

INSPECTION REPORT

PORTESHAM CE (VA) PRIMARY SCHOOL

Weymouth

LEA area: Dorset

Unique reference number: 113833

Headteacher: Miss Vicky Brown

Lead inspector: Paul Cosway

Dates of inspection: 7 - 9 June 2004

Inspection number: 266007

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	97
School address:	Winters Close Portesham Weymouth Dorset
Postcode:	DT3 4HP
Telephone number:	01305 871283
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Dr J Lones
Date of previous inspection:	June 2001

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Portesham Church of England Primary School is a small school, serving the villages of Portesham, Abbotsbury and the surrounding area, including many isolated farms and small hamlets. It also attracts pupils from out of its catchment area, including Weymouth itself. The pupils range in age from four to 11. It is a smaller than average primary school. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is broadly in line with the average nationally, as is the proportion with statements of special educational needs (those who receive additional help from outside specialists). The proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is well below the average nationally. There are no pupils whose first language is not English. The attainment of pupils on entry is average overall, but rising as the school becomes increasingly popular and draws from a relatively affluent local intake. A significant proportion of pupils in Years 5 and 6 did not start their education at this school.

Because the school is small, every class has two-year groups within it.

Her Majesty's Inspectors last inspected the school in June 2001. They found that the school had made significant improvement since the previous report and that special measures were no longer required.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2734	Paul Cosway	Lead inspector	English Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education Art Music English as an additional language
1311	Barry Wood	Lay inspector	
23393	Angela Smithers	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Foundation Stage Geography History Personal, social and health education Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school is providing a good standard of education for its pupils. They achieve well, as a result of good teaching and the good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning that the school encourages. The school is very much a learning community, committed to helping all, adults and children, to succeed to their best of their abilities. Almost all pupils enjoy learning and work hard. Overall, standards are above average at the end of Year 2. Standards are average at the end of Year 6 because of some lower attaining pupils who have joined from other schools. These pupils also achieve well during their time in the school. Assessment and feedback are not used consistently to guide pupils on how they can improve their work. The very good leadership of the headteacher, with the full support of the effective and very committed staff and governing body, is taking the school forward by identifying areas for improvement and taking appropriate action. The school gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils of all ages and abilities achieve well.
- The consistently good teaching helps pupils to make good progress.
- Relationships are very good, within a very caring school.
- The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Good links with parents and the community extend learning opportunities.
- Very good leadership has led to good improvements in the school.
- Very good provision for special educational needs pupils helps them achieve well.
- Assessment and feedback are not always giving pupils enough information.
- Standards in information and communication technology are below average because the pupils have had too little opportunity to use computers.

Improvement since the last inspection in 2001 has been good, with particularly good improvement in the quality of the accommodation and the teaching – which is now generally good in all classes.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Pupils achieve well. Standards are average at the end of Year 6 and above average at the end of Year 2 in the Foundation Stage, almost all children in the Reception class are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1 and their literacy and numeracy skills are above average. At the end of Year 2, pupils' skills are above average in English and science and average in mathematics. There is only a small number of pupils in Year 6. Some joined during Years 3 to 5 and arrived with low levels of attainment in the national tests at the end of Year 2. Standards, overall, are close to average in Year 6 in English and mathematics and above average in science. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who have been at the school for a relatively short time, make good progress.

In the national tests for seven-year-olds in 2003, the pupils were well below average in writing, below average in reading and average in mathematics. They were well below the average for similar schools in reading and writing, and below average in mathematics, but there was a high proportion

of pupils with special educational needs within the small cohort. The school's results in the national tests (SATs) for Year 6 pupils were above the national average in English, average in mathematics and very high, in the top five per cent nationally, in science. The results were well above those attained in schools with similar pupils. The school met its challenging targets.

Pupils' personal development is good, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' attitudes to the school and their work are good, overall. Almost all pupils behave well and form very good relationships. Attendance is in line with the national average. The pupils are punctual to school and to lessons.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching is good and pupils learn well, because teachers plan their lessons to interest their pupils, which motivates them to learn well. In a small number of lessons, the pace of learning is too slow for the higher attaining pupils. Accommodation, staffing and resourcing are good – except there is not a suitable outdoor learning area for reception children. The school offers a broad curriculum, appropriate to the needs of pupils. The good partnership with parents and the community contributes to the effectiveness of the education it provides. Assessment systems are good in English, mathematics and science, but are not yet used consistently well to help pupils to raise the standard of their work in other subjects. The teachers and other adults give pupils good personal support and guidance.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership and management are good. The leadership of the school by the headteacher is very good and has led to significant improvements in the school since the last inspection. The management is good. The school runs smoothly, parents are kept well informed of its work, and there is a feeling of unity – teachers, governors, parents and the local community working together. The governing body is effective and is strongly committed to the school. Their governance of the school is good, and ensures that all legal requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Almost all parents are pleased with the school and believe that it is helping their children to make good progress. They are pleased with the communication between school and home, the running of the school and the ways they are encouraged to help their children to learn. Inspectors agreed with their views. Small numbers are concerned about bullying. There have been incidents, but these have been dealt with well. The pupils enjoy their time in the school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Continue to develop assessment and feedback to ensure that pupils are consistently given good guidance on how to raise the standard of their work.
- Raise levels of achievement in information and communication technology.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is good for all pupils. Standards are above average, overall, at the end of Year 2. High numbers enter the school in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 – six of the nine pupils currently in Year 6 took their Year 2 tests at other schools. Nevertheless, the pupils who join the school late settle in quickly and make good progress. Standards are average overall at the end of Year 6, but all pupils are meeting – and in many cases exceeding – their targets.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils achieve well.
- Standards at the end of Year 2 are above average in English and in Years 2 and 6 are above average in science.
- Almost all pupils exceed their target grade at the end of Year 6, based on their attainment at the end of Year 2.

Commentary

1. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school varies from year to year. This is partly because the intake is small – only nine or ten pupils in some year groups – and partly because there is a high mobility factor. The school lost pupils when it was put into special measures by a previous OFSTED report. It has gradually won some of them back and has attracted others. Attainment on entry is close to the national average – slightly below the average for the local education authority.
2. The trend over time for results in the national tests for seven-year-olds has been just below the national average, but the fact that there are only small numbers of pupils in each year group makes statistical analysis unreliable. The inspection found that standards in English and mathematics have continued to strengthen since the last inspection (when they were described as at least satisfactory at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6). They have risen significantly in science. The trend over time for all three subjects in national test results for Year 6 has been above the national average.
3. Science was highlighted as a concern in the last inspection report and improving results was a key issue for the school. It has made very good improvement since then. A thorough analysis was made of test results to ascertain where strengths and weaknesses lay and external advice was sought. As a result improvements were made to the teaching of science that have resulted in pupils becoming highly motivated. Their knowledge and understanding of science is good and they are adept at practical, investigational work. Progress in information and communication technology (ICT) was hampered by the school being on a split site and a shortage of equipment. All the resources are now together in the new building and the resources are good. Teething problems with the new equipment have been largely resolved and teachers are trained to use them. There is still a backlog of underachievement, which results in standards being below the national average, but the subject is now being taught well, pupils are making good progress and standards are rising.

