

# INSPECTION REPORT

**St Margaret Clitherow Roman Catholic Primary School**

Bracknell

LEA area: Bracknell Forest

Unique reference number: 110033

Headteacher: Mrs F Valentine

Lead inspector: Mrs Rowena Onions

Dates of inspection: 24<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> May 2004

Inspection number: 257779

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: 198

School address: Pembroke  
Hanworth  
Bracknell  
Postcode: RG12 7RD

Telephone number: 01344 424030  
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Appropriate authority: Governing body  
Name of chair of governors: Matthew White

Date of previous inspection: 20/4/1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Margaret Clitherow Roman Catholic Primary School is a school of below average size, with 198 pupils on roll. The school caters for pupils from the age of four to 11 years, with a broadly equal number of boys and girls. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language and most pupils are of white British ethnicity. The school is situated in the town of Bracknell. Some pupils live close to the school but a significant number come from a wider area. An average number of pupils leave or join the school at times other than at the usual times of admission and transfer. The socio-economic context of the school is broadly average, but the percentage of pupils taking free school meals is below average. The pupils enter the school with a very wide range of attainment and their overall attainment changes from year to year, in part, due to the proportion of children born in the summer months, who receive only one term's teaching in the reception class. On balance, attainment on entry to the school is average. The school has pupils with a wide range of special educational needs. There are currently 43 pupils (22 per cent) identified as having special educational needs, which approximates to the average percentage nationally. Three pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need. The school has a Gold Activemark and a Silver Artsmark and a Healthy Schools Award. It was awarded a 'Department for Education and Skills' (DfES) School Achievement award in 2003. In the year of the inspection, owing to an accident, the headteacher was absent from school for a term. In the absence of the deputy headteacher,

who was temporarily fulfilling the role of headteacher at another local school, the acting deputy headteacher became the acting headteacher.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18354	Mrs Rowena Onions	Lead inspector	English Information and communication technology Music Special educational needs
31754	Mrs Charlotte Roberson	Lay inspector	
18083	Mrs Judith Howell	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage <sup>1</sup> Science Art and design Design and technology Physical education
13307	Mr Ian Hancock	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History

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<sup>1</sup> The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three and ends at the end of the reception class. It is a distinct stage in preparing children for later schooling and is based on six areas of learning. These mainly refer to communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development, but also includes knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

St Margaret Clitherow is a **good school and it provides good value for money**. Pupils enter the school with average attainments and leave with well above average attainments in English and mathematics and above average attainment in science. Overall, teaching and learning are good, as are pupils' achievement, the leadership and management and the governance of the school.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils are taught well by a hardworking team of teachers and teaching assistants.
- Pupils like school and they generally work hard and behave well.
- The headteacher leads the school very well and successfully promotes both rising standards and very good care and welfare for all pupils.
- Pupils are not as interested in their work in some lessons as they are in others.
- Links between subjects are not fully exploited.
- Some subject co-ordinators lack the confidence to inspire colleagues to develop and extend work in their subjects.
- Children in the reception year are given a positive start to their education.
- There are very successful links with parents.

The school has shown good improvement since the previous inspection in 1998. Standards at the end of Year 6 have risen in English, mathematics and design and technology. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour have improved and the amount of good and very good teaching has increased. The school has successfully addressed the issues identified in the previous report.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

**Achievement is good** overall. Children in the reception class make at least good progress in all aspects of their education and the majority are set to attain the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the reception year but because many of them have very limited time in the reception class, few exceed these goals. Current attainment by pupils in Year 2 is above average in writing and mathematics and achievement is good. Achievement in reading is satisfactory and pupils attain average standards. Pupils in Year 6, including those with higher attainments, achieve well in English and mathematics and standards are well above average. Work to improve standards in science amongst higher attaining pupils has been successful and this means that overall standards in Year 6 have risen since 2003, when they were below the national average. They are currently above average and pupils' achievement is good. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs do well throughout the school.

Pupils from traveller families do very well. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and design and technology are above average.

**Pupils' personal qualities are good** overall. Most pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good in class but occasionally a small minority become restless when lessons do not suit their age and maturity or the time of day at which they are being taught. **Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good and cultural development satisfactory.** Attendance and punctuality are good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The **quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching in the school is good** overall. Teachers work hard to ensure that pupils learn well overall. In most lessons, activities are well planned and expectations of the amount of work pupils will complete are high. Because relationships are positive and discipline in most lessons is good, pupils wish to work hard to complete this work. Occasionally, however, expectations are unrealistic and pupils are less motivated to learn. This has more impact in Years 1 and 2, where teaching is satisfactory overall. The teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants is particularly effective and has a positive influence on progress.

The curriculum is satisfactory overall, but the way that it is organised sometimes lacks coherence and relevance to the pupils. The wide variety of out of lesson activities provides pupils with good opportunities to learn further. This has a particular impact on interest in physical education. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and means that these pupils do well. Provision for traveller pupils is very good. Procedures for child protection are very good, as are those for health and safety. The school has very good links with parents and with the community.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The **leadership and management of the school are good.** The headteacher provides very good leadership and is very successful in building a team who work very hard to the benefit of the pupils. She is well supported by the acting deputy headteacher and governors in making ongoing improvements to the education provided. There is clear vision focused on the raising of standards. The senior management team work effectively to this end, but the work of some co-ordinators needs further development. Governance is good. Governors are rightly proud of the school but continue to actively assist it to improve. They successfully ensure that statutory duties are met.

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

Parents and pupils are supportive of the school. Parents are happy with the education provided and particularly like the way their children are helped to mature personally as well as educationally. Pupils like school, in particular their teachers and their friends.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Ensure that pupils are equally interested, enthused and motivated to learn, irrespective of their age or the time of day at which they are being taught.
- Develop tighter links between subjects.



- Further develop the role of co-ordinators so that they can inspire development, change and innovation in their subjects.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Overall, pupils achieve well. By Year 6, standards are well above average in English and mathematics and above average in science. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve in a satisfactory way overall. Standards at the end of Year 2 are above average in writing and mathematics and average in reading. Achievement in the reception year is good.

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

- By Year 6, pupils read and write independently and fluently and are confident and competent mathematicians.
- Children in the reception year make good progress in all aspects of their education.
- Pupils in Year 2 gain good basic skills in writing.
- By Year 6, pupils have good knowledge of scientific facts and understand how to investigate scientifically.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set for them.
- Traveller pupils are ably assisted to make very good progress.
- Pupils achieve well in ICT and in design and technology.

