

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **STROUD VALLEY COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Stroud

LEA area: Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 115541

Headteacher: Mr Rowland South

Lead inspector: Mrs Stephanie Lacey

Dates of inspection: 15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> September 2003

Inspection number: 258056

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	261
School address:	Ryeleaze Road Stroud Gloucestershire
Postcode:	GL5 1JR
Telephone number:	(01453) 764400
Fax number:	(01453) 752551
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Christine Minett
Date of previous inspection:	23rd March 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Currently the school operates on two sites. It is a little larger than most primary schools, with 37 more boys than girls. Pupils come from a wide range of social, economic and academic backgrounds. About six per cent are from minority ethnic families. All pupils speak English as their first language. The percentage of pupils claiming free school meals is broadly average. When children started school this year, their skills, knowledge and understanding were also broadly average for their age. However, in most recent years, children's attainment on entry to school has been below average. Thirty-eight per cent of pupils have special educational needs, which is well above average. Most of these pupils are a little behind their peers, with a few who have more significant difficulties. Five of these pupils have a statement of special educational need. The percentage of pupils joining or leaving the school other than at the normal time is a little below average. In 2003 the school was given a Schools Achievement Award and a Pathfinder Careers Charity Award. There is a weekly after-school club run by the local parish church and a fortnightly school nurse 'drop-in' facility.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
3764	Stephanie Lacey	Lead inspector	English, art and design and music
14756	John Lovell	Lay inspector	
30618	Paul Story	Team inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology, design and technology and physical education
24342	Denise Franklin	Team inspector	Geography and history
19302	Christine Perrett	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, science, religious education and special educational needs

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a good school.** People matter at Stroud Valley Community School and the staff and governors' commitment to providing for the all round development of the pupils is a key to its success. The sensitive and supportive leadership of the headteacher has enabled the staff to work together to raise standards. Good teaching ensures that pupils achieve well. Long delays in amalgamating the school onto one site have hampered the school's work and financial planning. In view of the financial implications of continuing to run the two sites the school provides sound value for money.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well because the teaching is good
- Pupils are happy at school and get on well with each other
- The staff team works hard to encourage pupils' all round development and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are valued and supported effectively
- The headteacher provides a sensitive and enthusiastic lead
- Procedures for checking and evaluating how well the school is doing need to be clearer
- Information about pupils' progress is not always used to help them to improve
- A range of interesting activities, including good links with the community, enrich learning
- The accommodation needs improvement.

Overall the school has made good progress since its last inspection in 1998. The key area for improvement, standards in reading, writing and mathematics in Years 1 and 2, has been tackled successfully and standards have risen as a consequence of improved teaching. Standards have also risen in Year 6 national tests. Satisfactory progress has been made on two other issues for inspection related to assessment and monitoring of work in different subjects, with room for further development. Some improvements have been made to the accommodation for younger pupils.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	D	B	C	A
mathematics	D	C	C	A
science	B	A	C	A

*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.*

*National comparative data for tests in 2003 is not yet available.*

**Throughout the school pupils achieve well as a consequence of good teaching.** There is a wide spread of ability in each year group, with a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in some. For the past few years the skills, knowledge and understanding of the group of children entering the reception classes have been below average overall. This year children in the Foundation Stage have settled well into school and are on line to attain the goals children are expected to reach by the end of the reception year. Pupils currently entering Year 1 did not all meet the goals for their communication, language and literacy development, in spite of good progress through the previous year. Standards in Year 2 are broadly average in mathematics and science and most other subjects. They are a little below average in reading and writing because of the high proportion of pupils who have difficulties in this area. Currently in Year 6 standards are average in English, mathematics and science and other subjects. Overall standards have risen in Year 2 and Year 6 national tests since the last inspection. Overall girls have done better than boys in English for several years, largely because there are a higher proportion of boys with special educational needs.

Higher attaining boys and girls do equally well. Generally pupils in Year 6 do much better than their peers in similar schools because of the very good progress made in Years 3 to 6.

**Pupils' personal development is good. It is fostered well by the good overall provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.** Pupils are happy at school and have positive attitudes towards learning. They behave well in lessons and at playtimes. Attendance is satisfactory.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides a good education. Teaching is good throughout the school.** Pupils learn effectively and make good progress because good relationships, interesting activities and attention to their individual needs underpin their learning. This could be improved even further if the information about pupils' progress was used more systematically to plan work. Children in the Foundation Stage are well provided for, but the lack of an enclosed outside area limits the opportunities to develop their skills across all areas of learning. The curriculum is soundly based on the National Curriculum and national guidance. A range of short-term projects, visits and good links with the community enhances the work planned in lessons significantly. Parents support the school well.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Overall leadership and management are sound, with some strong features.** There is a shared commitment by staff and governors to providing the best education possible in order to raise standards further. The headteacher encourages and supports staff well and leads a strong and united staff team successfully. The delay in moving the school onto one site has made it difficult for subject leaders to have a whole school view of work in different curriculum areas. It has also meant that the headteacher, administrative staff and governors have had to devote time to dealing with building problems rather than running the school. Procedures for checking and evaluating the school's work are not as clear as they could be. Governors use their expertise well in the best interest of the school and all statutory requirements are met.

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

Parents are very satisfied with the school and have no significant concerns. Pupils in Years 3 to 6, whose opinions were sought, feel that the school is good and are particularly positive about the staff.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Agree simple procedures for staff and governors to check and evaluate how well the school is doing
- Use information about pupils' progress more systematically to move pupils' forward
- Provide an enclosed outside area for children in the Foundation Stage
- Move the school onto one site as soon as possible, ensuring that there is satisfactory provision for all aspects of pupils' education.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Pupils achieve well throughout the school. Standards in English, mathematics and science are broadly average. They range from below to above average in different year groups, depending on the proportion of higher and lower attaining pupils.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils achieve well
- Standards have risen in national tests
- Standards in reading and writing in Year 2 are slightly below average this year
- There remains a difference in attainment of boys and girls, especially in English.

#### Commentary

##### *Starting school*

1. When children start school in the reception class assessment data shows that their knowledge, skills and understanding are wide ranging. For the last few years the overall profile has been below average, with children having particular difficulties in the area of communication, language and literacy. Last year the Foundation Stage children made good progress and most reached the early learning goals in all areas of learning. This year the group are average overall and well set to reach the levels expected for their age.

##### *School's results in national tests*

2. Overall standards have risen in Year 2 and Year 6 national tests since the last inspection, particularly in Year 2 tests. In Year 6 the improvement has been in line with the national trend. The tables below refer to the 2002 tests because national comparative data is not yet available for 2003.

The table below shows that in 2002 standards in Year 2 were below average in reading, average in writing and above average in mathematics. Standards improved in 2003 and there is every indication that they will be above average in mathematics and average in reading and writing.

##### ***Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2002***

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.5 (17.9)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	14.9 (15.8)	14.4 (14.3)
mathematics	17.4 (17.9)	16.5 (16.2)

*There were 38 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

3. The table below shows that in 2002 standards in Year 6 tests were average in all three subjects. There is every indication that improvement this year will mean that standards are above average in English and science and average in mathematics. What the table does not indicate is the notable difference in the performance of boys and girls in English, with girls doing better overall. This was evident in some classes and it was clear that higher attaining boys and girls both do well, but that more boys than girls have difficulties with reading and writing. The school is tackling this effectively by ensuring that the work planned will interest



boys as well as girls. Nor does the table indicate the very good progress that this group of pupils had made since their Year 2 tests.

***Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2002***

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.7 (28.1)	27 (27)
mathematics	27.4 (27)	26.7 (26.2)
science	29.1 (30)	28.3 (28.3)

*There were 44 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

*Inspection findings*

*The Foundation Stage*

4. At the time of the inspection children had been at school for just over a week, attending for mornings only. They have already settled well into school life and are achieving well. There is every indication that most will reach the goals expected for their age by the end of their reception year in all areas of learning because of the good provision for their learning. Staff do the best they can to plan for children's development in all areas of learning, but the lack of an enclosed outdoor area limits opportunities for children's physical and creative development especially.

