



Office for Standards
in Education

St Christopher's School

CONTENTS

[Basic information about the school](#)

[Characteristics of the school](#)

[Part A: Summary of the report](#)

[Overall evaluation](#)

[Standards achieved](#)

[Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities](#)

[Leadership and management](#)

[Parents' and pupils' views of the school](#)

[Improvements needed](#)

[Part B: Commentary](#)

[Standards achieved by pupils](#)

[Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses](#)

[Main strengths and weaknesses](#)

[Commentary](#)

[Key Stage 2](#)

[Main strengths and weaknesses](#)

[Commentary](#)

[The table gives the percentage of half days \(sessions\) missed through absence for the latest complete year.](#)

Teaching and learning

Main strengths and weaknesses

Commentary

The curriculum

Main strengths and weaknesses

Commentary

Care, guidance and support

Main strengths and weaknesses

Commentary

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Main strengths and weaknesses

Commentary

Leadership and management

Main strengths and weaknesses

Commentary

Other Specified Features

What is the effectiveness of the provision within Key Stage 3?

Main strengths and weaknesses

Commentary

Part C: The quality of education in areas of learning, subjects and courses

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Personal, social and emotional development

Main strengths and weaknesses

Commentary

Communication, language and literacy

Main strengths and weaknesses

[Commentary](#)

[Mathematical development](#)

[Provision in mathematical development is satisfactory.](#)

[Main strengths and weaknesses](#)

[Commentary](#)

[Knowledge and understanding of the world](#)

[Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is good.](#)

[Main strengths and weaknesses](#)

[Commentary](#)

[Physical development](#)

[Provision in physical development is good.](#)

[Main strengths and weaknesses](#)

[Commentary](#)

[Creative development](#)

[Commentary](#)

[SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2 \(YEARS 1 TO 6\)](#)

[English](#)

[Provision in English is satisfactory overall. It is unsatisfactory in Key Stage 1, but satisfactory in Key Stage 2 and Year 7.](#)

[Main strengths and weaknesses](#)

[Commentary](#)

[Language and literacy across the curriculum](#)

[Mathematics](#)

[Main strengths and weaknesses](#)

[Commentary](#)

[Mathematics across the curriculum](#)

[Science](#)

[Provision in science is satisfactory.](#)

[Main strengths and weaknesses](#)

[Commentary](#)

[Information and communication technology](#)

[Main strengths and weaknesses](#)

[Commentary](#)

[Information and communication technology across the curriculum](#)

[Humanities](#)

[History, Geography in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 and Citizenship in Year 7](#)

[Main strengths and weaknesses](#)

[Commentary](#)

[Religious Education](#)

[Creative, aesthetic, practical and physical subjects](#)

[Art and Design, Design and Technology, Music and Physical Education](#)

[Main strengths and weaknesses](#)

[Commentary](#)

[Inspection judgements](#)

Basic information about the school

[▲ CONTENTS](#)

Name of school:	St Christopher's School
Type of school:	Middle, deemed primary
Type of control:	Ministry of Defence

Age range of pupils:	3 - 12 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number of pupils:	Boys 118, Girls 89
Address of school:	St Christopher's School Gibraltar BFPO 52
Telephone:	00350 55550
Fax number:	00350 55476
Headteacher:	Mr Stephen Coventry
Appropriate authority:	Service Children's Education
Chair of school advisory committee:	Surgeon Commander Brian Smith
Reporting inspector:	Angela Westington HMI
Date of previous inspection:	March 2000
Dates of inspection:	16 - 19 May 2005

Characteristics of the school

 [CONTENTS](#)

St Christopher's School, Gibraltar, is administered by Service Children's Education (SCE) and provides education for the children of service personnel and Ministry of Defence staff. Most parents are associated with the Royal Navy, but members of the Royal Air Force, the Army and United Kingdom Based Civilians are also represented. At the time of the inspection the school had 207 pupils in the 3 to 12 age range, including eleven pupils in Year 7 and 58 in the Foundation Stage, of whom 37 are in the nursery. Most pupils live relatively close to the school, although some come to school by bus. Pupils may transfer to local schools, or boarding schools in the United Kingdom, at the age of twelve.