#### **Commentary**

1. Children enter the school with a wide range of attainments, but overall attainment is broadly average. As they are well taught, in a well organised stimulating environment, they make good progress and achieve well in all areas of their learning and achieve very well personally, socially and emotionally and in their physical development. In all aspects, most are set to attain the national goals set for reception age children but, because a significant number have had only a term in the school, few are likely to exceed them.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.5 (16.2)	15.9 (15.8)
writing	15.4 (15.5)	14.8 (14.4)
mathematics	15.6 (16.2)	16.4 (16.5)

*There were 26 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

2. In 2003, standards attained by pupils in Year 2 were above the national average in writing, but below average in mathematics and reading. Focused teaching has ensured that standards have risen in mathematics and pupils currently attain above average standards. Standards in writing remain above average. Successful efforts have been made to ensure that pupils have basic skills, for example, knowing the links between sounds and letters (phonics) and developing neat legible handwriting. Pupils know how to write in different ways for different purposes. The attention to basic skills means that standards in reading have also risen a little and are average but the school is right to be seeking ways in which this improvement can be increased further. Currently, basic

reading skills are well taught, but there is insufficient time allocated for practising these skills. By Year 2, pupils speak confidently and clearly, but a number do not listen as well as they might and, as a result, standards in speaking and listening are average.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.3 (28.4)	27 (27)
mathematics	28.7 (29.3)	27 (26.7)
science	28.0 (30.2)	28.8 (28.3)

*There were 19 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

3. Over recent years, standards in Year 6 have risen year-on-year. In Year 6, as in 2003, standards in English and mathematics are well above the national average. Pupils are fluent readers and write with accuracy and purpose. They listen attentively and speak confidently, both in conversation and when discussing their work in class. Pupils calculate accurately and transfer their knowledge from one problem to another, choosing the mathematics they need to use to solve the problem speedily.
4. Standards in science are average for pupils in Year 2 and pupils have achieved satisfactorily. Standards by Year 6 are above average and have improved because more attention has been given to raising standards amongst higher attaining pupils. Current Year 6 pupils have achieved well. Pupils know how to investigate and how to record their findings systematically. They are interested and informed in the subject.
5. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are above the national expectation throughout the school. As a result of good teaching, pupils have good knowledge and skills in a wide range of aspects of the subject. Standards in design and technology have risen significantly since the time of the previous inspection and they too are now above the national expectation.
6. The good provision for pupils with special educational needs ensures that these pupils, together with those of lower attainment, make good progress. The vast majority of pupils leave the school with the basic skills and capabilities they will need to successfully complete work in the secondary school. Challenging work helps ensure that higher attaining pupils achieve well. Traveller pupils are very well supported and are given the confidence to feel comfortable in school, to learn and to make very good progress.

**Pupils’ attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils’ attitudes, values and their personal qualities are good, as is the overall provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In most lessons, pupils behave well and demonstrate good attitudes to learning. They develop positive relationships with teaching staff. Attendance and punctuality are good.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils like school and join in well with the activities provided for them.

- Pupils try hard to succeed, work hard and complete good quantities of work.
- Pupils' good behaviour in class and around the school helps them learn well.
- There are occasional lessons in which a minority of pupils become restless and less attentive.
- The school successfully promotes a set of values and beliefs, as well as providing a clear moral and social code that help the pupils develop a respect for themselves and others.

## Commentary

7. Most pupils have good attitudes to school and to the work they do there. Attitudes have improved since the time of the previous inspection. Pupils willingly undertake the tasks set for them in class and a good many attend the out of class activities provided. This is particularly true of sporting activities, where enthusiasm for taking part in football matches, for example, is high. Pupils say that they like school and enjoy their time there. Levels of interest in work in school are generally good and in most lessons, pupils attend well and show enthusiasm for what they are doing. The significant amount of work pupils complete in most lessons shows their willingness to work hard. They take pride in their work and standards of presentation are good. Pupils want to succeed, both to please their teachers and, as they grow older, to gain self-fulfilment. By Year 6, their attitudes to their work and the quality of thought they put into it should stand them in good stead for their future education.
8. Pupils' behaviour has improved since the time of the previous inspection. School and class rules make expectations clear. Pupils understand the need for them and are generally prepared to abide by them. Pupils conduct themselves sensibly in and around the school and behaviour in the vast majority of instances is good. Pupils report that the school is a friendly and safe place and that any instances of bullying or name-calling are quickly and very effectively dealt with. There have been no exclusions from the school. The school has clear and sensible guidelines for rewarding pupils and pupils see the system as fair and are particularly pleased when they are, for instance, mentioned in the weekly celebratory assembly.
9. In a small minority of lessons when activities are not as well chosen pupils' attitudes are less good. This is either when expectations are unrealistic or when they are not well suited to the time at which the lesson occurs. In these lessons, some restlessness occurs and this is not always checked as quickly and firmly as it should be. This reduces the quality of learning by some pupils in these lessons. Sanctions are clear in the school behaviour policy but were not totally consistently applied.
10. Personal development is good. The Catholic ethos of the school underpins all its work and the importance placed on pupils' personal development by the governors, headteacher and all staff is clear and effectively translated into everyday action. Staff work hard to develop good relationships and moral and social development is very well promoted throughout the school. This encourages pupils to distinguish right from wrong, develop their own views and beliefs, and to value and respect each other. Teachers promote a good working environment and this contributes to pupils' achievement. Pupils are encouraged to undertake roles of responsibility for day-to-day jobs, such as organising the school library, setting up for assemblies or in taking part in the school council.
11. Spirituality and cultural awareness are promoted well in class, for example, in a Year 6 lesson, where pupils discussed the difficulties in the development of a relationship between two characters in a book, caused by a lack of a common language. Subjects such as illness and

death are openly, but sensitively, approached. Spiritual development is good. Cultural development is, however, satisfactory overall. Pupils understand that they need to know about the cultures of others “to stop us upsetting other people without meaning to”. The actual level of their cultural knowledge is, however, somewhat variable, with some pupils being unsure of differences between the ways that different groups of people live.

12. Children in the reception class are provided with a settled, calm and secure environment, and achieve very well in their personal, social and emotional development and most will meet and some will exceed, the national goals for reception age children set for this aspect.
13. Whole school attendance figures recorded are consistently just above similar schools nationally and are good. Office staff are very vigilant in chasing up all reasons for absences. If any pupil causes concern or patterns of absence are noticed, the school and the education welfare service support the families well and such instances are rare. Pupils arrive punctually.

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

Authorised absence	
School data	5.3
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0
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 overall. Teaching and learning are good overall. A satisfactory curriculum is extended well by extra curricular activities. The school provides very good levels of care. Links with parents and the community are very good.