*Years 1 and 2*

5. Again pupils achieve well because of the good provision made for their development. This includes pupils with special educational needs who are especially well supported by learning support assistants. Higher attaining pupils also do well and respond well to challenge. This is particularly evident in the work seen, which was undertaken in writing groups last year. Standards this year are a little below average in reading and writing. This is because there are a higher proportion of pupils with particular difficulties in this area in the current year group. Standards are broadly average in mathematics and science. Standards were also broadly average in lessons seen in other subjects.

*Years 3 to 6*

6. Pupils achieve well in all year groups. All pupils are suitably challenged including pupils with special educational needs and those from minority ethnic groups. Setting arrangements in English and mathematics in the older classes have enabled pupils to work at appropriate tasks, with more support available for pupils who need it. Standards are broadly average in English, mathematics, science and ICT. Standards were also broadly average in the few lessons seen in other subjects.

*Whole school matters*

7. Generally pupils apply their literacy skills well in other areas of the curriculum, especially the humanities. However, and especially in Years 1 and 2, some pupils find it hard to understand what they have read because their vocabulary is not wide enough. Pupils' skills in ICT are sufficient to enable them to use these in other subjects, although there is limited evidence of this happening.
8. Throughout the school, and particularly as they get older, girls outperform boys in English. This is largely because there are a higher proportion of boys than girls who struggle with developing their literacy skills. Higher attaining boys and girls do equally well. The very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve as well as their peers. Pupils with special

educational needs achieve well. They receive good support in class, and a few pupils are given extra support in small, withdrawn groups.

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

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Their personal development is also good, with their social, moral and cultural development the stronger features. Their attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The caring ethos of the school permeates all activities, and helps to promote pupils' good relationships, attitudes and personal development
- The very good role models of the staff ensure that pupils quickly know the difference between right and wrong and behave well
- Pupils' moral, social and cultural development are good
- Staff manage the small minority of pupils who exhibit difficult behaviour well.

### **Commentary**

#### *Attitudes and behaviour*

9. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are good. The generally positive picture found at the last inspection has been maintained. The vast majority of pupils are well behaved, polite and courteous, and respond well to the caring ethos of the school. There are a few pupils who display challenging behaviour, but staff work well together to consistently reinforce good behaviour. Some children in the Foundation Stage enter school with underdeveloped social skills, but they learn the rules quickly, and respond positively to the clear routines. They enjoy the range of activities planned for them and are eager to learn. Pupils in the rest of the school also enjoy school, and show a considerable pride in being members of the school community. They are interested and involved in the wide range of activities that the school provides, both in lessons and out of school hours. Parents are very supportive of the school, and very happy with the values the school promotes. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good overall. Staff deal quickly and effectively with the few incidents of inappropriate behaviour that occur. No incidents of bullying were seen during the inspection, and as the table below shows, no pupils have been excluded from school. There have been very few racist incidents.

#### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
No ethnic group recorded

#### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
167	0	0
5	0	0
5	0	0
1	0	0
3	0	0
1	0	0
91	0	0

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

10. When given opportunities to work independently or in groups, pupils work co-operatively, sharing and valuing ideas, and concentrating well on the task. Occasionally, some pupils become restless and inattentive when expected to sit too long on the carpet, or when the task lacks sufficient challenge. In these situations learning is restricted.
11. Pupils with special educational needs generally have the same attitudes and values as their peers, although there are a few pupils who find conforming with the high standards set by the school difficult. However, these pupils are generally well managed by staff so they cause the minimum of disruption.

### *Relationships*

12. Pupils' relationships with adults and each other are good, and have a positive impact on their learning. They are supportive of each other and their teachers. Pupils are happy and secure, and enjoy school life in an atmosphere where all are valued. Pupils respond well to the help provided, and enjoy the praise that is often given. They enjoy receiving rewards for 'Star performance' and strive to be the 'student of the week'. These rewards are strong motivators, especially for the younger pupils. Pupils of all ages mix well at playtime and lunchtime, and pupils with special educational needs take a full and active part in lessons, and activities at playtimes.

### *Personal development*

13. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong which is promoted from a very early age. They benefit from the very good role models set by the adults in school. The adults in the Foundation Stage, for example, set particularly good role models for their children in relation to co-operating and working together. When pupils show qualities such as honesty, politeness, and helpfulness, these are rewarded alongside academic achievement. All pupils are very aware of the class and school rules and this helps the school to be a very orderly community. Values are promoted through the school's programme for personal, social and health education, where a developing sense of citizenship is encouraged through the whole-class discussion periods known as 'circle time'. There are opportunities for pupils to enhance their social development, through taking responsibility, which they do with commitment and pride. The School Council meets regularly, although the new council has not yet been elected for this term, and the members take their responsibilities very seriously when making decisions on behalf of the whole school. Pupils in Year 5 act as 'buddies' for Year 2 pupils to ensure that transfer from one part of the school to the other is smooth. In all classes pupils are keen to act as monitors, helping the smooth running of the class. Residential visits for pupils in Years 4 and 6 provide a good opportunity for pupils to develop maturity. Pupils are encouraged, through all school activities, to be honest, trustworthy, and well mannered.

### *Cultural development*

14. Pupils are provided with a curriculum that promotes a good understanding of western culture in subjects such as history, art and design, music, and English. Pupils' understanding of different cultures is promoted through religious education in which pupils learn about the major world faiths. Although there were no multicultural displays evident at this early stage of the term, the school does ensure that in both buildings there are displays that help pupils to be aware of different cultures

### 15. *Attendance*

Attendance is broadly in line with the national average and levels of unauthorised absence are below the national average. Most pupils arrive punctually for the start of school. Registration practice is generally efficient but, on occasions, teachers fail to close the register or put a mark against an individual pupil's name. The significant majority of parents ensure that their children attend school regularly and arrive punctually. Most absences arise through sickness or medical visits, although some parents do withdraw their children from school to undertake holidays during

term time.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.4	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

*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**

This school provides a good quality of education for its pupils. Pupils achieve well because they are taught well throughout the school. There is scope to establish more systematic procedures for using information about pupils' progress to help them to improve. Interesting visits and projects help to bring the curriculum alive for the pupils and there are good links with the community. Overall staff make best use of unsatisfactory accommodation to fulfil the requirements of the National Curriculum, but there is no enclosed outside area for children in the Foundation Stage. Parents are supportive of all that the school does for their children.

**Teaching and learning**

Teaching is good throughout the school. This marks an improvement since the last inspection in teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage and Year 1 and 2, with good teaching maintained in Years 3 to 6. Consequently children in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 to 6 learn effectively. Pupils' progress is assessed thoroughly but the information available is not used as well as it might be to move pupils forward. This is because whole school procedures have not yet been fully established.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers have high expectations of good behaviour
- Good relationships are evident between staff and pupils set a firm foundation for learning
- Good support from learning support workers (LSWs) helps pupils to move forward
- There is good inclusion of pupils with special educational needs
- Most teachers have an enthusiastic and imaginative approach
- Assessment information is not used as effectively as it could be and pupils do not always have a clear picture of what they need to do to improve
- In some lessons pupils spend too long listening to the teacher and other parts are consequently rushed
- In many lessons there is a good use of questioning to challenge pupils
- Homework arrangements in Years 3 to 6 are inconsistent, which is confusing for parents
- Some classrooms are well organised
- Good use made of individual teachers' strengths.

**Commentary**

16. The table overleaf indicates the quality of teaching seen across the school. There is no significant difference in the quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage, Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 to 6 and overall the quality of teaching is good. During the inspection it was evident that one or two teachers, who found the inspection process particularly stressful, did not teach as well as they normally did. The inspection took place very early in the academic year and so teachers were still getting to know their new classes. Both parents and pupils are very positive about the teaching staff. Pupils especially feel that their teachers help them to learn effectively.