Attainment in the national tests at the end of Year 2

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.3 (15.7)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	12.1 (15.0)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.5 (16.6)	16.6 (16.5)

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

4. In 2003, the pupils were below the national average in reading, well below average in writing and average in mathematics. The results were below the average for similar schools in mathematics; they were well below average for reading and very low – in the bottom five per cent of all schools, for writing. This year group contained a particularly high proportion of pupils with special educational needs.
5. Boys' results have been consistently below those of girls for the last three years. This difference is only marginally greater than the difference nationally.

Attainment in the national tests at the end of Year 6

6. The small group of Year 6 pupils (10) taking the national tests in 2003 achieved well. Compared with results in similar schools (those where pupils attained the same results at the end of Year 2 in the national tests) pupils had made average progress in mathematics. In English, however, they had made better than average progress and in science their results were very high – in the top five per cent of all such schools. Overall, their results were well above average compared with those in similar schools. Although not all pupils spent all their time between Years 2 and 6 in this school, it has contributed well to the overall progress that they have made.
7. Compared with all schools, pupils' results were above the national average in English, average in mathematics and were in the top five per cent across the country in science. The results were well above average overall.
8. The relatively low performance in mathematics compared with the other two core subjects came about because fewer pupils gained the higher grade – level 5 – in mathematics than in English or science. Every pupil gained level 4, a much higher proportion than in schools across the country, but no-one attained level 5. This year there has been more emphasis on extending the higher attaining pupils and their achievement has improved.

Current levels of attainment

Children in the Reception class

9. Children in the Reception class achieve well in literacy and numeracy. Attainment on entry to the school is close to the national average, but tests indicate that it is slightly below the county average. They make sound or good progress in all areas of their learning, because of the good provision for developing literacy and numeracy skills and because they work alongside Year 1 pupils – which helps to improve their speaking and listening skills. They achieve good standards in literacy. Their achievement in personal, social and emotional development is good. When they enter Year 1, standards are in line with those expected of children at the end of the Reception year. From the very beginning, children are taught to be sociable and responsible, within a settled environment. There is a strong focus on numeracy. Children achieve well because of this, so that almost all reach the standards that children are expected to reach by the time they enter Year 1 and many achieve above expectations.

- Achievement is good in knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. It is sound in physical development. Overall, the planning for teaching and learning is good, and the good induction of children into the Reception class prepares them well for learning. They reach the standards expected of children of their age by the time they enter Year 1.

The attainment of pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6

- The attainment of pupils at the end of Year 2 in English is above average and the pupils are achieving well. In Year 6, attainment is average. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Achievement is good in Year 6. The pupils are making good progress from their levels of attainment at the end of Year 2. Lower attaining pupils achieve well in English and are making good progress. By the end of Year 6, the higher attaining pupils reach well above average standards in writing, but some weaknesses remain in the writing of some children – especially in spelling and punctuation. Standards in reading are above average. The good teaching and the increasing provision across all subjects to teach and reinforce literacy skills ensure that they achieve well.
- In mathematics, the attainment of pupils in Year 2 is average. In Year 6 it is in line with that expected nationally, although, unlike last year, some pupils are above average. Almost all pupils have at least average levels of numeracy. Pupils at all levels of attainment are making good progress and are achieving well.
- In science, pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 have above average skills, knowledge and understanding. Pupils' achievement is good, because good teaching ensures that most pupils are interested in science and have good skills in practical work and investigation. The higher attaining pupils have a very good grasp of scientific concepts. At the end of Year 2, pupils have a sound grasp of scientific knowledge, including an understanding of living processes – such as the ways that plants grow and reproduce. Attainment is above the national average at the end of Year 6.
- Standards of attainment at the end of Year 6 in history and geography are average. In information and communication technology (ICT), standards are below average, but rising, and pupils are now achieving well after underachieving in recent years.
- The work seen in art at the end of Year 6 was of a very good quality. In music, pupils sing tunefully and in time. However, these subjects were not inspected in depth and definitive judgements were not possible. In the time available for the inspection, it was not possible to gather enough evidence to give secure judgements on standards in the other subjects in the curriculum.
- Pupils with special educational needs are making good progress as a result of the very good provision. They achieve well and reach the targets set for them. There are no pupils at an early stage of acquiring English.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Pupils' personal development is good and well supported by strong spiritual, moral, and social and cultural education. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory and punctuality is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in the reception class make a happy start in the school and have good attitudes and behaviour.
- Year 1 to 6 pupils' good attitudes and behaviour in the classroom help them achieve well throughout their time in the school.
- Older pupils often have very good attitudes and behaviour and work hard to achieve success.

- Pupils build very good relationships with each other, and almost all work and play well together - behaviour outside the classroom is very good.
- The school's good spiritual, moral, social and cultural education builds pupils' maturity and self-confidence.

Commentary

17. Since the last inspection, the school has maintained attendance levels at just above the national average in most years. Attendance in the present year is at a satisfactory level, but holidays taken during the school term are significantly high. One in ten pupils has poor attendance, and the majority of these pupils are associated with the reception and Year 1 class.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.4	School data	0.0
National data	5.2	National data	0.2

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

18. Children in the reception class respond well to the good teaching and quickly show confidence and build very good relationships. They understand the classroom routines and show obvious enjoyment in class. They willingly discuss their ideas and experiences at the morning talks. The children develop good attitudes and behaviour, so that their progress towards achieving their early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development is good.
19. In the rest of the school, pupils show generally good attitudes and behaviour. Most pupils are keen to do their best and work hard. There are occasional incidents of poorer behaviour, if teaching strategies lack pace or when a small minority of pupils, mostly boys, are over excited by their lessons. This immaturity occurs with pupils new to the school or when pupils do not fully understand the behaviour boundaries and the required classroom routines. Pupils aged ten to eleven often show very good attitudes and behaviour and gain self-discipline and maturity. They realise that hard work will bring them success, and they look forward to the challenge of their new secondary school. Those with special educational needs or challenging behaviour disorders are well integrated into all classrooms and have little effect on the orderly learning of other pupils. In the oldest class, they are indistinguishable in attitudes and behaviour from their colleagues. The school has not needed to exclude any pupils during the last three years.
20. Around the school, pupils have very good behaviour and are polite to adults. The school has positively intervened in bullying incidents associated with a small minority of boys at the start of the year, and pupils now feel relaxed and play safely together, without fear of bullying or harassment. They have learned to value each other's differences and contributions, either in the classroom or in clubs and activities. They show obvious respect for their environment, of which they are proud. Pupils are given meaningful responsibilities. In the school's assemblies, they show considerable responsiveness and enthusiasm when participating, for example, in a religious quiz with the local vicar.
21. Pupils' maturity is developed well. The good spiritual, moral, social and cultural education make a significant contribution to the positive and developing ethos of the school in its new environment. Their personal development is underpinned by very good personal, health and social education in the classroom, where older pupils learn the importance of community and citizenship. The school is strong in making pupils aware of their feelings. Collective worship meets statutory requirements and pupils learn about and have respect for the celebrations and beliefs of other faiths. They recall the Remembrance Day service and the celebration of Ascension Day as especially moving occasions.

22. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong - achieved more through the positive interactions of pupils and adults than by a list of rules. The school's ethos is building pupils' confidence and self-esteem and supporting very good relationships between all parts of the school family. Pupils enjoy working together and have a fundamental trust in their teachers and staff when they talk together in either groups or in one-to-one sessions (Bubble Time). They develop pride in their own cultural roots and traditions through history and geography studies and are given a good awareness of art, sport, music and theatre. Although the school exists in a largely monocultural environment, it uses many opportunities to introduce pupils to learning about the multicultural world through studies of famous people and a whole-school project on India. The school welcomes the support of outside organisations, so ensuring that pupils gain an appreciation of the mixed cultures of modern Britain.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good. Effective teaching, based on a well-planned curriculum, ensures that pupils learn well.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is good overall, with some very good features. As a result, pupils' learning is equally good. The assessment systems are well designed and detailed in English and mathematics. Assessment is satisfactory overall, because it is still developing in the foundation subjects and so is not always used to give pupils as much guidance as they need.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are well planned, with a good variety of activities to interest the pupils.
- Relationships are very good, so that in almost all lessons pupils are willing to learn.
- Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and praise them when they do well. Pupils respond well to this – working hard, concentrating and trying to succeed.
- Teachers do not always use assessment information effectively to help pupils to understand how they can improve their work.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 29 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	2	20	7	0	0	0

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

Commentary

23. Pupils make good progress because of the generally good teaching through the school. It has been a priority, since the last inspection, to raise the quality of teaching and to make it consistently good in all four classes. Considerable work has been done by the present and the previous headteacher, with the support of the local education authority, in developing teachers' expertise and monitoring and sharing successful teaching strategies. The result is that there is now a common approach to classroom management and lesson planning that is helping to ensure that all pupils receive a good education.
24. Teachers praise good behaviour and good attitudes in class. This encourages their pupils to respond positively and to learn and concentrate. In addition, the well-planned lessons ensure that pupils are interested in their studies. In a Year 5 and 6 history lesson, for example, the introductory sounds and images of Nelson Mandela's South Africa interested the pupils and made them eager to learn more. Resources were selected very well to present his whole life story, so that pupils were challenged to take account of changing attitudes and values over time. Very skilful questioning made them think for themselves and study the evidence that was presented to them in great depth.

25. The best lessons are run a brisk pace, so that pupils learn quickly and the teachers' drive and enthusiasm enthuse the pupils. In a good science lesson with Year 5 and Year 6 pupils, the teacher set a fast pace, making it clear to the class that they had to complete their task within a very strict time-scale, whilst ensuring, through her very good planning and organisation, that they had everything that they needed to identify key differences between different types of plants and animals. They had to work responsibly and independently – a challenge to which they responded very well - achieving much within a short time.
26. In the satisfactory lessons, the level of involvement is slightly lower because the enthusiasm and expertise that the teachers bring to the lessons are not always as high as they were in the lessons described above. The pace of learning is slower, but still the teachers focus well on their learning objectives. These are shared well with the class so that the pupils know what they are expected to achieve. Teachers' expectations are high, both of behaviour and of the progress that their pupils are expected to make, and pupils respond well.
27. In literacy and numeracy lessons, the work is planned so that different groups of pupils within each class are given tasks to do that are appropriate for their learning needs. In other subjects, the tasks set are sometimes very similar for all within mixed-age classes and do not always offer enough challenge for the higher attaining pupils or start at the right level for those with lower capabilities.
28. The homework that is set is effective in helping pupils to improve their knowledge and skills. This reinforces their learning. Marking is done conscientiously and the systems (using stars to represent achievements and wishes for skills still to be mastered) are well thought out. However, they are used inconsistently (being fairly recent introductions) and it is not always clear how or when the pupils are intended to improve their work. Informal feedback is often good, as is the use of praise to build pupils' confidence.
29. Across the school, the teaching of mathematics is good, with thorough coverage of all aspects of the subject. The pupils learn well because they are taught in depth. Secure subject knowledge leads to good teaching in English. Pupils learn well because teachers are seeking to meet their individual needs. In science, teaching is also good. Teachers provide practical lessons in which pupils can find out things for themselves and test hypotheses. Most learn well during these practical activities because they are so involved.
30. In ICT, and in personal, social and health education, teaching is good. It was not possible to observe enough teaching in the other subjects to give judgements on the overall quality.
31. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. Classroom assistants support pupils well and promote the learning of literacy and numeracy skills. They have been specially trained and make a significant contribution to the quality of learning in classrooms. Generally, class teachers take into account the attainment and needs of pupils with special educational needs and support them in their lessons. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language.

The curriculum

The curriculum provision is good. Opportunities for enriching the curriculum are very good and have a positive effect on pupils' learning. Accommodation and resources are good, overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The exciting, innovative curriculum encourages pupils to learn.
- Pupils enjoy and benefit from the very good range of additional curricular opportunities provided.
- The good personal, social, and health education programme is an important factor in the strong personal development of pupils.
- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs is very good.
- Children in the Reception class do not have access to a designated secure outdoor area.

Commentary

32. The curricular opportunities offered to all pupils are good. The Foundation Stage curriculum for Reception children is effective and children are prepared well for the next stage of learning. The school fulfils the statutory requirement to teach all subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education and sex education. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy are implemented effectively. Careful planning and lively teaching provide an interesting mix of basic language skills, mathematical skills, subject knowledge and creative experiences. These are skilfully blended to ensure that the main points of each subject are taught in an interesting way and that pupils enjoy their work in school. The school is keen to be innovative in its approach to teaching and learning and a number of interesting strategies are being put in place. They are designed to give more responsibility to both pupils and teachers and bring the different strands of the curriculum together. They will take time to take effect and the school will need to monitor and evaluate them carefully to ensure they are being consistently applied and are improving pupils' achievements.
33. Pupils enjoy a very wide range of interesting and exciting opportunities that enrich the curriculum. For example, they join with a group of schools and participate in opera - enjoying a production of *Carmen* last year and eagerly anticipating *Don Giovanni* this year. Story tellers and artists are welcomed at every opportunity. Residential visits are a highlight for the older pupils, when they have the opportunity to go to camp for a weekend. The school uses its good links with the community well. There are useful visits from the local school nurse, policeman and shop owner. The sporting needs of pupils are supported well and, as each year group is small, all pupils have the opportunity to play in school teams. Music provision is enhanced through visits from a music teacher. There is a varied range of clubs that pupils can attend, including the opportunity to learn the French language and to participate in gardening and arts and crafts.
34. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools award. This has greatly enhanced the pupils' experiences and learning through the many and varied activities that it has brought. There is a very good programme in place to promote pupils' personal, social and health education.
35. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. There are very good assessment procedures in place which measure both the pupils' needs and achievement. All pupils have good individual educational plans and these are implemented effectively. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and effective and supports both pupils and teachers very well. Support staff are caring and informed. They help pupils effectively within class sessions and show an understanding of their needs and a good level of care for their welfare at all times during the day.
36. The new accommodation is good and classrooms are bright and well cared for. Colourful and varied displays value pupils' work. There is a large school field and a good range of interesting activities are provided for the pupils outdoors at break times. The hard surface area is small. Reception pupils use the secure outdoor playground but do not have a designated area. Therefore, children do not have the chance to work indoors and outdoors through all curriculum areas throughout the day, as is recommended within the national guidance.