### **Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. The use of assessment is also good.

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

- Teaching is particularly effective in the reception class and in Years 5 and 6.
- Teachers expect pupils to work hard and to complete good amounts of work.
- Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the effectiveness of lessons. Their work has a particular impact on pupils with special educational needs.
- Traveller pupils are assisted to learn very well.
- Occasionally, the activities planned are not well suited to the age of the pupils or the time of day at which the pupils are being taught.
- Teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they are teaching. Care is taken to develop pupils' vocabulary so that they can think and talk about what they are learning.
- Assessment in English and mathematics is very thorough and means that teachers and pupils are aware of what needs to be learned next.
- Some of the ways in which assessments are recorded are unnecessarily time consuming for staff.

### **Commentary**

#### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 33 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2(6%)	5 (15%)	14(43%)	11(33%)	1(3%)	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.*

14. Although the overall quality of teaching and learning remains good as it was at the time of the previous inspection, there is an increased proportion of lessons that are good or very good. Two excellent lessons were observed and in both cases the quality of these lessons lay in the skill with which the teacher used both activity and questioning to encourage pupils to develop their thinking and understanding of the subject in hand.

15. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good overall. It is particularly strong in promoting social development and in improving children's physical skills. The teacher's planning takes good account of the learning requirements of this age group. A very good atmosphere is created in the class. This is very effective in encouraging and engaging children in their learning, while having fun at the same time. A good, interesting curriculum is provided, which offers a rich variety of activities. The reception teacher and support staff work very closely together to form a very effective team. Teaching is also particularly effective in Years 5 and 6 because teachers plan a programme of work that gives pupils a belief in their own ability. In most cases, tasks are very well matched to pupils' differing attainments and each is enabled to succeed.
16. Teachers and teaching assistants work together well as a team. The good skills of the teaching assistants are well utilised in a variety of ways. When required, they support pupils with special educational needs well. There is particularly good work carried out by teaching assistants specialising in early literacy skills, which helps to ensure that pupils in Year 1 develop good basic skills. The special educational needs co-ordinator supports the teaching of these pupils well by assisting teachers to plan for their needs in class. Teaching assistants are also a key element of the success of the provision for traveller pupils, especially the way in which they work to build the confidence and self esteem of these pupils. Teaching assistants are, however, often well deployed in a more general way in class, assisting all pupils to make progress.
17. Teachers take good care to be well prepared. They are knowledgeable about the subjects they teach and this adds to the interest of most lessons. Teachers have undertaken training, as necessary, to improve their teaching, for example, teachers in Years 5 and 6 have very successfully learned to use the new 'interactive' whiteboards (whiteboards that are linked to a computer) and their use greatly enhances the success of lessons. The development of vocabulary has been a focus of school improvement and this is evident in the consistent way, in which, teachers identify the vocabulary to be used in a lesson and the careful way in which this is done.
18. All teachers have high aspirations for their pupils. This is successfully translated into practice in most lessons. Pupils are expected to concentrate hard and to try their best. Because relationships are generally good, pupils are happy to do what is expected of them. On occasion, however, expectations are unrealistic and pupils are expected to undertake activities in a way that is suited to older pupils. For example, the expectation as to the extent to which young pupils can discuss independently how to set up a science investigation, or the length of time that pupils can be expected to sit still and listen to their teacher, is too great. Almost all lessons are conducted in a well-disciplined way but, where expectations are unrealistic, this is less effective for a small minority of pupils. Additionally, on occasion, lessons are too long or the overall balance of the days' activities not fully considered and pupils' interest and motivation are reduced. Although these situations are evident throughout the school, they have a greater impact in Years 1 and 2 and, in these year groups, the overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. It has least impact in Years 5 and 6 and the quality of teaching in these year groups is particularly effective in raising standards.
19. Assessment is successfully used to track the progress pupils are making in English and mathematics. Targets are set and regularly reviewed with pupils and this helps them to target their effort more precisely. The data the school has is effectively used to identify areas of strength and areas needing further development. Work is conscientiously

marked and in the main, shows pupils where they have succeeded with the learning identified for the activity and how they could improve their work. There are, however, some inconsistencies in this between classes and subjects. Assessments are made and recorded in all other subjects and this provides teachers with the information they need to decide what needs to be taught next. The way these assessments are recorded, however, differs from subject to subject and in some subjects, the way the recording is done requires an amount of time that cannot be justified in terms of the amount of information it provides.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. It is enhanced by good opportunities for enrichment, including a wide range of extra curricular activities. Accommodation and resources are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children in the reception class are provided with a rich, stimulating curriculum.
- The curriculum is not always relevant to the needs and ages of individual pupils.
- The timetable is not always planned effectively.
- The programme for personal, social and health education is well planned and given high status in the school.
- The school curriculum is fully inclusive of pupils of differing attainments and backgrounds.
- The school curriculum is enriched by numerous visits and visitors and extra curricular activities support the curriculum well.
- Outside accommodation is attractive and provides a stimulating environment.

### **Commentary**

20. In the school's previous inspection, the curricular provision for children under five was identified as a key issue for action. Since then there have been considerable changes to the provision and significant improvement has been made in planning the work to be undertaken, improving the outdoor accommodation and the range of resources. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is now good.
21. There have been improvements to the breadth and balance of the curriculum in Years 1 to 6 since the previous inspection, particularly in design and technology, yet the curriculum remains satisfactory. This is because it does not always take into account the interests, needs and ages of the pupils being taught. Subjects are not interlinked sufficiently well to provide connected experiences that assist pupils to understand how what they learn in one subject can be used to help them learn in another. The timetable is not always planned effectively and some lessons are too long or are planned for the wrong time of day. As a consequence, some pupils find difficulty maintaining their concentration and this slows the overall pace of their learning in these lessons.
22. High priority is given to the programme for pupils' personal, social and health education, which is good. This is an integral part of the school's ethos and inclusion strategy, where the staff work hard to provide a calm environment that encourages pupils to mature and develop personally.
23. Pupils' learning is greatly enriched by numerous visits to local places of interest to support topics studied, such as to Southill Park, Reading and the residential trip to Ufton Court. Visitors such as authors, theatre groups, musicians, artists and drama groups are regularly invited to enrich numerous curricular activities. The school provides a wide and



varied range of after school clubs, which are well supported. These include football, athletics, gymnastics, drama, karate, French, Spanish, art, choir and drama clubs. Outside coaches are often brought in to offer professional advice, and these include coaches from Reading Football Club. Focus weeks such as art, science, book and fitness weeks raise the profile of subjects and are popular events, which support pupils' learning well.