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 36 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	5 (14%)	17(47%)	13(36%)	1(3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.*

#### **Common strengths**

17. There are some common strengths in teaching that underpin the good quality of pupils' learning. These include high expectations of pupils' behaviour, which means that pupils concentrate well on learning tasks. There are good relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils like and trust their teachers and LSWs and this helps them to tackle work with confidence. Good support from LSWs means that all pupils, but especially those with special educational needs, have opportunities to work in small groups with adult help.

#### **Characteristics in good and very good lessons**

18. In the best lessons interesting activities and a lively approach gripped pupils' interest and helped them to move forward quickly. Very good questioning enabled pupils to think carefully and develop their understanding.

#### **Example of outstanding practice**

##### **An excellent part of a very good literacy session in which Year 6 pupils interpreted 'Jabberwocky' by Lewis Carroll**

Earlier in the week pupils had found difficulty in interpreting 'Jabberwocky' and the teacher decided to refocus pupils' understanding of the poem by asking them to act it out. Twenty minutes into the lesson the room was buzzing with noise as pupils worked in groups of four to act out a verse at a time. They 'gyred and gimble in the wabe' and resisted the Jabberwock with their 'vorpal swords'. The teacher stopped them at very regular intervals to demonstrate their work. At these times he used questioning very effectively to extend pupils' thinking about the meaning of language. Questions like 'How do mome raths move?' and 'What does whiffling sound like?' got pupils thinking. All pupils were fully involved and made tremendous strides in interpreting the overall meaning of the poem in their actions, as well as confidently suggesting meanings for words like 'manxome' and 'beamish'.

#### **Other strengths**

19. Some classrooms are very well organised, with equipment and books neatly stored so that they are easily accessible to pupils. In some of the older pupils' classes teachers make good use of their curricular strengths by swapping classes for music and ICT.
20. There is a fully inclusive approach, which means that all pupils, including those from minority ethnic groups and higher and lower attaining pupils are given the support that they need. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support in class, and in small withdrawn groups by LSWs, to enable them to understand and complete the tasks set, and make good progress. Teachers set tasks to match their needs in literacy and numeracy lessons, and individual targets on individual action plans are precise, but planning does not always show what particular targets special educational needs pupils are working towards in particular lessons.

### *Assessing pupils' progress*

21. Assessment procedures have improved since the last inspection, when they were judged not good enough. In the Foundation Stage, teachers assess their children well in all activities to highlight any areas of difficulty. These assessments are then used well to plan work. Pupils in the rest of the school are tested frequently in English, mathematics and science. The statutory test results are very thoroughly analysed so that staff have a clear picture of pupils' attainment. However this data is not used rigorously enough to plan subsequent work. Tracking systems are new and do not yet show the progress that pupils make and whether this is good enough. Generally staff give pupils good verbal feedback on their work, but the marking of work is not always helpful. It does not give pupils a clear picture of whether they have learnt what was intended. There are no whole school expectations for how teachers' day-to-day assessment is recorded.

### *Timing*

22. In some of the satisfactory lessons teachers spent too long talking to the pupils. The pupils listened well at these times and made steady progress, but consequently sometimes the time left for pupils to work independently was limited. In one or two sessions the conclusion to the lesson was rushed.

### *Homework*

23. Homework is set throughout the school and most pupils tackle it conscientiously. In Years 3 to 6 especially there are differing systems for organising homework and this is confusing for parents, who are not always clear about what is expected of their children.

### **The curriculum**

24. Overall the school provides a broad curriculum that is brought alive by clubs, practical activities, visits and visitors. Planning for different subjects has improved since the last inspection. There are sufficient teachers and LSWs to provide effective support for pupils. They work hard to overcome the limitations imposed by its sites and buildings, particularly in physical education (PE) and ICT. There is no enclosed outside area for children in the Foundation Stage and this is unsatisfactory. There are adequate resources for all subjects and these have been improved for English, mathematics, science, ICT and PE.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good use of visits, visitors and events to bring the curriculum alive, supported by a good range of out of lesson clubs and activities
- An inclusive school committed to ensuring individuals and groups have equality of access and opportunity
- Improved planning of the curriculum since the last inspection, with further developments in hand
- Overall, the accommodation, particularly on the Junior School site, is unsatisfactory
- There is no enclosed outdoor area for children in the Foundation Stage
- In some classes English and mathematics sessions are too long
- Good arrangements to support pupils moving from reception to Year 1 and Year 2 to Year 3
- Lack of consistency in using ICT to support learning in other subjects.

### **Commentary**

#### *Planning for work in the Foundation Stage*

25. Planning in the Foundation Stage is sound overall and based on national guidelines. Staff plan activities to engage and interest the children, but opportunities for improving the curriculum are restricted by the lack of an enclosed outside area.

*Planning for work in Years 1 to 6*

26. The curriculum provides a sound basis for pupils' learning. It is firmly anchored on the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for Religious Education. A regular programme of visits and visitors help to bring learning alive. Annual residential visits for Years 4 and 6 provide good opportunities for pupils' personal development. Events such as 'Choosing Day' give pupils' the chance to take responsibility for their own learning. The 'Breakfast Club' project is a particularly good example of how links between subjects are used to extend learning.

**Example of outstanding practice**

**In the summer, Year 6 pupils organised a month long pre-school 'Breakfast Club' for other pupils**

The Year 6 Breakfast Club project, last Autumn, is a very good example of an imaginative approach to learning. It captured pupils' interest and extended their understanding across a range of subjects. Initially pupils had to apply and be interviewed for jobs in the club'. The month long project provided real, hands-on opportunities for Year 6 pupils to employ a number of mathematical and ICT skills in planning, costing and running the club. Other skills used included art and design ideas for publicity and menus, design technology in creating the 'energizer' cereal and English skills in the necessary discussion and written tasks. Even musical talents were put to good use in providing musical accompaniment. The co-operation required to make the club a success gave pupils valuable first hand opportunities to develop interpersonal skills and experience decision making in a real life context. This built their confidence well and pupils' sense of achievement is evident in their record of the work.

27. The school is now beginning to develop the use of national guidelines to tailor its planning to suit the needs of the school.
28. Suitable emphasis is placed on English and mathematics. The national strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have been used well by teachers as their basis for planning in these subjects and have contributed to the improvement in standards. Literacy and numeracy skills are being developed and employed in other subjects as pupils read and record information or carry out tasks but this is not yet developed as a consistent, regularly planned feature of provision.
29. The curriculum is not always as balanced as it might be. Lengthy morning sessions of English and mathematics do not always help pupils to maintain concentration and interest or maximise learning. Currently the time available for teaching in Years 3 to 6 is below the recommended minimum. The school has recognised this and is considering how best to tackle the problem.

*An inclusive approach*

30. The school's strong commitment to ensuring equality of access and opportunity for all its pupils is achieved by active intervention through catch-up programmes, setting in mathematics and the good support provided by teachers and LSWs in lessons. A two-year planning cycle ensures that the needs of the different age groups in the mixed age classes are met and ensures pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are systematically developed. All pupils on the special needs register have individual action plans highlighting the pupils' individual needs, which are regularly reviewed. All pupils with special educational needs have access to the same curriculum as their peers.

*Restrictions imposed by the accommodation*

31. The school is located on two sites, which are almost one mile apart. The school has anticipated a move to a single site for many years and, as a consequence, has not invested in maintenance and improvements at the Junior School site. The governors' decision to restrict finance for maintenance and improvements has affected the quality of the learning environment, despite the obvious efforts of staff. The current junior library is too small and there is no permanent ICT suite.
32. There is no outside grassed area that is suitable or safe for PE and the school has to use playing fields that are several miles away. The school works hard to overcome the limitations of its sites particularly for PE and arranges a good programme of off site provision for games and swimming in addition to the on site provision of sports coaching by specialists. There are a good range of out of lesson clubs and competitive sporting fixtures with neighbouring schools.

