

INSPECTION REPORT

DR SOUTH'S CE VA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Islip, near Kidlington

LEA area: Oxfordshire

Unique reference number: 123195

Headteacher: Mrs Kay Ings

Lead inspector: Deborah Zachary

Dates of inspection: 3rd – 5th May 2005

Inspection number: 266751

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	75
School address:	Bletchingdon Road Islip Kidlington Oxfordshire
Postcode:	OX5 2TQ
Telephone number:	01865 372323
Fax number:	01865 372323
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Tim Goodfellow
Date of previous inspection:	26 th April 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is smaller than most others, and serves three rural villages near to Oxford; however, more than half the children come from outside the catchment area. Overall, the pupils' socio-economic backgrounds are above average, and the percentage of pupils claiming free school meals is smaller than normally found. The large majority of pupils are from white British backgrounds, with small minorities from a range of other ethnic groups; however, all pupils speak English as their first language. The standards of pupils who enter the school in Reception (Year R) vary very widely from year to year. In some years standards on entry have been well above average and in other years well below average. Significant numbers of pupils, well above what is seen nationally, join the school or leave it between Year R and Year 6. The number of pupils with special educational needs is currently well below average and no pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

The school's Year R pupils are taught in a Partnership Foundation Stage Unit with Islip Playgroup.

The school received the Oxfordshire Special Conservation award in 2004.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2940	Deborah Zachary	Lead inspector	Mathematics, science, information and communication technology, special educational needs.
9789	Leigh Barclay	Lay inspector	
14997	Val Emery	Team inspector	English, art and design, history, personal, social and health education and citizenship, foundation stage.

The inspection contractor was:

Serco QAA
Herringston Barn
Herringston
Dorchester
Dorset
DT2 9PU

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school that provides good value for money. The headteacher is leading it very well and teaching and achievement are good. The pupils are happy and safe, and are well prepared with the skills they will need for the future. Many improvements have been made over the last two years. Further developments are constrained by the accommodation, but a new Foundation Unit building - for Reception (Year R) pupils and the Islip Playgroup - is under construction.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher prioritises very well and has a strong vision for the development of the school.
- The pupils have very good attitudes to learning and develop very strong moral and spiritual values.
- Children in Year R are not progressing as well as older pupils because the accommodation is not finished and ways of working with the playgroup are not yet well established.
- Achievement in English is very good.
- Pupils are assessed well and given very good guidance on how to improve.
- Teaching is monitored, but monitoring does not focus enough on subject-specific issues.
- Links with the community contribute very well to a broad and interesting curriculum.
- There is no designated quiet area in the playground.

The school has improved well since the last inspection. The key issues have been addressed well. Pupils' progress was satisfactory in 1999 and is now good. Teaching has improved, with more good teaching and no unsatisfactory teaching seen on this inspection. The school continues to improve, and the school's leadership shows a good capacity to improve it further.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

In this report, "standards" is a judgement that compares the levels the pupils are reaching in their subjects to levels reached nationally by pupils of the same age. "Achievement" is a measure of how well pupils are doing - whether standards are high enough, taking their progress and their capability into account.

The school only has a small number of pupils in each year group, so the test scores of one pupil or absence of one pupil can have a big effect on overall grades. In addition, the pupils' standards when they start school vary greatly from year to year. For these reasons, the grades in the table above should be interpreted with caution and the changes of grades from year to year are not significant. In order to assess how well pupils were doing, inspectors looked carefully at the progress of individuals. In 2004, achievement by Year 6 was satisfactory.

Achievement is now good overall. It is currently good in Years 1 to 6 and satisfactory in Year R. Standards are below average in Year R, average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. Achievement in Year R is limited by the current accommodation, which constrains both teaching and the partnership with the playgroup. Pupils are doing very well in English in Years 3 to 6 and in information and communication technology (ICT) in Years 1 and 2. They are doing well in mathematics. In science, the oldest pupils are achieving very well in their knowledge and understanding of facts, but are not as good at investigations. Pupils with special educational needs are achieving as well as other pupils.

Pupils' personal qualities are good. Their attitudes to school and to learning are very good and their behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, with strengths in spiritual and moral development.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching is good overall, as is learning. Teachers plan carefully and pupils are made well aware of what they are trying to learn in each lesson. Homework links well to what is happening in class. Relationships are good, as is discipline. The curriculum is good, and is enhanced well by extra activities. Pupils are looked after well, their progress is tracked well and they are given very good advice on how to improve. There are good links with parents and other schools and very good links with the community. The accommodation severely limits the provision for pupils in Year R. They share the hall with the playgroup while purpose-built accommodation is being constructed, and must clear things away for school assemblies. The teacher is not able to establish some routines and activities that would be usual for this age group. As a result, teaching in Year R is satisfactory rather than better.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. However, leadership is better than management. Both headteacher and governors have a vision for how the school is to develop, and the headteacher has done a very good job in driving much of the improvement that is underway. She has ensured that the most important changes have taken priority. In this small school, the headteacher teaches for half of the week, and so her time for management is limited. Some aspects of management are good - for example, financial planning and day-to-day organisation - and monitoring of the overall performance of teachers is secure and well linked to the school's overall development. However, other monitoring of teaching is not frequent enough and does not focus enough on requirements of specific subjects or on age-related needs - for example, the needs of children in Year R. Subject co-ordinators are not involved enough in monitoring their subjects. In Year R, there is some lack of clarity in roles between school and playgroup staff. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body has a number of new members. All are supportive, and

statutory requirements are met, but not all are confident in questioning and challenging about school matters.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Both parents and pupils are well satisfied. Both feel the pupils make good progress and are well taught. However, both have some concerns over behaviour in the playground. Inspectors saw no bad behaviour, but games of chase are robust and space is limited. Smaller children sometimes have to stand still and wait for others to run past. The playtimes are appropriately supervised, but there is no designated quiet area where individuals can be sure no one will run and shout.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve provision for pupils in Year R.
- Monitor teaching more frequently and in a more focussed way.
- Provide a quiet area at playtime.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is good in Years 1 to 6 and satisfactory in Year R. Overall standards are below average in Year R, average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in English is very good.
- Pupils in Year R are not achieving as well as older pupils.
- The oldest pupils show a very good knowledge and understanding of scientific facts, but are not as good at investigations.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are achieving very well in ICT.

