfactory, it was because the planning was not careful enough to achieve the purpose and the pupils made little progress.
14. The school has a sound range of assessment procedures for Key Stages 1 and 2, which provide information to help the teachers with their planning. However, although the data has improved recently, it is still not used well enough. Tests are analysed to identify those who need further support with their work, and to group the pupils for work in English and mathematics. The teachers assess the pupils' work in order to measure progress. However, they do not assess the pupils' progress in lessons well enough in order to build on what has been learned. They set targets for the pupils in English and mathematics, but these targets are not specific enough and are rarely referred to in lessons and in only a few teachers' marking. Although a start has been made, the pupils are not sufficiently involved in assessing their own work. In addition, marking is not sufficiently effective; in only a few classes does it contain comments that will help pupils to see how well they have achieved the aims of the lesson or how they may improve their work. Comments are often not followed up and some marking is over lavish with praise for work that is not of good quality.
15. Support staff work well with the groups and individuals they assist. The teachers use their time and expertise effectively during whole-class teaching sessions, to support the teaching. They work well with the groups and individuals they support, ensuring that the pupils with special educational needs or those whose first language is not English make good progress in most lessons.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 31 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	3 (10%)	7 (22%)	19 (62%)	2 (6%)	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.

The curriculum

The curriculum provided is adequate overall. The provision for pupils' personal, social, and emotional development is good. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is not balanced sufficiently and the teaching time at Key Stage 2 is too short.
- The extra-curricular activities are very good and enrich the statutory provision.
- The number and quality of support staff are good and have a positive impact on pupils' learning.
- Accommodation has improved, but is unsatisfactory for the Foundation Stage.
- Pupils with special educational needs, and those who use English as an additional language, are catered for well.

Commentary

16. The breadth of the curriculum is appropriate, but the balance is not. All areas of the National Curriculum and religious education are planned in order to meet statutory requirements for all three stages of education, as was the case at the time of the previous inspection. In the Foundation Stage, the balance between the different areas of learning is satisfactory, but at Key Stages 1 and 2 several subjects, such as science, religious education and music do not have sufficient time allocated. As well as the recommended daily literacy hour, a lot of time is given to additional English lessons such as guided reading, whilst insufficient time is devoted to developing literacy skills across the curriculum. At Key Stage 2, pupils are not taught for the advised length of time, and there is some slippage at various points, particularly at the end of each day after assembly. Curricular provision is good for pupils with special educational needs and those who use English as an additional language.
17. Opportunities for personal, social and emotional development are not confined to personal and social education lessons, but permeate most aspects of school and impact on the very positive ethos. The subject is enhanced in other lessons and, before leaving, pupils in Year 6 have lessons about sex and relationships. They have some opportunities to discuss issues relating to alcohol and drug misuse. Notices around the school heighten pupils' awareness of the school rules and reinforce acceptable behaviour and relationships. All adults, including lunchtime supervisors, regularly reinforce good manners and hygiene.
18. The Foundation Stage curriculum, although satisfactory overall, is not yet firmly established. Although activities in lessons adhere well to the six areas of learning for children this age, whole-school curriculum documentation often refers to the reception class as part of Key Stage 1, rather than as a separate key stage. The accommodation for these children is of poor quality, although it is to be replaced soon. Staff have overcome the difficulties of the building well and have successfully provided an attractive learning environment with good quality displays. Nevertheless, space is at a premium and the lack of an adequate outdoor learning area has a detrimental effect on children's physical development.
19. The very good range of extra activities enriches the curriculum imaginatively. This includes the programme for global citizenship which also impacts on many aspects of the taught curriculum and enhances significantly pupils' cultural development. Currently, the older pupils' involvement with an environmental project and developing their own vegetable patch is very impressive. Also of note is the computer club, where the pupils in Years 5 and 6 are working on a project organised by Bristol University. Instrumental music tuition, swimming and sports are other key extra-curricular activities.
20. The large number of support staff make a valuable contribution to the pupils' learning. Classroom assistants and those supporting pupils with special educational needs are clear about their roles and work alongside class teachers providing good support for lower ability pupils in lessons and enabling them to achieve well. The school has done what it can to provide a welcoming environment, conducive to good learning. Overall, sound use is made of a very difficult site,

although there is room for improvement in the way in which classrooms are allocated. Four separate buildings, plus a hut used for special educational needs, inevitably lead to some time wastage. By building on storage space, the hall is now adequate for gymnastics, dance and other physical education lessons. This is an improvement since the last inspection but concerns still remain about road safety. Most individual classrooms are of a good size and there is an adequate computer suite, which is used well, but the library is under-used. There is reasonable hard-surface space and a small area, with a pond, which provides sound opportunities for environmental education.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides well for the health, safety, care and welfare of pupils. Support, advice and guidance for pupils, based on the monitoring of achievements and personal development, are satisfactory. The involvement of pupils in the school, through seeking, valuing and acting on their views, is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school takes good care of all pupils and safeguards them well.
- Staff training in child protection policies and procedures needs updating.
- There are good induction arrangements for the youngest pupils.
- Pupils enjoy their involvement in school matters and appreciate the changes they have helped to achieve.