Like all SCE schools, St Christopher's is subject to considerable movement of pupils as service personnel arrive and leave. During the last academic year, 77 pupils joined the school and 68 left out of a total school population of 203. Most pupils spend between six to eight terms at the school, although children of civilian parents sometimes stay slightly longer. Unlike most SCE schools, St Christopher's is very isolated. It is the only SCE school in this part of the world.

There are currently 12 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs (SEN), including six with more pronounced needs and one with a statement of SEN. English is the first language of all but two pupils. No pupil is entitled to a free school meal.

The attainment of pupils on entry to the school reflects the full ability range but overall is average.

Part A: Summary of the report

Overall evaluation

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

Standards achieved

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6	compared with	
	SCE schools	All schools in England
English	B	B
Mathematics	C	C
Science	B	B

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have good attitudes to learning and they behave very well. The provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality is good.

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. Teaching is good across the Foundation Stage, unsatisfactory in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2 and Year 7. The curriculum is satisfactory overall; it is good in the Foundation Stage and is enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities throughout the school. The level of care and support provided for pupils is satisfactory. Links with parents and other schools are satisfactory. Links with the community are good.

Leadership and management

Since the last inspection, improvement had been very limited until the recent intervention by SCE, whose concerted efforts are now beginning to bear fruit and bring about positive change. The school is now led and managed soundly. SCE, as the appropriate authority, has recently appointed a new headteacher and a new deputy headteacher to complete the senior team. A new chair of the SAC has recently taken up post. SCE was concerned at the lack of progress that had been made since the last inspection, and senior officers from SCE are

working with the new senior team and the teachers to bring about improvement. The school provides an adequate quality of education, overall, and has the capacity to improve.

Parents' and pupils' views of the school

▲ CONTENTS

The school has satisfactory links with parents. The majority of parents feel that the school is doing a good job. They feel welcomed at the school and value the support the school offers their children. There is, however, a small proportion of parents who have reservations about aspects of the school's performance and the support provided for their children. Pupils enjoy being at the school; they feel safe and secure. They believe the school is doing well by them. The Year 7 pupils would like more responsibility.

Improvements needed

▲ CONTENTS

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

- raise the standards of reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 1 by improving the quality of teaching;
- ensure that assessment informs teachers' planning and helps pupils know how well they are doing and how they can improve;
- improve the quality of IEPs for pupils with SEN, so that they include manageable and measurable targets;
- continue to develop the role of senior staff and those with subject responsibilities;
- develop the role of the SAC so that it is able to hold the senior management team to account for the standards achieved and the quality of education provided.

Part B: Commentary

▲ CONTENTS

Standards achieved by pupils

▲ CONTENTS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is satisfactory, but it is variable across the school; pupils make more progress in some classes than in others. Standards are average overall: pupils attain the early learning goals by the end of FS2; they are below average at the end of Year 2; and average at the end of Years 6 and 7. Pupils make good progress in the Foundation Stage with most being in line to meet the early learning goals. In Year 2, standards in English and mathematics are below average; standards in science and ICT are average. In Years 6 and 7, standards are average in English, mathematics and science; in ICT at Year 6 they are above average, and well above average in Year 7. Pupils with SEN do very well in the Foundation Stage but their progress is more limited elsewhere.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- standards in ICT are good, and very good by Year 7;
- pupils make a good start to their learning in the Foundation Stage;
- pupils make unsatisfactory progress in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 1, and standards are below average in Year 2.

Commentary

1. Pupils remain at St Christopher's School for any period of time between six months and two years; occasionally they may stay longer. It is therefore of limited value to compare test results from one year to the next or to consider trends in performance over time.

Key Stage 2

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

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 Average point scores	compared with	
	SCE schools	All schools in England
English 28.1	B	B
Mathematics 27.0	C	C
Science 29.2	B	B

2. In the 2004 tests, results were above average overall in English and Science and average in mathematics. In all the tests, boys performed better than girls.