Care, guidance and support

The school's care, welfare and health and safety procedures are very good. The school provides pupils with good support and advice. Pupils' involvement in the work and development of the school is effective.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school works well with outside professional agencies in implementing its well defined support, guidance and welfare policies and procedures.
- The staff and governors are very vigilant in protecting pupils from dangers inside and outside the school.
- The staff gives a very high priority to the pastoral care of pupils, in order that they will be happy and work hard.
- Pupils quickly become part of the school family.
- The headteacher and staff have a very good knowledge of their pupils, but there are insufficient records of pupils' personal development.
- Pupils' targets are not always precise enough in the advice and guidance given to pupils to help them to make progress.

Commentary

37. The headteacher sets clear direction for the care of pupils. She expects her staff and parents to consistently focus on the values of "putting children first" as expressed in the school's vision. Policies and procedures are well defined and rigorously implemented by committed and caring staff, and they are well supported by outside professional agencies. The school nursing service has a positive relationship with the school and assists with sex education, with the total support of parents. The school works well with the education welfare officer, in order to gradually improve rates of attendance. The personal, social and health education of pupils is well supported by the annual visit of the county council's life education van and the school's work with the district council on recycling.
38. Child protection procedures conform to the county's statutory guidelines. Staff training is up-to-date and the school is alert to any potential risks to children. The school displays the Childline telephone number, which supports its values of helping pupils to protect themselves. Health and safety procedures are very good. Teachers ensure that pupils are made aware of any hazards prior to activities, and are vigilant when releasing children to parents and carers at the end of the school day. There are regular audits of the school premises, and risk assessments are in place. The school is a safe place, as indicated by the low incidence of minor accidents. Accident procedures and the dispensing of medicines are implemented thoroughly.
39. The headteacher and staff give the highest priority to the pastoral care of all pupils. Pupils feel that they can trust their teachers totally. The school recognises that some pupils find school challenging and they can choose either one-to-one counselling sessions or group talks to work out their concerns with an adult of their choice. Pupils also talk easily to adults about their enjoyment and happiness in coming to the school and the fun of learning in a safe environment where they have firm friends. The school's very good pastoral care is underpinned by sensible behaviour procedures, which are not rigid in their application. They rely on a mutual respect between teacher and pupil, and self-discipline is an expectation. In most cases these procedures have a positive impact and pupils' progress is evident, but a few younger pupils are not always able to cope with the more flexible approach. The school's approach to pastoral care and behaviour has been highly successful in calming the aggression of a small minority of boys earlier in the year.

40. The induction of pupils new to the school is good, and pupils and parents feel welcome and understand the routines. Children make a smooth transition from their pre-school placements and are well supported through home visits and the transfer of information. Those children who join the school later in the year are also inducted well and their parents report that the headteacher deals with both them and their offspring in a very caring way. Parents also appreciate the school's efforts in giving their child a successful fresh start when they move from another school.
41. Teachers and staff have a very good knowledge of their pupils through their close daily contact in this small village school. The arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory overall. They are most effective in the core subjects, with particularly detailed assessment and tracking in English and mathematics. Elsewhere, the sharing of academic targets with pupils is not well developed. The targets are often too vague and general. Pupils do not have a sufficient awareness of their levels of performance so that they do not have a real understanding of what they need to do to improve. The tracking of pupils' personal development is mostly informal, lacks records, and is reliant on the teachers' accumulated experiences with individual pupils. Teachers identify pupils with special educational needs and they develop good individual educational plans with pupils and parents. Pupils with problems are quickly identified and there is good feedback and discussion of issues between the teachers and the headteacher at internal staff meetings, where strategies are structured to individual pupils.
42. The school is making good progress in consulting with pupils on wider school issues that affect them. Older pupils have welcomed their participation on a school council and they feel that their voice is meaningful. A selection of pupils from each year group has undertaken an on-line questionnaire to assess their views on how it feels to be a child at the school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership between the school and home is good. The school's links with the community and other schools are good. Parents have very good levels of satisfaction with the school and the education it provides.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very happy with most aspects of the school and are increasingly approving of the headteacher's and staff's vision for their children's education.
- Most parents help and support the school well and make an effective contribution to their children's learning and involvement in school life.
- The headteacher and staff work very hard to be approachable to all parents and are receptive to their views.
- All pupils benefit greatly from the school's good relationships with the local community.
- The school has good relationships with the pre-school, local primary schools and the secondary schools, which help pupils to settle into new surroundings.

Commentary

43. The headteacher gives a high priority to the school's relationships with parents. She is successfully developing strategies to forge strong links with all parents, and the partnership with parents continues to improve since the last inspection. The results of the OFSTED questionnaire show significant increases in confidence in all aspects of the school, especially homework, information on children's progress and the standards of work. Increasing numbers of parents in outlying villages make a considerable commitment to bring their child to this out-of-catchment school, which they perceive as welcoming and improving. Many parents were complementary about the school during the inspection and the inspection team confirms parents' positive perceptions of the school.