Commentary

21. The school continues to value each pupil for who they are and what they can contribute to the school. This nurturing ethos is shared by staff, pupils, parents, governors and members of the community. The pupils trust their teachers and strive to do well. Staff know their pupils' personal circumstances well. Good care is taken over all welfare matters, including Internet safety. The supervision of pupils at the end of the school day is organised and monitored well. A comprehensive range of policies and procedures has been developed and implemented since the previous inspection. These ensure that the health and safety of pupils and staff, both within school and on trips and visits, is monitored and that risks are assessed.
22. Child protection procedures follow the recommendations of the area child protection committee. The policy has been reviewed, in light of recent legislation, and a statement prepared for inclusion in the prospectus. However, staff training has not yet been updated. Governors, staff, parents and community members are all actively involved in improving road safety awareness. Governors are in active discussion with outside agencies while parents, staff and community members assist with 'walk or cycle to school' weeks and cycling proficiency award training. Parents and community members give their time to organise hire of the swimming pool and ensure adequate supervision.
23. Parents praised the induction procedures for children joining the reception class. The programme of staged visits, in liaison with local pre-school groups, and comprehensive information provided by the school, ensure a smooth start to school. Pupils spoke very positively about feeling fully involved in the running of their school. The system of house meetings gives pupils of every age the opportunity to voice their views. Issues that surfaced from the pupils' questionnaire have been explored and solutions found.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has very good links with parents and the community. There are good links with local nurseries and playgroups and receiving secondary schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents receive a very good range of information about the school.
- The involvement of parents in the school, through seeking, valuing and acting on their views, is very good.
- The parents give very strong financial support for the school, particularly through the parent-teacher association.
- The school works very well with the local community.
- There is a strong and well-established link with a school in Zambia, through the global citizenship programme.

Commentary

24. The provision of information about the school and its work has improved since the previous inspection. The prospectus, website, governors' annual report to parents, regular newsletters incorporating wider community information, together with termly curriculum meetings and written information, contribute very well to the comprehensive range of information available. The staff and headteacher are also available to meet with parents at the end of the school day. In addition, the information in pupils' reports has also improved. The addition of targets and the pupils' evaluation of how they have progressed during the year are good features. However, there is no indication of the level at which the pupil is working in English, mathematics and science, compared to the level expected for their age. Issues arising from the annual questionnaire for parents are discussed and acted upon. Parents feel their opinion is taken into consideration. Open forums are held once a term, based on a topical issue. Parents, pupils and staff all feed into these discussions. Parents feel this forum is a good feature.
25. Parental support for the school is very strong. They willingly give their time, money and expertise to support the educational and personal development of pupils. Parents help in school hearing pupils read, attend assemblies, help with sports and other clubs and support conservation and recycling ventures. The parent-teacher association continues to raise substantial funds through a range of social events for children and adults. In particular, the summer fayre involves the whole community in working together to raise funds, which help support the school's library and information and communication technology provision. In addition, the parent-teacher association manages the hire and supervision of the swimming pool. This co-operative venture benefits the whole community, with volunteers ensuring access during the summer holidays.
26. Community links, local and international, have been strengthened further since the previous inspection. Parents feel that the school is very much a big part of village and community life. People who no longer have children at the school come back to help and support events. There is much involvement with the church, including visits for festivals, carol singing, and the distribution of harvest food. Pupils in Years 3 and 5 benefit well when an artist and astronomer share their knowledge and expertise with them in lessons. Local people's skills in dressmaking and carpentry are harnessed to help with school plays, which are performed for the whole community. The cultural exchange with a school in Zambia continues to strengthen. Parents and members of the community are invited to social events, when teachers and pupils share their learning and experiences in this project. This community involvement makes a very good contribution to pupils' social, moral and cultural education and to many subjects of the curriculum.

Example of outstanding practice

Countess Gytha's Global Citizenship Programme has an outstanding impact on every pupil, parent and member of the local community.

The school's remarkable partnership with a school in Zambia has developed outstanding cross-cultural understanding and has raised awareness of environmental and sustainability issues. Initial exchanges of letters, photographs and artefacts developed into visits and established an effective programme of regular teacher exchange. Pupils, teachers, parents and members of the community value the exchange of cultural knowledge. Last year, both schools gained much enjoyment and reward from a story-telling partnership project. A wealth of African textiles, artefacts and musical instruments is attractively displayed in classrooms and the reception area.

Environmental topics are very important, particularly regarding issues of waste reduction. The Global Citizenship Club, for pupils in Year 6, composts organic lunch waste for use on the newly dug vegetable garden, and recycles paper, cardboard and ink cartridges. Old spectacles are sent to Africa. Playground improvements, such as the provision of shade, were based on pupils' knowledge of life in Zambian schools. Pupils take their concerns about sustainability into the wider community very seriously. They work with parents and the parish council to increase recycling facilities. They organise successful events, such as coffee mornings, for parents and villagers, where they promote global sustainability and endorse Fair Trade products.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher provides the school with satisfactory leadership. Governance is satisfactory. The leadership of the senior management team is unsatisfactory. Management is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The senior management team does not provide sufficient vision or drive for improvement.
- The curriculum is not planned or monitored carefully enough.
- The governing body takes a strong role in shaping the direction of the school but does not challenge it sufficiently.
- Although the senior management team has a sound understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, action to bring about improvements is not always rapid enough.
- Many subject co-ordinators are developing their roles well.

Commentary

27. Overall, the leadership and management provided by the headteacher are satisfactory. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work well together and are held in high regard by parents. They have worked hard to develop teamwork in the school and have mainly been successful, although there are some inconsistencies in practice. Relationships within the school and with parents and the community have been built on and the school continues to provide well for the pupils' personal development. The focus on maintaining and developing the link with Zambia has resulted in outstanding practice in global education. Despite their dedication, however, leadership and management are less effective now than at the time the school was previously inspected. Most issues from the last inspection report have been addressed successfully, but the improvement of the school has been thrown off course recently by long-term illness and the budgeting difficulties that have resulted. As a consequence, the headteacher has undertaken a heavier teaching commitment than would otherwise have been the case. Nevertheless, not all priorities have focused with enough precision on raising standards by targeting areas of weakness, and action in some areas has not been as rapid as possible.
28. Planning for school improvement is satisfactory overall, and provides a long-term strategic view for the school. The priorities for improvement are appropriate, identified after an analysis of pupils' test results and the school's monitoring and evaluation. The headteacher and senior members of staff monitor planning and teaching regularly, and this process has provided the headteacher with a broad understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of classroom practice. However, monitoring has not been sufficiently rigorous to identify where satisfactory teaching could be improved or to eliminate the inconsistencies in classroom practice.

