

INSPECTION REPORT

New Close Community School

Warminster

LEA area: Wiltshire

Unique reference number: 126232

Headteacher: Mrs Karin Ancell

Lead inspector: Mrs Sheelagh Barnes

Dates of inspection: 11th – 14th October 2004

Inspection number: 267378

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:	5-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	189
School address:	30 Imber Road Warminster Wiltshire
Postcode:	BA12 9JJ
Telephone number:	01985 212304
Fax number:	01985 219303
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Ian Davie

Date of previous inspection: 18-Jan-1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

New Close Community School is an average sized primary school situated in Warminster in Wiltshire. The 189 boys and girls who attend are aged between four and eleven. Most of the pupils come from homes around the school and many of them are from military backgrounds. As a consequence, there are much higher than average levels of movement in and out of school and many pupils have been at a number of schools in the past. Children may attend reception from September of the year in which they are four. Older children start full time and younger children attend mornings only initially. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is below average at below 7 per cent. However, using a nationally recognised formula to take the military backgrounds of the pupils into consideration, this equates to schools with over 35 per cent of pupils eligible for free school meals. Virtually all of the pupils are of White British origin and all speak English as their main language. Attainment on entry to the school is below that expected nationally overall. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is slightly below average. The proportions of pupils with special educational needs vary considerably between year groups, in part due to the lower than average size of some classes. Currently no pupil has a Statement of their need. There have been many changes to leadership in the last two years, including the four headteachers, one of whom resigned. These changes have resulted in considerable alteration to systems within the school and high levels of disruption. The current headteacher took up her post at Easter 2004. The local education authority has pledged to work with the newly appointed headteacher to provide high levels of support and training for all staff, in particular in science and mathematics. The

school has gained the *Healthy School* and *School Achievement* awards. It is part of the *Leadership Development Strategy in Primary Schools* and *Vibrant Schools* projects.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
16249	Mrs Sheelagh Barnes	Lead inspector	Mathematics, Science, Information and communication technology, English as an additional language
19365	Mr Gordon Stockley	Lay inspector	
4099	Mr Rodney Braithwaite	Team inspector	Special educational needs, English, Creative, aesthetic and practical subjects
27324	Mrs Daphne Crow	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, Humanities, Religious education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

New Close Community School provides a caring and friendly environment for all pupils. The strong leadership of the newly appointed headteacher and the positive ethos support pupils' self-esteem and confidence well. The school provides a **satisfactory** education overall for boys and girls of all levels of attainment. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The turbulent times that the school has undergone have slowed progress in many areas and have led to many pupils not making all the progress they should in some aspects of their learning in recent years. A great deal of work has been undertaken since the appointment of the current headteacher and the school is now improving rapidly. However senior staff are aware of the need for continued work, especially in writing throughout the school and in mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are below average in writing, mathematics and science at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- The standards of care and welfare the school provides are very good.
- The leadership of the newly appointed headteacher is good and she has very clear vision of how to raise standards further.
- While teaching is satisfactory overall, there is too much inconsistency particularly in teaching in mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6.
- New systems of assessment are good but are not yet used well enough to monitor progress.
- The school provides pupils with very good opportunities to enrich their learning.
- The school has good links with parents and very good links with the community.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and these pupils make good progress towards their targets as a result.

The school has undergone considerable change in leadership since the previous inspection in January 1999. These changes, combined with the very high levels of turnover of pupil population and low levels of staff morale, prevented the school moving forward as fast as it should. Standards fell in many areas, including teachers' assessment and tracking of standards and in pupils' behaviour. At the time of the appointment of the current headteacher not all of the key issues of the previous inspection had been fully resolved. Overall, improvement since the previous inspection was unsatisfactory. However, currently, good progress is being made, especially in establishing clear systems for behaviour management and developing systems for monitoring pupils' progress and to use to respond to individual pupils' needs.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Year 6 results

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

science	B	D	D	D
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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.

Pupils' achievement is **satisfactory** overall.

Standards have fluctuated over the years since the previous inspection. In part this has been due to high levels of pupil movement in and out of the school, many of whom arrive without records of previous attainment, and high levels of pupils with special educational needs in some year groups. However, data that is available to track pupils' progress also indicates that many pupils were not making all the progress they should in recent years, particularly in mathematics. Results of tests taken in 2004 by pupils in Year 6, were average in English, below average in science and well below average in mathematics when compared with both all schools nationally and with similar schools. The achievement of boys and girls is identical. Achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good.

Currently children in the Foundation Stage start school with standards which are below those expected. This is a change since the previous inspection which noted that standards were in line with those expected for pupils' ages. The children make steady satisfactory progress overall and good progress in personal and social development. Their overall achievement in all six areas of learning for young children is satisfactory.

At Year 2, standards are average in reading. Standards are below average in writing, science and mathematics. In other areas of the curriculum standards are in line with those expected. Taken overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory.

At Year 6, standards are average in reading. They are below average in writing and science. They are in line with expected standards in information and communication technology and religious education. Pupils' achievements in these subjects are satisfactory. However, in mathematics standards are below those expected and pupils' achievements over time have been unsatisfactory in some year groups in the recent past. Currently progress in most lessons is at least satisfactory and in many it is good.

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is **good** overall. Pupils' spiritual and moral development is good. Their social development is very good. Cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Attendance and punctuality are good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education the school provides is **satisfactory** overall. Teaching and learning are **satisfactory** overall. The curriculum is satisfactory and is enriched with a very good number of other activities.

Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage and for Years 1 and 2 are satisfactory overall. In Years 3 to 6 there is too much variation in the quality of teaching, particularly in mathematics and science. The standard ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. The school is aware of the need to provide more consistency and, as a result, intensive training is planned in these subjects. Procedures for assessment that have recently been put in place are good. However, because they are still very new, they are not yet being used consistently across the school to monitor pupils' progress and to plan lessons to match pupils' needs accurately. Teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs are good. The curriculum is satisfactory overall. The school provides pupils with a very good range of activities that enrich the curriculum, such as the very well attended clubs. Resources are satisfactory overall. Accommodation is good. The school is maintained to a very high standard of cleanliness.

Care and welfare of pupils are very good. Links with parents are good. Links with the community are very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **satisfactory** overall. The leadership of the recently appointed headteacher is good and is already beginning to raise standards. Leadership of subject areas has been recently reviewed and was unsatisfactory in the recent past. Many coordinators have only recently undertaken their roles and are at very early stages of monitoring standards across the school. Governance is satisfactory overall and governors ensure that the school meets all statutory requirements. Administration is efficient.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils are supportive of the school. They are pleased with the recent changes.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- raise standards in writing, mathematics and science throughout the school;
- use the newly developed assessment systems to monitor pupils' progress in all subjects and to plan lessons to match the needs of individual pupils and groups more accurately;
- achieve greater consistency in teaching, especially in mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement overall is **satisfactory**. Standards are below those expected for the Foundation Stage and at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in personal and social development for reception children is good.
- Standards are below average in writing, mathematics and science at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.