24. The school is appropriately staffed with teachers and a good number of teaching assistants who are well trained and give valued support to both the teachers and pupils. Good resources support learning in physical education, design and technology and the reception class. The quality and range of reading books are, however, unsatisfactory and do not help to promote pupils' interest in reading. The school accommodation has greatly improved since the previous inspection but the two small school libraries are not sufficiently well laid out to encourage maximum use. Outside, the well maintained grounds and new outdoor area for the reception year provide a very pleasant and stimulating environment for work and play.
25. As a result of clear leadership, the school has a very positive approach to inclusion. This is apparent in the good provision for pupils with special educational needs and those from a range of different backgrounds. All pupils are enabled to take part in all activities.

### **Care, guidance and support**

Very good care and standards of welfare are promoted consistently in the school. Support offered to all pupils is good. Processes for seeking pupils' views are also good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher very successfully ensures that all pupils are treated equally and fairly.
- Very thorough attention is given to providing pupils with a very safe environment in which to play and work.
- All pupils are given good help and guidance. Arrangements to support traveller children are a particular strength.
- The school council is an articulate and effective group of pupils whose work has an impact on their school.

### **Commentary**

26. The headteacher leads by example and considers all pupils' needs equally. Parents and pupils immediately single her out for praise for the way she cares, takes time to listen and then always takes action. Since she has been at the school, much training has been undertaken by all staff in areas that promote pupil care and support, and it is a strength of the school that issues such as child protection and first aid are revisited nearly every year. The school is inclusive. It treats pupils equally and when making important decisions about an individual involves all those who know the pupil including parents. What is best for the pupils is seen to be of primary importance. The headteacher constantly seeks even higher standards in the quality of care provided at the school.
27. Governors and staff take their responsibilities very seriously and ensure very good levels of welfare. Audits and risk assessments are routinely carried out and the person with responsibility in this area is experienced and knowledgeable. More importantly, she seeks and gets support from others where necessary. The extensive grounds and play

equipment are very well maintained to ensure proper safety standards at all times. Many policies, which guide care and welfare, are reviewed and updated regularly and staff promote them consistently across the school.

28. Staff know pupils well and personal relationships are usually very positive. Pupils say they would turn to adults for extra advice and encouragement if they needed it. The school works very effectively with many outside agencies, including the regular input of the school nurse and the local authority special educational needs and traveller support services. As a result, pupils are well supported and personal development is informally but usefully tracked throughout the school. Pupils from minority groups, for example, traveller children, do as well as their friends because they are very closely supported and over time build up very good, trusting relationships with staff. Learning support and lunchtime assistants also make a very significant contribution to the large staff team, which works together in the school.
29. The school council has been established for about two years and is beginning to make a real difference to life in school. Pupils from all years represent their friends and have, for example, recently been discussing how to change some school routines and how to raise money, not only for some extra playground equipment, but also for local charities of their choice. The headteacher routinely questions a wide number of pupils when planning initiatives that concern them. She listens to, and where appropriate, acts on pupils' suggestions and opinions.

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

Links with parents and the community, including the church, are very good. Links and friendships are good with many schools. Together these partnerships help raise achievement across the school.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher consults widely with parents to seek their views on how best to implement many changes and improvements.
- Many parents get involved in the school and the very committed parent teacher association plays an especially significant role.
- Links within the community, particularly with the church, are well established.

### **Commentary**

30. The views of parents are very positive and many compliment the school, especially the friendly, happy way the pupils behave and the accessibility and approachability of all staff, including the headteacher. Parents know that the headteacher is there to support them as well as the children. They appreciate the way she listens and actively seeks their views and opinions. Recently, for example, she formed a small committee of parents to review the school mission statement. She keeps parents very well informed through the newsletters and the school website, as well as being readily available to answer and deal with any questions or concerns. Written reports about pupils' achievements, although satisfactory in the past, are currently being updated to give better, clearer information to parents. The home school agreement is shared with all parents every year and ensures all know the role they are expected to play in the pupils' education. The headteacher is active in seeking ways to engage and involve parents who visit the school less often. A recent 'Father's Day', for example, saw many dads enjoying time in the school playing and working with small groups of children.

31. There has been a long tradition of a strong and supportive parent teacher association. In part as a response to the warm encouragement of the headteacher and the value she gives to this group, it continues to flourish from year to year. The group is very well organised and raises considerable sums of money, sometimes shared with the church, to support learning in the school. They also successfully encourage interaction among parents, some of whom live quite a distance from the school. Parents get involved in the school in other ways, for example, many help very regularly in classes with cooking and reading activities. Overall, links with parents are very firmly established and a significant strength because they support so well the wide range of activities offered.
32. The school is well known within its community. This is in part because of the active way it supports community events and is supported by them. Leafleting and promotion of the school within the local press is routinely carried out so that members of the neighbourhood community know about what is going on at the school. Links with the church are very strong and many parents, pupils staff and governors attend Mass regularly. In addition, the headteacher attends diocesan and parish council meetings so that activities and news can be more widely shared. Pupils particularly benefit from and enjoy getting involved in local community arts projects. The school links with other schools for sporting activities and sometimes shares its own resources, for example, with the local nursery, who each week uses the school hall for gymnastics activities. Links with the large number of partner secondary schools are sought so that pupils' moves to their next schools can be as smooth as possible. Overall links with other schools are good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management of the school are good overall. In particular, the very good leadership of the headteacher contributes much to the school's success. The governance and management of the school are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and provides strong leadership.
- There is a strong staff team. Led by the headteacher and the senior management team, staff work well together.
- The role of the co-ordinator has improved since the previous inspection but needs to be developed further to increase individual co-ordinators confidence in leading change in their subjects.
- Data analysis is used effectively to raise standards in English, mathematics and science.
- The governing body is becoming increasingly proactive and effective in its role.

### **Commentary**

33. Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed who provides very strong leadership. She gives clear educational direction for the school, which enables it to fulfil its aims well. A clear lead is given to colleagues who form an effective team. There has been a very clear focus on raising standards particularly in English, mathematics, information and communication technology, design and technology and science. The positive ethos established in the school supports learning well and ensures that pupils work hard and achieve high standards. The acting deputy headteacher worked extremely hard and with the willing support of other senior managers, led the school well during the unexpected absence of the headteacher during the autumn term.