29. Members of the senior management team are hard working, highly committed and supportive. The team has wide-ranging responsibility and there is a strong commitment to joint decision-making. It meets regularly to discuss issues, prior to whole-staff discussion. However, the team does not have a clear enough overview of the whole school's strengths and weaknesses and does not focus its own efforts sufficiently on raising standards and bringing about the necessary improvements with enough urgency. On a more positive note, the school has taken appropriate steps to develop the role of subject co-ordinators, and many are taking on their roles with initiative and enthusiasm, leading their subjects well.
30. The school has a commitment to equal opportunities and the inclusion of all pupils. In most areas, particularly in the provision for the pupils with special educational needs and ensuring the equal treatment of boys and girls, this works well. However, this commitment is not altogether effective, as the more able do not receive the challenge they need to reach their potential.
31. The governors make a purposeful contribution to the work and direction of the school and fulfil their statutory duties soundly. They show considerable enthusiasm, commitment and loyalty. There is a good balance of experience and expertise. The chair of the governing body is well informed and has a good working knowledge of the school. However, governors do not challenge the school sufficiently to bring about the planned improvements rapidly enough.
32. The school's day-to-day finances are in sound order. The school's administrator manages them efficiently and provides the headteacher and governors with up-to-date information, enabling them to monitor expenditure in a routine way. The substantial carry-forwards have been accumulated to cover shortfalls caused by falling rolls and high staffing costs. There is a satisfactory link between the planned expenditure and school improvement planning. However, the systems for allocating the budget do not always ensure that it is spent efficiently. Although the school's income is lower than the average, taking into consideration, the standards achieved, the quality of education and the leadership and management provided, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	485,959
Total expenditure	493,242
Expenditure per pupil	2,557

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	33,440
Balance carried forward to the next	26,157

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 **satisfactory**. Induction arrangements are good, and links with parents are very good, ensuring a smooth transition into school. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. However, the provision and leadership and management have deteriorated since the previous inspection, when they were good.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships are very secure and adults treat children with respect and care.
- The staff develop the children's independence well.
- Children benefit from being involved in whole-school global citizenship initiatives.

Commentary

33. Children enter the school at various stages of development. Most have had some pre-school experience and are confident and articulate. Some, however, find difficulty waiting their turn or sharing. The adults provide very good role models and children respond positively. Children of all abilities make good progress and achieve well through good teaching and most will exceed the Early Learning Goals by the time they reach Year 1. Staff build successfully on previous experience and know the families well. Despite the children only having been in school for a few weeks at the time of the inspection, they were settled and happy. Most display high levels of trust as they arrive each day, confidently leaving parents and helpers. Behaviour is good and most children are courteous and kind to each other. Children who are selected as 'prefects' take their responsibilities very seriously. Routines are well-established and children quickly develop independence in taking care of themselves. The children are involved in the school's excellent global citizenship programme right from the start. Participation in initiatives, ranging from storytelling partnerships to recycling, gives the school's youngest children a strong sense of belonging to a caring, close-knit community.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All staff develop children's speaking and listening skills well.
- Some independent activities lack structure and purpose.
- Reading is taught well.
- Children do not always have enough opportunities to write.

Commentary

34. Most children enter school as confident speakers, although not all are good listeners. Through sound teaching, the children achieve satisfactorily and most reach the Early Learning Goals by the time they move into Year 1. Staff build successfully on secure early literacy and language skills. In lessons where there is a high level of support, children benefit greatly from working in small groups and make good progress. Adults extend children's speaking skills most effectively in group or adult supported activities. Sometimes, such as when awaiting instructions during physical education lessons, children who lack maturity do not listen well.

35. Routines for reading in school are well established. The children love books and have many favourite stories. Reading forms an important part of many lessons and children make particularly good progress when they read together in a small group with an adult. However, whilst activities working with an adult are purposeful and productive, other work lacks structure. Children lose interest, particularly when tasks do not match their ability. They develop handwriting skills effectively and write names independently but they do not always have sufficient opportunities to practise writing by themselves. Evidence taken from previous work reveals that a heavy reliance on worksheet-based activities, combined with few examples of children's independent writing, restricts progress.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Worksheet-based activities do not always meet the needs of individual children.
- Independent activities do not provide enough challenge for children with well-developed mathematical understanding.
- Cramped classroom space restricts opportunities for practical activities.

Commentary

36. The children in the current reception class began school with secure mathematical understanding. Teaching and learning are sound and the children's achievement is satisfactory. By the time children move into Year 1, they are on course to reach, and a significant proportion to exceed, the Early Learning Goals. Standards are higher than is usual for their age.
37. The children enjoy working with numbers and have a good understanding of mathematical concepts, such as 'longer' or 'shorter' when, for example, discussing the length of ribbons on 'The Scarecrow's Hat'. Staff use appropriate counting songs and link work well to stories that capture children's interest and enthusiasm. Evidence taken from previous work, however, indicates that children of all abilities often do the same work at the same level. The more able children find the work too easy. Some complete worksheets using numbers to five, when they are confident with numbers to 30 and beyond. In addition, cramped classroom space restricts opportunities for children to learn through sand and water play. The children miss valuable opportunities to explore and investigate. This lack of opportunity for children to think independently goes some way towards explaining why many older pupils lack the confidence to apply their mathematical knowledge to problem solving.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have a good awareness of other people's lives.
- Computer skills develop well.
- Free-choice activities sometimes lack purpose and structure.

Commentary

38. Many children begin school with good first-hand knowledge of the development of animals through rural life. Children make steady progress and achieve satisfactorily through sound teaching. Most are on course to achieve, and many to exceed, the Early Learning Goals by the time they move into Year 1 and standards are higher than is usual for their age. Reception-aged children are fully involved in the school's many curricular initiatives, and gain valuable knowledge about other cultures and traditions, through their global citizenship links with Zambia. The school makes appropriate provision for teaching religious education. Children have good access to

computers and develop secure independent mouse and keyboard skills right from the start. The poor quality of the accommodation does, however, have a negative impact on provision. Because the classroom is temporary, it does not have facilities for Internet access or interactive whiteboards found in the rest of the school.