Commentary

Foundation Stage

1. Children enter the Foundation Stage with standards which are below those expected for their age overall. This is different to the standards found at the time of the previous inspection when they were broadly in line with those expected. They make satisfactory progress in most areas of learning and their achievements are satisfactory in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. However, standards in these areas of learning for reception children are still likely to be below those expected when they start in Year 1. In personal, social and emotional development, children make good progress and their achievement is good. They are likely to attain the standards expected in this aspect of learning by the time they start in Year 1.

Key Stage 1

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.6 (15.6)	16.0 (15.8)
writing	13.4 (14.8)	14.8 (14.5)
mathematics	15.2 (16.0)	16.4 (16.3)

There were 35 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. Standards have fluctuated widely over the last three years. This is due in part to class sizes, proportions of pupils with special educational needs and the higher than average numbers of pupils who start at the school at times other than reception. At Year 2, standards are currently average in reading and below average in writing. Standards are below average in science and mathematics. In other areas of the curriculum, including religious education, physical education and information communication technology, standards are likely to be in line with those expected. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory. Achievements of pupils with special educational needs are good. Results in tests at the end of Year 2 in 2004 were below average in reading and well below average in writing and mathematics. Compared with similar schools on the basis of free school

meals eligibility and movement of military families, standards were above average in reading and below average in writing and mathematics.

Key Stage 2

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.7 (28.9)	27.0 (26.8)
mathematics	25.5 (25.5)	27.2 (26.8)
science	28.2 (28.0)	28.9 (28.6)

There were 35 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. The variation in standards attained year on year for older pupils is high. It is due in the main to the same factors that affect Year 1 and Year 2 and the continuing very high levels of movement in and out of the school because many of the pupils are children of military families. At Year 6, standards are currently average in reading. They are below average in writing and science. They are in line with expected standards in information and communication technology, physical education and religious education. Pupils' achievements in these subjects are satisfactory. However, in mathematics standards are below those expected and pupils' achievements over time have been unsatisfactory in some year groups. This is because the school stopped doing regular assessments and because some teachers have tended to use commercial work sheets and lesson plans which were not matched well enough to the particular needs of individual pupils. Currently achievement in most lessons is at least satisfactory and in many it is good. Boys and girls achieve equally. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good. This is because of the very focused and targeted support they are given.
4. Pupils leaving school at the end of Year 6 in 2004 reached standards in tests which were well above expectation in reading and many attained the national standard expected in writing. Standards in English were average overall. They were average when compared with similar schools. Results of tests in mathematics have also varied greatly over the years, but they were well below average in 2004. Compared with similar schools, these results were also well below average. Results of tests in science were below average and below those results attained in similar schools when pupils' amalgamated English and mathematics scores were the criteria.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are **good**. Pupils' behaviour is **good**.

Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good** overall. Attendance and punctuality are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school successfully promotes good relationships.
- Most pupils behave well in lessons and about the school.
- Pupils show a good interest in school life and the very good range of activities provided.
- The school promotes pupils' social skills very well.
- There are weaknesses in some aspects of cultural development.
- Attendance is above the national average.

Commentary

5. The very caring atmosphere of the school promotes good relationships. The school ensures all pupils are fully included in the life of the school. Pupils who join the school at different stages integrate quickly into the life of the school. All staff work hard to develop good relationships within and outside classes. This result is that pupils work and play happily together. Parents say that most children enjoy coming to school and some are reluctant to leave at the end of the school day.
6. The youngest children in the reception class quickly learn to take some responsibility for their learning and gain independence. They know the right way to behave, to share equipment and to take turns. Most children are making good progress towards the expected goals in personal, social and emotional development. Generally pupils behave well in lessons. This has a positive impact on their learning. They behave sensibly both during lunch and at playtimes. Behaviour is particularly good when the whole school comes together in assemblies. Pupils sit still and silently as they listen to music at the start of assembly, which creates a spiritual atmosphere. There have been two fixed period exclusions in the recent year.
7. Assembly themes provide pupils with a time for reflection and promote a sense of spiritual awareness. The good ethos also helps to promote spiritual awareness. Personal, social and health education lessons give pupils good opportunities to put forward their thoughts and feelings on a variety of issues and pupils listen to and show respect for the views of others. Pupils enjoy helping with the smooth running of the school by undertaking responsibilities such as tidying up after lessons. The school effectively encourages pupils to develop caring attitudes to others. *Thoughtfulness certificates* are given to pupils who are particularly caring and they are proud of these. In lessons pupils co-operate very well together when working in pairs or small groups. Other good opportunities are provided for pupils to consider wider social issues such as taking care of the environment through recycling projects.
8. A wide range of purposeful activities is provided outside lesson times. These are appreciated by pupils and support their social development very well. Pupils are also given the opportunity for a residential visit. This helps to develop their independence and self-reliance, as well as engendering a team spirit.
9. Pupils are given satisfactory opportunities to visit places of cultural interest and to study the work of famous artists and musicians and the school effectively promotes positive images of people of other cultures and faiths. However, some opportunities are missed for pupils to understand or explore the issues surrounding living in a multi-cultural society.
10. Attendance rates are above the national average and have been for several years. Pupils are very punctual and parents support the school well in ensuring that their children attend regularly and on time.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data:	4.5

Unauthorised absence	
School data:	0.6

National data:	5.4
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National data:	0.4
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The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

<i>Categories used in the Annual School Census</i>	<i>No of pupils on roll</i>	<i>Number of fixed period exclusions</i>	<i>Number of permanent exclusions</i>
White – British	187	2	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **satisfactory** overall. The quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum is **satisfactory**. There are **good** opportunities for enrichment in learning. The school provides **very good** levels of care. Links with parents are **good** and with the community they are **very good**.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **satisfactory** overall. Teaching and learning in reception and Years 1 to 6 are satisfactory overall. The quality of very newly developed assessment procedures is good, but their use so far is unsatisfactory because they are so new.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching of mathematics and science is too variable, particularly in Years 3 to 6.
- Teachers have improved knowledge and confidence in using information and communication technology to support other subjects, but some opportunities are still missed in some lessons.
- The quality of assessment has been greatly improved since the previous inspection and systems are good. It is starting to be used to monitor pupils' progress, but this is limited as yet.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 27 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	1	9	15	2	0	0

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

Commentary

11. The quality of teaching in the reception classes and in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory overall. The quality of planning is usually at least satisfactory and often good. As a result, there is equality of access to the full curriculum by pupils from all groups in each class and the quality of learning is satisfactory overall. Most teachers have good levels of confidence and knowledge in the subjects they teach. However, there is great variation in confidence in the teaching of mathematics and science, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Teaching and learning in the two classes for the oldest pupils are generally at least good and

sometimes very good. Most teachers throughout the school make effective use of National Numeracy Strategy techniques in mathematics lessons and, as a result, these lessons are interesting and move on with good pace. Pupils are given good opportunities to practise their skills and make good gains in their learning. However, this is not the case in all classes and some lessons are unsatisfactory as they do not have suitable regard for what pupils already know and can do. There is a similar variation in science. Some lessons are planned which try to cover too much of the scheme in one lesson and so do not meet pupils' needs well enough as they are too complex. While pupils are taught scientific facts, throughout the school they do not all have enough opportunities to take part in experiments and devise their own hypotheses or test them. The leadership of the school is very aware of this and intensive support in mathematics and science is planned for the forthcoming term from the local education authority.