3. Inspection findings confirm the general picture of average standards overall at the end of Year 6 and 7 but with some pockets of underachievement. Standards attained by pupils in ICT are above average by the end of Key Stage 2 and well above average in Year 7.

4. Pupils with SEN achieve well in the Foundation Stage due to the very good support they receive and the early identification of their needs. However the progress they make in Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2 and Year 7 is hindered because the targets in the IEPs are vague, lack precision and do not focus on the next steps in their learning. Although they receive good individual support from teaching assistants in some lessons in Key Stage 2, their achievement is unsatisfactory in Key Stage 1 and barely satisfactory in Key Stage 2 and Year 7.

5. Insufficient evidence was available to support judgements on provision in religious education (RE). Standards in history, geography and music are in line with expectations; standards of singing are above average in Year 7. Standards in art and design are above national expectations in both key stages and in Year 7.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have good attitudes to learning and they behave very well. The provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- the school is very successful in developing pupils' positive attitudes and self-esteem;
- relationships between staff and pupils and amongst pupils are very good;
- there is good provision for the personal, social and emotional development of pupils in FS1 and 2;
- pupils' behaviour is very good and the school is free from bullying and harassment.

Commentary

6. The good attitudes to learning that were noted at the last inspection have been maintained. Pupils like school and

view it as a happy and safe place. In the Foundation Stage pupils settle quickly into routines, are interested in the activities and behave very well. Older pupils are polite and courteous and behave very well both in lessons and around the school. They listen well to instructions from teachers and the contributions of other pupils. They are attentive in lessons, answering questions and making suggestions confidently. They show a real interest in learning when given opportunities to investigate and explore ideas. However, when teaching lacks focus and explanations are too long pupils become restless and lack concentration.

7. Pupils relate well to each other and co-operate well in pairs or small groups during lessons and in the playground. When pupils are given responsibilities, such as participating in the school council, they respond very well. Pupils and staff get on well together. The caring ethos of the school ensures that new arrivals are quickly integrated and accepted into the school community.

8. Very good behaviour is promoted through the clear system of rewards and sanctions, which is fully understood by pupils and applied consistently by staff. Bullying, racism and other forms of harassment are extremely rare. Pupils are given some opportunities to take on responsibility through the school council or when asked to support a new arrival. However, the prefect system does not give pupils in Year 7 sufficient opportunities to take on additional responsibilities.

The table below shows the attendance figures for the school.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	5.1%	School data:	0%
National data:	5.1%	National data:	0.4%

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

9. Pupils arrive in good time to start the school day. Attendance was in line with the national average in the last school year. The school has good monitoring systems in place to follow up all absences. There have been no exclusions from the school over the past year.

10. Pupils' spiritual awareness is developed appropriately through collective worship, circle time and RE. Moral development is good and pupils have a clear understanding of what is right and wrong. They are encouraged to think and to be understanding of others. Lessons in personal, social, health education and citizenship are effective in promoting an awareness of others and an appreciation of differences. Pupils develop an understanding of the local community through visits to the local hospital, and residential trips to nearby towns in Spain. Performance at local arts festivals and participation in sports events with local schools further enhance this development. Pupils gain an understanding of multicultural diversity through work on other faiths and cultural traditions in RE.

Quality of education provided by the school

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. Teaching is good across the Foundation Stage, unsatisfactory in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2 and Year 7. The curriculum is satisfactory overall; it is good in the Foundation Stage and is enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities. The level of care and support provided for pupils is satisfactory. Links with parents and other schools are satisfactory. Links with the community are good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is satisfactory overall. In Key Stage 2, teaching has improved since the last inspection. There is a higher proportion of better quality teaching than was seen at that time and the best quality teaching is predominantly found within this key stage for 7 to 11 year olds. In Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching has declined since the last inspection, and it is now unsatisfactory. The underlying reason for this is that the teaching of basic skills - reading, writing and mathematics - is insecure and pupils do not always make the progress of which they are capable. Teaching and learning within the Foundation Stage are good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are good;
- class teaching in Years 3 and 5 and specialist teaching in art, design and technology (DT), ICT, Spanish and science in Key Stage 2 are very effective;
- some pupils do not make adequate progress in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 1 because some teachers lack the subject knowledge to teach these effectively;
- the school has recently introduced new assessment systems but these are not yet used consistently to ensure that pupils are taught the knowledge, skills and concepts they require.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 50 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (4%)	5 (10 %)	24 (48%)	15 (30%)	4 (8%)	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.