34. The senior management team are supportive and clear about their roles and responsibilities. Through the guidance and leadership of the headteacher, these are developing well. The team have been successful in creating a productive climate for learning and in promoting good inclusion throughout the school. They have set a strong base from which the school can develop further. The role of the co-ordinators has been developed since the previous inspection. They have been given more opportunities to monitor and develop their own subjects and in some instances, for example, ICT, have done this imaginatively and well. This is not the case in all subjects. The headteacher realises that further development is needed to ensure that all co-ordinators take more responsibility and all have sufficient confidence to inspire and lead innovation to change and develop their subjects.
35. Management is good. The school rigorously monitors its performance and uses the information gained to guide improvement. Data analysis is used as a powerful and effective tool by the headteacher and senior staff, who are very clearly aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The quality of teaching is regularly monitored, by the headteacher and the local education authority to identify strengths and to identify where further improvements need to be made. These are agreed openly and supportively at performance reviews, where further training is encouraged to develop both teachers' own professional needs and those of the school.
36. The headteacher, staff and governors have successfully identified the school's priorities in the school improvement plan. This is a useful working document that contains details of costings, time scales and success criteria to judge effectiveness. It does not, however, identify any long-term plans based on the school's aspirations. Financial management is good. The school has begun to make good use of specific grants and additional funding provided for school improvements. Decisions on spending are appropriately linked to educational priorities, such as staff training and increasing the number of teaching assistants to support pupils' learning and achievements.
37. There are some new members of the governing body and several who are new to their particular positions. They share the headteacher's desire to improve standards throughout the school. Like the school, they are developing effectively and are building fruitful relationships with the leadership of the school and increasingly taking more responsibility. Due to the long-term absence of the bursar, for example, the governors have become more proactive in financial management and have successfully turned a deficit budget in 2003 into a likely small surplus in the financial year that is just ending (2003/4). The governors are effective in undertaking all their statutory responsibilities and work hard to support the school. Best value is sought by the governors, at all times, when considering the purchasing of goods or services. As yet, however, they have no formal procedures to evaluate the impact of financial decisions on pupils' attainment and progress.

## Financial information

### *Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003*

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	485,926	Balance from previous year	-549

Total expenditure	485,462
Expenditure per pupil	2,727

Balance carried forward to the next	-5,085
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## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

38. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. The school adheres to the local education authority's policy of accepting children into school in the term in which they become five. This means that a number of the children receive only one term's teaching in the reception class before they move to Year 1. The proportion of such children changes from year to year and has an impact, year on year, on the overall attainment of the group. In the current reception class, two thirds of the children will receive only one term in the reception class. As a result, despite the good progress they make during the term and the good preparation they have received in their nurseries and playgroups, a smaller than average number of children will exceed the goals set for reception age children.
39. In the school's previous inspection, the provision for children under five was identified as a key issue for action. Since then there have been considerable changes to the provision and significant improvements have been made in planning, improving the outdoor accommodation and in the range of resources available. The reception teacher provides good leadership for all adults in the department, who work very closely together to form a very effective team.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

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

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

- Because they are very well taught, children achieve very well and reach standards above those expected for their age by the end of the reception year.
- A very good working environment enables children to settle quickly and to work well.
- Relationships between adults and children are very good.

#### **Commentary**

40. This area of learning is given a high priority when children start school and the children achieve very well. They make good progress and many are set to exceed the Early Learning Goals<sup>2</sup> by the time they reach the end of the reception year. The trusting relationships and warm personalities in the reception class help children to recognise that each of them is valued and this helps to promote their self-esteem and confidence. An enthusiasm to try hard and do well is evident.
41. Expectations are appropriately high. Staff expect the children to make choices and become independent, taking every opportunity to encourage this. As a result, the children's ability to initiate ideas for themselves is well developed. The children feel confident and secure and are completely engrossed in their activities. They also sit quietly and listen attentively when necessary. Children with special educational needs are very well integrated and receive very good support.

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<sup>2</sup> Early Learning Goals are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They refer mainly to achievements children make in connection with communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.

42. Aspects of personal development such as an understanding and respect for the way of life of others are actively taught. In the week of the inspection, for example, the children were visited by an Indian lady who spoke, amongst other things, about traditional clothes. During the week, the children were given the opportunity to learn more through books and activities, such as tasting a range of exotic fruits.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

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

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

- Careful thought and planning means that good quality experiences are provided to assist pupils to enjoy work in communication, language and literacy.
- Children are given a good start to learning basic skills through daily practice of such things as phonics and word recognition.

#### **Commentary**

43. Children achieve well in this area of their development. Most are on course to attain the Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception year. This represents good achievement because many children did not start school until the current term. Teaching is good because great attention is paid to systematically teaching a wide range of skills to all children. High priority is given to promoting spoken language skills, particularly through role-play and this results in significant benefits to the children in all of their other learning. Vocabulary is developed well and teachers and teaching assistants are careful to ensure that children have good opportunities to use new words when working and playing.
44. Children are helped to develop or sustain a liking for books. Well chosen books are shared with the children as a class, in small groups and individually. Children make particularly good progress in reading. All children listen well to stories and most children can recognise letter sounds and competently read a range of words in simple texts. The promotion of early writing skills is good and there is much evidence of children writing independently, sometimes at length. The reception teacher provides a range of exciting activities that encourage children to write, such as writing letters to the giant from the story 'Jim and the Beanstalk' and writing in role as an 'estate agent'. Children are taught to form their letters correctly and a good number are already beginning to write in a 'joined up' style.

### **Mathematical development**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

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

- Children are given plenty of mathematical experiences to assist them in developing their understanding of number.
- Good emphasis on the development of mathematical language widens children's knowledge of shape and measurement.

#### **Commentary**

45. Children achieve well in this area of learning and most will reach the national goals by the end of the year. Teaching is good and the children's learning takes place through relevant play and games that make children want to take part. Adults take every opportunity to develop the children's mathematical skills, particularly, the development of mathematical language, in a way that makes learning fun. When singing a number song about dancing flowers in the sun, for example, the children put flower hats on as they danced, counting on one as each child joined in with the dance. As a result, children are familiar with number rhymes and enjoy using counting skills. Children are motivated to play games that promote the development of mathematical concepts, such as addition, when they placed seven model animals in two fields in different ways.
46. Staff use good clear questioning and correct mathematical vocabulary when teaching the children. The children's previous work showed that they had made a good start in recognising coins, comparing size and repeating two colour patterns. Older children do simple addition and subtraction and record their work independently.

## **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching of this aspect is good and based on giving children first hand experiences.
- Children show a curiosity and interest about all that is presented to them.
- Role play is used well to deepen and extend pupils' experience and imagination.
- Visits and visitors are used well to promote learning.