12. Teachers are gaining confidence in the use of information and communication technology and teaching in this subject is satisfactory overall. However, some opportunities to use computers to help pupils investigate or record their work in other subjects are missed in day-to-day lessons.
13. Assessment of pupils' achievement and progress has been a difficult area for the school in the last two years. Strategies have been changed and in one case discarded, resulting in confusion for the staff. As a result, both procedures and practice have lacked coherence and direction, and records of progress have been inconsistent and sometimes lost. Teachers have had no clear picture as to how much progress individual pupils were making or in recognising insufficient improvement or under achievement. The new headteacher rapidly grasped this nettle soon after her appointment. She has, in conjunction with the co-ordinator, taken a leading role in introducing clear and effective procedures in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, which closely identify pupil progress. She is also ensuring that teachers understand and use these systems regularly and for the purpose of pupils' improvement. The effect within the school is steadily improving, although the use of procedures will remain unsatisfactory until they have been bedded in and the wide gaps in the staff's knowledge of pupils' progress have been filled. The greatest benefit to the school of the new assessment procedures is that they have raised the knowledge and expectation of staff as to how to help pupils to improve consistently over time by using information provided. In addition, subject leaders will now have the personal responsibility of introducing assessment across the whole curriculum, as well as in the core subjects, and thereby improving the standards and achievements of the pupils.
14. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers work effectively with outside agencies to provide specialist guidance where necessary. In lessons teachers, and especially the highly effective and well qualified teaching assistants, interact well with the pupils with special educational needs. There is good, detailed assessment of what they can and cannot do and the next targets for them to work towards. These individual education programmes are reviewed regularly and are known to all staff. Targets for pupils are now very specific and class teachers have a much better understanding of their roles in the day-to-day management of pupils with special educational needs. As a result, these pupils are set work which is at the right level for them and they make good progress towards their targets.

The curriculum

Curricular provision is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Opportunities for curriculum enrichment are very good
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The accommodation is good and for outdoor physical education it is excellent.
- Curricular provision in mathematics and science in the recent past has been unsatisfactory, although it is currently improving.

Commentary

15. At the time of the previous inspection, the curriculum was judged to be good. However, at that time information and communication technology was not used sufficiently well in other subjects and provision for the physical development of young children in Foundation Stage was in need of improvement. Since that time there have been many changes to the schemes of work for different subjects, due to the many changes in leadership. Overall the provision is satisfactory and the statutory requirements are met in all subjects.
16. The provision for the youngest children has been significantly improved and the playground area is spacious and well equipped. The curriculum for children in reception is satisfactory and this enables them to achieve satisfactory standards. Activities are planned to cover all of the six areas of learning for Foundation Stage children.
17. There has been significant work to ensure that the issues noted in information and communication technology have been addressed and the curriculum is now linked effectively with work in different subjects.
18. Planning in science has improved and the school is in the process of an intensive support system from the local authority. However, during inspection it was observed that some teachers were using planning from other schemes until very recently. This involved overuse of work sheets and lessons which did not always follow on effectively from work already covered.
19. The school recognises that it still has some way to go. The curriculum for mathematics is due to be completely reviewed in the forthcoming term with support from the local education authority. The intensive support planned is focused on ensuring an improvement in standards in teaching and learning and pupils' achievement.
20. The school is totally committed to the full inclusion of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Provision for these pupils is good. They are well supported in lessons and in other activities of the school to ensure that they have equal access to the activities on offer. The special educational needs co-ordinator and headteacher have recently reviewed the whole school approach to special educational needs and a clear programme for more improvement has been instigated. Considerable advice has been given by the local education authority, resulting in a high level of support for pupils with special educational needs and a change in emphasis in their individual education plans. There are regular reviews of progress and the school has a good partnership with the parents of pupils involved. Although this is a similar finding to that of the last inspection, there is clear evidence that effective provision faltered in recent years but has recently improved to the present level. As yet there is no specific identification of or provision for

gifted and talented pupils, but this aspect is now built into the new school development plan.

21. Curricular enrichment is a very strong feature and is very good. Nearly all of the pupils in Years 3 to 6 attend one or another of the after-school clubs. These range from music and cookery to sport and information and communication technology and make a very positive contribution to the learning and skills of the pupils who attend. There are regular visitors to the school such as illustrators, authors and other experts, such as sports coaches and visiting speakers, all of whom help to make the curriculum more interesting. There is also a wide range of visits to local and other places of interest, for example linked to work in geography and history.
22. The spacious building and grounds make a good contribution to the quality of education provided by the school. Classrooms are generous in size and well equipped. The large hall, well equipped with stage and lighting, enables the school to put on good quality dramatic productions. Displays of pupils' work and information about the school are attractive and informative. The building is maintained to a very high level of cleanliness by the caretaker and cleaning staff and this makes a very positive contribution to the ethos of the school and pupils' self-esteem. Outside facilities for physical education are excellent. Resources are generally satisfactory and used well. There is a suitable match of teachers and support staff to the curriculum. The recently created secure outdoor play area for Foundation Stage pupils also provides an interesting and exciting play space for pupils at break and lunchtime.

Care, guidance and support

The school has **very good** procedures for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. It provides pupils with sound support and guidance and involves them well in the work of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good attention to health and safety ensures that pupils are happy and safe in school.
- The procedures to ensure that new pupils settle quickly into school life are very good.
- Pupils have good relationships with their teachers and other adults in the school.
- The school provides effective support to pupils and their families, especially at times when they are most vulnerable.

Commentary

23. The school pays very good attention to health and safety and this means that pupils are happy and safe in school and they can work and play in a healthy and caring environment. The governors are fully involved in monitoring health and safety matters and efficient risk assessments have been carried out. There are frequent health and safety inspections of the building and grounds and the whole site is kept very clean and well maintained by the conscientious caretaker and cleaners. Several members of staff are trained in basic first aid procedures and one member of staff is also a qualified nurse. There are effective procedures for child protection in place and all staff are aware of what they need to do if they have any concerns about a pupil. There are appropriate safeguards to control pupils' use of the Internet.
24. The school's very good induction arrangements help new children to settle into school life easily, ensuring that they quickly become familiar with the routines. This is particularly important given the large number of children who join the school part-way through their primary education. The children have good, trusting relationships with their teachers, support staff and the headteacher. Staff know the pupils well and this enables them to provide well-informed support, advice and guidance. Teachers identify children who have learning or behaviour difficulties and, with appropriate provision, enable them to improve and make progress.
25. The school prides itself on being one large family and nowhere is this better exemplified than when some members of the family are facing particularly severe difficulties. At the time of the inspection some fathers of children in the school were on active service in Iraq. The headteacher, in her weekly newsletter to parents, offered the school's full support to these children and their families at this very difficult time for them.
26. The school involves pupils well in the running of the school by seeking their views as part of the school's annual review and by the opportunity for pupils to place ideas in a suggestions box. The school is in the process of extending and developing this aspect of its work by introducing a school council. The first stage – class councils – is planned to start later this term. This gives a clear message to the children that their opinions and ideas are valued and respected.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has **good** links with parents. Links with other schools and colleges are **good**. Links with the community are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good links with the community significantly enhance the quality of pupils' learning.
- The school regularly seeks parents' views and takes account of them.
- The written annual reports on pupils and the other information that the school provides for parents are good.
- There are good mechanisms to ensure the smooth transfer of pupils to the secondary school.