Commentary

1. The school has a small number of pupils in each successive year group, and this means that the performance of one pupil can have a big effect on overall grades. A significant number of pupils start or leave the school between Years 2 and 6, so their results in Year 6 are not all due to the quality of teaching in this school. In addition, the intake varies widely from year to year. For example, in the current Year 3, pupils who started the school in Year R had well above average standards on entry. In some other year groups, those who started in Year R had well below average standards. All these things mean that data on results must be interpreted with caution. In order to make judgements on achievement, inspectors looked closely at the progress individual pupils make through Year R, between Year 1 and Year 2, and between Years 3 and 6. They particularly looked at the progress of pupils who had been in the school for the full period.

2. In 2004, Year 6 pupils' achievement in the national tests was satisfactory. The value added by the school, a calculation based on the progress pupils make between Years 2 and 6, was average. They did well in English and not well enough in science. In science, and to some extent also in mathematics, the pupils who were higher attainers when they were in Year 2 did not do well enough by Year 6. Those who had been middle or lower attainers made satisfactory or good progress. The 2004 Year 2 pupils also achieved satisfactorily in their national tests. Many were very able on entry to the school, and standards in the tests were well above average overall. Standards in reading and mathematics were better than in writing. In writing, no pupils gained the top score possible, though nearly half did so in reading.

The tables shown below give average points scores for pupils. Each level in the national curriculum is given a number of points. Pupils are expected to move on one point every term, so if a school's scores are one point above the national, their pupils are, typically, a term ahead.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.5 (27.0)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	27.5 (27.8)	27.0 (26.8)
science	27.5 (29.3)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 12 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	17.8 (15.9)	15.8 (15.7)
mathematics	15.8 (13.5)	14.6 (14.6)
science	19.7 (15.9)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 15 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. The achievement of current Year 6 and Year 2 pupils is better than the achievement demonstrated by the 2004 national test results. In Year 2, though standards are only average overall, pupils have made good progress to reach those standards since they entered the school. Records show that on entry, standards were well below average in some areas of learning. Standards are currently above average in ICT, average in English and below average in mathematics and science. Pupils are achieving very well in ICT and well in the other subjects inspected. In ICT, pupils have had the benefit of access to good resources with the network room adjoining their classroom, and their skills in exchanging and sharing information are particularly strong. Following last year's results, the school has been working to raise standards in writing, and has done this successfully. All pupils, boys and girls, the most able and those with special needs, are achieving well.
4. Only seven of the 12 pupils currently in Year 6 have been in the school since Year 2. Their current standards, as assessed by teachers, indicate that the value added by the school is at least good. Inspectors largely agreed with the teachers' assessment of standards in Year 6. Standards in English are well above average and those in

mathematics and science above average. Standards in ICT are average. Pupils as a whole in Year 6 are achieving very well in English and well in the other subjects inspected. Their standards are lower in ICT because they started with lower standards: ICT was a key issue for action in the last inspection. The school has focussed on raising standards in English and on improving progress for the higher attainers in mathematics and in science. This has been very successful in English, and in Years 3 and 4 in mathematics and science. In Years 5 and 6 the progress of higher attainers has improved overall in mathematics and has improved in terms of knowledge and understanding of science. However, higher attainers could be more fluent in mental calculation in mathematics, and in science some do not have the advanced investigation skills that they should. Overall, however, taking into account how well the highest attainers do in English and in scientific knowledge, the most able, gifted and talented achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs are also achieving well.

5. In Year R, temporary difficulties are limiting pupils' achievement. A new purpose-built Foundation Unit is being constructed. Currently, the class has no base other than the school hall, so all equipment must be cleared for some parts of the day. The class is taught with the Islip Playgroup as a shared Foundation Stage (the Foundation Stage covers pupils in Year R and younger pupils not yet of school age), but as the accommodation and ways of working are interim arrangements, the staff are not yet working effectively as a team. Though individual teaching and interactions with pupils are good, pupils' progress is satisfactory rather than better.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The pupils' attitudes to school and to learning are very good. Their behaviour is good. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' very good attitudes to school and to learning contribute positively to their achievement.
- Pupils' spiritual development is very good, enriched by the close links with the village church.
- Pupils' moral development is very good.
- The behaviour of the older pupils in the playground can be boisterous.