44. The dissatisfaction levels of parents are low and there are no areas of significant dissatisfaction. Pupils' behaviour is the highest ranking dissatisfaction area, but this was judged by the inspection team as good overall. During the year the school has had to deal with some incidents of bullying from a small number of boys, who have occasionally harassed other pupils. The headteacher and staff have been successful in combating the problem through very good pastoral care and good behaviour procedures.
45. Overall, the statutory information for parents is satisfactory but does not represent the essential character of the school. Annual reports to parents are detailed statements of what children can do in all National Curriculum subjects, but do not contain a comment on the pupils' performance against targets in the present year or targets for the future year. Reports do not contain pupils' own written reviews of their year at school or ask for parental feedback. However, parents feel comfortable with the opportunities they have for engaging with school and recognise the feedback and descriptions of their children and their achievements. They enjoy an informative newsletter, and letters to home are timely and respectful of the many other demands on parents' time.
46. Although there is no parents' policy, most parents have signed the home-school agreement and fulfil their pledge through their children's attendance and assisting them with homework. The school is proactive with parents in discussing how they might help their children and explaining new education strategies and initiatives - through *Learning to Learn* evenings that have involved many parents. The school wants parents to help in the school and experience first-hand the changing positive ethos and most parents attend the many school functions and celebration assemblies. The Parent Teacher Association has been reformed and is enthusiastically involving parents and pupils in social events and fund raising.
47. The headteacher wants parents to be confident in approaching the school and to feel that their views are valued. This is well realised in practice. They are asked for their contributions to the school's strategic development through questionnaires and feedback after visits, so that they feel that their views matter. When parents have concerns and anxieties the headteacher leads from the front in working out an amicable solution, but they realise that she is determined to put children first at all times.
48. Although the new school lies on the edge of the village, it is still seen as a very positive influence on village life. It wants to be a proactive member of the community and the pupils' reputation with villagers is deservedly high. Pupils benefit greatly from the close ties, which enrich their curriculum and their awareness of local culture. The school uses the local churches well for the major Christian festivals, and the vicar regularly visits for assemblies and to be part of the school. The churches, the village's buildings, and the adjacent countryside are important resources for the practical teaching of subjects of the National Curriculum. People from the local community are welcomed into the school and the school's pupils benefit greatly from their close ties with the British Legion and the Women's Institute as part of its spiritual and cultural agenda.
49. The school has good links to local primary schools. It endeavours to guide parents towards a secondary school that is appropriate for their child's abilities. Effective relationships with two secondary schools enable pupils to undertake science lessons in properly equipped laboratories and make a good transition without anxiety. Although the local pre-school is not in the village, there is an effective working relationship to the mutual benefit of the schools, pupils and parents.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall leadership and management are good. The leadership of the school is very good and parents, staff and governors praise it. The management and governance of the school are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the school by the headteacher is very good.
- Communication is very good within the school and with the local community, fostering a real sense of community.
- The work of the school is managed well.
- The governors fulfill their roles well.
- The financial controls are good.

Commentary

50. The headteacher, who at the time of the inspection had held the substantive post for just over two terms, leads the school very well and, as a result of her skills and those of the previous headteacher, there has been further improvement since the last report. She has very high expectations of the staff, the pupils and herself and the strong relationships she has helped to develop within the school ensure that all seek to give their best. Her focus on high achievement and her use of assessment information to track progress and raise standards are increasingly effective. She has led the *Assessment for Learning* initiative very well and it is becoming embedded in every teacher's practice. Because of the loyalty that staff have to her and their willingness to follow her lead, the school's capacity for further improvement is good.

Example of outstanding practice

The high quality of the headteacher's work shows itself in the way that whole-school leadership roles have been shared and developed to the point where all members of staff have a significant leadership responsibility. The teaching assistants lead whole-school initiatives, such as the Healthy Schools' Programme, the School Council, the development of the library and Bubble Time (one-to-one counselling). Pupils take on leadership roles and achieve Leadership Accreditation. Teachers take the lead in generic issues in the development of the curriculum. All this helps to develop their personal skills (and professional skills in the case of adults) as well as generating a climate in which whole school improvement is supported and encouraged.

51. The headteacher's management of the school is very effective indeed. She has managed her staff very well, she has managed the introduction of performance management well, and has helped to lead the school to an 'Investors in People' award. Monitoring of the school is informal, but effective. She knows the staff and children so well that she is very aware, in this small school, of the quality of the work that they are doing. In her involvement in the classrooms, and her general presence around the school, she is an excellent role model for all the adults who work within it. Across the school, management is good from those with managerial responsibilities. The management of special educational needs by the teacher from the LEA Support Service is very good. The monitoring of work and teaching in the foundation subjects is satisfactory.
52. There are only three subject leaders – for physical education, information and communication technology and special educational needs. The other subjects are a shared responsibility. The subject leaders in these three areas are effective and committed, and are showing effective leadership – developing the subject and staff expertise well. The subjects without a designated leader are nevertheless led and managed satisfactorily. The planning of the curriculum is thorough and there are joint reviews to monitor the quality of pupils' work. The school is considering appointing subject leaders for literacy and numeracy as soon as there is enough experience amongst the staff and this would be a positive move, ensuring that there is someone for each of these two crucially important subjects who has up-to-date knowledge and expertise.

53. All governors visit regularly to monitor and support the school. Many of them have considerable professional expertise outside of education that they bring to their role for the benefit of the school. They are involved in setting and monitoring the budget and in school development planning. They fulfil their role well and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school improvement plans are detailed and have been implemented effectively. The priorities for improvement are appropriate and there is clear evidence that progress is being made. All statutory requirements are met, although the policy for gifted and talented pupils needs to be reviewed and an action plan implemented.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	298,464	Balance from previous year	-17,834
Total expenditure	282,056	Balance carried forward to the next	0
Expenditure per pupil	2,907		

54. The management of the school's finances is good. All the necessary controls are in place, and the school has received a favourable audit report. The deficit from the previous year arose from factors outside of the school's control and careful budgeting means that it will be cleared by the end of the current year. Governors' expertise and the efficient work of the administrative officer ensure that the school makes very good use of its resources. Special educational needs funding is spent appropriately. The principles of best value are applied well. Income and expenditure per pupil are slightly above the national average, but reflect the school's context. Pupils achieve well in terms of academic development and very well in their personal development, and the school is providing good value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The overall quality of provision for children in the reception class is **good**.

- There are particular strengths in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development.
- The curriculum takes account of the national recommendations, but is made relevant to the needs of the children and is innovative.
- There is no designated secure outdoor provision and this limits pupils' opportunities for physical development and other areas of the curriculum.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships between adults and children are very good.
- There are opportunities for children to organise their own learning and take responsibility for it.
- Occasionally, adults do not insist that children clear up after themselves.
- Some activities do not give children a challenging range of resources from which to make their choices.

Commentary

55. Children are in line to reach the expected goals at the end of the Reception year and they achieve well, as a result of good teaching. Adults create a secure and interesting environment for children and they settle well, enjoy school and are keen to learn. Relationships are very good. Adults show care and respect for all children and are good role models. Children copy this and are kind to each other. They know the school routines well. Behaviour is good.
56. There are opportunities for children to take responsibility for their own learning by planning the activities they will do during a session before they undertake them. At the end of the session, they review what they have done. This makes children independent and helps them to realise that they have some responsibility and control over their learning and this is good. Children are rightly expected to clear up after they have completed a task but this is not always insisted upon. In some activities within these sessions there are not enough resources provided to give the higher attaining children a sufficiently wide and challenging choice.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The majority of children will exceed the expected levels and achievement is good.
- Teaching and learning are good.