Commentary

27. As noted at the time of the previous inspection, the school successfully engages parents' support and involvement in their children's education. The school is a welcoming place where parents feel comfortable and where teachers and the headteacher are always accessible and willing to listen to any concerns that parents might have. A number of parents help regularly in classes and with hearing children read. The parents' group has been dormant for a while but is beginning to get going again so that it can raise extra funds for the school. Parents generally also make a good contribution to their children's education by hearing them read at home and ensuring that they complete their homework.
28. The school provides an informative prospectus and other useful guidance for new parents in order to help them to support their children's education. The written annual reports on pupils' progress use a combination of tick lists and narrative to show parents clearly how well their child is doing. They also show the next steps that the child should take in order to make further progress. A weekly newsletter keeps parents well informed about what is going on in school. Copies of recent newsletters are available on the school's website and parents can have a copy sent to them by e-mail if they so wish. The first newsletter each term includes a brief description of the areas of each subject to be studied during the term.
29. Parents' views of the school and what it provides have been sought recently and it is intended that this will become an annual exercise as part of the whole school annual review. The school values these opinions and uses them, where appropriate, to contribute to school development. For example, homework emerged as a parental concern from the latest consultation exercise and the school is currently reviewing its homework policy.
30. Pupils in Year 6 are well prepared for their transfer to the secondary school. There is good liaison between the staffs of the two schools and a number of staff from the secondary school visit New Close prior to the transfer to get to know the pupils and their particular needs. Year 6 pupils have the opportunity to visit the secondary school during the summer term in order to get to know their new school.
31. The school's very good involvement with the community includes links with the local church, which enhances the pupils' knowledge of religious education. For example, the local vicar leads assemblies and the Rural Dean has visited and spoken to the children about his work. The older children have taken part in a carol service organised by local churches. The school is involved in an extensive range of activities with the local

community. Examples include football and swimming competitions, as well as hosting the Wiltshire Junior Chess Fun Day recently. A number of local organisations, such as the Air Cadets and Rainbows, use the school's facilities on a regular basis and a range of visitors from the community share their knowledge and experiences with the children. The school's good links with other local educational establishments include the provision of work experience opportunities for pupils from the local secondary school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **satisfactory** overall. The headteacher provides **good** leadership. Management is satisfactory, although some aspects require improvement. The governors fulfil their responsibilities **satisfactorily**. There is a positive ethos shared by the whole school community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has strong purpose and high aspirations for the school and offers good leadership.
- The new school development plan lays out clear and achievable priorities for improvement in the school.
- The management of subject leaders has been unsatisfactory, but after recent initiatives is rapidly improving.
- The governing body is well led by the chair of governors and makes a satisfactory contribution to the governance of the school.
- Financial management is satisfactory, but the budget carried forward has been too high for some time.
- Monitoring performance data and taking action as a result has been unsatisfactory, but is now improving.
- The teamwork and contribution to the school of all non-teaching staff are very effective.

Commentary

32. New Close School has seen considerable turmoil in its leadership and management in the last two years. The headteacher at the time of the last inspection left the school in 2002. A new headteacher was appointed but resigned after a short period, and an acting headteacher took over for a year before the present head was appointed at Easter this year. Although most of the staff have remained at the school during this time, there is strong evidence that these frequent changes in leadership led to confusion and low morale in the school, resulting in a fall in standards in some areas. Equally evident is the fact that the new headteacher has made a huge and positive contribution to the improvement of these aspects since her arrival. Her vision, sense of purpose and aspirations are all high quality and at all times she leads from the front. As a result, the school community knows where it is going, knows what its priorities are and is now working as an effective team. Additionally, all staff are clearly aware of what is expected of them and what their responsibilities are.
33. The headteacher, together with her deputy head and the co-ordinator for the infants, has identified the major action priorities as improving pupil behaviour, improving staff self-esteem, raising the status and responsibilities of subject leaders, improving assessment and reviewing planning procedures. This is all clearly laid out in a new, detailed school development plan to which all staff have contributed. The major aim is to improve

standards and achievement in the school, which have recently been inconsistent. The immediate aim of improving behaviour has already clearly been achieved.

34. The good leadership of the headteacher is now enabling the positive development of the leadership skills of other key staff, which are at present satisfactory in the senior management team, but unsatisfactory in many curriculum areas. This is because, until recently, subject leaders have had little opportunity to lead and take responsibility for the development of their subjects. This has also been a recent high profile area for improvement. Teachers are now being empowered to monitor standards and progress and set realistic development targets. The complementary skills of the deputy headteacher are also being used in order that her management role can be widened and she can have a broader overview of school development, and use her high teaching skills as exemplars of good practice. Management within the school is at present satisfactory, but should improve as these initiatives expand.
35. The governing body, well led by a very supportive chairman, is making a satisfactory contribution to the management of the school. Governors have been involved in some very difficult decisions recently, but their anxieties have been relieved because of the good guidance they have received from the new headteacher in the direction the school should be moving. Governors are proud of the staff, pupils and general friendliness of the school. Several of them are frequent visitors, with governors for special educational needs and literacy playing a particularly active role. They have made significant decisions to help the improvement of the school environment. They have exercised considerable caution with the school budget where an excessive contingency has been maintained for some time – this year over £70,000 – in the region of 15 per cent of the overall budget. However, some of this excess is now being used for the benefit of the pupils at present in school and this satisfactory financial management should help the school towards achieving its educational priorities. The governors are mindful of two major factors in their financial considerations. Firstly, the school population can vary widely depending on the deployment of local army units and, secondly, there is a long term trend of falling numbers on roll. The governors are determined that falling numbers will be arrested without the necessity of again retaining a high contingency.
36. The school's recent detailed self-evaluation has been effective. It has recognised a weakness in the use and monitoring of performance data and sharpened the focus on professional development of staff. Staff are now involved in relevant training, both for the whole school and for individuals, and training includes non-teaching staff. Performance management and staff targets are now integral in staff development, with regular reviews in place.
37. A strength of the school is how well the non-teaching staff work as a team and manage their responsibilities. The office staff are highly effective in their day-to-day duties and offer a warm welcome to visitors and prospective parents alike. Teaching assistants, midday supervisors and particularly the caretaker help to give the impression of a well ordered, safe and friendly environment.
38. At the time of the last inspection, the school was strongly led and the management was generally very effective. There have been many changes in both leadership and management since that time. The evidence of this inspection is that the school is now well on the road to achieving the levels of competence described at that time, although there is still much to do.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

<i>Income and expenditure (£)</i>		<i>Balances (£)</i>	
Total income	572,950	Balance from previous year	62,405
Total expenditure	557,295	Balance carried forward to the next	78,060
Expenditure per pupil	2,759		

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

39. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall. Currently there are 19 children in the reception class. Eight of the youngest children attend part-time, for the morning session only, until the spring term. Attainment on entry to school varies from year to year. This September many children entered with below average attainment. In particular a significant number have below average language and communication skills. The curriculum is satisfactory overall. Staff concentrate effectively on the development of social skills through all activities and as a result children make good progress in this area. Teaching, learning and achievement are satisfactory overall. Children are provided with a satisfactory variety of activities that they enjoy. Staff ensure that children of all abilities are fully included in these activities.
40. The provision is well organised. The teacher and teaching assistant are clear about their roles and responsibilities and work well together as a team. Good procedures are in place to assess what children can do and how well they are learning. This information has just started to be used to plan future work. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage by the class teacher are satisfactory overall. Although the teacher manages the class environment well and is improving the provision, many of the new procedures have not been in place for long enough to improve children's learning. Overall, there has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. The construction of an outside play area is giving children better opportunities to develop their physical skills.