Commentary

6. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning in lessons. They generally listen attentively, are keen to answer questions and undertake tasks enthusiastically. This is largely the result of careful, calm organization, and teaching that is both planned and paced well. Teachers maintain a high level of interest and usually set challenging tasks to ensure that pupils of all levels of attainment have the opportunity to achieve well. In Year R, standards of personal, social and emotional development are below average, with the accommodation also limiting pupils' achievement in this area. For example, it is harder to develop independence skills when resources have to be cleared completely away after each session. Nevertheless, the children are making satisfactory progress.
7. Standards of behaviour are good in the classroom and in assemblies. In the playground, which is at present very restricted while building work is being carried out, the older children run and chase boisterously which, parents report, intimidates the

younger children. However, though the speed may be intimidating, the pupils are aware of younger ones and there is no intention to frighten them. Behaviour itself is not a problem. It is rather that there is no designated quiet area where those children who are worried by the older ones can play. Pupils are fully aware of the standards expected and required by staff. These are reinforced by rewards and sanctions which the pupils respect. The strong Christian ethos of the school also contributes to the pupils' understanding of right and wrong. They treat each other with courtesy and friendliness. The occasional minor incidents of bullying are quickly addressed. There have been no exclusions.

8. The spiritual development of the pupils is a strong feature of the school. On a visit to the church for assembly, the children paused at the door before entering for a moment of quiet and reflection. Some classes end with a prayer. Pupils talk about their environmental area in terms of its beauty and the pleasure of watching nature.
9. Pupils are socially aware. They play harmoniously together and readily help and support each other in the classroom. The many out-of-school activities and events, which include an annual residential week on the Isle of Wight, also promote their social development. Teachers provide a positive lead in engendering positive relationships by giving frequent praise and encouragement and by recognizing the individual needs of every child. The pupils have a strong sense of community and are articulate and positive contributors. They treat their school and resources with respect. Where they are encouraged to develop independence and take responsibility, they respond very well. They have begun to make contributions to the school's development plan through the school council.
10. The school exploits a wide range of local opportunities to enrich the pupils' cultural experience. Assemblies are regularly held in the village church and the anniversary of Edward the Confessor, who was born in the village, is generating many activities. The pupils also study the cultures of distant countries; each class undertakes a project on a different country each year. Last year the whole school participated in a themed week on South East Asia. Pupils are also prepared well for life in multicultural Britain. Topical news items are discussed in the speaking and listening part of the literacy programme. Recently, the pupils enjoyed writing their own election manifesto in the run-up to the general election.
11. Attendance is broadly in line with that of primary schools nationally. A high proportion of the absence is due to families taking holidays in term time, which the school does its best to minimize. In a small school, however, absences of this sort do affect attendance figures significantly, particularly if a family with several children is away. Parents at the parents' meeting were happy with the help given to children to enable them to catch up after absence.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.3	School data	0.1
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Though it is only satisfactory in Year R, this is a temporary situation. The key factors are the good teaching and the good curriculum in Years 1 to 6. Assessment and care are good throughout the school; pupils receive very good guidance and there are strong links with parents, other schools, and particularly the community.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good in Years 1 to 6 and satisfactory in Year R. Assessment is good throughout the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers generally plan well and tell pupils what they are going to learn in lessons.
- Assessment is very good in English.
- Resources are used well and teaching assistants make a strong contribution in lessons.
- Team teaching is not yet well established in the Foundation Unit.
- Homework is well linked to classwork.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 20 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	3	10	7	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.

12. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning, and their lessons interest them. They are given a good variety of activities and plenty of practical experiences to help them learn. They enjoy working with the interactive whiteboards and with the resources that teachers bring in for specific lessons – for example for science or art. The interest that lessons engender is an important cause of pupils’ good learning. Another of the key reasons pupils learn well is that they are usually given the information to really understand where they are going. This is done partly through teachers explaining what the learning intention of the lesson is, at the start. It is also done in mathematics and English, and in some aspects of other subjects, through giving pupils subject targets to aim for. Individual targets are set for reading and writing and these are very effective because pupils are well aware of them. The teachers track pupils well and marking indicates further points to help the pupils to meet the target. In mathematics, targets are set for groups. The school is currently reviewing and developing target setting in science and ICT.
13. Targets are based on good assessment. There are good systems in place to record pupils’ progress in mathematics, and in English assessment systems are very good. Pupils are assessed each half term in English, mathematics and science. In all other subjects, pupils’ progress is tracked through a ‘traffic lights’ system where learning objectives are used as a basis for assessments. Assessment information is used well to plan work for individuals and groups of pupils. In a mathematics lesson in Years 3 and 4, for example, pupils were grouped according to their target curriculum levels and

work was planned to meet these targets. Planning is good in most classes, because teachers do identify very clear learning intentions for the lessons. The good planning means that homework is often linked very well to what pupils will be doing in lessons. Year 5 and 6 pupils, for example, completed some of the work for their party manifestos for citizenship work at home.

14. In the reception class the teacher makes careful observations of individual children at work. These observations are used effectively to plan work for individual children and contribute to the foundation stage profiles on each child's progress. However, there are times in the reception class when the children do not have enough structure to their independent activities, because they are not linked well enough to planned learning objectives.
15. Teaching assistants work very closely with teachers and contribute well to lessons. They take groups of pupils, both higher and lower attainers, and work with them on specific objectives that are well matched to their needs. They also withdraw individual pupils of a range of abilities to develop reading skills. Here they are adept both in developing skills for the more able (for example the use of dictionaries in Years 3 and 4 to check a meaning a pupil has guessed) and the less able. Both teaching assistants and teachers judge their questioning well and are good at drawing ideas from pupils. In reception, other adults from the playgroup work with the children as well as the teacher. All adults work well with individual pupils, but interaction or close team teaching between the teacher and playgroup staff is limited.

The curriculum

The quality and range of learning opportunities in the curriculum are good overall. The enrichment of the curriculum and support for learning outside the school day are also good. Accommodation is currently unsatisfactory but other resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is carefully planned to meet the pupils' needs.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Good enrichment opportunities support children's learning well outside the school day.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory for children in Year R.