Commentary

57. Good teaching allows children to make good progress in this area of learning and the majority of children will exceed the level expected for their age. They speak well and have the confidence to do so to their class. They listen well so they can respond. They are coherent

when they answer questions. A love of books is encouraged through a good range of stories. Children are taught early phonics and are beginning to read simple texts. Children write their name and the majority make good attempts at writing for meaning, using their knowledge of letter sounds. Higher attaining children write a significant number of simple words correctly. The majority have good control and form letters legibly.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The majority of children will exceed the expected level and achievement is good.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge and high expectations of pupils result in good learning.

Commentary

58. Children have good levels of mathematical knowledge and understanding as a result of the good teaching and the majority will exceed the expected level for their age. They have a good knowledge of number to 20 and some beyond. They can count on and back and so add and subtract. They know the names of simple shapes. They enjoy using the shop to purchase goods with coins. They chose to complete subtraction sums when given a choice of activities. There is systematic and structured teaching which always provides visual representation and this allows the children to grasp the concepts well.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good planning indicates that children experience a rich variety of different activities and this supports learning well.
- There are good assessment procedures in place, but these are not always used to identify challenging tasks for children to undertake.

Commentary

59. Children are in line to reach the levels expected for their age and they achieve well. Teaching is good. During the year, an exciting range of experiences is provided, so children begin to understand more about the world around them. People who work in the community talk to the children and give them insights into a wider world. Children plant seeds and learn to care for them as well as understand that certain conditions are needed for growth. They enjoy using the computer and the higher attainers, most of whom have computers at home, are very competent.

60. There are good assessment procedures in all the areas of learning and staff know the children's strengths well. However, this information is not always used effectively, so that when they have a choice, the tasks are not always challenging enough to extend their knowledge and understanding. There is no secure designated area outdoors and so children are unable to access the world around them as freely as they should.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are provided with a good range of activities to help them develop their physical skills.
- There are limited opportunities for the outdoor area to be used to support work in other areas of the curriculum.

Commentary

61. Teaching and learning are good overall, and so achievement is sound, despite the lack of a secure outdoor activity area. Most children are likely to attain the standards expected by the end of the Reception year. There are opportunities for children to engage in physical activities both inside and outside and staff make good use of the facilities available. Children ride wheeled toys, and have great fun running in, out and under the parachute. They are excited by the bubbles they can create while using large arm movements to twirl the 'wand'. They use tools and materials carefully to make models. They hold pencils and scissors correctly.
62. Use is made of the hard and grassed areas at specific times. However, there is no secure designated outdoor provision for children in this phase of learning as recommended in national guidance. This limits the progress that children make within their physical development and all other areas of learning.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A colourful and stimulating environment encourages creative and aesthetic development.
- There are very good opportunities for children to work with a variety of materials.

Commentary

63. Most children are in line to attain the expected levels at the end of the Reception year and they achieve well. Teaching is good. Planning indicates that children experience a rich and varied curriculum. Recently the whole school embarked on a project 'mother nature as designer' and the youngest children benefited from working with older pupils and had the opportunity to develop some very exciting and creative designs. They are beginning to recognise the work of famous artists and try to copy their style. For example, they created copies of the work of Picasso. They make finger, sock and glove puppets which can be used in their imaginative drama. Children's efforts are valued in the displays around the school.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 2 are above average.
- Pupils of all ages achieve well in response to good teaching.
- Pupils' attitudes are good and contribute to good learning.
- There are good techniques for teaching reading.
- Teaching approaches are not always sufficiently directed to the needs of higher attaining pupils.

Commentary

64. Standards attained by Year 2 pupils in the 2003 national tests were below average, reflecting a continuing trend, and were well below standards in similar schools nationally. However, the numbers of pupils in each year group are too small for these figures to be statistically significant. There was a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in this year group and this showed itself in their results in the writing test, in which their scores were well below the average nationally. In this small school, small variations in the make-up of the year group make large variations in the national test results. In 2002, for example, a higher attaining cohort reached above average levels in the writing test.
65. The Year 6 entry in 2003 was also too small for the results to be significant in national terms, although the ten pupils involved achieved well and their overall scores were above the national average. Boys and girls attained equally well and 90 per cent gained level 4 (the expected level for their age) or above.
66. The inspection showed that standards in English are above average in the current Year 2, for both boys and girls, in all the key areas of reading, writing, speaking and listening. A particular strength is the confidence in speaking which many pupils show when responding to teachers or volunteering information in class. Pupils also read with confidence and most develop an accurate writing style, with a good range of vocabulary. Pupils in Year 2 join the school with average standards and achieve well.
67. Standards in the current Year 6 (where there are only nine pupils in the current year) are average in relation to national expectations. Many of these pupils joined the school late. They and others also achieve well in relation to their previous attainment. They have well developed speaking and listening skills. The quality of their reading and writing is more variable. The higher attaining pupils read with confidence and write clearly and expressively, reaching above average standards. When writing, they make occasional grammatical and spelling mistakes, but the sense is still clear and their work is often a pleasure to read. Average attaining pupils write interesting and often imaginative pieces. Their spelling is their main weakness. Lower attaining pupils find it difficult to express themselves clearly in writing. Most have interesting things to say and lively ways of expressing their ideas, but they fail to form sentences correctly, write using colloquial expressions and spell many common words inaccurately. These problems with technical accuracy lower the standard of their writing significantly and are a major barrier to achievement.
68. There are no significant differences in standards or achievement between boys and girls. The high attaining pupils in all year groups achieve well, except occasionally when the pace of their learning is slowed by the teachers' need to ensure that the lower attaining pupils in the classes are not left behind. The pupils with special educational needs achieve well, because of the additional support that they are given. Average attainers are making good progress and achieve well. Attainment overall is affected by the high rate of mobility, with a high percentage of pupils joining and leaving the school at different times.
69. Teaching in English is good, leading to good learning. The teachers manage mixed-age classes skilfully and ensure that pupils, who are well motivated and keen to learn, remain very focused on their work. The quality of marking is variable, and in some instances is not very helpful in showing pupils how they can improve their work. However, assessment is used effectively in lessons: teachers refer to pupils' targets and give good feedback on how well they are doing. When teaching to the whole class, teachers use questioning well to consolidate learning and language development, as seen for example when Year 3 and 4 pupils were investigating the structure of haikus. Teachers ensure in their planning that there is very good coverage of the requirements of the National Curriculum for English in terms of the coverage of content. Their pupils have a rich diet, enjoying a wide variety of stories and poems, as well as having opportunities to write in a range of different styles – such as accounts, letters, poems and short drama scripts. However, there is not always sufficient

focus on what pupils most need to learn in order to improve their work. For example, when pupils who have not yet mastered the use of capital letters and the full stop are being taught apostrophes and inverted commas, it can confuse, rather than help them.