Personal, social and emotional development

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The high expectations of staff ensure that children quickly learn the right way to behave and to distinguish between what is right and what is wrong.
- Children develop good attitudes to learning because of the interesting range of activities provided.

Commentary

41. From the time they enter school, a high priority is placed on developing children's skills in this area. Teaching is good and children respond well to the high expectations set and they learn and achieve well. Most children are likely to attain the expected goals by the time they enter Year 1. Children are provided with a good balance of adult-led and self-chosen activities which enable them to learn to work as part of a group or independently. They are developing the confidence to try new activities yet maintain attention, concentrate and sit quietly when they need to. Overall, children work and play happily together. Teaching and learning are good. When necessary, staff correct the children firmly but sensitively, thus supporting their self-esteem. Children are encouraged to take responsibility for planning their self-chosen activities and clearing away afterwards. They respond well to this and are developing a sense of responsibility for the environment and their own learning. Resources are well organised, which enables children to find the things they need and return them after use.

42. Activities are suitably planned to stimulate children's interest and curiosity and, as a result, children are developing good attitudes to learning. Staff ensure children with special educational needs are fully included in all activities and other children are quickly learning to understand their difficulties and respect their needs.

Communication, language and literacy

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff take every opportunity, both formal and informal, to develop children's language and communication skills.
- There are occasional missed opportunities to introduce new techniques in recording information.

Commentary

43. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, as is children's achievement. However, because they have below average attainment on entry to school, many children will not attain the expected goals by the time they enter Year 1. In particular, many children start school with poorly developed speech and language skills. Staff place a strong emphasis on developing children's communication skills through all activities, both formal and informal. Adult-led sessions with small groups of children provide good opportunities for children to share their ideas with an adult and to extend their vocabulary. In this situation they start to sustain attentive listening and to respond with relevant comments. Other activities such as role-play encourage children to develop their communication skills. However, unless an adult is present to encourage these skills, some children will just play happily alongside each other with very little discussion.
44. The teacher provides a suitable range of activities that motivate children and help to develop their reading and writing skills. Children observed during the inspection were handling books carefully and beginning to enjoy stories. Whilst children make satisfactory progress with developing their writing skills such as knowing how to hold a pencil correctly, many are at a very early stage and few are yet attempting to form recognisable letters. On occasion opportunities to introduce children to new methods of recording their thoughts are missed. For example, children were given a blank sheet to draw how to keep a baby safe, following a class discussion.

Mathematical development

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Day-to-day routines are used well to help children develop their number skills.
- Occasionally work is not sufficiently differentiated to ensure all children are learning at the best possible rate.

Commentary

45. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Children achieve satisfactorily. However, because of the below average attainment on entry, many children will not attain the expected goals before they enter Year 1. Suitable emphasis is placed on teaching mathematical skills through a wide range of practical activities, songs and games that are relevant to children's needs. Daily routines such as snack-time are used well to develop children's counting skills, for example counting the number of children who have

milk. Other routines such as completing the calendar each day teaches them to sequence the days of the week.

46. Occasionally, teaching does not fully match children's learning needs as well as it could. Many children have below average skills on entry to school. In particular they find difficulty in using comparative language such as *more* or *less*. During the inspection children were measuring how tall they were in comparison with a painting of a giant and each other. Whilst teaching and learning were satisfactory overall, by the end of the session some children still found real difficulty in saying which child is taller or shorter.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

47. It was not possible to make an overall judgement of provision or standards. However, an analysis of teachers' planning and work on display shows that all aspects of this wide area of learning are suitably thought out. Visitors into and visits out of school provide effective support and extend learning in this area. For example, linked to the current topic *Ourselves*, children gained first hand experience of how to look after a baby by the visit of a baby and his mother. The daily routine of recording the weather is helping them to understanding the changes that take place over time. There are regular opportunities for children to develop their information, communication and technology skills through using the class computers. Religious education is taught according to the locally agreed syllabus.

Physical development

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The outside play area is well equipped and provides children with good opportunities to develop their physical skills.

Commentary

48. Teaching, learning and achievement are satisfactory. However, many children enter school with below average manipulative skills and because of this some will not achieve the expected goals by the time they enter Year 1. Staff are well aware of the need to improve children's fine manipulation and provide a suitable range of activities to develop these skills such as by handling small toys, a variety of tools and a range of construction materials.
49. Since the last inspection, there is a newly constructed and well-equipped outside play area. This has improved the opportunities for regular physical activity. During the inspection a more formal physical education session with the older children was observed in the school hall. Teaching and learning were good and children achieved well in relation to their ability. Behaviour was very good because of the high expectations of the teacher. However, a significant proportion of children had difficulty with co-ordinating their movements such as being able to stand still on command without wobbling.

Creative development

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Creative activities are used well to support learning in other areas.
- Some opportunities are missed to introduce the use of different media to record feelings and thoughts.

Commentary

50. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Children's achievement in this area is satisfactory.
51. Creative activities are often used well as a stimulus for learning in other areas. For example, children learn to identify a range of simple two-dimensional mathematical shapes by using them to print colourful patterns. In a short session observed a small group of children were making a poster to *Keep Baby Safe*. Teaching and learning and achievement were satisfactory overall. The teacher helped children develop their ideas at the start of the session and the activity was used well as a means to develop children's language and communication skills. However, there were missed opportunities to learn new techniques or use a more imaginative range of media. Children have suitable opportunities to develop their imagination and communication skills through participating in role-play. An analysis of teachers' planning shows that all aspects of creative development are appropriately catered for to help children make progress towards the expected learning goals, although a significant number are not likely to attain them by the time they enter Year 1. This is because they have below average attainment on entry to school.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below expectation in writing.
- The achievement and progress of pupils with special educational needs are good.
- Assessment procedures are good, but the use of these procedures and records in order to help progress is currently unsatisfactory.
- The leadership and management of English have been unsatisfactory, but are improving.

Commentary

52. Standards in English have fluctuated considerably over the last few years. At the end of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils have reached levels varying from above those expected nationally to below or well below average when compared with similar schools. The results of 2004 national tests indicate that pupils in Year 2 reached standards expected in their reading, but were below average in their writing. Pupils leaving school at the end of Year 6 reached standards well above expectation in reading and an above average number attained the national standard expected in writing. However, at Year 2, no pupils reached above average levels in writing and very few attained above average levels in writing at the end of Year 6. Inspection evidence indicates that the overall standards in

school at present are in line with national expectations in reading, with a few pupils above. In writing, standards are below average.