Commentary

16. The school has developed a broad and balanced curriculum that helps pupils to achieve well. Long-term planning and curriculum balance are constantly reviewed to ensure that the content and progression are appropriate and that statutory requirements are met. For example, the school has recently decided to decrease the hours set aside for literacy and numeracy in order to spend more time on other subjects, and thus ensure the balance of the curriculum. This was a carefully considered move based on the knowledge that the pupils achieve well in these subjects. Medium-term planning is also well considered. Links between subjects are carefully planned, for example between art and religious education. The national literacy and numeracy strategies are well embedded and used well to guide teachers' planning. National and commercial schemes of work have been adapted to support planning and are used in other areas of the curriculum such as personal, social and health education. Policies are in place for sex, relationships and drugs education and

these are carefully planned and taught within the school's curriculum. Statutory requirements are fully met in these areas too.

17. The curriculum has some distinctive features that greatly enhance the pupils' experiences. For example, the school is committed to providing good music education and all pupils in Years 3 and 4 learn the clarinet. A school commitment to developing sport is also being supported through the appointment of a sports coach in September last year. In partnership with local schools, there is an annual arts week. The school has included new innovations in its curriculum such as the development of thinking skills and mind mapping. Aerobic exercise for 15 minutes each morning is another innovation to promote good learning for pupils. The curriculum is also enriched well by a good variety of extra-curricular activities. These range from orchestra, choir and percussion clubs to various sports such as golf, tennis and football, as well as art and chess clubs. The provision of a sports club (Club Energy) is well received by pupils.
18. Only a small number of pupils have special educational needs in the school, but their needs are met well. Individual education plans are up to date and targets are detailed and reviewed regularly. Both teachers and teaching assistants ensure that pupils with special educational needs achieve well in lessons and have full access to the curriculum.
19. The ratio of teachers to pupils is better than in many schools, and some classes are quite small. There are also a good number of teaching assistants. As a result pupils get plenty of individual attention and guidance. There are adequate learning resources, and additional resources are purchased where needed (for example, fresh flowers to dissect). There are enough computers and other ICT equipment, but the network room is not big enough for all pupils in larger classes. The main problem with accommodation, though the situation is temporary, is for Year R. Permanent accommodation is being built, but at the moment the Year R and Islip playgroup children use the school hall. This is unsuitable for a variety of reasons. For example, equipment cannot be left out so learning is interrupted at the end of sessions, display is limited, and learning through role play is restricted because enticing play areas are harder to arrange. In addition, the temporary space makes particular demands for teamwork on the staff, and roles and routines for the way the adults work together have not yet been effectively established. The result is that despite some good individual work by staff, pupils' progress is restricted. An additional problem due to the building work taking place is the restriction of play space outside, which contributes to a crowded playground and to the feeling of insecurity for younger pupils reported by parents.

Care, guidance and support

The school makes good provision for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. It provides pupils with very good support and guidance and satisfactorily involves them in its work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers know the pupils very well, and they are well looked after.
- Every pupil's development is closely monitored, and teachers give them very good guidance on how to improve.

- The lack of a designated quiet area in the playground affects the welfare of the younger pupils.

Commentary

20. The school provides a friendly, happy environment that is conducive to learning. Due attention is paid to safety issues. Pupils' healthy living is promoted through the personal, social and health education programme, as well as through provision such as the national *Free Fruit* initiative. Safety is also emphasized in the curriculum with classes on topics such as drugs awareness, fire risks, and cycling proficiency; some in conjunction with the local hospital. The pupils cross the lanes to the church very sensibly. There is adequate first aid expertise amongst the staff and arrangements for looking after pupils who are unwell or suffer minor accidents are good. Child protection procedures meet all the requirements. Very effective links with educational and social services include a home/school links worker.
21. Lunchtimes and playtimes are adequately supervised and behaviour outside is satisfactory. However, the absence of a designated quiet area in the playground means that some pupils feel unsafe among the rough and tumble of boisterous chasing games. The situation is exacerbated by building works which mean that the space available is smaller than it would otherwise be. An existing raised area with seating has the potential, if formally designated, to be a refuge for any pupils who do not want to run or have others running past them.
22. The school attaches great importance to the personal development of every child, and teachers encourage them to take responsibility for their learning. The assessment procedures ensure that teachers carefully track the progress of every pupil. Targets for each child are agreed with the pupils, who take pride in achieving them. This contributes significantly to the pupils' personal and academic development. Teachers and support staff know the pupils and their families very well, are sensitive to their needs and are thus able to provide very good support and guidance. The very good relationships between pupils and staff enable pupils to raise any concerns they may have, knowing that they will be dealt with sympathetically.
23. Induction arrangements are good and children settle happily into the reception class, many of them already familiar with the school because they progress from the Islip playgroup. Throughout the school parents are encouraged to come into their child's classroom before the start of the school day, which consolidates the school/family links and provides opportunities to discuss any concerns. Similarly, pupils are well prepared for transfer to the secondary school.
24. A school council was formed in September 2004 to seek pupils' views and involve them formally in the work of the school. In the first year, the pupils have contributed to the development of the school grounds. There are plans to increase their voice. When pupils are given responsibility, such as monitoring duties in the classroom or participation in assemblies, they exercise it very competently and confidently.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has very good links with the community, and good links with parents and other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good links with the village community, and particularly the church, enrich the curriculum and promote the pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
- The good links with other schools both enhance the curriculum and ensure that pupils transfer confidently on to their next stage of education.
- Parents are very well informed about their children's standards and progress but less well informed about the curriculum they are following.