70. Leadership and management are satisfactory, although there is not a subject leader. The teaching of literacy is monitored by the headteacher and there is very good coverage of the curriculum content for literacy. The professional development of staff is good, but the fact that leadership is shared by all means that there is no specialist on the staff to provide guidance and expertise.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

71. Most pupils in the school have above average language and literacy skills. These help to promote good learning in all subject areas. Almost all pupils listen well and are confident in discussion, for example when considering the use of evidence in history. They respond well to questioning in class - eager to volunteer answers – and all teachers use questioning techniques well to develop speaking and listening skills. Pupils also use their literacy skills to become good researchers. The ability of many pupils to read and write fluently is a major contributory factor to their good achievement in many subjects. However, teachers need to ensure that pupils learn to spell correctly the technical language of mathematics and science.

MATHEMATICS

The school's provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of mathematics is good across the school and pupils achieve well.
- The good ethos for learning ensures that pupils have positive attitudes to mathematics.
- Good assessment procedures are in place and pupils' progress is recorded but a new initiative in assessment has not yet impacted on the standards attained.

Commentary

72. Standards in mathematics in Year 2 are average, as they have been in recent years. The small group of pupils in Year 6 is reaching average standards overall. In 2002 results were above average, but the numbers are too small for them to be meaningful. Pupils of all abilities make good progress and achieve well. Higher attaining pupils are extended by tasks that differ in the amount of challenge they present. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress. There is no significant difference in the achievement between boys and girls.
73. By the end of Year 2, all pupils are working at least at average levels of the National Curriculum for mathematics, but slightly fewer than nationally are at the higher level. They can add and subtract one- and two-digit numbers with a reasonable degree of accuracy. They are beginning to understand multiplication and division. A small number of pupils attain the higher level, Level 3. At the end of Year 6, most pupils are at least at Level 4, the nationally expected level for their age with a small number attaining the higher level, Level 5. A significant number of Year 6 pupils have joined the school since Year 2 and several entered the school with special educational needs. The achievement of all pupils is good.
74. Teaching is good. Pupils are enthused and motivated by the quality of the teaching. They respond well to the well-planned lessons and show positive attitudes to the subject. Teachers are aware of the different ways in which pupils learn, and they use a variety of teaching methods and strategies to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met. They have good subject knowledge and are able to present work in a variety of ways. They explain concepts clearly and structure learning so pupils grasp each step before moving to a more difficult idea.

This maximises opportunities for effective learning. Good relationships and clear routines and procedures give pupils confidence and independence. Homework is used effectively to reinforce the work done in class.

75. There are good assessment procedures in place. Pupils' achievements are recorded regularly so that teachers can check on pupils' progress. Recently, the school has initiated a new assessment process which is designed to involve both teachers and pupils. This has not been in place long; it is not consistently used and so it has not yet impacted on standards. Work is marked regularly for correctness of mathematical response. There is less emphasis on presentation and the correct spelling of mathematical vocabulary. This has an effect on standards as, sometimes in the poorly presented work, pupils make careless errors. The leadership is devolved and so all participate in initiatives and support each other. This is successful in these two areas as the staff numbers are small and they work well together. It does not, however, provide a framework for ensuring consistency and specific expertise.

Mathematics across the curriculum

76. Pupils have good opportunities to use their mathematical knowledge as part of their work in other areas of the curriculum. They use graphs and tables to record data. In science they estimate and measure and in history they are familiar with time lines. As a result, they develop an appreciation of the practical uses of these skills.

SCIENCE

The provision for science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average throughout the school and pupils achieve well.
- Standards have improved due to the good teaching.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and enjoy their investigations.

Commentary

77. National test results at the end of Year 6 in 2003 were well above the national average. By the end of Year 6, attainment is currently above national expectations. Pupils have a good understanding of all aspects of the science curriculum and enjoy their investigations. All, including the more capable pupils and those with special educational needs, make good progress and achieve well. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection.
78. Current standards in Year 2 are above average and this is better than in previous years. By the end of the Year 2, pupils have a good understanding of living things, know the names and functions of the different parts of plants and are beginning to understand circuits in electricity. They are learning about the properties of a range of materials and have begun successfully to plan and carry out simple scientific investigations. All pupils achieve well.
79. Older pupils investigate habitats well and devise useful keys to identify animals. They know the properties of solids, liquids and gases. They investigate the properties of different materials and have a good understanding of what materials are most suited for a range of purposes and why. They understand that some changes are reversible in materials, such as when water freezes, and that some are not. Most can write their investigations clearly and record their results in graphs that they can interpret and explain. They organise and carry out investigations, with a good understanding of the factors that will make for a fair test.
80. The teaching is good. It is well planned and well resourced. During the inspection, no teaching was observed in classes 1 and 2, but evidence was drawn from looking at work books and discussion with pupils. Teachers make lessons enjoyable and, as a result, the pupils respond well. The pupils enjoy science and are eager to be challenged and

questioned. They are excited when they are able to make predictions and then discover the answers for themselves. In a good science lesson with Year 5 and 6 pupils, they explored the questions they would need to pose to produce a key to identify different animals and insects. Year 3 and 4 pupils carefully counted the number of living things they could find within a certain area and were able to record their findings on a pictogram, making important links with subjects across the curriculum. Work is marked conscientiously, but it does not always indicate to pupils how they can improve.

81. The leadership and management of the subject are devolved and all staff participate in initiatives and support each other. This works effectively within these areas as it is a small team who work very well together. It is less effective in ensuring consistency of teaching and learning and developing specific expertise. After-school clubs and visits to interesting places make a good contribution to the curriculum.

HUMANITIES

82. Too few lessons were seen to make overall judgements on provision in **history** or **geography**. No lessons were observed for pupils in Years 1, 2, for either history or geography and there was too little evidence of retained work to make a judgement on standards in Year 2. Discussion with pupils indicates they enjoy their work. Using good links with the creative subjects – such as art and design - pupils collaborate and produce a good model of their village and can describe the routes they take to school.
83. One history lesson was observed in Year 5 and 6 and one geography lesson in Year 3 and 4. Other evidence is taken from teachers' planning, and looking at pupils' work on display or in their work books. There is insufficient evidence to judge the standards in geography at the end of Year 6.
84. In the key areas of historical knowledge and understanding, and the pupils' ability to use historical evidence, standards in Year 6 are in line with national expectations for pupils in this age group. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have a sound knowledge of life in past times. For example, they learn about transport and education in the village in which they live, comparing the past with the present. Year 5 and 6 pupils are beginning to develop good research skills by finding out more about the life of Nelson Mandela. They made very good progress in the lesson observed, as the teacher skilfully guided them into producing relevant questions from which to undertake their research. They collaborated well at this task. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and the most able pupils, achieve satisfactorily in building upon their prior knowledge.
85. The school has adopted the strategy of teaching history and geography in blocks of time (half a term for each) throughout the year, in order to give continuity and depth to the experiences. It provides opportunities for pupils to make links in their learning. For example, Year 3 and 4 pupils draw on their previous knowledge and understanding of the history of their village and use it when they use and interpret maps. Older pupils use techniques in ICT to illustrate erosion and write a newspaper report on an environmental disaster. There is a planned curriculum which covers all requirements of the National Curriculum appropriately.
86. Good use is made of the local area and other educational visits to promote learning. The subjects have not yet been prioritised for improvement within the school development plan, but the current two-year rolling programme is soon to be reviewed.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils of all ages are now achieving satisfactorily.
- Standards are below average because of shortages of hardware and software, which have now been resolved.
- Pupils have good opportunities to use ICT as a learning aid in several subjects and are gaining in confidence in its use as a result of good teaching.
- There is a coherent development plan in place for the further development of ICT and good leadership.