### **Commentary**

47. Standards of achievement in this broad area of development are good. Most children are working at levels expected for their age. Work is organized into topics so that learning is linked and made relevant to them. This term, for example, the topics covered are based on growth and pets. Children are learning about the growth of plants through their own observations and investigating what will help a seed to grow. They have created their own garden and a wormery. A good variety of interesting activities are planned well to stimulate children's curiosity and enhance their understanding. The children develop an awareness of the past, as they look at old and new toys and learn about the local area on a walk to look at different houses, pretending to be estate agents! Role-play is also used well to increase children's knowledge and understanding of everyday life. Play areas are converted to enable children to use their imagination, for example, serving in a fruit and vegetable shop, being a customer in a café or visiting a baby-care clinic.
48. Reclaimed materials and building bricks are provided for children to explore and create models and their construction work is purposeful. The photographs of previously completed work show their models of houses and puppets to be well designed and finished. Children use computers to draw and paint pictures and a programmable toy to learn about directional language. A particularly impressive development is the way children confidently handle a camera to take pictures of their own homes and of visitors who come in to talk to them. Children's awareness of religious and cultural traditions is well enhanced through role-play and stories such as 'Handa's Surprise'. A variety of visitors are also invited into school to talk to the children. For example, the local priest



visited to baptise a baby doll and parents representing other cultures, such as India and Africa, have talked to the children about their way of life.

## **Physical development**

Provision in physical development is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The teaching of physical education is exceptionally good and both raises standards and ensures that children enjoy physical activity.
- There are good opportunities for children to develop their manual dexterity.

### **Commentary**

49. In terms of their overall physical development, the children achieve very well. Standards are higher than those generally seen. There is a safe very attractive outside play area attached to the reception class, which enables staff to provide children with a wide range of opportunities to enable them to gain confidence and extend their skills in balancing, climbing and in using wheeled toys. The time outdoors is planned to extend the learning that occurs in the classroom and the opportunities provided support the physical development of children well. Most children were seen to move with good control and increasing confidence as they rode the tricycles round a track. The quality of teaching is very good overall and activities in physical education lessons have a real sense of purpose and high level of challenge. In the lesson observed, children explored different ways of moving, both on the floor and on the apparatus. They demonstrated that they were able to jump off the boxes in different ways with very good control.
50. Children are provided with a good range of interesting tasks to support the development of their manipulative skills, for example, handling clay, building models with construction sets, using a knife carefully to spread butter onto bread and spooning jam onto the bread to make a sandwich. They also use pencils, crayons and brushes efficiently and demonstrate the control necessary for writing.

## **Creative development**

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### **Main strength and weaknesses**

- Children are provided with a wide range of well-planned creative activities.
- There are good opportunities for imaginative play.

### **Commentary**

51. Children achieve well in most aspects of this area of development and most will reach the national goals by the end of the year. They work with a range of different media and materials and produce some work that is of a high quality. Their observational drawings and paintings of snowdrops and daffodils, for example, are very effective and show good attention to detail. When painting pictures of marigolds, children make the colour orange, by carefully mixing the red and yellow paints. They have made collage pictures, used charcoal to sketch artefacts from the past and produced some particularly effective weavings using different fabrics.

52. Teaching is good overall. Good learning in this aspect is particularly due to the wide range of stimulating and purposeful creative activities provided for the children to experience. Resources are organised well, enabling children to select activities in the classroom and outdoors. There are many opportunities for imaginative play and the children need no encouragement to participate. When in the fruit and vegetable shop, for instance, they play willingly and co-operatively with other children. Adults provide sensitive support to the children while they play without dominating their activities. Children are familiar with a good repertoire of favourite songs and sing tunefully. The classroom organisation enables all children to experience all the activities on offer.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**.

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

- Pupils leave the school with very well developed reading and writing skills.
- Successful work has been undertaken to improve standards in writing throughout the school.
- Although reading is well taught, younger pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to practice what they have learned.
- Where they are well taught, pupils are inspired by what they are asked to do and they work very hard.
- The use of English in other subjects is not as systematically planned as it could be.

#### **Commentary**

53. Overall achievement in English is good. By Year 6, standards are well above average, as demonstrated by the results of national tests. Standards are rising year on year and pupils achieve well. Pupils read fluently and with good expression. They talk intelligently about what they have read and demonstrate an enjoyment of books. Pupils write well, adapting their style to the type of writing and the audience for whom it is intended. Standards of spelling, punctuation and handwriting are high. Pupils speak and listen well, for example, when discussing the relationship between two characters in a book.
54. Pupils in Year 2 have good basic skills and can use these to write independently in a variety of ways. Much effort has been put into the development of writing. Standards in writing in national assessments were above average in 2003 and continue to rise. Not as much time and attention has been given to improving reading, however, and standards in national assessments in 2003 were below average. Standards are now a little higher, being average, but the school has rightly identified the need for further improvement. Although teachers teach reading skills carefully, not enough dedicated time is allocated to reading and this affects overall standards. Additionally, the quality and condition of the available reading books is unsatisfactory and does not inspire pupils to want to read them. Speaking and listening skills are average. Pupils are confident speakers, but do not always listen sufficiently well.
55. Good provision for pupils with special educational needs and those of lower attainment, takes the form of careful teaching, good support from both teachers and teaching assistants, as well as some additional lessons at particular times of the year. In Year 1,

the latter are particularly effective in giving pupils a good boost to their skills and confidence. The effect of this good provision ensures that the vast majority of pupils can read and write sufficiently well to support their learning in the secondary school.

56. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good but there are variations between year groups and lessons. Teaching and learning are particularly effective in Years 5 and 6. All lessons are conscientiously planned and teachers hold high expectations of their pupils. They give clear explanations and good emphasis is given to daily practice of skills in handwriting, spelling and vocabulary development. This work pays dividends in standards seen. At its best, teaching is imaginative and sensitive to pupils' needs. Pupils are encouraged to take part in lessons and to volunteer answers confidently. In these lessons, teachers demonstrate clearly their own interest in the topic in hand and pass this interest on to the pupils. This interest was very clear in a Year 6 lesson in which pupils were asked to 'map out' the way a novel was developing and the links between the characters within it. Pupils were highly motivated by the activity and the extent of the freedom they were given, allowed them to develop their own thinking about the book. It was notable in this lesson that the work of some pupils of lower attainment was particularly creative and effective.
57. In all lessons there is an insistence on high standards. On occasion, this insistence takes the form of over-control and pupils, although they generally complete the work as they are asked, are not as enthusiastic about what they do and resulting standards are not as high. In other lessons, some good initial teaching is followed by some uninspiring activities that similarly do not motivate pupils to do their best.
58. Leadership of English is currently satisfactory. Very good use has been made of assessment data to identify areas for improvement. Development work in writing has been successfully led. The current co-ordinator is new to the post and has not yet had the time or opportunity to monitor a number of aspects of the subject, for example, the teaching of reading, or to look at ways in which the subject could be further developed.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

59. Pupils are given ample opportunity to speak, read and write in other subjects. The links are, however, not fully developed. Because direct links are not specified in teachers' planning, younger pupils, in particular, do not always understand that the skills they are learning in literacy lessons are for use in other subjects. This lack of specific planning also means that opportunities to systematically consolidate and extend English skills are sometimes missed.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The consistently high standard of teaching in Years 5 and 6 means that these pupils achieve well, and standards are well above average by Year 6.
- Good opportunities are provided for the development of mental arithmetic and for solving problems mathematically.