Commentary

25. Parents are well informed about the school and school events through the prospectus and weekly newsletters. The school's open door policy means that there is an easy dialogue between parents and teachers. Parents are very well informed about their children's progress through twice-termly consultation evenings, when targets are jointly agreed, and good annual reports. They would appreciate more detailed information about the curriculum their children are following. Though they are given information at the start of the year, they are not fully aware of shorter-term topics as the year goes on.
26. Parents make a good contribution to their children's learning by attending the curriculum sessions at the beginning of each year and by supporting their children with their homework. They also raise significant funds for the school through the *Friends of Dr South's*. Parental help in the classroom is limited because most parents work and the catchment area is very wide.
27. The very good links with the community include a very strong link with the local church, where the children attend regular assemblies and contribute to the major Christian festivals. The curate is a regular visitor to the school. The school contributes regularly to the parish magazine. There have also been imaginative projects with the local community to celebrate the anniversary of the birth of Edward the Confessor. On alternate years, pupils are involved in a *Junior Citizen* scheme, run jointly by the fire service and police.
28. The school has developed good links with other primary schools in the area. This provides valuable staff development opportunities for the teachers, and the children enjoy collaborative sports and arts events. The good links with the local comprehensive school mean that the pupils who progress there have a smooth transition.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher provides very good leadership, and leadership as a whole in the school is good. Management is satisfactory, as is governance.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a very clear vision for the development of the school and has made significant improvements.
- Results are analysed well and strategic planning is good.
- Monitoring of teaching and learning is not frequent enough and does not focus enough on requirements of specific subjects or age-related needs.

- There is not yet sufficient clarity in the management and roles of staff working in the Foundation Unit.

Commentary

29. The headteacher has been in post four years, so there has been a change of headteacher since the last inspection. Since her appointment she has moved the school forward very well in improving the quality of teaching and in ensuring the development of the accommodation to support a Foundation Stage Unit. As she teaches a class for half of the week she has had to prioritise carefully, and has done so judiciously. There have been a number of staff changes since her appointment, and building work is not yet complete, but the direction is well established.
30. The results of national tests are carefully analysed to pick out any areas of underperformance. For example, the need to improve the progress of able pupils in writing in Years 1 and 2, and in mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6, was appropriately identified last year. The school's development plan for this year outlines appropriate strategies to improve these things, and is an effective tool giving costings and clear responsibilities. Some of the measures taken have already been successful, for example the focus on writing. Co-ordinators too are well aware of the direction in which subjects need to go. They support other staff well and provide good role models for the teaching of their subjects.
31. Self-evaluation in the school as a whole is strong. The school outlined its view of itself clearly before the inspection and the inspection team agreed with its main conclusions – for example on achievement, teaching and effectiveness. The school has a good capacity for further improvement. Nevertheless, there are currently some minor weaknesses in aspects of the monitoring of teaching and learning, partly because time for this is limited by the head's teaching commitments. Plans and evaluations are monitored regularly by the headteacher, which is a positive feature. Monitoring of teaching for the purposes of performance management is sound. However, whilst this sort of monitoring will pick up any general teaching strengths and weaknesses, or those related to previous targets, it is less likely to pick up subject-specific issues such as a need for more pace in a mathematics starter, as seen during the inspection. Further, it only takes place once a year and does not cover a wide variety of subjects. The school has bought in advisory support to provide some subject input into monitoring, but there is no planned schedule for a rolling programme of subject review.
32. There are also some weaker areas in the management of the Foundation Stage. The Foundation Unit is under development, and it would not be realistic to expect all to be in place yet. However, the specific roles and responsibilities of school and playgroup staff are not clearly delineated, and policies and lines of communication are not yet agreed and understood by all. As a result, though there is good teamwork between the head and reception class teacher, teamwork between the class teacher and the playgroup staff in class is not firmly established. In contrast, there is good teamwork in the way the provision for pupils with special educational needs is organised. The special educational needs co-ordinator has well-organised systems and class teachers and assistants work together well to ensure that strategies decided on are followed, and targets met.
33. The day-to-day organisation of the school runs very smoothly and financial planning is good. The amount carried forward, nearly 25 percent of income, is much higher than would be expected, but there is a sound explanation. The bulk of it is reserved for the

building work that is already underway. The rest is a carefully planned fund to sustain the employment of a full-time teacher in Year R until the expected expansion of the Foundation Stage has been completed and *wrap-around care* (care for children out of school hours) has been established.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	266433	Balance from previous year	27719
Total expenditure	228139	Balance carried forward to the next	66013
Expenditure per pupil	3042		

34. Governors are very supportive of the school. They share the head's vision for development and some governors, including the Chair, have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors are willing to debate with the head and amongst themselves. However, some are inexperienced and do not yet have a sufficiently detailed understanding of matters to do with standards and the curriculum to be confident in asking probing questions. They ensure that all statutory requirements are met, and look for ways to build on what they are doing. For example, they wish to look again at the way they monitor matters of race equality.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The overall provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The wide range of activities provided are practical and interesting, and adults intervene well with individual children.
- Weaknesses in the present accommodation for Year R children constrain their learning.
- Teamwork by staff - in terms of clear communication, roles and responsibilities - is not yet securely established.
- Good opportunities are regularly provided for independent play, but there are not enough activities with a clearer structure and purpose for children approaching Year 1.