11. Teaching in the Foundation Stage effectively develops the basic skills pupils need in order to learn. Pupils are taught skills of independence and learn how to work together well. They develop an interest in learning which prepares them well for the demands of the National Curriculum. Teachers have a clear understanding of how and what young pupils need to learn, but they could challenge the more able with greater rigour. Pupils with SEN are very well supported in the Foundation Stage and make very good progress as a result.

12. In Key Stage 1 teaching is unsatisfactory overall because teachers' expectations of pupils are too low. Thus, over time, some pupils do not make the progress or reach the standards of which they are capable. Some teachers do not teach the basic reading, writing and mathematical skills pupils need to be able to use to make progress across the curriculum. Behaviour management is sometimes unsatisfactory; this slows the pace of teaching, and leads to pupils becoming bored and restless. Within the key stage, however, there is some good teaching which challenges pupils so they make bursts of good progress in individual lessons and consistently good progress in ICT. Despite the best efforts of teaching assistants, pupils with SEN make unsatisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 because their individual learning targets lack clarity.

13. The improvement of teaching and learning in Key Stage 2 since the intervention by SCE demonstrates the school's capacity for improvement. Teaching in Years 3 and 5 and specialist teaching in art, DT, ICT, Spanish and science in Key Stage 2 are very effective, and teaching is now satisfactory across the key stage. The teaching of Year 7 is satisfactory overall, and is particularly strong when pupils receive specialist teaching in DT, ICT and science. Teachers use their secure subject knowledge to ensure pupils' learning. Satisfactory use is made of time, and pupils work very well both individually and collaboratively. As a result, the pace of pupils' learning accelerates for 7 to 11 year olds and they make at least satisfactory progress. Scrutiny of pupils' work, however, reveals that expectations of pupils' productivity and of the quality of their work are too variable across the Years 3 to 7. Pupils should be achieving more and attaining more highly. Individual examples were noted of pupils who have regressed since joining the school. Pupils with SEN are often well supported by teaching assistants during lessons. As a result, they often taste success when attempting individual tasks. However, their progress across the key stage and in Year 7 is only satisfactory because the targets within their IEPs lack coherence.

14. Although teachers' planning is satisfactory, it nonetheless has some weaknesses. Lower down the school, planning is sometimes sketchy and indicates a lack of understanding on the part of some staff about the purpose of the activity they are teaching, particularly with regard to the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. There is insufficient emphasis within both planning and assessment on the systematic teaching of phonic skills. This is seen most clearly within Key Stage 1 where some pupils, often boys, struggle to read and spell because they have not been taught the phonic skills they require. The use of teaching assistants and support teachers is not sufficiently carefully planned. At times, there are simply too many adults working in classrooms and their well intentioned but strategically ill planned efforts detract from the learning of the class.

15. Following the intervention of SCE during the past year the school has developed improved assessment systems to clarify what pupils know and what they need to learn next. However, the use of these systems is not embedded across the school. Assessment is, at times, inconsistent and sporadic. This leads to some pupils being taught knowledge, skills and concepts they have already grasped, or important areas of learning being missed or taught too superficially. Teachers' questioning techniques are too variable across the school, so pupils' understanding is not consistently assessed during lessons. As a result, they are often not challenged sufficiently during lessons. Pupils are not clear enough about what they have to do to improve their work in the core subjects of English and mathematics, and marking does not always help them make progress as thoroughly as it should. At its best, marking helps pupils to improve by identifying what they need to do next. Too frequently, however, marking is uncritical and accepting of pupils' first efforts.