39. The children develop a good understanding of scientific concepts through investigations, such as sorting rough and smooth materials. Sometimes, however, although the children have opportunities to experiment with construction toys, the activities are unstructured and the children do not always make as much progress as they could, because tasks do not match individual needs or abilities.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children enjoy their work because staff making learning fun.
- Outdoor play facilities are inadequate.

Commentary

40. The children's physical development is similar to others this age on entry to school. The quality of teaching and learning is always sound, and children of all abilities achieve satisfactorily. The staff make best use of the facilities available, but the inadequate outdoor space restricts opportunities for physical development. Despite the limitations, most children are on course to achieve the expected level for this age by the time they reach Year 1.
41. The children demonstrate good pencil control in their writing and increasing confidence with scissors and glue spreaders when, for example, cutting and sticking their decorations for 'Mrs. Honey's Hat'. They display good co-ordination and interpret music well as they plough fields and drive tractors during a 'Tracks and Furrows' dance session. Even the most reticent child wanted to get involved because activities were exciting.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attractive displays stimulate interest and improve poor quality accommodation.
- Lack of space sometimes restricts opportunities for independent creative learning.
- Some activities are over directed and others lack purpose.

Commentary

42. On entry to the reception class, children's creative development is similar to others their age. Through sound teaching and learning, achievement is satisfactory. Most children will achieve the Early Learning Goals by the time they reach Year 1. Activities are linked well to favourite stories or topics. Children's hat designs, inspired by the story of 'Mrs Honey's Hat', show flair and individuality. Although children have reasonable access to a range of tools and equipment, they do not always have enough space to explore, create or let their imaginations take over. Sometimes, when tasks lack purpose, or are over directed, they stifle creativity and children do not make as much progress as they should. Displays are lively, interesting and relevant. They greatly enhance poor quality accommodation and give good insight into the creative development of individual children.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils throughout Key Stage 2 are not achieving well enough in writing.
- Pupils in Year 2 are achieving well this year.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, but the more able are insufficiently challenged.
- Teachers' planning does not consistently match the needs of the pupils.
- The development of language and literacy skills across the curriculum is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

43. The pupils' achievement overall is satisfactory, similar to the time of the previous inspection. The standards of the pupils currently in Year 2 are above average in reading, speaking and listening and average in writing. In the Key Stage 1 national tests in 2003, the results in reading were similar to the national average, but were below average in writing. In 2004 there was a slight improvement on these results, but standards were still below the national average overall. This showed that pupils had not achieved well in relation to their capabilities, during a period of disruption in staffing. Pupils currently in Year 2 are achieving well because lessons are well structured, based on the teacher's good knowledge and understanding of the National Literacy Strategy. Good, open-ended questioning enables pupils to explain their answers and allows the teacher to assess individual learning. Individual writing work is planned carefully for different ability levels. Teachers have high expectations, but one or two pupils, of middle and lower ability, are being over-challenged and are struggling to enjoy their reading.
44. The 2003 Key Stage 2 national tests were similar to the national average. They showed good improvement in 2004 and were above the national average and well above average when compared with similar schools. However, whilst most of the pupils in Year 6 had made satisfactory progress since they were in Year 2, the more able pupils had made less than average progress overall. Standards in the current Year 6 are average in reading, above in speaking and listening, but below in writing. In this year group there is a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs. However, even taking account of this, the standards in reading and writing do not reflect some of the more able pupils' capabilities. This is because most of them do not have the expected skills of spelling and punctuation, and their handwriting is not well formed.
45. Pupils throughout the school are very articulate, and most speak confidently and maturely about a range of subjects. Standards are above those expected for their ages and they are achieving satisfactorily. Sound opportunities are provided in lessons for the pupils to discuss and share ideas with a partner or in small groups. Most pupils listen carefully and politely to teachers and to each other. School productions and involvement with clubs and community activities add breadth to the opportunities for planning and discussing. These contribute well to pupils' social development.
46. Teaching is satisfactory overall. The teachers encourage the pupils to read a variety of texts and discuss ideas. As a result of these varied opportunities, the pupils' good command of spoken English enables them to write imaginatively and use appropriate sentence structures, but most do not understand how to use a library. The teachers' marking of work is generally inadequate to help pupils improve and extend their work. The school has identified the need to improve writing and has begun to implement some general strategies, such as weekly spellings. However, as yet it has not been sufficiently rigorous in analysing the specific reasons for the low standards and taking action to address them, and there is an over-reliance on printed worksheets, so that the pupils do not have enough opportunity to write independently.
47. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because they are supported well. The school's generous level of support enables all classes to have support during English lessons and, additionally, there is specific support for those pupils with special educational needs. The

less able pupils receive additional help through a range of strategies, such as 'reading recovery', 'additional literacy' and 'further literacy'. The more able pupils are catered for less well. In lessons, individual tasks, particularly in Key Stage 2, are usually the same for all pupils. Therefore, whilst the lower-ability pupils cope well, because of the good support, the tasks are rarely sufficiently challenging for the more able pupils. Teachers do not use their knowledge of the pupils' attainment and ability to plan work at an appropriate level. Pupils throughout the school have very good attitudes and behave very well. They are prepared to work hard, even when the tasks are inappropriate. Individual star targets have recently been introduced to help pupils identify what they are working towards in writing, but, as yet, most do not know how or what they can do to improve.

48. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The subject leader is aware of what needs to be done and has undertaken some responsibility for improving standards by analysing information from the National Curriculum test results to show where the weaknesses lie. The monitoring of teaching is not, however, sufficiently rigorous to ensure that planning is always matched to pupils' needs and capabilities, particularly those of the more able pupils in Key Stage 2.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

49. The development of language and literacy across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. Although pupils have many opportunities to listen and speak in other subjects of the curriculum, opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills are insufficient. Pupils spend a lot of time listening to their teachers, and they use the Internet well to read about history, but other learning materials are frequently limited to printed worksheets or pictures. Literacy skills are not usually highlighted in the planning of lessons other than English, although some teachers do this well. For example, in a Key Stage 1 information and communication technology lesson, punctuation and the writing of lists was continued from the literacy lesson. Occasionally, key vocabulary is identified, for example in a physical education lesson, but this is not done consistently.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are starting to improve at Key Stage 1.
- The more able pupils underachieve overall, particularly at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Data analysis, target setting and tracking are not used effectively enough in the quest for higher standards.
- Problem-solving skills are not developed systematically from the start, and older pupils find it difficult to think for themselves.

Commentary

50. Results of the 2003 national tests indicated that standards at the end of Key Stage 1 were below average when compared to schools nationally and well below average when compared to similar schools. Although standards fluctuate from year to year, the overall trend was downwards. Results in the 2004 tests are better, with a substantial rise.
51. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2, which were above the national average in 2003, were average in 2004 when compared both nationally and with similar schools. The standards of the pupils currently in Year 6 are not expected to be high, because there are more pupils with special educational needs than usual in this year group. Achievement is satisfactory, and similar to the time of the previous inspection.
52. Although there is much work to be done, there are encouraging signs of improvement, particularly at Key Stage 1. In lessons where the pupils with special educational needs receive additional support, they make good progress. After a period of staffing difficulties in Year 2,

provision in this year group is now stable and pupils are making noticeably more progress than in the past. The picture is not quite so positive at the end of Key Stage 2. The school is rightly concerned and has sought advice on raising standards. In addition, the boys regularly outperform girls, although no noticeable difference in achievement was detected during the inspection. Occasionally, however, in the oral part of lessons, boys dominate, and teachers allow girls to sit passively. Pupils who demonstrate mature mathematical thinking receive little to challenge them. This group underachieves. In general, by the time pupils reach Year 6, although they have studied a wide range of topics, some pupils lack depth of understanding, because coverage has been too superficial.

53. Evidence taken from examples of previous work, reveals why pupils lack the confidence to apply their knowledge to practical situations and problem solving. The emphasis is too heavy on worksheet-based activities, in both the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, and pupils have little opportunity to think for themselves. The more able pupils make least progress, because the work is undemanding. By the time pupils enter Key Stage 2, although they develop secure numeracy skills and have a good grasp of most topics, they are already too reliant on adult support and lack the confidence to experiment and investigate for themselves. Some teachers compound the problem because they do not teach this aspect of the mathematics curriculum effectively enough.
54. The school is aware that pupils' use of information and communication technology needs further development. The introduction of timetabled sessions in the computer suite, and interactive whiteboards, herald a positive step in the right direction. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is satisfactory overall. Some good teaching was observed in Year 4. Teaching assistants make a strong positive contribution to pupils' learning. All teachers use warm-up sessions well to engage pupils' interest. They develop speaking and listening skills effectively through good quality discussion. They focus well on good mental recall. Pupils in Year 6 value 'Masterclass' sessions, when the teacher gives further explanation if they have not understood. Where the teaching is good, group activities are well matched to different needs and abilities, and there is a good level of challenge for the more able. In too many lessons, however, pupils of different abilities complete the same work at the same level. Many activities are worksheet or workbook based. More able pupils find this work uninspiring and easy; less able pupils struggle unless they have support. There are too many inconsistencies and the lack of a corporate approach towards raising standards is a major factor in the school's inability to move forward at a faster rate. Planning varies from barely adequate in some classes to very detailed in others. The quality, quantity and standard of work do not reflect ability, or age, accurately. Indeed, examples of some pupils' previous work reveal superficial coverage, inadequate volume, weak marking and poor presentation.
55. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has a good basic understanding of strengths and weaknesses, and a sound sense of direction for the subject, but does not have a clear enough overview of provision or an understanding of why some pupils are not making as much progress as they should. Consequently, inconsistencies in practice have not been identified. There are, however, signs that the school is moving in the right direction. Assessment procedures are developing well and data analysis is starting to be used to track the progress of individual pupils more effectively. The use of target setting is not yet firmly established, however, and the school does not use assessment effectively enough as an important tool in raising standards.

Mathematics across the curriculum

56. The provision for mathematics across the curriculum is adequate. The school has focused much of its attention on improving mental skills and on raising standards. It has rightly recognised the need to develop mathematical skills more effectively through other subjects. Although there are some good isolated examples, such as using negative numbers to measure temperature in science work, opportunities tend to occur incidentally, rather than as part of systematic planning.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are secure in their scientific knowledge.
- Their skills of scientific enquiry are not developed sufficiently.
- Teachers are making inadequate use of assessment to provide pupils with work that is suited to their ability, particularly the more able.