Commentary

87. Standards of pupils in ICT are below average in Year 2 and Year 6 in relation to expectations nationally. Pupils of all ages and abilities, including pupils with special educational needs and the most able, are currently achieving satisfactorily as teachers seek to give them as many good opportunities as possible to use the new equipment that the school has purchased. They are making good progress from the low standards of the recent past.
88. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have a narrow range of ICT skills. They can word-process and after using programs, such as those to create simple pictures, they can save and print their work. During the inspection, several younger pupils were observed in lessons using computers confidently and largely independently.
89. Pupils in Year 6 are quickly developing a range of competencies in various subject areas. Pupils can use the Internet effectively for research; they develop the ability to use databases, for example when carrying out surveys in science or the humanities; and they can make graphs to record the results of their investigations. Some good work was seen in data-logging – older pupils produced clear graphs recording rainfall. Most pupils are confident in using ICT as a word-processing tool. Some go on to use desk-top publishing software to produce simple front sheets for a newspaper. They can plot simple shapes, such as a square or triangle, enlarge it, and direct a roamer (computer-controlled vehicle). Only the higher attaining pupils, however, have the confidence in using ICT applications that would normally be expected for their age.
90. Information and communication technology is taught as a stand-alone subject in the school, as well as an adjunct to work in art, humanities and science lessons. Teachers have worked hard to overcome the problems that they have had mastering the new system and subject expertise is now secure. Teachers can now give confident advice and support to pupils, who are responding well to the guidance they are given. Lessons are thoroughly planned and well prepared. Because the teachers are well organised, the pupils are ready to concentrate and work hard. All pupils, including those who lack confidence, have positive attitudes to working with computers and are pleased and enthusiastic to learn when they realise that it is the turn of their class to use the new equipment. Assessment in ICT is underdeveloped and there is not a clear, detailed system for tracking pupils' achievement and progress across the school.
91. Leadership and management of the subject from the recently appointed subject leader are good. The use of ICT as an integral part of teaching and learning is carefully built into curriculum planning. Teachers act as positive role models through their own use of ICT – many lessons in other subject areas are introduced using computer images projected onto a whiteboard. There is now a good, varied range of resources, including trolleys of small, 'wire-free' computers that can be wheeled into classrooms (enough for one between two). There is a coherent plan for the further development of ICT as an integral part of the curriculum.

Information and communications technology across the curriculum

92. Information and communication technology is used well in several subjects as a means of supporting and furthering pupils' learning. It is built into curriculum planning. Information and communication technology is particularly effective as a means of research, with pupils having access to the Internet, which is used to get information in subjects such as history. Pupils also use ICT independently on a regular basis. The long periods of inadequate resourcing, followed by the frustration of teething problems with a very new system of wire-free technology, seem to be over. It is now becoming an integral and normal part of the school's curriculum and adds to the quality of learning in most subject areas.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

93. Work in **art and design** and in **design and technology** was sampled, so no judgements are made on provision. The subjects are taught in alternate, half-term blocks. In the half term that the inspection was carried out, there was no teaching of art and design in the school and the design and technology block had not got far enough underway to make any judgements about the quality of teaching or standards. There was abundant evidence of work in art that had been carried out during the year and it is clearly a strength of the school. There are rich opportunities to work with professional artists, as well as after-school clubs. There are many impressive examples of pupils' work displayed on the walls. Striking examples of batik, for example, and very well executed still life pictures of fruit, done by Year 5 and 6 pupils, combining painting and computer graphics.
94. Many older pupils have advanced drawing skills, showing an accurate sense of proportion when drawing people. They display a lively awareness and use of colour in all their paintings. There are excellent examples of three-dimensional work from the 'nature as designer' theme completed last half term. Cobwebs have been woven into imaginative and fascinating patterns, with complex structure and a varied use of materials. Younger pupils had reached high standards in their portrait work, as well as showing the ability to understand something of Picasso's style and reproduce elements of it in their own work. The pupils remember their work in art and can talk well about the techniques they have used. They have very positive attitudes towards the subject and achieve well. There is considerable subject expertise in art and design amongst the staff, but no subject leader and no systematic method of assessment to record progress.
95. Work in **physical education** was sampled, and so overall provision is not judged. In the lessons observed, pupils demonstrated an average standard of throwing and catching for their age group. The high attainers can throw accurately and catch balls thrown from a distance, but many of the rest are hesitant when catching, snatch at the ball and often drop it. When doing athletics, again the higher attainers show skills in running and hurdling, but the majority of pupils do not jump in a co-ordinated way. Some try to skip over the hurdles; few make the jump a fluid movement developing naturally from the rhythm of their running. All pupils show at least average levels of fitness. All are enthusiastic and enjoy sport, realising that exercise is important and good for them. Achievement is satisfactory.
96. It was not possible to observe any **music** lessons, so provision is not judged. However, listening to the pupils sing – which they do pleasantly and tunefully – indicates that standards are average in this element of the subject and that pupils are achieving well.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a very good programme in place and the school gives its development high priority.
- Good direct teaching supports learning effectively.

Commentary

97. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools' Award and through this has undertaken a very good range of activities to promote this area of learning.
98. There is a very good programme in place to promote pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship, taught to all year groups as a subject in its own right. All pupils achieve well and are encouraged to think of the needs of others and to develop an understanding of what it means to live in a community. Older pupils give interesting presentations describing changes they would make to areas of concern (such as environmental issues) and have considered how they would go about implementing the changes. Younger pupils build self-esteem by telling the class positive attributes of their friends.
99. Teachers are particularly skilled at developing the confidence of children from an early age, and building on this as pupils move from Years 1 to 6. In the Reception class, pupils choose for themselves from a range of activities that promotes their independence and social skills. The fact that they are working with pupils from Year 1 helps to promote their social and personal development.
100. There is a school council made up of all the Year 6 pupils. It has made some sensible suggestions which have been implemented. It has not been in place long enough to be fully integrated into the work and life of the school. However, pupils are given good opportunities to develop a sense of responsibility, with monitors within each class. Pupils treat each other with respect. A strength of the school is the emphasis put upon strong personal development, which enables pupils to work well together and contributes very effectively to discussion in class. Strong community links also give pupils a very positive sense of development.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7) against national expectations and/or averages.