53. Pupils generally enter school in the Foundation Stage with below average skills in English and there is much higher than average movement of pupils in and out of the school. There has, nevertheless, been a lack of consistency in enabling pupils to progress in the recent past. Reading standards are better than writing. Pupils progress at different rates in different classes and few reach higher than average standards. With so many variables, the overall conclusion is that the great majority of pupils achieve satisfactorily and make steady progress in their learning, although a small number of pupils could do better. The school has recognised the weakness in writing and has already taken urgent steps to improve this situation. These measures have included intensive monitoring of pupils' writing throughout the school and a complete review of the ineffective assessment procedures of the last few years. The headteacher and newly appointed co-ordinator are also driving hard to raise expectation across the school so that the few higher attaining pupils achieve their potential in writing. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and make better than average progress because they receive good quality intensive support, particularly from the very effective teaching assistants.
54. Standards of pupils in speaking and listening at Year 2 and Year 6 are as expected for their age. Many opportunities are being given to pupils to express themselves verbally and to interact with each other. Pupils in Year 5, for example, tell each other stories, some of them talking fluently for several minutes. Almost all of the *listening partners* sustain concentration well and ask the storytellers relevant and sensible questions.
55. Reading standards are the strongest element of English in the school and are in line with those expected. Most pupils enjoy reading and are given plenty of opportunities and encouragement to do so. Reading is well organised in all classes and pupils are heard regularly by adults. The standards of a great majority of pupils are as expected for their age, although a significant number do attain higher levels. A key factor to the development of reading skills is the good consistent support received by most pupils from their parents and carers. Many pupils also use the local public library, with some pupils in Years 5 and 6 belonging to the '*Warminster Junior Reading Club*' and regularly writing book reviews.
56. Standards in writing in the school are below average at Year 2 and Year 6. In fact the school had identified this as a weakness over a year ago, but only now are steps taken since then beginning to bear fruit. The main problems have been a lack of consistency in the approach to teaching both imaginative, interesting writing and also the skill of accurate, legible handwriting. Procedures for assessment have changed more than once over recent years and the information gathered has in the past not always been analysed accurately or sometimes used at all in order to gauge the progress of individual pupils. Consequently, although evidence of good writing was observed, for example the descriptions by Year 6 pupils of the stories of a visiting author '*Mirror Monsters*', there was also evidence of careless, inaccurate and badly presented writing. Spelling is also variable. All pupils have regular spelling tests and many learn their spellings conscientiously and can reproduce their learning accurately. However, spelling is not so consistent in its application by pupils in their day-to-day writing.
57. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, but vary through the school. From scrutiny of work and observations of lessons, teaching and learning are consistently at least

satisfactory and sometimes good in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6, teaching and learning are more variable and teachers in the youngest classes do not always expect the highest standards of work and presentation in pupils' writing, for example. When this happens, pupils do not make as much progress as they might in learning to develop their writing skills. During inspection teaching ranged from satisfactory to good. Teaching was best when teachers had high expectations of their pupils, consistently challenged pupils of all abilities and helped them to develop good habits in their work. Teaching and learning were less effective when teachers were undemanding of good standards. Some lessons, such as for younger pupils in Key Stage 2, lacked energy and pupils spent too long on the carpet. When this happened, insufficient focus was made upon the progress of individual pupils and higher and lower attaining pupils were equally disadvantaged. The teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs are good because they receive consistent good support and guidance, especially from their designated teaching assistants.

58. Marking and planning are also variable. Some teachers rely heavily on work sheets, which are not always adapted to the needs of the pupils in their classes. The marking of all teachers is regular and conscientious, but varies widely in its approach to improving pupils' work. Some writing is heavily corrected and has words of guidance as well as praise for the pupils. Other writing is hardly corrected at all and has only merit stickers and encouraging comments to guide learning. However, some teachers do verbally go through the writing with individual pupils, pointing out areas for improvement. Individual targets have recently been introduced for all pupils, such as '*I must remember to use full stops and capitals*', in order to guide improvement, but need more time to be effective.
59. The newly appointed subject leader has already identified these areas for urgent improvement following a whole school audit with the deputy headteacher. A number of new initiatives, particularly the introduction of clear and consistent assessment procedures, have already been put in place. The previously unsatisfactory leadership and management of English in the school is now improving and is currently satisfactory. The subject leader has made a satisfactory start to her task of guiding improvement and sharing good practice. Standards in English have fallen since the last inspection for a number of reasons including standards on entry being lower than at that time. However, there are clear signs that in the last six months improvement has been slowly taking place. This should gather pace as the vigorous drive to improve standards, led strongly by the senior management of the school, starts to take effect.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

60. The promotion of literacy through other areas of the curriculum is satisfactory and reflects the overall findings for English. Speaking and listening are used effectively in most subject areas, particularly for example in physical education, where pupils are consistently encouraged to evaluate their work by talking about it. Likewise, reading is encouraged regularly across a range of subjects, including the use of reference books from the library in homework assignments for older pupils. However, the use of writing in other subjects is weaker and is not yet consistent enough in either its regularity or accuracy. Information and communication technology is sometimes used, especially by older pupils, for word processing and makes a satisfactory contribution to their literacy skills, but opportunities to use it further are sometimes missed.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have declined since the time of the previous inspection.
- Assessment systems are good, but not all teachers make adequate use of the information gained to provide pupils with work that is suited to their differing needs.
- When teaching is good, pupils gain confidence in their ability in the subject and enjoy lessons.
- Some opportunities are missed to use information and communication technology to support work in the subject.
- The newly appointed co-ordinator has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject.

Commentary

61. Standards in mathematics have varied in recent years. They were above average in tests at the end of Year 2 in 2000 and 2002, well below average in 2001 and average in 2003. In tests in 2004, standards were well below average again. In part these fluctuations are due to differing proportions of pupils with special educational needs in some year groups, but also to the high amount of movement in and out of school with pupils arriving and leaving all the time from many different school backgrounds. Current pupils in Year 2 have made steady satisfactory gains in their learning since reception. Their achievement is satisfactory, but the standards they are likely to attain at the end of the year are below average.
62. Results of tests at the end of Year 6 have also varied greatly. They were average in 2000, below average in 2001, above average in 2002 and well below average in 2003 and 2004. Many similar factors have caused these fluctuations. However, in addition, tracking of interim test results and analysis of previous work indicates that some year groups made too little progress in their learning in recent years. The newly appointed headteacher has identified this in her audit of the school and has moved swiftly, with the new co-ordinator, to involve the support of the local education authority in intensive review of the subject and training for all staff. This initiative is still in its early stages and so has only just started to improve standards.
63. The quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory overall for the pupils in Years 1 and 2, and frequently they are good. However, in Years 3 to 6 there is significant variation. The evidence from inspection is that the quality of teaching ranges from unsatisfactory to good, and this variation is unsatisfactory. Most lessons are carefully planned, based on the pattern of the National Numeracy Strategy. Good, recently introduced assessment procedures are in place, but teachers do not all use the information gained to provide work that suits pupils' different needs in lessons. All pupils in some classes are presented with the same activities. This does not 'stretch' the potential higher attaining pupils, whilst at the same time it is often too complex for lower attaining pupils to understand fully. Teaching and learning in Years 5 and 6 are good and pupils' achievements are good in these classes. Learning support assistants effectively help pupils with special educational needs with their work and this enables them to make good progress towards their learning targets.