#### *Moving from the infants to the juniors*

33. A good pattern of visits and the well-organised 'buddy system' ensure that the transfer from Year 2 to Year 3 is successful despite the shift of site.

#### *Staffing*

34. There are sufficient teachers and LSWs, who are suitably qualified and deployed to teach the curriculum on both sites. They have sufficient experience and suitable skills to undertake the tasks they are assigned. LSWs in the Foundation Stage are particularly effective in their role as part of the teaching team.

#### *Resources*

35. Adequate resources are in place to meet the needs of the curriculum in all subjects. Those for literacy, numeracy, science and information technology have all been improved significantly since the last inspection. The newly installed radio link will enable greater flexibility and is already allowing whole class ICT sessions in Years 3 to 6.

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

The care, guidance and support for pupils are satisfactory overall and pupils enjoy good relationships with staff which benefit their confidence in seeking support when they have any concerns or wish to share their joys.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported
- Good support is provided by the school nurse and outside agencies
- Some safety issues related to the new build have been identified and temporary action taken to ensure pupils' safety, but have these not been permanently resolved.

### **Commentary**

#### *Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety*

36. The school's procedures for ensuring the safety and well-being of pupils are satisfactory. First aid provision is good and over thirty staff are qualified to provide assistance in the event of an emergency. Safe practice is promoted well in lessons. Equipment is regularly checked and tested and the school is developing a portfolio of risk assessments. In appropriate cases, they have sought external consultants or the LEA's advice and this has been followed very carefully, to ensure the safety of pupils, staff and users of the site. Hazards, such as asbestos in the



infant school boiler-house, tripping hazards on pathways and rubble just below the surface of an area of steeply sloping grass, have been identified. External advice has been secured to ensure that appropriate measures are taken to minimise any risk and that children are not exposed to danger. It is expected that these hazards will be eliminated as part of the redevelopment works. The 'drop-in' facility offered, on the infant site, by the school nurse on a fortnightly basis is welcomed by parents.

37. Child protection procedures meet requirements and the school exercises its responsibilities with vigilance and care.
38. Currently, attendance registers remain within classrooms throughout the day, but the school has recognised that if they are held centrally, it will speed up the process of checking that all pupils have safely evacuated the building in the event of an emergency.

#### *Support and advice*

39. Induction arrangements are satisfactory, both when children start at school and when they move to the Junior School site. These arrangements start the work of developing good and trusting relationships between pupils and staff which give pupils the confidence to seek support and guidance when they have concerns about their work, or a personal problem, or when they want to share a success or news of something special. Staff provide a good response to such requests and, through their good knowledge of pupils as individuals and monitoring of pupils' personal and academic development, provide well-informed support, advice and guidance.
40. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well. Any outside agencies that are involved are invited to annual reviews. A number of agencies give good support to the school, including the educational psychologist and behavioural support team, which is proving beneficial to teachers who have disruptive pupils in their classes. The use of nurture groups for the younger pupils helps them to settle into class, and a daily lunchtime club enhances pupils' social skills through play. Both these initiatives have a positive impact on behaviour.

#### *Involving pupils*

41. The school successfully seeks pupils' views through the School Council. There is more scope for involving them in new projects, such as planning for the new build on the infant site.

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

Parents have very positive views of the school and the education which it provides. The partnership between school and home, other schools and the community is good overall and plays a positive role in supporting pupils' learning at school and home.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are very happy with what the school provides for their children
- The school's partnership with parents makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning
- Links with the community enrich learning experiences for pupils and provide good opportunities for their social development
- The quality and informative content of newsletters and general information provided to parents are good
- The committee of the Parent Teacher and Friends Association (PTFA) works hard to support the work of the school
- Reports to parents about their children's progress are not consistent in style from class to class
- Parents do not have clear information about what their children need to know to move to the next stage in their learning.

### **Commentary**

### *Links with parents*

42. The very positive views of parents reflect an overall high level of satisfaction with all aspects of the school's provision. A very small minority of parents express some concerns about the information that parents receive about pupils' progress and some concerns about bullying. Inspectors support the positive views of parents and were unable to support parents' concerns about bullying. They found that where bullying is identified, it is quickly and effectively addressed and that staff are effective in identifying and resolving relationship breakdowns, which some pupils find very distressing. Inspectors judged that newsletters and general information provided to parents are good and that annual reports are satisfactory. Reports demonstrate the good knowledge that teachers have of pupils and inform parents about the work that pupils have completed and their attitudes, but are not always consistent in their style and content and sometimes fail to provide parents with clear targets or guidance as to what their children need to do to progress to the next stage of their learning.
43. The school has satisfactory arrangements to survey parents and gain their views, which are fed into the school improvement planning process. The school normally manages to resolve any concerns of parents informally. However, in the event that a parent should wish to make a formal complaint, there is an effective complaints procedure and in the last year, the only formal complaint that was received was dealt with fully in accordance with the agreed policy.
44. Many parents support their children well at home by sharing books with them and helping them with their homework. A few help in school on a regular basis.
45. The PTFA is run by a small but hardworking committee and successfully raises funds to provide additional resources and learning opportunities for pupils. Through events such as the 'summer sizzle' they have been able to fund, for example, drumming workshops and the purchase of instruments such as 'boom whackers'. The work of the PTFA is appreciated by staff and benefits pupils well.

### *Links with the community*

46. Links with the community and a wide range of visits and visitors provide good enrichment of the curriculum and support pupils' personal and social development as well as widening their experiences and giving them opportunities to learn about the needs of others.

### *Links with other schools*

47. Links with other schools are satisfactory and the school plays an active part in the local pyramid of schools. Links with secondary schools appropriately support the transfer of pupils at the age of eleven by providing opportunities to visit and gain an understanding of what secondary schooling will be like.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Overall leadership and management are sound, with significant strengths in some areas. The school is governed effectively, with some governors making important contributions. The school is led well by the headteacher with good support from senior teachers. Sound management structures and procedures underpin the every day work of the school and applications of the principles of best value are satisfactory. The delay in moving the school onto one site has had a negative impact on its work, especially in relation to managing the curriculum, costs involved in running two sites and the time spent by the headteacher and staff in moving between the two buildings.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The pastoral leadership of the headteacher is very good.

- There is a good focus on raising standards
- The headteacher, ex deputy head and assistant head have created effective teaching teams
- The secretary makes a very significant contribution to the smooth running of the school
- The expertise and contribution of key governors is very good.
- Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school need clarifying for both staff and governors
- The leadership of the work with pupils who have special educational needs is very good
- The maintenance of a split site is costly and inefficient
- The school has been successful in attracting additional funding

## **Commentary**

### *Leadership*

48. The headteacher has successfully established a united and supportive staff team who are committed to making good provision for the all round development of pupils. Underpinning this provision is a clear focus on raising standards shared by both staff and governors. This is a very inclusive school and all pupils are valued. Care is taken to meet pupils' individual needs. The leadership of the work for pupils with special educational needs is very good and ensures that these pupils are supported well.
49. The headteacher works very sensitively with staff to help them to develop and to support them in their work. He and the ex-deputy headteacher, who led the work in the infant department, together with the assistant head, enabled the staff teams for the Foundation Stage, Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 to 6 to work well together.
50. Staff with subject responsibilities are developing their roles and currently are not as effective as they might be, especially in relation to monitoring and evaluating provision and standards in their particular areas. The reasons for this are:
- Many subject co-ordinators are new to their roles
  - In the past there has been too much emphasis on looking at policies and managing resources to the detriment of evaluating what is happening in classrooms
  - The delay in moving to one site has made it more difficult for staff to have a whole school view of their subject
  - There is no clear programme for monitoring and evaluating work in different subjects
  - It is difficult for co-ordinators to draw up a plan for improvement because they do not have a sufficiently clear overview of what is happening
- Staff are very hard working and committed and there is every indication that this area will improve rapidly as staff take on their new responsibilities.