- Detailed analysis of information from assessments is used well to set individual targets for pupils.
- The promotion of mathematical skills in other subjects is not yet fully effective.

## **Commentary**

60. Standards have significantly improved since the previous inspection and are consistently well above average at the end of Year 6. Pupils of all abilities achieve well particularly at the upper end of the school. The school has been effective in raising achievement in mathematics due to the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy and the high expectations and challenge given to pupils who are given good opportunity to use and apply their mathematical skills. This work has been successful in raising standards in Year 2 from below average levels in 2003. Current Year 2 pupils are attaining above average standards and have achieved well. Throughout the school, good emphasis has been placed on improving mental computation and fact retention, which is effectively reinforced by regular homework. This has a positive effect on pupils' basic number skills. Small group support in the form of 'springboard' and 'booster' groups improves pupils' confidence and effectively raises achievement in mathematics. Teaching assistants offer good support to the pupils with special educational needs both in these groups and in class.
61. The quality of teaching is good overall but during inspection varied considerably between very good lessons and one that was unsatisfactory. High quality teaching was often seen at the upper end of the school, where learning is very effective because pupils are well motivated and challenged by the tasks teachers prepare, and the pace of lessons is brisk. In such instances, pupils' behaviour is good and they work conscientiously to solve problems and complete tasks and they are proud of their achievements. Throughout the school, where teaching and learning is less effective and occasionally unsatisfactory, pupils are set inappropriate tasks with limited practical opportunities. In these lessons, time is not used effectively because pupils sit for long periods on the carpet not actively involved. As a result, they lose interest, are easily distracted and sometimes demonstrate poor behaviour and attitudes. This has a negative impact on their learning and that of others.
62. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory and its management is good. A detailed action plan has been produced to outline areas for development. The current temporary co-ordinator has been well supported in her work by the last subject co-ordinator. Effective use is made of intermediate and national test results. Detailed tracking systems are used well to set individual targets, which are regularly reviewed and updated in order to improve pupils' achievements. The current co-ordinator has had limited opportunities to monitor teaching and learning, due to staff absences and this, as well as the temporary nature of the post, has necessarily somewhat restricted the vision for innovation and improvement.

## **Mathematics across the curriculum**

63. Pupils' use of mathematical skills in other subjects is satisfactory overall but the school has identified the need to develop links further. In geography, pupils use graphs and ICT to record their findings of the traffic survey in Reading. Calculation and measuring skills are used appropriately in science and design and technology and timelines are used in history.

## **SCIENCE**

The overall provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- As the result of good teaching, pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve well and attain standards that are above average by Year 6.
- There are regular opportunities for pupils to investigate and experiment in science.
- There is good emphasis on the use of specific scientific vocabulary.
- At times, inappropriate work is provided for the younger pupils.
- There is insufficient use of information and communication technology to support the teaching of science.

### **Commentary**

64. Fewer pupils in Year 6 attained at the higher Level 5 in the 2003 national tests and attainment was below the national average. As a result the school has put a great effort into providing greater challenge for higher attaining pupils, particularly through the emphasis on practical investigation. This strategy is proving successful and standards in Year 6 are now above average, which is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. Pupils in Year 2 reach standards that are average and their achievement is satisfactory.
65. In Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory. In a lesson in Year 1, many pupils revealed good achievement as they investigated whether plants needed light to grow. The lesson itself, however, was more suited to older pupils and as a result, the interest of pupils suffered and their attention wandered. The analysis of pupils' work indicates that pupils in Year 2 have a satisfactory range of opportunities to learn through practical activities. Helpful planning sheets assist pupils to refine their practical investigative skills. Good use is made of the school's attractive grounds. Pupils in Year 2, for example, were building on their learning about contrasting habitats, by considering questions they wanted to find the answer to, before going outside to carry out their investigation.
66. The quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good overall, with the result that these pupils most often make good progress. In the lessons seen, the high expectations of teachers had a major impact on the learning of all pupils. The analysis of pupils' work and evidence gathered from talking to pupils, indicate that overall, good teaching and learning is promoting good achievement. Teachers make work interesting for pupils and present it in a way that develops pupils' capacity to work both independently and collaboratively.
67. By Year 5, pupils' investigative skills are particularly well developed. In the lesson seen, the high quality discussion was a key factor in promoting learning. A particularly good aspect of this lesson was the opportunity for pupils to plan an investigation for themselves. Throughout the school, teachers are skilled at developing the necessary scientific language that pupils need in order to talk about their work. Consequently, by Year 6, pupils confidently explain previous work they have undertaken and the way in which they devised their own investigations. Their recording makes a good contribution to the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. There is, however, very little evidence to show that pupils have the opportunity to use information and communication technology to support their learning.

68. Leadership of the subject is good. The co-ordinator has ensured the curriculum is well planned with a clear focus on the development of pupils' scientific vocabulary and investigative skills. Links with other subjects could, however, be better developed.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are confident in their approach to new work in ICT.
- Teachers use their good knowledge of ICT well when teaching their pupils.
- Subject vocabulary is taught well.
- The subject co-ordinator has good plans for the increased use of ICT in other subjects.

### **Commentary**

69. Pupils achieve well and attain above the expected standard in ICT in both Years 2 and 6. They have good knowledge of the full range of the required curriculum and show good confidence when using computers and other equipment. They are happy to explore new programs and to put what they find out to good use. Pupils in Year 6, for example, watched a short demonstration about how to use 'PowerPoint' and then experimented with the program themselves. By the end of the lesson, all had made a good quality, short presentation including text, clipart and animation.
70. Teaching and learning in ICT are good. Teachers have good levels of ICT competence and are able to explain to pupils, using good subject specific vocabulary, how to undertake their work. As a result, pupils talk and think well, using vocabulary correctly. Teachers and teaching assistants provide good support where necessary, but are comfortable to allow pupils the space to gain experience through independent working.
71. Subject leadership is good. Provision and standards have improved since the time of the previous inspection. Training for teachers has been successful and the co-ordinator provides useful ongoing support where required. The co-ordinator is aware of areas of relative weakness in the subject, for example, the use that is made of ICT through the curriculum, and has sensible plans for the improvement of this.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

72. This is an area for further development. There are already a number of opportunities for pupils to use ICT in other subjects. Pupils, for example, use word processing skills in their writing. They use some data handling skills in science and the Internet for information in history and geography. The use of ICT across the curriculum is, however, not yet fully planned or consistent and in some subjects, opportunities to make cross-curricular links are missed.