64. Most teachers make good use of mental activities at the beginning of lessons. In the best lessons these sessions are brisk and enable pupils to learn that mathematics is fun. Pupils throughout the school generally behave well. Most settle to their tasks with interest and enthusiasm. They work well with other boys and girls, concentrate well and make suitable progress. On occasion, however, pupils are expected to sit on the carpet area for unrealistic amounts of time and, when this happens, their concentration lapses and they become bored and restless. Most pupils take care with the appearance of their books. Whilst most teachers provide comments of encouragement and advice in their marking, others provide little more than ticks. In classes for the youngest pupils in Key Stage 2, teachers do not always expect the highest standards of the pupils in their presentation and untidy work is accepted. Opportunities are then missed to help pupils improve their work further.
65. Leadership and management of the subject in the past have been unsatisfactory. This was due in part to the general turmoil within the school at that time. The co-ordinator has only very recently taken up her role and her present work in both leadership and management is satisfactory. She has good personal levels of expertise and offers colleagues help when required. She has started to monitor the work being produced and is fully aware of pupils' current performance and the quality of provision throughout the school. She is putting in place strategies to help tackle the weaknesses in conjunction with the local education authority. She is also aware of the need for teachers to make better use of assessment to ensure that they provide pupils with work well matched to their individual needs. A new scheme of work has been planned with new thorough assessment systems, and funding has been allocated for this on the School Development Plan. Results of tracking have been analysed and demonstrate clearly that pupils who have attended the school since reception tend to achieve higher results than pupils who are newly arrived. However, the audit has also highlighted varying degrees of confidence and skill amongst teachers.
66. Standards are below those noted at the time of the previous inspection. At that time they were judged to be in line with the average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. However, attainment on entry to school was also higher than at the current time, being average overall.

Mathematics across the curriculum

67. The basic skills of numeracy are suitably developed in subjects such as science and information and communication technology. However, opportunities are sometimes missed in lessons for pupils to use computers to help develop mathematical skills.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make satisfactory progress in gaining knowledge in Years 1 to 6. However, the school does less well in enabling older pupils to learn to set up their own experiments and record their findings in their own ways.
- Teachers' skills are variable in Years 3 to 6 and too much work in some classes relies on worksheets and is not well matched to pupils' abilities and skills.

- The co-ordinator has a good perception of what needs to be done to raise standards.

Commentary

68. Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2003 indicated that standards were very high for the proportion attaining the expected Level 2, as all pupils achieved that level, but well below average for the proportion attaining Level 3. Standards in assessments in 2004 were similar in that, although very nearly all pupils attained Level 2, no pupils attained the higher Level 3.
69. Standards in tests at the end of Year 6 in 2004 were below schools nationally. Compared with similar schools on the basis of the combined scores pupils had achieved in tests in English and mathematics at the end of Year 2, results were also below average.
70. Currently pupils' achievements are satisfactory in Years 1 to 6 and pupils make satisfactory overall gains in knowledge of the world around them, but the development of skills of questioning and setting up tests for the oldest pupils is unsatisfactory. Skills of developing scientific thinking are not developed well enough because too much of the work they are given in Years 3 and 4 is based upon pupils being told facts. They are given far too few opportunities to find things out for themselves, to question, to devise their own experiments and work out how to record their findings.
71. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, but variable. This is particularly the case for pupils in Years 3 to 6. Some teachers, including the co-ordinator, have good levels of knowledge and understanding and teaching in most lessons is at least satisfactory and often good. Other teachers are less confident and secure in their skills. It is this lack of confidence which leads some to resort to using structured lessons from commercial schemes that do not always match the learning needs of the pupils in the class. On these occasions teaching is unsatisfactory. It slows the learning of potentially higher attaining pupils and lower attaining pupils equally. Marking of work of some classes is basic and too often untidy and poorly presented work is accepted. A new scheme has been adopted by the school which contains assessment opportunities. Intensive support in the subject, including teacher training, has already started and is planned to continue in the forthcoming term.
72. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator is aware of the main strengths and weaknesses of the subject. She has only had responsibility for the subject for a matter of weeks, but has already completed an audit, including looking at work books, and so has a satisfactory awareness of overall strengths and weaknesses. She has formulated a draft action plan for the subject, highlighting the need to ensure that lessons are planned to meet the differing needs of all pupils. Resources are satisfactory. They are stored so that staff have easy access, but not in a way conducive to access by older, higher attaining pupils to learn to select what they need for experiments.
73. There has been a significant decline in standards since the previous inspection when they were in line with those expected at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. But standards on entry to reception are currently lower than at that time.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is well focused on the development of pupils' skills and knowledge with effective links to other subject areas, but on occasion opportunities to use ICT to support work in other subjects are missed.
- Leadership and management are good and committed to improving standards and resources.

- Resources have improved since the previous inspection with portable systems that can be used in all classrooms.

Commentary

74. Pupils have regular, suitable learning opportunities and they attain satisfactory levels by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Each class has opportunity to practise and develop skills further in their classrooms, using portable laptop systems. Teachers use these opportunities effectively to develop pupils' skills in the subject, as well as to support different curriculum areas such as history, art and design and science well. However, on occasion opportunities to use class-based computers are missed. In many lessons during inspection computers were not used as much as they could have been.
75. Pupils enjoy their lessons. Boys and girls are gaining in confidence in using the wide range of information and communication technology equipment well. They use the Internet to research in history and science, the digital cameras to record their work and activities. They merge pictures and text with competence and confidence and write about what they have found. From Year 1 onwards, pupils open, work and close a suitable range of programs. They identify different icons on the screens and use addresses to research on the Internet. By Year 6, pupils confidently add to, amend and combine a range of information from differing resources, presenting it in a variety of forms. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well by teachers and learning support assistants and so make good progress towards their learning targets.
76. Teachers are developing suitable levels of confidence. Lessons are planned carefully and are focused upon the development of pupils' learning and increasing their knowledge of a range of programs. Teachers allow pupils suitable opportunities to learn the skills of concentration and perseverance. They plan work well to give pupils suitable opportunities to develop the skills of accessing different programs and understanding how computers can help them in their work in and out of school. Pupils work hard and produce good amounts of work in lessons. They have good attitudes to their work and generally behave well, working with concentration. Teachers are good at asking questions that give good guidance to learning. Pupils listen carefully to instructions and work independently as well as collaboratively.
77. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has worked hard to ensure resources are up to date and staff trained to use these resources. She has good levels of expertise. The scheme of work and policy have been updated and the resources have improved. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements. School has bought technical support to ensure systems are kept in good working order. As noted by the previous inspection, the computer club continues to make a positive contribution to the progress of the pupils who attend. Although the co-ordinator has monitored teachers' planning, she has not had time within classes to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. Future plans include further work on assessment systems and monitoring of standards of teaching and learning in classes.
78. Provision has improved since the previous inspection, when pupils' progress in learning to use information and communication technology in other subjects was judged to be too slow.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

79. Information and communication technology is starting to be linked satisfactorily to other subjects of the curriculum and so skills, knowledge and understanding are promoted effectively. Lessons using laptop computers give pupils good opportunities to see how computers can support their learning in a range of different subjects. However, opportunities are sometimes missed for pupils to practise what they have learned in other lessons, although each classroom has at least two machines permanently available. This limits pupils' ability to refine and develop skills further.