The curriculum

▲ CONTENTS

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum overall; it is good in the Foundation Stage. Extra-curricular provision is good. Provision for pupils with SEN is unsatisfactory overall. Accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- provision within the Foundation Stage is good and ensures that pupils acquire the basic skills they need to cope with the demands of the National Curriculum;
- there is a good range of extra-curricular activities which enrich the curriculum and which pupils enjoy;
- pupils with SEN do not make enough progress in Key Stage 1 and their progress in Key Stage 2 and Year 7 is only satisfactory because the strategic planning in their IEPs is inadequate;
- accommodation has some strengths, particularly for the Foundation Stage, in the provision of specialist teaching rooms for art, DT, food technology, ICT and mathematics, but is unsatisfactory overall;
- there are insufficient high quality resources to support the teaching of reading.

Commentary

16. The school provides a curriculum which is broad, balanced and relevant. The curriculum for pupils in the Foundation Stage is good and improving, providing both breadth and balance in all areas of learning. By the time they leave FS2, pupils are well prepared for their transition into Key Stage 1. Assessment systems in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory; staff have a sound knowledge of their pupils and plan activities which generally meet the needs of individuals. Provision for developing pupils' communication, language and literacy skills is sound; the teaching and assessment of reading, and particularly of phonics, is insufficiently rigorous and more able pupils are not encouraged to use their phonetic skills consistently. Provision for pupils' mathematical development is satisfactory but work for the more able sometimes lacks challenge. Provision for pupils' physical development, outdoor play and for developing knowledge and understanding of the world is strong. Provision for their personal, social and emotional development is very good.

17. Long-term planning for the curriculum in Key Stages 1 and 2 and Year 7 is based on the National Curriculum and the nationally recommended strategies for literacy and numeracy. Over each year the time allocated to each subject is balanced and the curriculum is suitably broad. At times, particularly in Key Stage 1, schemes of work do not sufficiently underpin that which is taught. This leads to pupils not being taught important knowledge, skills or concepts. New systems of assessment are not yet embedded enough to allow teachers to use their professional

judgement to amend the learning objectives from schemes of work in the light of pupils' capabilities; this leads to a degree of mismatch between the taught curriculum and the learning needs of pupils. Overall, the school is only at the early stages of considering the curriculum from the perspective of the pupils who experience it. At times, in English and mathematics, the taught week lacks coherence for pupils because one day's activities do not build logically upon those undertaken previously. In addition, there are few strategically planned links between subjects. Specialist provision enhances pupils' curricular opportunities in art, ICT, music, science and Spanish for pupils in Key Stage 2, and for pupils in DT and ICT in Key Stage 3.

18. The curriculum is effectively and enjoyably enriched by a good range of after-school clubs, visits to places of interest, visitors from the community and the garrison. Older pupils undertake a comprehensive programme of residential visits to various destinations in Spain, during which they have the opportunity to practise their use of Spanish. Photographic records of these residential visits demonstrate the great enjoyment with which pupils participate in them, and they are clearly a valuable means of strengthening relationships between pupils, and between pupils and staff.

19. Pupils' special educational needs are identified very swiftly in the Foundation Stage and the provision made for them in these classes is very effective. Throughout the rest of the school, provision for pupils with SEN is just satisfactory overall, despite the good quality support available during most lessons from teaching assistants. This is because the targets within pupils' IEPs lack the precision necessary to enable those who provide additional support to focus sharply on identified difficulties, particularly in literacy.

20. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. The playground for Key Stage 1 pupils is barren and requires resurfacing. The Key Stage 2 playground is devoid of any interesting areas for pupils and its markings have faded significantly. Little shade is provided in any playground. Toilets in some areas of the school are unpleasant and pupils rightly complain about them. No pegs or benches are provided in toilets where pupils are required to change for physical education (PE), no hot water is available and the hand dryers blow out cold air. There are some strengths in the accommodation provided. Pupils in the Foundation Stage benefit from spacious light and bright accommodation. Specialist teaching rooms for art and DT, food technology, ICT and mathematics enhance provision in these subjects.