## **HUMANITIES**

73. Insufficient evidence was available to support overall judgements on provision in history and geography. Two lessons were seen in geography. Work in pupils' books in both subjects was also examined. It was of a broadly average standard.

74. In **geography**, pupils have knowledge of their own area through work in school that is well supported by local visits, such as those to Henley on Thames and Reading. They begin to be able to contrast their own area with other regions in the United Kingdom and develop a wider sense of the world through the study of foreign places, such as India, for example. They begin to understand how factors such as the difficulty of obtaining drinking water, affect life in some other parts of the world. Overall, discussions with the co-ordinator and pupils in Year 6 indicate that pupils develop a satisfactory range of skills and knowledge in geography, but that they lack enthusiasm for the subject. There has been little development of geography over recent years and coordination of the subject has been limited to routine tasks such as ensuring the availability of resources. Although satisfactory, the co-ordinator has lacked the time and confidence to promote aspects of the subject, for example, links with other subjects and with cultural education.
75. During the inspection, no **history** lessons were timetabled. Due to the temporary absence of the deputy headteacher, there is currently no co-ordinator for history but discussions with pupils in Year 6 indicate that a satisfactory scheme of work is used to develop skills. Pupils have a developing sense of chronology and suitable knowledge of the periods of history they have studied. Good use is made of the residential trip to Ufton Court to support pupils' learning about the Tudors. A scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that links with other subjects are not well established and there are missed opportunities to use literacy skills, with an over dependence on the use of work sheets. As with geography, leadership has not promoted recent development and innovation in the subject.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

76. Design and technology was inspected fully and is reported below. Additionally, work was sampled in art and design and physical education but not in sufficient detail to provide a judgement on provision. Because there was little available evidence, music was not inspected.
77. Only one **art and design** lesson was seen. Pupils' artwork around the school and in their sketchbooks indicates that standards are in line with expectations by Year 2 and Year 6, which is similar to the school's previous inspection. The school has recently been awarded an 'Artsmark' at silver level to acknowledge the breadth of the curriculum it offers. In the lesson seen, pupils were using the ideas from brick patterns that they had seen on buildings in Reading to design their own patterns on squared paper. They did this carefully and accurately. Overall, pupils acquire the necessary skills in painting, collage, textiles and three-dimensional work and their achievement is satisfactory.
78. Satisfactory links are made with other subjects, such as history and information and communication technology, that enhance the presentation of work. An 'arts week' provided pupils with the opportunity to work with students from a local secondary school and led to pupils in Year 6 making some effective three-dimensional life size figures with wire, paper and paste. Subject leadership is secure, but like in some other subjects, has not yet fully enabled recent subject development.
79. **Physical education** enjoys a high profile in the school. During the inspection, inspectors saw one lesson taught by a member of the school staff and two taught by outside specialists. In the lesson seen in Year 2, pupils made good progress in developing their running techniques and in linking a combination of actions in a relay race. The lesson

moved along at a brisk pace and set a good level of challenge for the pupils to which they responded well. The teaching of the specific skills required to improve the pupils' performance was well emphasised and, as a result, pupils tried really hard and improved through practice. The lesson was well structured with a suitable warm up exercise, good development of the main activity and a cooling down exercise.

80. Good use is made of outside providers to give pupils in Years 3 to 6, specialist training in football, tag rugby and cricket. In the sessions seen, pupils clearly enjoyed the experience and look forward to participating in lessons. From discussions with teachers and pupils, it is evident that all aspects of the subject, including outdoor and adventurous activities, are taught at various times during the year. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 have swimming lessons and almost all achieve the nationally expected standard. Physical education is well led and managed and pupils benefit from a very wide range of experiences, including the after school clubs that develop gymnastic, dance and games' skills further. The co-ordinator has been instrumental in developing a sports programme that enabled the school to receive a sports grant and achieve several awards including 'Activemark Gold'.

### **Design and technology**

Provision in design and technology is **good**.

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

- Good emphasis on all aspects of the subject ensures pupils develop above average knowledge and skills.
- There are good links made with other subjects.

### **Commentary**

81. The standards attained by pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are above national expectations. Pupils achieve well. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection, when a key issue was to improve the rate of progress in design and technology for pupils in Years 3 to 6. By Year 6, pupils have good skills and knowledge. They, for example, gather information from a range of sources, including the Internet, to design and make good quality three-dimensional models of shelters. They produce detailed plans and adapt these plans as they progress. Pupils use a variety of materials to create a winding mechanism for a wind-up toy, construct free standing photograph frames using good skills in measuring and assembling, and refine their sewing techniques well to achieve a good finish to their money containers.
82. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils are able to achieve and ensure that the work is suitably challenging. They provide a variety of opportunities for pupils to develop particular skills through focused practical tasks. In the lesson seen in Year 1, the good teaching enabled pupils to use a selection of fruit to make a simple fruit salad. The teacher paid very good attention to health and safety matters and questioned pupils about the reasons for taking such precautions to check that all understood their importance. The pupils were encouraged to present their fruit salads attractively.



83. Curricular planning is good and effective links are made with other subjects, such as literacy, art and design, history and science. Pupils in Years 5, for example, designed and made torches that incorporated an electric circuit and in Year 4 pupils made pop-up books to show the history of Bracknell. The work is well planned with a clear focus on the different elements of designing, making and evaluating. Planning shows that skills and knowledge are taught in progression from year to year and build upon pupils' existing knowledge and understanding well. Good leadership in the subject ensures that design and technology enjoys a high profile in the school.

### **Personal, social and health education and citizenship**

84. The programme for personal, social and health education is good. The school has a detailed policy and scheme of work and the good quality of the work reflects the importance put on pupils' personal development by the headteacher and governors. In the reception class, emphasis is placed on personal, social and emotional development and this is very successful in enabling the children to settle well in school. In the rest of the school, many aspects of personal development are effectively integrated into discussions during personal, social and health education lessons and class discussions (Circle Time<sup>3</sup>). These opportunities are further extended through the school council, assemblies and numerous lessons including science and physical education. Sex and drugs education are taught by teachers who are well supported by the school nurse and other visitors.
85. Pupils are encouraged to have an understanding of the importance of good health and exercise. The school has received a Healthy School award to acknowledge the success of work in this area.

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<sup>3</sup> During Circle Time pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. It is agreed by all pupils that no interruptions should occur and only one person at a time will speak. Respect for other pupils' views will occur at all times and therefore pupils feel confident that they can talk with ease and free from any form of interference or interruption from other children.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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