### *Management*

51. Overall the management of the school is sound. There are satisfactory procedures in place to enable the school to run smoothly on a day-to-day basis. There are also sound strategies for evaluating how well the school is doing in order to plan for the future.
52. The experienced secretary provides very effective administrative and financial support. She is very welcoming to staff, pupils and visitors and makes a very significant contribution to the life of the school. She is supported well by her colleague on the infant site.
53. The headteacher and governors have managed the staffing of the school well and consequently staff enjoy working at Stroud Valley. The headteacher and governors consult carefully with staff when changes are proposed to staff responsibilities. Arrangements for professional development are sound.

54. The management of the school's finances is sound. Planning has been frustrated by uncertainty about projections of the school roll and the lack of a detailed timetable for the move of the school on a single site.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	669,138
Total expenditure	654,031
Expenditure per pupil	2,344

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	90,823
Balance carried forward to the next	105,930

55. Balances are high and currently stand at almost 16 per cent of the total school income. This has arisen through:
- Specific decisions by governors to try to avoid unnecessary maintenance expenditure at the Junior School site, which will be demolished when the redevelopment takes place
  - Success in bidding for monies to support planned projects which has resulted in some significant savings against the original budget in areas such as provision of ICT equipment.
  - Governors are planning a phased reduction of balances to support the transfer to a single site and to meet planned staffing requirements.
56. The school has satisfactory procedures to ensure that it applies the principles of best value appropriately and in some cases very well. For example, fair competitive tendering and the securing of goods and services are managed very well to ensure that competitive quotations enable the school to obtain best value in its use of resources. However, the school does not sufficiently use national and local data to compare itself with other schools and procedures to consult with all stakeholders are insufficiently developed. The school provides satisfactory value for money.
57. The school takes time to evaluate its work and some aspects of this evaluation are very good. The headteacher's analysis of pupils' performance in statutory tests, for example is very detailed and provides a clear picture of standards and improvement for staff and governors. Procedures for monitoring other aspects of the school's work, such as progress made towards issues identified for improvement, work in classrooms and developments in different subjects are not so clear-cut and consequently staff and governors take longer to evaluate these areas than they need to. This is because:
- There is no clear calendar for monitoring arrangements during the year
  - The cycle for monitoring policies is too short. Subject policies do not need to be monitored every year
  - Expectations of subject co-ordinators' monitoring are not clearly defined
  - Expectations of governors' monitoring visits are not clearly defined.
  - The school does identify sensible areas for development as a consequence of its current monitoring, but the system is not as efficient as it could be.

**Governance**

58. Overall the governance of the school is sound, with some very good features. The most significant are the contributions made by individual governors with particular expertise. The chair, for example, who has a background in educational management, has successfully delegated aspects of work to specialist governors. She supports the headteacher very well and provides appropriate challenge.

**Example of outstanding practice**

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**The contribution that governors can make to the school was seen in the work of the chair of the premises committee in preparation for a move to a single school site**

The chair of the premises committee brings formidable determination and professionalism to her role. This enables her to provide informed leadership to her committee and excellent support to the school in preparation for its move to a single site with disabled access. In preparing her briefs she has involved pupils in measuring, calculating and charting gradients and in observing public enquiries. This has helped pupils to understand the needs of others and to understand the process of considering matters in a public forum.

59. In discussion with governors it was clear that they have a good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are involved in planning for improvement. Some governors visit the school during the school day, but overall procedures for them to monitor what is happening in school are too vague.

*The impact of the split site*

60. Uncertainties about the timing of the move onto one site have had a negative impact on various aspects of the school's work. These include:
- Financial planning, with uncertainty about future funding
  - Development of subject management
  - Time spent by headteacher and governors in discussions about building has lessened the time available to concentrate on improving standards.

The Governing Body has made an excellent input to the planning process for the new building and has very carefully considered the current and future needs of the school on a single site. Whilst some of the governors' aspirations will not be realised, they will have made a significant contribution to improving facilities and access for the benefit of pupils, staff, parents and visitors.

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

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

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good and improved since the last inspection. Children are prepared well for transfer to Year 1. The children enter reception in the September before they are five, and at the time of the inspection were only attending in the mornings. The majority of children are taught in a single age group but a few of the older children are taught with Year 1 pupils. The majority of children have attended some form of pre-school provision. All children achieve well because the teaching is good, and the curriculum is appropriately planned to provide a wide range of interesting and relevant activities, which are well matched to their needs. All adults set excellent role models for the children and manage them well. There is a good ratio of adults to children, ensuring that the needs of all are well met. All staff work very well as a cohesive team, carefully monitoring all children's progress. The accommodation inside is satisfactory but outside facilities are unsatisfactory due to the cramped playground and sloping nature of the surface. The children do not have continuous access to a separate secure outside area, and resources for outdoor activities are unsatisfactory, but there is limited space for storage of more equipment.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve well because of the good teaching and the high expectations set by staff
- Every opportunity is taken to enhance children's development, and children are in line to reach the expected goals by the end of the year, with some exceeding these
- Supportive relationships are being established and so children feel confident and happy.

### **Commentary**

61. The personal, social and emotional development of the current intake is better than it has been in the recent past, and is generally as expected for their age. There are a few children who have underdeveloped social skills, and who find it hard to conform to the high expectations set by staff.
62. Even at this early stage in the term the clear boundaries, and the consistent role models set by the adults in the reception, ensure that the children know what is expected of them, so that they quickly learn the correct way to behave. Children already know the routines well, settle to tasks with a minimum of fuss, and behave sensibly. The excellent teamwork of the adults in both classes gives the children superb role models for co-operation, and a calm but rigorous approach to work. The majority of children show interest in what they are doing, concentrate well, even when not directly supervised, and are eager to learn. Children are continually encouraged to feel confident about what they achieve, and are reminded of the high standards that the adults expect. They are friendly and take a pride in their work. Children are encouraged to share and take turns amicably, and put up their hands when answering a question. When children do not conform they are dealt with firmly but fairly, so that they learn how to appreciate the needs of others within the group. Children are expected to clear up after themselves, which they do without much prompting. The very supportive relationships ensure children feel secure and confident to seek help when required. The gains in learning already evident in this area are as a result of the continual reinforcement of rules by the adults, and treating each other and the children with courtesy and respect. This leads to trusting relationships, and helps the children succeed.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers and support staff take every opportunity to develop the children's language skills, and teaching is good.

### **Commentary**

64. Early indications are that the majority of children are on course to meet the expectations in this area of learning. Already children are making good progress as a result of the many opportunities they are given to talk and listen. All staff take every opportunity during all activities to develop the children's vocabulary through probing questioning and consistent insistence that children listen to the contributions of others. For example, when children were making cakes the support assistant continually chatted to the children asking them questions, so that they had to think, and choose appropriate words to describe what they were doing. Very good relationships mean that children have the confidence to talk, and all adults are genuinely interested in what the children have to say. Children enjoy books, and listen attentively when a story is read to them. For example, when the teacher read the story of the 'Pig in the Pond' the children were hanging on her every word as she read with expression and excitement. This created a real spiritual atmosphere as the children experienced the wonder of books. It is too early in the term for children to have a reading book, but there are many opportunities in the morning when children can look at books themselves, which they handle with care, appreciating that text is read from left to right. Examination of current planning and of children's work done last year indicates that there is a good emphasis on the recognition of sounds to help children learn to read and write. No examples of writing were seen for the current reception children, but they are encouraged to hold pencils correctly while they colour.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers plan a wide range of activities to support learning which ensures children achieve well.
- Every opportunity is grasped in all activities to promote children's mathematical development.