Commentary

57. Standards are average overall and the pupils are achieving satisfactorily. The teachers' assessments at the end of Year 2 and the national test results at the end of Year 6 in 2003 were similar to the national average. In 2004, results improved and were above average both nationally and when compared with similar schools; comparable with the standards seen at the time of the previous inspection. The pupils currently in Years 2 and 6 have a secure grasp of scientific facts. The pupils in Year 2 undertake experiments on aspects of their work successfully and show an understanding of the subject above that expected. For example, even early in the year, many pupils have a secure knowledge of the main features of the human body and a flowering plant, and they identify the items needed to sustain life. They recognise and name common materials, and describe their various uses articulately. The pupils have a sound understanding of how materials can be changed by heating.
58. In the present Year 6, the standards this year are broadly average. The pupils carry out a range of experiments, using suitable equipment, making observations and recording their findings. The pupils readily explain many of the life-processes of humans, as well as discussing, for example, the importance and function of the heart and lungs. They have a sound knowledge of forces and materials. However, few are confident enough to select their own resources and organise their own experiments, and this area of their work is not developed well enough at either key stage.
59. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Lessons are planned soundly, with teachers, throughout the school, making adequate use of practical activities. The teachers have secure subject knowledge, and provide clear instructions and helpful demonstrations of the work that is to be undertaken, but do not give the pupils sufficient opportunity to develop their skills of enquiry. They support all pupils in turn and this helps them to make satisfactory progress. The teachers sometimes use the expertise of parents and the community to enrich the pupils' experience, and these occasions can be very rewarding. The visits of an expert astronomer to Year 5 lessons entranced the pupils and developed their understanding of the work of scientists very well. However, the teaching is unsatisfactory when the lesson is not planned carefully enough to ensure that all pupils learned from the lesson.
60. Assessment is unsatisfactory. Although the school keeps track of the pupils' performance, this data is not used well enough on a day-to-day basis. Planning rarely makes appropriate allowance for the provision of work for the needs of different pupils. They are usually presented with the same activities, with the result that, on occasions, some find the work too difficult, while others find it undemanding. The teachers mark pupils' work regularly, but although they sometimes add useful comments of support and advice to help the pupils develop their work, this is rare. Furthermore, the over-use of worksheets does not necessarily encourage and help pupils develop their skills in presenting their work logically and systematically or contribute sufficiently to the development of their literacy and numeracy skills. The pupils rarely record the results of their scientific practical work in their own ways and in some classes the work of all pupils is very similar. Much of their work is not presented well. Information and communication technology makes insufficient contribution to the subject.
61. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The co-ordinator supports her colleagues adequately, and her leadership is satisfactory, given the large burden of responsibility she carries. Although she rarely monitors the work being produced, she uses the analysis of test results to identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' current performance and pinpoint areas where improvement is needed.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils do well at Key Stage 1.
- Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject enable them to teach with confidence and plan lessons well.
- The co-ordinator is providing very good leadership.

Commentary

62. Pupils achieve well in Key Stage 1 and reach standards which are above those expected for their age. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Even at this early stage in the year, pupils in Year 2 work confidently through menus to access the program they need and have a good knowledge and understanding of how to use the space-bar, arrow keys and return/enter keys. They are aware that information and communication technology can be used for a variety of purposes such as word processing, accessing information and producing graphs. Pupils in Year 6 are achieving satisfactorily. They have recently made good progress, from a low point, and are now reaching standards appropriate for their age. They use the Internet competently, and are beginning to understand the strengths and weaknesses of different search engines. They have used 'PowerPoint' to make presentations which include text, graphics and sound. However, because of gaps in their learning from previous years, their knowledge and understanding of how to make things happen by using the technology is minimal.
63. The range of evidence, including scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning, shows that the quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers use their good understanding of the subject well, and all pupils make good gains in their knowledge and use of computers. Throughout the school, teachers are already using the recently installed interactive whiteboards with considerable expertise to reinforce previous learning and introduce new skills at the start of lessons. Little time is wasted as pupils move to the computer suite and most settle down quickly and work hard on appropriate tasks. They share the use of a computer with a partner sensibly.
64. Leadership and management are very good. The subject leader is knowledgeable and enthusiastic and works hard to generate enthusiasm and support colleagues. She has been instrumental in ensuring that there is now a scheme in place for the teaching of skills. Whilst half-termly monitoring of teachers' evaluations provides insights into what is being taught, there is still no monitoring of teachers' planning. A sound system for the assessment of pupils' progress has very recently been introduced. A very popular computer club, run by the co-ordinator, enriches the pupils' learning.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

65. The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. It is good in history where pupils research the Internet for information, for example, about the Victorians in Year 6, and about Egyptology in Year 5. Word-processing is also used for history and, occasionally, for English writing. Although the teachers now introduce their lessons using the interactive whiteboard, the pupils use information and communication technology insufficiently for many areas of the curriculum. While there is evidence that information and communication technology is used in most subjects, this does not happen frequently enough in each class. The school and co-ordinator are well aware of the need to improve this aspect of their work, and the co-ordinator has been instrumental in ensuring that it is part of the current development plan.

HUMANITIES

No judgement is made on the overall quality of provision in **history**, as only one lesson was seen.

66. From the evidence available, indications are that standards in **history** are similar to those in other schools and that pupils throughout the school achieve satisfactorily, as they did at the time of the previous inspection. However, there are inconsistencies in the depth of coverage, the quality of work produced and the development of skills. In some year groups, such as Year 4, topics are covered in sufficient depth to ensure pupils gain a secure understanding of the main events and changes in the periods studied. Pupils in Year 5 make good use of information and communication technology skills to present topics that they have researched independently. There are good links with other subjects, such as art and science, and very effective use of visits and visitors to enhance pupils' learning. During the week of the inspection, a visiting astronomer linked pupils' science work on the planets to the topic on Ancient Egypt very skilfully. Pupils made good gains in their knowledge because they were interested.
67. As with many subjects, there are too many inconsistencies in practice, some of which have gone undetected. The volume of work in Year 6 is very small and does not do justice to the ability of many pupils. Some year groups are totally reliant on worksheet-based activities that neither inspire nor challenge. The quality of presentation and marking varies considerably between classes. In addition, some teachers do not have high enough expectations of their pupils and more able pupils often do not achieve the standards of which they are capable. History is not as high profile a subject as geography. A temporary co-ordinator is starting to acquire an accurate overview of provision. Assessment is not yet firmly in place, but self-evaluations are used effectively in some classes. Homework is purposeful and supports class work well. The school is currently well placed to move the subject forward.

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership is very good.
- Involvement in global citizenship initiatives makes a strong positive contribution towards pupils' cultural and social development.
- Map work skills are weak at the end of both key stages.
- There is considerable inconsistency in the quality and quantity of work produced.
- There are examples of good links between geography and other subjects in the curriculum.
- Not all teachers have high enough expectations, particularly of the more able.