Commentary

35. At the time of the inspection there were six full-time children in Year R and one part-time child. The Year R children are taught at present in the school's hall and they work alongside pre-school playgroup children in the mornings only. The attainment of the current Year R children when they started in the reception class was below average overall; five of this year's Year R children were born in the summer, and so have only just started to attend full time. Their attainment at the end of their reception year is likely to be below average in all areas of learning; few are likely to reach expectations for pupils nationally at the end of the year, mainly due to their age. Their achievement is satisfactory.
36. Although this small group of children benefit from having other younger children to interact with, their learning is enhanced when they are taught separately by the reception class teacher. As the time draws near to entering the Year 1 and 2 class, there are times when children should have greater structure to their independent activities - linked to planned learning objectives. A wide range of practical activities is planned and children enjoy these, playing happily with and alongside the younger children. Both the teacher and other adults intervene well with individual pupils, for example to encourage pupils to think about how a wall of bricks can be made stable or to draw attention to a snail's characteristics, providing a magnifying glass. When children are taught separately by the reception class teacher, the teaching and learning are satisfactory. However, there are many distractions around them with the younger children at play and they find it difficult to concentrate for any length of time. A clear sanctions and reward system is needed to ensure that children know the parameters of their behaviour.
37. The present accommodation in the school hall is temporary and overall it is unsatisfactory. The hall is used for assembly and after-school activities and this means constant movement of furniture and resources. It also means that Year R children have no real feel for having a permanent classroom of their own. The building of the new Foundation Unit is almost complete and will be run in partnership with the playgroup. Work has been started to establish clear policies for this unit. Some aspects of management are not yet secure: roles and responsibilities, together with lines of

communication, need to be more clearly established in order that this partnership runs successfully from the start of using the new building.

38. The curriculum leadership of the Foundation Stage is satisfactory, but the teacher is relatively new to the school and only just full time. She has been instrumental in helping to make progress in the working relationships with the playgroup. The overall provision is not as good at the moment as it was at the time of the last inspection, because the accommodation has changed and the partnership with the playgroup is not yet fully established.
39. In the area of **personal, social and emotional development**, the children's achievement and the teaching are satisfactory. The teacher takes the opportunity to develop good habits, for example telling one child to explain to another why he wanted to put a label in a particular place, instead of just arguing with her. The small numbers of children in the class benefit from working with younger children and other adults from the playgroup. The children make choices and decisions about their activities and work well with younger children, sharing resources. They have a sound understanding of the need to listen to the contributions of others and to take turns. Their independent skills are promoted well through a wide range of independent play activities. Children self-register in the mornings and take themselves to the toilet, which is not adjacent to the classroom. The children know the school routines and are happy and confident learners.
40. In the area of **communication, language and literacy**, the teaching and learning are satisfactory. A satisfactory combination of activities are led and directed by an adult, such as sound letter recognition and word building sessions and free choice activities such as role play. Additionally, children are learning to write for a variety of purposes. An example of this is writing instructions for a seed packet that they have designed for growing beans. Most will attempt writing and can copy the teacher's writing. All recognise their names and will make good attempts at writing them. They regularly share books together in school and take them home to share with adults. By the end of Year R, the children have a good appreciation of books and understand that writing conveys meaning. Most have a small vocabulary of whole words that they can recognise. Higher attaining children read simple sentences independently and show an understanding of the elements of stories.
41. In terms of **mathematical development**, the children's achievement is satisfactory, as is the quality of teaching and learning. By the end of Year R, children have a range of understanding of number. Most are secure in counting to 10, but at present not all recognise the numerals involved. Higher attaining children count reliably beyond 10 and recognise numerals to at least 20. Children's learning is enhanced by counting objects in their everyday life in the classroom. They count the number of children present first thing in the morning, for example. Number games are used well to reinforce number. *Number Lotto* is an example of this, where children recognise and cover a number that is called. Children regularly explore mathematical concepts through sand and water play, sharing these facilities with playgroup children.
42. The children's **knowledge and understanding of the world** was satisfactorily developed during the inspection in free choice activities, which included construction with a purpose in mind. Children were involved in building a den with large bricks in an outside activity and learned to cross gaps on the following row to make the building secure. They have plenty of opportunities to explore and investigate the outside environment. Regular access to the computer suite helps children to learn how to use

simple programs and functions. Many need to be supported in switching on the computer and finding the program they want, but then most are able to use the mouse accurately. The children are enthusiastic learners and are interested in all activities. **Physical development** and **creative development** were not inspected.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well because very good assessment and feedback enhance and complement the good teaching.
- Effective school action over the last two years has promoted very good improvement in writing.
- Pupils' speaking and listening skills are not yet as well promoted as their reading and writing skills.

Commentary

43. Standards are average in Year 2, and in Year 6 they are well above average. Boys and girls of all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs, achieve well in Years 1 and 2 and very well in Years 3 to 6. Achievement differences are mainly due to the good focus on writing, which has been in operation for two years in Years 3 to 6, but is relatively new to Years 1 and 2. In the assessment tests for Year 2 last year there was some underachievement of the higher attainers in writing. However, achievement in Year 2 is better this year. Very good improvements have been made since the last inspection, when standards were average and progress satisfactory overall through the school. In particular, the progress of higher attaining pupils has improved from satisfactory to very good. Approximately half of the pupils in Year 6 are expected to reach the higher Level 5 this year. The very good leadership by the co-ordinator has made a substantial contribution to raising standards and a wide range of discussion and training has been provided. Management is good. The co-ordinator has limited opportunities to monitor teaching and learning across the school, although good work takes place in monitoring pupils' work and assessments.
44. Standards in Year 6 are now well above average in reading and writing, but a little above average in speaking and listening. This aspect of the subject is due for review. Although good examples were seen of strategies such as paired discussion and group presentations, they are not used frequently enough to impact fully on standards. For example, in one lesson on democracy linked to the general election, groups of pupils presented their ideas, which they had prepared over previous weeks, to the class. The presenters spoke with assurance in a formal situation with variation of expression and their ideas were thoughtful and ordered. The school is aware of the need to develop this sort of activity more frequently into the curriculum, to raise standards further.
45. A number of factors have contributed to the very good improvement in the pupils' achievement. The most significant has been the improvement in the quality of teaching and learning, which is now good across the school in spite of the relatively short time that the team has been together. The good teaching is enhanced by very good assessment. Assessments are undertaken each half term, and detailed records enable teachers to target work well to pupils' needs. Furthermore, pupils frequently refer to the targets set for them, and these have an important impact in involving them in their own progress and learning, complementing the work of the teacher. Marking is regular and helpful to pupils; it is well linked to their targets.