### **Commentary**

64. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan a range of interesting activities to promote mathematical understanding. Most children are working at levels expected for their age. Children are already beginning to count to five. Adults use a variety of number rhymes and songs to help children count. Examination of children's work from last year shows that children make good progress, with the most able children understanding numbers to ten. Although no written recording of number has been done so far, at this early stage in the term, three more-able children were already able to recite numbers to ten. During one well-planned activity, where teaching was good, the above average children took turns to choose a coloured cotton reel to thread on the appropriately coloured lace to eventually make five. The teacher constantly asked 'How many more are needed?' and used her fingers effectively to demonstrate how many more were required. In this session children were beginning to appreciate the notion of 'one more than', while consolidating their understanding of ordering numbers to five. They also reinforced their colours, and learning to take turns enhanced their personal and social skills. Children are given opportunities to recognise simple patterns, such as a repeated stripe and spotted pattern used on their cake cases, but most children cannot sustain a repeated pattern when joining a string of coloured camels. All these practical

activities prepare the way well for future learning, and are very appropriate for this stage of development, ensuring that children sustain interest and do not become bored.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A range of interesting activities is planned to promote learning in this area
- Staff use questioning very effectively to enhance the children's knowledge and understanding of the world about them
- Lack of opportunities to use computers.

### **Commentary**

65. Teaching and learning are good and children achieve well. Most are working at levels expected for their age. A good variety of appropriate interesting activities is planned to stimulate children's curiosity and enhance their understanding. For example, a group of children planted pansies to improve the school environment. During this activity the support assistant questioned children well about the formation of the plant and what the roots were for. By the end of the session the children knew that the roots kept the plant in the soil as well as giving the plant 'food'. In another group children made 'currant buns'. The good teaching here was characterised by the quality of the questions that made the children think about health and safety issues, such as the need for clean hands; care as the oven is hot; what happens to the sugar when it looks as if it has disappeared when mixed with the margarine; and how the mixture changes as a result of cooking. The learning in this lesson was consequently good, and children's vocabulary was enhanced as they learn such facts as the yellow part of the egg is called the yolk. The activities planned for this area of learning emphasises again the way that all areas of learning are developed effectively alongside each other. There is a lack of opportunity for children to use computers, and during the inspection no children were observed using listening centres. These activities are planned for later in the term.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers make the most of the limited accommodation outside, but there is access to a lovely hall for structured lessons
- There is no continuous access to an outside play area, so opportunities for development are limited
- When outside sessions take place there is a lack of focus and no rigorous planning for these sessions.

### **Commentary**

66. No hall sessions were observed during the inspection, so no judgements can be made about teaching, but children were observed in the playground, and indications are that children are on line to meet the expected goals by the end of the year. At these times their achievement was satisfactory. Children have limited opportunities for outdoor play and children in the reception /Year 1 class do not have continuous access to the outside area. This is unsatisfactory. The outside area is small and very sloped, so it is difficult to organise activities with balls, and trikes can only be ridden downhill. This and the limited resources for outside play restrict opportunities for physical development. The time observed when children were engaged in outdoor play lacked focus, and was really a session for children to let off steam, and this



limited further learning. Children develop their manipulative skills well by handling dough, scissors and brushes, and manipulate small construction equipment with dexterity. There is however, a lack of stimulating large construction equipment to further enhance physical development.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

### **Commentary**

67. It was not possible to make an overall judgement of provision or standards, but the work on display indicates that standards are as expected. There was no use of role-play observed during the inspection to develop children's imagination, but the half-day nature of attendance at this time in the term, limits time available for creative activities.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**. Overall, the quality of the teaching and the work planned for pupils are good and this ensures that they achieve well.

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

- Standards in writing are improving
- The quality of teaching and learning is good
- The use of drama to develop pupils' understanding of language is very good
- Girls do better than boys
- Marking does not always give pupils a clear picture of how well they are doing or what they have to do to improve
- The presentation of older pupils' work is sometimes untidy
- Reading areas in classrooms and the library in the junior building are not as stimulating as they might be
- Subject co-ordinators do not have sufficient time to monitor work in classrooms.

### **Commentary**

68. Standards in English are rising because of the school's focus on improvement in this subject. This is evident in national test results over the last few years. There have been some variations year by year because of the make up of particular groups of pupils. When national comparative data for 2003 tests is available, it is likely that in Year 2 standards in reading and writing will be average and above average in Year 6. This represents good progress from entry, when many children did not do as well as their peers.
69. The inspection found that pupils, including those from minority ethnic groups, pupils with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils, achieve well throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs are particularly supported and every effort is made by staff to raise their attainment by carefully planned work and good support and encouragement. In all year groups there is a wide span of ability. Girls do better than boys. The school has worked successfully to raise boys' achievement, but as girls' achievement has also improved the gap remains.
70. Overall standards in speaking and listening are a little below average in Year 1 and 2 and broadly average in Years 3 to 6. Most pupils speak confidently and make themselves understood, but many younger pupils are limited by a restricted vocabulary. Consequently both their understanding and their ability to communicate effectively are hampered. Staff work hard to help pupils to extend their vocabulary by:

- Repeating and explaining unfamiliar words
- Encouraging pupils to talk to each other
- Using drama activities to help pupils to communicate confidently.

71. Pupils achieve well in reading, with the development of their knowledge and enjoyment of books going hand in hand with the development of their reading skills. Standards are a little below average in Years 1 and 2 and average in Year 6. There is a structured reading programme, with pupils working through a published scheme. There are good opportunities during the school day for pupils to engage in group, paired and silent reading. All pupils are encouraged to read with parents and carers at home and this helps them to move forward well. Pupils are clear about the strategies that they need to use to work out how to read words and sentences and most tackle new reading material confidently. Pupils, especially older ones, are developing firm preferences for the work of different authors. Dick King Smith, Anthony Horowitz and JK Rowling are firm favourites. Generally book areas in classrooms are well organised, but there are few displays to capture pupils' interest. The junior library is not large enough for a whole class to work in and many of the books are well worn.

72. Staff have worked hard and successfully to drive up standards in writing. These are now a little below average in Years 1 and 2 and broadly average in Years 3 to 6. Pupils achieve well because of good teaching. Factors that have been instrumental in raising standards are:

- Inspiring in-service training
- Revised planning techniques
- Writing groups in Years 1 and 2
- Interesting writing tasks set
- Opportunities for pupils to write across a range of genres
- Opportunities for extended writing
- Pupils' writing celebrated in displays and scrap books

The school is continuing to target writing for improvement. Additional factors, which would contribute to improvement, are:

- Higher expectations of handwriting and presentation in Years 3 to 6
- Clearer marking so that pupils are quite clear about what they have to do to improve.

73. In the lessons seen teaching ranged from very good to unsatisfactory and was good overall. It is evident from both lessons and work from last year that some of the teaching is of a high quality with an emphasis on helping pupils to develop their literacy skills through purposeful and enjoyable activities and this enables pupils to achieve well. In Year 4, for example, pupils worked well to turn a poem into a story. Pupils concentrate well in lessons and work hard. In the satisfactory lessons it was evident that some teachers were very nervous and an analysis of pupils' work indicate that usually their teaching is stronger. In the unsatisfactory session pupils did well in the first part of the session, but did not move forward sufficiently in the activity part of the lesson.

74. The two subject leaders have a clear view of what needs to be improved and have worked well with staff to put improvement strategies into practice. They have not yet had sufficient time to monitor work in classrooms.

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

Pupils use their language and literacy skills well in other subjects. At the moment these opportunities to link subjects together are not structured into the medium term planning.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved since the last inspection
- All pupils achieve well because of the good teaching and learning
- There is a strong focus placed on developing pupils' numeracy skills
- The use of ICT is under-developed
- There is insufficient emphasis on problem solving
- The monitoring of teaching and learning is not sufficiently developed
- Pupils are not clear about what they have to do to improve.