HUMANITIES

80. **Geography** and **History** were not a focus for inspection. Nevertheless, scrutiny of written work in books and on walls suggests that attainment is in line with national expectations in both subjects at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn about the Great Fire of London and characters such as Samuel Pepys. They study their routes to school and describe with satisfactory skill some of the geographical features observed. In Years 3 to 6 pupils study geographical features such as mountain ranges and learn the names of the major mountains in the world. They also research information about different environments, including the water cycle and its effects. They make satisfactory progress in learning how to improve the environment and annotate plans of the school to indicate noisy and quiet areas. They learn about major historical civilisations in work linked effectively to art, such as a study of Ancient Egypt. The subjects have not had a high profile in recent years and leadership and management are at very early stages. They have been unsatisfactory in the recent past. There are plans for the co-ordinators to start monitoring teachers' planning this year and to audit resources and the curriculum. Monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is planned to start in Spring 2005.

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Outside visitors are used well to support learning in religious education.
- There is no whole school system to record pupils' progress.

Commentary

81. The school follows the recommendations of the locally agreed syllabus and standards are in line with expected standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. This is similar to the standards reported in the last inspection.
82. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Pupils in Year 2 have a satisfactory understanding of the importance of celebrations and how people celebrate them in Christianity, for example Harvest Festival. They are able to record the main events of significant stories such as the story of Joseph and the story of Jonah and the Whale. Pupils in Year 6 have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of how the beliefs of Christians can affect the way they live. In the two lessons observed during the inspection teaching, learning, standards and achievement were all satisfactory. Relationships were good and pupils behaved sensibly during discussions and gave some thoughtful responses to questions. Pupils in Year 1 had a satisfactory understanding of the importance of saying *thank you*, especially of saying *thank you* to God. The recent visit of the Rural Dean inspired Year 6 pupils to think deeply about the way Christians can help people in different ways, particularly in times of sadness. A few higher attaining pupils demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of Christianity, including reference to Christ on the Cross. An analysis of teachers' planning for the subject shows pupils are provided with suitable opportunities to learn about other religions such as Islam and Judaism. Pupils learn respect for people of other faiths and to develop an understanding of the similarities and differences between their own faith and that of others. Religious education makes a satisfactory contribution towards pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

83. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and is keen to develop the subject further. However, she has not yet had an opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in the subject and to be fully effective in her role and there are no formal procedures in place to assess pupils' learning and achievement.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

84. No judgement is made about provision in art and design, design and technology or music as none of these areas was a focus in the inspection. One lesson in Year 2 was observed in art and design, when pupils were continuing a study of looms, weaving and natural and man-made materials. Their standards were at least as expected for their age. Throughout the school there is much evidence of pupils' work in art. Pupils have entered local competitions, winning 'highly commended' certificates for their '*views from a porthole*'. They have used printing blocks to make symmetrical designs of flowers and designs of '*people in action*'. Additionally they have linked literacy work '*Who am I?*' with very colourful self-portraits. Their displayed work, which considerably enhances the school environment, shows standards as expected for their age, with a few pieces above average.
85. No lessons were observed in music, although all pupils join in enthusiastic and tuneful singing in assemblies and hymn practice. The school is proud of the singing by pupils in the regular school productions for parents and friends. There is no provision for instrumental teaching for individuals and the subject leader has identified composition as an area for development throughout the school.
86. Design and technology is taught in some terms but not in others. The curriculum planning during the term of the inspection did not include any class involvement in the subject. In the school there are examples of clay models produced by using the school kiln. Older pupils have good recall of their activities when making musical instruments, Egyptian vases, chairs, picture frames and mosaics and describe in detail their use of tools and safety goggles. Standards of work seen in the school are as expected for their age.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards and achievement are good in swimming.
- Good quality provision is made for extra-curricular games.
- A strong and effective link has been made with the local Sports College.
- The school achieves well in competitive games with other schools.
- The outside areas for physical education are excellent.

Commentary

87. By Year 2 and Year 6, standards in physical education are in line with national expectations. They are above average, though, in swimming throughout the school. This is because pupils all have regular opportunities to go to the local pool and as a result almost all pupils can swim 25 metres or more by the time they leave the school. The

achievement of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory in dance, gymnastics and games and good in swimming. This is a similar finding to that of the last inspection.

88. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. They are mostly satisfactory, but sometimes good. Good teaching such as that seen in a dance lesson in Year 6 was characterised by much encouragement to pupils to evaluate their movements and those of others. A good link to literacy was made in Year 2 when the dance was linked to a '*big book*' story. Teachers make conspicuous efforts to encourage speaking and listening in physical education lessons, but on occasion some pupils become very excitable or vociferous. Pupils enjoy their lessons and follow instructions carefully. They also work well with partners and in groups when devising routines. A few, though, can become boisterous and lack sufficient respect for the views of others.
89. A particular strength of the subject is the good number of opportunities pupils are given for extra-curricular clubs. Large numbers of pupils of all ages were observed at football and netball clubs where the learning of skills was high on the agenda. There is a strong and effective link with the local Sports College which provides coaches, facilities and regular support to the school. This encourages a very good community link. In addition the school is actively involved in competitive sports with other schools and has both won and been in the first three in recent times in soccer, athletics and swimming tournaments.
90. Resources for physical education are good. The school has a spacious, very well maintained hall and excellent, well kept grounds and playground. The immensely enthusiastic new subject leader has many plans for offering even more opportunities to pupils and improving standards. Her leadership and management are satisfactory, but these are early days. Her enthusiasm and the strong links with the neighbouring college show great promise for the successful future development of the subject in the school.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

This subject was sampled.

91. The school's needs for supporting pupils' personal development have been successfully identified and it is meeting these well. The school has constructed a good quality curriculum that covers all of the required aspects of the subject and corresponds to pupils' needs. It is well designed to help all pupils develop confidence and to raise social awareness and knowledge of personal issues. The caring school ethos supports pupils' personal development well. The requirements for teaching pupils about sex and relationships education and drugs awareness are fully met. Citizenship is not taught in isolated lessons, but is integrated into the rest of the curriculum. The scheme of work takes good note of national guidelines. Work is linked to the newly introduced *Values System*, where pupils are encouraged to think of others.
92. In the lessons seen, teachers related very well to the pupils. As a result pupils behaved very well, showing respect for themselves and each other. Teachers ensured that pupils at all levels of attainment were fully involved. In a very good lesson seen, older pupils discussed how emotions can be very strong and change very quickly as we get older. The teacher handled sensitive issues very well. Pupils showed a high level of interest and responded thoughtfully. They expressed clearly what helps them to deal with angry

emotions. Discussions of this nature add significantly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and also to their language and communication skills.

93. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to consider their wider social responsibilities such as helping to preserve the environment.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement	Grade
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	5
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	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	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	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
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).