21. Resources for the teaching of reading are poor. There are insufficient materials to support the teaching of reading and libraries contain few fresh, high quality texts. Elsewhere resources are satisfactory.

Care, guidance and support



Arrangements for securing pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are satisfactory. Pupils are treated as individuals and receive a good level of personal support and guidance, but academic guidance for pupils is unsatisfactory. The school places a high priority on seeking the views of pupils and acts on their views effectively.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- induction arrangements for pupils new to the school are good;
- pupils' views are heard through the school council;
- First Aid procedures are good;
- although arrangements to support and protect pupils are in place, procedures for child protection are not fully understood by all staff;
- recently introduced assessment systems are not yet embedded so academic target setting is weak.

Commentary

22. The overwhelming majority of pupils feel happy and secure at St Christopher's and report that there is always someone to whom they can turn for help. First Aid procedures are good; in the event of an accident, pupils are well cared for by staff who have undertaken First Aid training. Child protection procedures are in place and the school is well supported by social workers from the garrison. However, a few support staff lack clarity about what they should

do in the event of a disclosure of abuse by a pupil and require further training.

23. Induction procedures for pupils new to the school are good. The school provides an e-mail link on its website which families who are about to be posted to Gibraltar may use to request a school prospectus. On arrival in Gibraltar, prospective parents and pupils meet the headteacher who provides a guided tour of the school, introduces them to class teachers and gives them an opportunity to raise any issues which may concern them. When pupils join a class, they are given a 'buddy' who looks after them so they instantly have a friend to play with and to look after them. Pupils appreciate this system. After a pupil has been at the school for three weeks, their parents meet the classteacher to ensure that the pupil has settled happily.

24. There is an established school council so that pupils' views may be heard. Pupils feel that their views and ideas are heard and acted upon by the school. For example, Year 7 made the school council and headteacher aware that there were no mirrors in their toilets and these were subsequently provided.

25. Academic target setting for pupils is at an early stage because the school's new assessment systems are not yet embedded. Until these systems are used systematically staff lack the information they need to set appropriate targets for pupils. There is early identification of pupils with SEN and although their progress is regularly monitored through termly review meetings, the accuracy of the monitoring is impaired by the lack of measurable targets in the pupils' IEPs. The school liaises frequently with outside agencies to provide advice and guidance on pupils with SEN.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

▲ CONTENTS

Overall, the school has satisfactory links with parents. The school welcomes them and the majority of parents consider that it is doing a good job. The school treats pupils as individuals and parents value this and the support offered to their children. There is, however, a small proportion of parents who have reservations about aspects of the school's performance and the support provided for their children. The school has established good links with the local community and satisfactory links with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- the school treats pupils as individuals and parents value this highly;
- the school generally responds to parents' concerns; although some parents feel that insufficient attention is given to the teaching of core skills in some classes, and that they do not receive sufficient information about how well their child is doing;
- good links exist with military personnel, the Padres and through them, with other communities;
- the school involves parents effectively in supporting classroom activities and it invites parents to assemblies. Parents enjoy these opportunities.

Commentary

26. The school has worked hard to build effective links with parents and the broader community and, in many ways, has been successful. A weekly newsletter is sent to each family to keep them up-to-date about key events; the production of an annual Year Book has been a very popular enterprise, welcomed by many parents; and parental attendance at the weekly Celebration Assemblies is high. Several regular social activities feature prominently, such as Spanish language lessons, and 'get fit' classes led by members of staff. The Parent Partnership Group, run by the school, organises a wide range of interesting trips and activities for parents, including visits to the local synagogue, sessions on Chi Gung, baby massage and child health and safety.

27. The school staff also organise, periodically, curriculum events for parents, such as a session on how mathematics is taught. These events have been less well attended, and some parents have not been aware of them taking place.