46. Improvements have been made in handwriting and presentation, which are now generally good. The skills of writing are taught well; during the inspection Years 3 and 4 were reinforcing their understanding of how to write with the beginning and end of a story. In Years 5 and 6, pupils were reinforcing their knowledge of formal styles of writing, looking at explanation text and the use of impersonal language. Homework is used well to reinforce current work or prepare for future work. Work is well matched to groups of pupils of different abilities and teaching assistants make a very valuable contribution to pupils' learning by working with one group whilst the teacher concentrates on other groups. The learning intentions of the lesson are explored well at the start of the lesson, and are often referred to again both during and at the end of the lesson. For example, Year 1 and 2 pupils were learning the meaning of *onomatopoeia* and this was frequently referred to during the lesson, when pupils were enjoying *sound words* in poetry. This was reinforced again at the end of the lesson and the pupils learned well. Teachers make lessons as interesting as possible to reinforce the pupils' learning. For example, in the same Year 1 and 2 lesson, pupils used untuned musical instruments to recreate the *sound words* they had identified.

Language and Literacy across the curriculum

47. Teachers make good opportunities in other subjects for pupils to practise and apply their literacy skills. Examples include pupils looking at the writing up of a science experiment when learning about explanation text. There are also good links with geography and history.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are achieving well in all classes because of good teaching and good assessment and feedback.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning.
- The oral/mental starter activity in lessons sometimes lacks pace for older pupils.
- The results of national assessment tests are well analysed to look for areas to improve.

Commentary

48. At the time of the inspection, standards in Year 2 were below average and standards in Year 6 above average. Given their starting points, these standards represent good achievement for the pupils concerned. Pupils with special needs are achieving well, as are those of higher and middle ability. Most pupils are doing equally well in all areas of mathematics, and planning gives the right attention to all areas. However, some Year 5 and 6 pupils are not quite as quick in their mental calculations as would be expected from the quality of their written work. There is not always enough demand for quick, pacy calculation in the sessions that start lessons off (called the *oral/mental starter*). Though much of the written work and the teachers' own assessments indicate that standards are well above average in Year 6, this lack of top-class fluency indicates that above average is the fairer judgement of standards.

49. Teaching is good overall. Much of the teaching seen during the inspection was good, with some very good features. Though there was some satisfactory teaching, where the starter session lacked pace but other aspects of the lesson were good, the pupils' work indicates that teaching overall is good. Teaching assistants are fully involved in lessons, sometimes taking more able groups and sometimes less able groups. This means that pupils of all abilities get good individual attention during the week. Assessment is used well to refine teaching; for example, in the Year 3 and 4 class the teacher had identified some previous problems with understanding of decimals, and he used a lesson on pounds and pence to revisit this. Assessment is also used well to help pupils understand their targets, and work is well marked. Planning is good in all classes and pupils are made aware of what they are to learn in the lesson.
50. Leadership is good; this has resulted in good improvement since the last inspection, when pupils' achievement was satisfactory. Planning and pupils' work are monitored. The results of national assessment tests are well analysed to look for ways in which they can be improved the next year. Last year the co-ordinator identified a need to focus more in teaching on the highest level - Level 5 - for Year 6 pupils, and their work shows that this has been effective. The assessment system is well managed and planning is secure, but there is too little direct monitoring of teaching from a mathematical perspective. There has been no recent monitoring of teaching of elements of the *national numeracy strategy*, for example.

Mathematics across the curriculum

51. Mathematics is used appropriately in other subject areas. It is well used in science, for example in measurement work, in graphs drawn to illustrate results of investigations, and in the use of formulas in Year 6. Here pupils' work shows that they can work out the cost of the electricity used from data on the power of an appliance and the length of time it is on.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Resources are very well used to stimulate interest and ensure plenty of practical experiences for pupils.
- For the oldest and highest attaining pupils, the understanding of science is better than investigation skills.
- National assessment test results are analysed well to indicate areas to improve.
- Very good teaching was seen in two classes during the inspection, and achievement in science is good overall.

Commentary

52. At the time of the inspection, standards were below average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. Year 2 was a low attaining year group on entry to the school and they have achieved well. Year 6 are also achieving well overall. Their achievement is good in terms of knowledge and understanding, but satisfactory in their investigation skills. This is a good improvement overall since the last inspection.