Commentary

68. Standards are similar to those expected at the end of both key stages and to those at the time of the previous inspection. The pupils demonstrate above average knowledge and understanding of other cultures and environmental issues, through their global citizenship work and strong links with Zambia. This aspect of provision has gone from strength to strength since the previous inspection. The school richly deserves its International School Award. However, global work forms only part of the geography curriculum. Evidence taken from previous work and discussion with pupils reveals many inconsistencies, and a particular weakness in the development of map-work skills. For these reasons, achievement overall is satisfactory rather than good.
69. The disruption caused by recent staffing problems in Year 2 has taken its toll on standards at the end of Key Stage 1. Staffing is now far more stable, and there are encouraging signs the current class is back on track. There are examples of good practice. In some year groups, such as Year 4, teachers encourage independent research and develop writing skills well. The pupils give good perceptive evaluations of their understanding of topics, such as 'Weather around the World'. In Year 5, work on 'Survival in the Rain Forest' is of good quality and is linked very well to problem-solving work in design and technology. This topic is presented as a play and is used very effectively to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills.
70. In Year 1, the influence of links with Mufilira School in Zambia comes through very strongly. The pupils also develop a good understanding of world geography through their 'Countess Gytha Airways' work. Activities are interesting and exciting in this class and pupils succeed because

they want to learn. In contrast, pupils in Year 6 do not cover topics in enough depth to achieve standards in line with their ability. Although pupils are articulate and enthusiastic about global citizenship, they have very little recall of some other aspects of the geography curriculum. They demonstrate only a basic knowledge of map-work. Presentation, quality and quantity vary considerably from year to year and there is an inconsistent approach towards developing research skills systematically. There are some good isolated examples of information and communication technology and numeracy skills being used well in topics, but opportunities tend to be incidental, rather than planned, and the school is aware that this area needs further development.

71. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. In the small sample of lessons observed, teaching ranged from satisfactory to very good. However, additional evidence, taken from examples of previous work, emphasises the inconsistencies in teaching. Where teaching is very good, there is a sense of fun and challenge. Pupils in Year 1 were highly motivated by the comprehensive variety of maps placed in front of them. All too often in some other lessons, however, teachers' expectations are not high enough and there is little to challenge the more able. Pupils of all abilities complete the same work at the same level. The quality of presentation and marking varies considerably. The volume and depth of coverage is also an issue.
72. Assessment procedures are simple but effective. They give an adequate indication of what pupils know and understand. The school's approach towards assessment is not yet consistent, however, and this has been earmarked for further development. The subject is led very well and managed soundly by a skilled practitioner, who leads by example. Documentation is of high quality and priorities for development are accurate. The co-ordinator has a very clear sense of direction for the subject and offers good support and guidance to colleagues. Staffing instability and limitations on time have made in-depth monitoring difficult. This lack of monitoring has meant that inconsistencies have largely gone unnoticed. The weaknesses in pupils' map-work skills have been recognised, however, and swift action has been taken to remedy the gaps in pupils' knowledge. Artefacts and resources linked to Zambian work are of high quality. The pupils who participate in the Global Citizenship Club demonstrate exceptional maturity in their approach towards environmental issues.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- At the end of both key stages, standards are below those in other schools and the pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory.
- Teaching is unsatisfactory and the subject does not receive sufficient time and emphasis.
- Leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory because pupils' achievement, teaching and learning are not evaluated effectively.

Commentary

73. Standards are below those in other schools, at both key stages, and have deteriorated since the time of the previous inspection. The pupils do not develop an adequate knowledge of Christianity or other major world religions they should study, such as Judaism, Sikhism, Hinduism and Islam. They do not have a clear understanding of the impact of faith on the lives of believers, and their knowledge of symbols, beliefs and celebrations is minimal. Although there is an appropriate scheme of work, developed locally, teachers are not using it effectively and the pupils do not have an adequate coverage of the subject. Consequently, their knowledge is disjointed and the curriculum is unsatisfactory. Not enough time is spent on the subject and there are some long periods in between the lessons the pupils have. The subject is often confused with personal and social education, and the key areas of faith and its impact on the life of believers are often lost.
74. Two lessons were observed. The teaching at Key Stage 1 was satisfactory but at Key Stage 2 it was unsatisfactory. However, the range of evidence demonstrates that the teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall, that the teaching strategies used are limited in range, and that the methods are often dull and uninspiring. The older pupils report, and their books demonstrate, that they watch videos or listen to their teachers reading, and then record and illustrate what they have seen and heard. The teaching demonstrates a lack of imagination in motivating and involving the pupils. There have been visitors who illustrate aspects of world faiths, such as the contribution made by a local clergyman, but the interest they generated has not been maintained during the school year. As a result, standards are not high enough by the end of both key stages, and the pupils in Years 2 and 6 report that they often do not enjoy the subject.
75. Little work is recorded and when it is, the work set is the same for all pupils, so that it is too easy for the more able and others are given tasks which are too hard for them. Much of the work in some classes remains unfinished, and is often careless and untidy. Marking is unsatisfactory, being rarely more than acknowledgement that work has been completed and occasional praise. Pupils have a limited understanding of topics which they have covered as they have moved through the school. The subject co-ordinator has had little opportunity to monitor standards in religious education or the quality of provision. In addition, a lack of assessment and recording of what has previously been taught makes it difficult for teachers to know exactly what each pupil knows, understands and can do. These factors contribute to the unsatisfactory leadership and management in the subject.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

No lessons were observed in **design and technology** during the inspection, therefore, no overall judgement can be made about the quality of provision.