### Commentary

75. Standards in mathematics in both Year 2 and Year 6 are average. In 2003 national tests over three quarters of pupils in both year groups reached the expected standard. Almost a third of seven year olds and over a quarter of eleven year olds achieved higher levels. Overall the school does well for its pupils, with all groups making good progress and achieving well. Pupils with special educational needs, well supported by teachers and LSWs, achieve as well as their classmates. Boys and girls are currently making similar progress. Pupils from minority ethnic groups also do well. The introduction of setting in Years 3 to 6 provides for different abilities and extends more able pupils.
76. Since the last inspection the school has worked hard to raise standards in mathematics, especially in Years 1 and 2. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected levels has steadily risen as the quality of teaching has improved. In both 2001 and 2002 standards were higher than those in schools with similar intakes. Most pupils enter the school with below average mathematical understanding, but by Year 2 are working within the expected range for their age, developing a knowledge and understanding of place value and recalling addition and number facts to at least 10. They are taught to recognise number patterns and use different strategies to solve number problems. As pupils move up the school the speed and range of mental calculations increases. Year 4 pupils use tables and number patterns to identify multiples of 4, 5, 6, or 10, up to 100, recognise remainders and use calculators, for example. By Year 6 more able pupils make good use of computers to present data to solve problems.
77. Pupils often make use of computers to practise numeracy skills in their classroom. Recent developments will allow whole class use of computers to become an integral part of mathematics lessons.
78. The strong and appropriate focus on numeracy skills has improved pupils' knowledge and capability. Their recall of other areas of mathematics is rather more limited. Pupils in the Year 1/ 2 class, for example, are unsure of the names of common two-dimensional shapes, and in a Year 3/4 class, the names and properties of three-dimensional shapes. Work in pupils' books shows few examples of the understanding of other mathematical concepts, or its use to solve practical everyday problems.
79. In all the lessons seen teaching was good and in one Year 6 lesson it was very good. Strengths include:
- Carefully planned lessons with clear learning objectives, which have a positive impact on pupils' learning and standards

- Teaching which captures pupils' interest and enthusiasm
- Good emphasis on the correct use of mathematical vocabulary
- The exploration of methods of calculation
- Making sure that pupils fully understand how work builds on previous learning
- Encouraging pupils to feel secure and contribute with no fear of failure ensures that all pupils achieve equally well
- LSWs are well-briefed and often effectively lead groups on specific tasks
- Questioning is well used to check pupils' understanding and advance their thinking
- Clear explanations ensure all pupils understand how to complete the task successfully

In some lessons time constraints meant the end session was rushed and the opportunity to check understanding and reinforce learning points was not fully exploited.

80. Adoption of the National Numeracy Strategy as the basis for planning in the subject has made a significant contribution to the rise in standards. The recent introduction of a commercial scheme will assist in ensuring that all strands are fully covered and provide a useful basis for assessment. The quality of marking is variable and does not often indicate to pupils how they can improve. A regular pattern of monitoring arrangements is not established to identify and share good practice. Resources are sufficient for current needs and have been improved significantly since the last inspection. The previous deputy headteacher's strong leadership has played a key part in subject improvement. The new arrangements for shared leadership have yet to become established.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

81. Pupils often use mathematics as part of their work in other subjects and consequently develop an appreciation of the practical uses of these skills. For example, they use graphs and tables to record data in geography and science or measure materials in design technology. However, opportunities tend to occur coincidentally rather than as part of systematic planning. Specific planned projects such as Year 6 pupils' work last year for the 'Breakfast Club' or their assessment of disabled access to the school, often provide good opportunities to consolidate and extend skills.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well as a result of the generally good teaching, particularly of the older pupils
- There is good emphasis on the use of specific technical language
- Insufficient use of ICT to support science
- There is a lack of rigorous assessment for the investigative strand of the subject.

### **Commentary**

82. Because of the timing of the inspection so early in the year, there was little evidence of work done by the current Year 2 pupils. However, scrutiny of work completed last year indicates that standards are average. In the statutory tests in 2003 few pupils achieved the higher level three, and there is little evidence at this time to suggest that there will be an improvement next year. The current Year 2 entered school with well below average understanding of the world about them and poor social skills. These have had a negative effect on the standards being reached, but pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils in Year 6 are in line to achieve the expected standards by the end of the year, as a result of the good teaching and insistence on the correct use of technical vocabulary. No differences were observed between the achievement of boys and girls, and they all achieve well, including those with special educational needs and those from minority ethnic groups. However, planning for lessons does

not include more challenge for the higher-attaining pupils. All pupils do the same tasks, and this restricts opportunities for these pupils to achieve even better.

83. In the lessons seen during the inspection teaching varied between satisfactory and good. Overall teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. In lessons where teachers' subject knowledge was secure, and planning showed a clear focus, pupils learned well, showed interest and enthusiasm for the subject and concentrated hard. Where there was not a clear focus and too few opportunities to learn through practical activities pupils' learning was only satisfactory. Teachers generally provide opportunities for pupils to carry out experiments, but scrutiny of work indicates that there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to plan their own investigations. There is good emphasis in all lessons seen on the correct use of specific vocabulary, which ensures that pupils fully understand scientific terms. There is a lack of consistency in the way pupils record their work, and this leads to confusion and a lack of clarity. Year 6 teacher had to ensure that pupils used an agreed format as they were very unsure of how to record their experiments, which meant valuable time was lost on techniques that should be familiar to pupils by this age. There were some good examples of teachers changing their planning in the light of what pupils had achieved, which resulted in pupils consolidating and reinforcing their learning. For example, pupils in Year 6 found drawing conclusions difficult, so the teacher clarified the difference between recording results and drawing conclusions. As a result of this further explanation pupils' understanding was broadened.

84. There have been many improvements since the last inspection. These include:

- A steady improvement in standards
- Improvements in the co-ordination of the subject
- A new rolling programme of topics on a two-year cycle to accommodate the mixed-age classes, and ensure all elements of the subject are taught
- Regular assessments of attainment, although tracking of pupils' progress is not embedded into current practice
- Statutory test results are analysed to highlight strengths and weaknesses and this feeds into subsequent planning
- There are many examples of the use of mathematics to support work in science, in the use of charts, graphs and tables to help recording, and pupils use their measuring skills effectively to aid their work on friction.

There remain some areas for development. There are no rigorous assessment procedures for the experimenting strand of the subject to help teachers have a clear picture of pupils' attainment in this important element of the curriculum. The policy statement still needs updating, and there has been no monitoring of teaching and learning. There is a lack of the use of ICT to support learning in the subject.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There has been recent improvement in resources and staff expertise
- Direct teaching of ICT skills is good
- ICT is not used consistently to support learning in other subjects
- Procedures for monitoring and evaluating provision and standards in ICT are not established.

### **Commentary**

85. By Year 6 pupils' ICT skills are average. In the direct teaching sessions seen, in both the Year 3/4 class and the Year 6 class, good teaching enabled pupils to make rapid progress and achieve well. It is not possible to reach a judgement about standards in other year groups as

no use of ICT was observed during the inspection. Since the last inspection national funding has meant that the resources for the subject have been improved and staff confidence and expertise developed through training. Historically problems with equipment and accommodation have restricted the use of ICT. The acquisition of laptops and digital projectors on both sites and the establishment of radio networks allowing Internet access and whole class teaching mean that the school is well placed to move forward. However in Years 3 to 6 the older pupils have to move out of their classroom one day a week so that a computer 'suite' can be set up.