53. Teaching is good. Teachers take a very practical approach to the teaching of science and the pupils respond with interest and enthusiasm. Their knowledge and understanding are greatly enhanced by the opportunity to learn so practically. For example, during the inspection Years 1 and 2 were exploring forces due to the wind or to air, with a wide range of activities which developed their understanding in small, graduated steps. They loved running slowly and quickly in the playground with large sheets of paper held out like sails. In another very good lesson, Years 3 and 4 were working on a range of practical and ICT-based tasks aimed at developing their understanding of root systems in plants; the teacher also used a fascinating practical demonstration of how plants draw up nutrients, placing celery in coloured water so that the plant gradually became coloured. Years 5 and 6 consolidated their understanding of parts of flowers by dissecting daffodils. They were able to explain not only the names of small parts but also their function in plant reproduction.
54. The pupils do plenty of investigations, and some investigation skills are developed to the highest levels. For example, Year 6 pupils can use graphs very well to display results and look for patterns. However, the teaching of investigation skills to the most able does not give enough attention to the need for accuracy and to the need to predict and explain on the basis of scientific understanding. As a result investigations are completed and results recorded, but not at the most perceptive level of which higher attainers are capable.
55. The analysis of national tests last year was effective, and did indicate that the able Year 6 pupils were not performing at a high enough level. Science results have been comparatively weak (not as good as mathematics and English) for several years. This year the situation has improved. Written work and teachers' assessments indicate that science standards are now as high as mathematics standards, and written work shows that the higher attaining pupils are reaching the highest levels in their understanding. The co-ordinator is new to the post and the school, and so has been supported by the headteacher. He is now leading the subject well, and has a good understanding of what needs to be done and what the best science teaching should be like. The necessary management tasks such as review of resources and schemes of work have been tackled. Assessment is satisfactory. However, no subject-specific monitoring of teaching has taken place. Management is satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in Year 2 is very good.
- ICT is used well to support the teaching and learning of a wide range of subjects.
- The oldest pupils' understanding and use of email have not been effectively developed.
- The network room is too small for most classes to use as a whole class.

Commentary

56. Standards in Year 2 are above average and these pupils are achieving very well. They have had a wide range of experiences of using ICT and the work they have produced is of a particularly high level in terms of communicating and sharing information. They are not only competent in their use of ICT for word processing – changing the size and

colour of the text to make titles stand out – but have also produced some unusual ways of reaching an audience. For example, their cartoons with speech bubbles to tell the story of Cinderella demonstrate high-level ICT skills for this age group.

57. Standards in Year 6 are average. However, ICT was a key issue at the time of the last inspection and the Year 6 pupils were starting from a lower base than would be expected. The school has made good improvements to the subject and the pupils in Year 6 have achieved well to reach their current standards. They have not yet, however, had sufficient experience of the use of email, though it is planned in the scheme of work to be covered before they leave. Otherwise, they have a sound understanding of the uses of ICT, both in school and beyond.
58. Teaching and learning are good. Specific ICT skills are taught discretely, and these are then applied in other lessons. For example, during the inspection Year 3 and 4 pupils were taught how to search the Internet for information using a search engine such as *Google*. The lesson took the example of trying to find images of the ascension of Christ, which made a good link to their religious education topic. ICT is used in a range of subjects, and this enables pupils to consolidate their understanding.
59. ICT is well led with a clear vision for the development for the subject. As the network room is small, the school is appropriately examining the option of investment in laptop computers in a wireless network for use in classrooms. Management is satisfactory; there has been much development but schemes of work have not yet been fully embedded and monitoring of lessons from an ICT perspective has not taken place yet.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

60. ICT is used well in a wide range of subject areas. Interactive whiteboards are used in the majority of lessons, with pupils using the keyboard and remote mouse to try out ideas and present them to the class. In English in Years 3 and 4, for example, they used this equipment to highlight and vary punctuation, and in science in Years 5 and 6 a small group used it to prepare a table of results. Both the Year 1 and 2 and the Year 3 and 4 classes have easy access to the network room. Years 1 and 2 have produced some highly effective computer-generated artwork illustrating the fire of London for their history topic. Years 3 and 4 used the networked computers in small groups, researching functions of roots on plants.

HUMANITIES

History was sampled; geography and religious education were not inspected.

61. A portfolio of history work examined showed a good range of approaches taken to the history topics required by the national curriculum. Pupils have produced poetry to celebrate the millennium of the birth of Edward the Confessor, for example, and have taken part in dramatic re-enactments of more recent history of Britain since 1930. In a well-taught Year 1 and 2 lesson on Christopher Columbus, the story was used as a stimulus for discussion of old and new features of ships, and very good links were made with geography as pupils broadened their knowledge of places in the world, tracing Columbus's voyages.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art was sampled; design and technology, music and physical education were not inspected.

62. Artwork displayed around the school enhances the environment and shows the wide range of media used by pupils. In a good Year 5 and 6 art lesson in which pupils were creating garden border pictures to be printed on silk, the teacher had high expectations and standards were above average. Painting skills were good and the teacher's interventions well judged to help pupils develop skills further.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

This area of the curriculum was sampled.

63. In a PSHE lesson for Years 1 and 2, discussion partners were used very well to help pupils deal with ideas about how to stay safe. The children talked sensibly and showed they understand that their actions can affect others and that they have choices in situations that may arise. Adults intervened well to help the pupils clarify their thoughts and ensure that key safety points were understood.
64. In a very good citizenship lesson for Years 5 and 6, on the day before the national general election, the pupils presented manifestos for their own political parties. Though the parties were made up, the areas tackled in the speeches were real, and pupils showed a very impressive awareness of the issues and implications of the policies being presented. The teacher had structured the situation very well with each pupil given a role to prepare and deliver within the party – the 'chancellor', for example, had to explain how policies would be funded. She also ensured a brisk pace and summarised key features of the parties clearly in order to help the rest of the class ask focussed questions, and gave very good attention to developing the skills of formal speaking.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
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).