76. From a scrutiny of the available pupils' work and discussions with pupils and teachers, it is evident that standards in **design and technology** are similar to those in other schools at the end of Key Stage 1 and the pupils' achievement is satisfactory. However, there is insufficient coverage of the subject at Key Stage 2, and standards are below those expected and achievement is unsatisfactory. Although standards have been maintained at Key Stage 1, they have declined at Key Stage 2. At Key Stage 1, the pupils have made models and artefacts from a range of materials, such as food, junk materials and fabric. They design their models and evaluate the outcomes simply. At Key Stage 2, standards have declined since the time of the previous inspection. There are examples of pupils' planning and designing, but these are well below the standard expected. While some pupils have made models at home, which are of a higher standard, examples of products they have made in school indicate that finishing skills are lower than those in other schools, and there is very little difference in quality between the work of the more able and the less able.
77. The pupils have made artefacts and models, such as models of houses in Year 1, story books with slides and pop-ups in Year 4, and shelters in Year 5. They make plans for their models, but these are skimpy and while they show the resources to be used, few show measurements. Consequently, the subject makes little contribution to the development of the pupils' numeracy skills. While the pupils evaluate the effectiveness of their designs and, in Year 6, the designs of others, this is at a very superficial level. The pop-up books made by pupils in Year 4 are of the

standard expected for Year 2. By the end of Year 6, the pupils have had the opportunity to experience a range of tools but the range of materials is limited and they have very little experience of designing and making moving models. They do not develop an adequate knowledge of mechanisms, or the ability to use them in their own designs. They rarely investigate or evaluate other products. Apart from those who attend the computer club, the use of information and communication technology to develop their knowledge or own ideas is not a common feature of their work.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Insufficient attention is given to developing the pupils' creativity.
- The work in pupils' sketchbooks, and the display of their work, varies considerably in quality.

Commentary

78. Standards at the end of both key stages are similar to those found in other schools, and similar to those found at the time of the previous inspection at Key Stage 1. The pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Evidence taken from two lesson observations at Key Stage 2, examples of previous work, and discussions with pupils indicate that pupils of all abilities achieve satisfactorily. Standards are not as high at the end of Key Stage 2 as they were at the time of the previous inspection because art and design has not been given as much emphasis. However, despite a reduction in the time given to the subject, pupils still experience an adequate range of media and study topics in reasonable breadth and depth.
79. The pupils in Year 2 develop a satisfactory range of skills. Their self-portraits and collages are completed carefully. They have studied the work of Andy Goldsworthy and made their own leaf pictures in a similar style. Pupils in Year 5 display sound artistic skill in, for example, painting large pictures and making coiled-clay pots to illustrate their Egyptian topic and, in Year 6, the pupils have made competent models to link with their Victorian studies. Many of the older pupils produce careful and accurate observational drawings. There are some opportunities for the pupils to use information and communication technology to support their learning. However, much of the art work on display is over-directed and there is little evidence of the pupils being given opportunities to make choices and develop their own approaches. Pupils in Year 6 talked with enthusiasm and knowledge about the study of Paul Klee's work they did in Year 4, but they have little recall of the work of other artists, other than some paintings by Monet and Picasso. There is a strong link with African art, through the link with Zambia, and some drawings completed by Zambian pupils are displayed in the school.
80. In the small number of lessons observed, teaching was at least satisfactory. The broader evidence from work on display, the use of sketchbooks and discussion with the pupils indicates that the overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Displays celebrate work across the whole curriculum. They vary considerably in quality. Some are attractive and displayed with care; others lack attention to detail and are poorly presented. Sketchbooks are used for the appropriate purpose in a few classes, but in the main they are not, and many have little work in them.

Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in singing are good.
- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to compose.
- Provision for peripatetic music tuition is good.

Commentary

81. Pupils throughout the school sing well, and this aspect has improved since the last inspection. In lessons and assemblies, they sing tunefully, enthusiastically and with good articulation. The range of songs learnt is good, teachers drawing on music from a range of different cultures. Since the last inspection, the school has begun to implement a scheme of work to enable teachers to cover all aspects of music. This has increased teachers' confidence and is starting to raise standards. The pupils have the opportunity to use tuned and untuned instruments to accompany singing, but opportunities to create their own music, including through the use of information and communication technology, are not sufficient.
82. The school encourages pupils to take advantage of the good peripatetic tuition that is available, and about a quarter of the pupils, mostly Key Stage 2, learn to play an instrument. These include keyboard, guitar, accordion and violin as well as brass and wind instruments. The intensity of the small group and the good teaching ensure that the pupils make very good gains in their knowledge and understanding of music, learning dynamics, notation and key signatures. Most achieve well and reach a good standard.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good provision for games and swimming helps pupils reach standards above those expected in these aspects of the subject.
- Pupils' learning is well supported through a good range of extra-curricular activities.

Commentary

83. Pupils are taught a good range of games skills which enable them to succeed well at sports such as netball, hockey, rugby and football. The luxury of having their own swimming pool also ensures that pupils swim from a very early age and to a high standard. However, in the lessons observed, the pupils were given insufficient opportunities to evaluate their own performances and to seek ways to improve even further. The person responsible for the games aspect of the subject is knowledgeable and enthusiastic and contributes to the high standards reached. These good standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
84. The teaching of physical education is at least satisfactory and is good in games. The school allocates appropriate lengths of time for the different aspects but teachers are less confident in gymnastics and dance because their knowledge and understanding is insecure. The school is aware of this but as yet has taken little action to address it. Accommodation has been improved since the last inspection, creating more hall space for indoor lessons, but the absence of an overall co-ordinator for physical education contributes to the imbalance of achievement. Leadership and management are satisfactory.

85. The school provides a very good range of sports activities outside lessons, including biathlon, (running and swimming). These enhance the pupils' learning and support their social development. A good number of pupils take part in these sports and play matches against local schools. They usually do particularly well in local swimming galas. The governors and parents play a major role in ensuring that sports and swimming maintain a high profile.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

86. Only one lesson was observed in **personal, social and health education and citizenship**, and, therefore, it is not possible to make a judgement about provision. However, it is evident that the pupils achieve well. The school is committed to providing an environment in which pupils are encouraged to respect others and learn about living in a global society. Values are promoted securely, through the recently established well-planned scheme of work, which provides good guidance for teachers. A sense of citizenship and caring for others is encouraged well through class personal and social education lessons, and activities beyond the school day greatly enrich these opportunities. The links with Zambia, which pervade all areas of school life, are particularly valuable in helping the pupils learn about and respect the cultures and lifestyles of others.

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	4
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 (ethos)	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
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	2
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	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	4
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).