28. A number of parents help out in school regularly, including a group of mothers who run the supplementary reading programmes for Key Stages 1 and 2. Elsewhere, one or two fathers help with sports lessons. In their various

ways, they add significantly to the strong sense of community that infuses the school and from which all pupils benefit.

29. Parents are able to meet teachers termly to discuss their children's progress and teachers are available at the beginning and end of each day. Annual reports inform parents of their children's progress and the areas for further development but they do not, as yet, include details of results of any standardised tests that pupils have taken.

30. Satisfactory links have been established with other local, Gibraltarian schools, with some pupils taking part in inter-schools' sports leagues. There are strong links with the military and the school benefits from its use of the military sports pitch, pool and other resources.

Leadership and management



Since the last inspection, improvement had been very limited until the recent intervention by SCE, whose concerted efforts are now beginning to bear fruit and bring about positive change. SCE has very recently appointed an experienced and committed headteacher. His first task has been to appoint a new substantive deputy headteacher. A new chair of the SAC has also been appointed. Senior officers from SCE have been instrumental in tackling unsatisfactory teaching where it occurred. The new senior leadership team provide satisfactory and improving leadership and management for the school, which now has the capacity to improve further.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- the school has a new committed leadership team. They have worked very hard, in a short time scale, to deal with the many issues for improvement highlighted in the previous inspection;
- there is strong support and challenge from senior officers in SCE;
- there is a strong drive to improve the quality of teaching by staff who carry posts of responsibility;
- the SAC has not, until recently, been able to hold the school to account for its strategic performance; it is now well placed to fulfil this role.

Commentary

31. St Christopher's School was last inspected in March 2000 and the inspection highlighted many issues to be tackled. Most of these were left in abeyance until the intervention by senior officers from SCE in February 2004. Little progress was made until September 2004, since which time much has been achieved on a broad front.

32. SCE's full review of the school in February 2004 detailed the backlog of work to be undertaken plus the new responsibilities facing the school as a result of changing national and SCE priorities. These included, for example, the establishment of planning, preparation and assessment time for staff, SCE's focus on building high quality Foundation Stage provision and, not least, a sharp focus on raising standards and improving the quality of teaching. The ensuing revised action plan incorporated both the outstanding issues from the inspection and the new priorities. This has become the basis of the school's current improvement programme.

33. SCE officers, and the previous acting headteacher, monitored the quality of teaching across the school and tackled unsatisfactory teaching where they found it. A programme of support and guidance was implemented which has, to a large extent, been successful. Several changes were made to the teaching timetables and specialist teachers were brought in to augment provision. This has had the effect of reversing the negative judgement originally made in the previous inspection about the quality and variability of teaching in Key Stage 2.

34. The senior leadership team, all of whom hold temporary, and multiple, posts, have shouldered much responsibility in recent months, responding quickly to SCE's interventions. Previously, they had an over-optimistic view of the quality of some of the provision the school offers and the standards that pupils attain. This is changing rapidly; the subject leaders and co-ordinators are now aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are capable of working alongside the new headteacher and deputy headteacher to forge sustained improvement.

35. The leadership and management of SEN are unsatisfactory, however, because strategic planning does not meet the needs of pupils with SEN effectively enough. Support for these pupils is patchy as it is not co-ordinated effectively across the school.

36. The SAC does not have the same responsibilities and obligations that the governing body of a school in England would have. Nevertheless, there is an expectation on the part of SCE that SACs will hold schools to account for the quality of provision they offer and the standards that pupils attain. Until recently, the SAC at St Christopher's has not been in a position to do this; much of the information needed, to ask relevant questions or make informed decisions, has not been made available. The current members of the SAC are aware of the issues now facing the school and are well placed to fulfil their role more robustly.

Other Specified Features

▲ CONTENTS

What is the effectiveness of the provision within Key Stage 3?