86. The use of national guidance as the basis for planning will ensure that all pupils experience the expected subject strands. Examples of pupils' work show they are learning to use ICT for word processing, graphics, the Internet and data handling as well as control, monitoring and modelling. Teachers' planning and conversations with pupils confirm that classroom computers are regularly used but the introduction of whole class sessions is relatively recent.
87. In the lessons seen the teacher's own specialist subject knowledge was used well to give clear succinct explanations and demonstrations using the digital projector. Good use of questioning maximised pupil input and a brisk pace to the learning meant that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieved well. Year 6 pupils quickly and accurately combined text, sound, photographs and digital images to create virtual books for younger pupils. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson pupils' ICT skills were extended and reinforced by the use of spreadsheet program to analyse and present data.
88. Conversations with pupils and examples of their work show they are confident in accessing the Internet for research, recording sensor data and presenting text. They are enthusiastic about the use of ICT, clearly enjoy their lessons and work well with partners or groups to achieve well. Although many have PCs at home, and are therefore used to a different operating system, all state that the use of Imacs is not a problem for them. The direct teaching sessions yield quick results and enable pupils to make rapid gains in their ICT skills. Year 3/4 pupils in their first
89. whole class session learnt quickly how to change the size and style of fonts to suit different purposes.
90. Recent changes in subject leadership have yet to be consolidated and much of both subject leaders' time is currently taken resolving technical problems. Assessment procedures have been revised and the new class record sheets will provide a good overview of coverage and indicate the next step in learning. A portfolio of pupils' work is being assembled and will provide all teachers with clear exemplification of standards. Monitoring of teaching and learning in the subject are not developed to ensure that best use is made of resources and teachers are supported in their use of it. The school has not developed a clear interim view of how ICT teaching should develop before the move to a single site.

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

91. During the inspection little use was seen of ICT outside the direct teaching sessions. Pupils report that they use their classroom computers to complete programs that consolidate numeracy skills in mathematics, for writing tasks in English, to record science investigations and to access the Internet for research. Examples in their books confirm this but the level of access for individual pupils is limited by the computers available and is not yet a regular and consistent feature of teaching.

### **HUMANITIES**

92. In humanities work was sampled in **history** and **geography**, with only one lesson seen in each subject. It is therefore not possible to form an overall judgement about provision in these

subjects. There is every indication from pupils' work that standards are broadly average and improved since the last inspection in Years 1 and 2.

93. In both subjects it is clear that a range of visits and visitors play an important part in making the work interesting and relevant. Parents described some of the exciting work undertaken at the meeting held for them before the inspection. In geography for example, a visit to the beach at Clevedon enabled pupils to understand some of the physical and human features of this type of environment. From discussions with pupils in Year 3 many obviously enjoy history and they spoke enthusiastically about their current topic on the 'Second World War' and how their town was bombed during the war.
94. Subject co-ordinators have started to monitor their subjects through discussions with pupils and looking at samples of their work, this has not been in enough detail to monitor the quality of teaching and provision effectively.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in the subject is **satisfactory**

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are encouraged to apply religious doctrine to their every-day lives
- There are no assessment procedures and no monitoring of teaching and learning.

### Commentary

95. Standards of attainment seen during the inspection remain in line with expectations of the locally agreed syllabus, as they were at the time of the last inspection. Only two lessons were observed, and a lot of work covered in religious education lessons centres around discussions, so there was limited written work to examine. However, scrutiny of the available work, and talking to pupils indicate that pupils' achievement is sound, throughout the school.
96. In the lessons seen teaching was satisfactory, and pupils are gaining a sound understanding of Islam and Christianity. Discussions with pupils in Year 6 show they are beginning to link religious teaching with everyday life, such as knowing that the Ten Commandments give us rules for life. This indicates that pupils are being given opportunities to discover the meaning behind religions as well as facts. Good use is made of visits to the cathedral. Younger pupils learn about the features of a church, for example. There are good examples of cross-curricular links when Year 2 pupils went on to make clay models of the building after the visit.
97. The curriculum is planned on a two-year cycle to accommodate the mixed-age classes, and the co-ordinator keeps a watchful eye on teachers' planning to ensure the correct coverage of topics. However, she has had no opportunities to monitor teaching and learning in the subject to enable her to have a clear picture of standards across the school. Assessment procedures are under-developed.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

98. Only one lesson was seen in each of the following subjects: art and design, design and technology, music and PE. It is not therefore possible to make a firm judgement about provision, although limited evidence indicates that it is satisfactory in all four areas. In addition to observing lessons, inspectors spoke to co-ordinators about their work, spoke to pupils about what they had learnt in design and technology and looked at pupils' work from last year.
99. It is evident from teachers' planning, the prospectus and the pre-inspection meeting with parents that work planned in **art and design** is varied and interesting. This is a similar picture to that at the time of the last inspection. This lively approach was certainly evident in the display based on Martin Waddell's 'Owl Babies' in the infant entrance hall. This incorporated

some striking paintings of owls, with a good use of brush strokes. Good attention to the development of painting skills was a feature of a lesson in Year 4 where pupils achieved well because of the teacher's high expectations. They worked in pairs using paint and pastel to create an abstract design showing good brush control and an understanding of 'hot' and 'cold' colours.

100. In **design and technology**, discussion with pupils showed that they are gaining experience of a range of materials and techniques and developing the expected subject skills through designing and making a variety of products. Younger pupils explained how they had designed and created puppets, for example. Older pupils had designed musical instruments and made biscuits. However, it is clear that pupils do not always evaluate their own work or that of their classmates. This is a similar position to that found by the last inspection. Resources are sufficient and adequate for current use but the use of ICT to support learning either through planning, modelling or control is at an early stage.
101. In **music**, pupils were only observed in Years 5 and 6, although the whole school was heard singing in assemblies. It is quite clear that the good subject expertise of teachers is used well to help pupils to move forward. One teacher leads the weekly 'singing' assembly and takes another class for music, while her own class has an ICT session. The headteacher, an accomplished guitarist, also takes a music session. Older pupils sing tunefully, with awareness of breathing, diction and dynamics and most obviously enjoy singing. Lessons are enhanced by a choir and recorder groups, although there is no other instrumental teaching. Concerts and performance also contribute to pupils' overall musical experience. This positive picture has been maintained since the last inspection.
102. In **physical education**, the school works hard to overcome the limitations imposed by its sites. From viewing planning and discussions with teachers and pupils it is evident that all strands of the subject including outdoor and adventurous activities are regularly taught during the course of the two year cycle. This is a position similar to that found by the last inspection. The standards in swimming by Year 6 are good and pupils benefit from weekly sessions at the local swimming baths.
103. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are regularly coached to a nearby recreation ground for games sessions. Good use is made of outside providers to give specialist training in golf, cricket, football and rugby. Since the last inspection the opening of the new hall on the infant site has addressed concerns and provided an excellent and well-equipped facility for indoor PE. This will benefit all pupils. In the lesson seen in Year 5/ 6 pupils made good progress in developing the skills of throwing, catching and bowling. The clearly planned objectives provided good opportunities to practise and consolidate skills in games of rounders and kwik cricket. The school has identified the need to improve teachers' subject knowledge through further training. Enthusiastic subject leadership over recent years has provided good opportunities for competitive sport with local schools. A good range of after school clubs develops games' skills further. However, one half of the leadership partnership now has responsibility for two major areas of the curriculum constraining the time available for work in this subject.
104. In these subjects the **role of the co-ordinators** is underdeveloped. All are enthusiastic about their area of responsibility and some are very knowledgeable, but their overview of whole school strengths and areas for development is limited by a lack of systematic monitoring and evaluation.

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

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



Only one lesson was seen in this area of the school's work and so no judgements are made about overall provision.

### **Commentary**

105. The school sees pupils' personal development as an important part of its work. There is a good programme of activities including work on diet, health, sex, drugs and personal safety. This programme helps pupils develop a safe and healthy life style, gain confidence and interact with others. It is well supported by visits from outside agencies. The School Council and recent visits to the Council Chamber over the planning enquiry provide older pupils with opportunities to witness democracy at first hand.

## 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	4
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	4
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	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	4

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