▲ CONTENTS

The inspection team were asked to look at the provision for Year 7 pupils, because they are a very small cohort of, currently, just eleven pupils. Recently, SCE took the decision to amalgamate the Year 6 and Year 7 groups into one class called 'The Seniors'.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- the social provision for Year 7 pupils is better within the larger class; but
- there is a loss of status for the Year 7 pupils which they feel acutely;
- the specialist teaching, for Year 7 pupils separately, is highly beneficial; but
- within the general lessons, for example history, English, there are limited opportunities for the more able Year 7 pupils to be challenged;
- some Year 7 pupils are repeating Spanish lessons they have covered previously in Year 6.

Commentary

37. The three main areas of concern about the provision for Year 7 pupils are: the need to recognise their position as secondary pupils and thus ensure that their social and emotional needs are met; the need to ensure high quality specialist teaching within specialist areas and the need to ensure appropriate challenge in other subject areas.

38. By amalgamating the two groups into one class the Year 7 pupils, especially the boys, have a broader social group to work and mix in and this is an improvement. However, being within a mixed class means that they have lost their Year 7 identity, and the status that goes with that, including being prefects. Now, all 'The Seniors' are prefects in some way.

39. The specialist teaching is proving to be highly beneficial for Year 7 pupils. Spanish is well taught as a specialist subject however care needs to be taken to stretch those pupils in Year 7, especially the more able, who have already covered the Year 6 programme of work.

40. There is little evidence of Year 7 pupils undertaking individual research or extended study. The work in their books does not reflect what they know, can do and understand. Much of their work is poorly presented and does not reflect a sense of personal pride. The planning for general lessons, such as English and history, does not identify specific objectives for Year 7 pupils working at, or within, level 5. Pupils generally, throughout Key Stage 2, are not directed in their choice of reading material, and the Year 7 pupils, like pupils in other year groups, have a very limited knowledge of authors and their works. Insufficient attention is paid to the list of prescribed authors that pupils in Key Stage 3 need to study.

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. Children enter FS1 at age three with levels of attainment that are broadly average for their age. They achieve very well throughout the Foundation Stage in personal, social and emotional development. Achievement in knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development is good and satisfactory in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. By the time they reach the end of FS2 most are on course to achieve the expected goals in all areas of learning with some exceeding them, particularly in the area of personal, social and emotional development. Pupils with SEN achieve very well due to the very good support they receive from teachers and key workers.

The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now good and very good in promoting the pupils' personal, social and emotional development. The Foundation Stage manager provides a good role model for support staff (key workers) in FS1 who have developed their expertise well through professional development, leadership and support. They provide an effective system for supporting pupils' learning.

A relevant curriculum is provided which, for the most part, offers rich, purposeful activities. Teachers' planning takes proper account of the needs of all pupils including those who have special needs. However there is no common planning format across FS1 and FS2 to ensure a consistency of approach by the two year groups. Strong emphasis is placed on developing pupils' social, speaking and listening skills. Themes and topics are used effectively to link activities and develop their knowledge and skills through hands-on experience and play. Staff work well together reviewing what has been done and ensuring that the attractive displays and stimulating activities interest and engage pupils. The good quality resources, the much improved indoor accommodation and the outdoor play area are used well. Assessment of pupils' progress is developing. Staff record how well pupils are doing and are beginning to use this information to plan what they need to learn next.

The good provision is a result of the good quality leadership and management that are provided. The Foundation Stage manager has a clear vision for improving pupils' learning and a great deal has been achieved since the last inspection. However, greater emphasis is needed on improving pupils' learning in language and literacy and mathematics in FS2.

Personal, social and emotional development

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- pupils achieve well in both FS1 and FS2 and make good progress because the quality of teaching is good;
- they are happy and confident and form very good relationships with adults and each other;
- they learn to socialise and become independent.

Commentary

41. Pupils make very good progress from starting in FS1. They achieve very well with most reaching, and some exceeding, the expected goals by the end of FS2. They settle quickly into the established routines where their interests and independence are fostered and encouraged effectively by adults. Good planning ensures that they experience a wide range of stimulating activities that help them to develop their concentration and feel secure. Adults are enthusiastic and ensure that all pupils feel included and involved. Pupils continue to make very good progress in

FS2 where they show increasing maturity in playing and co-operating with others. Staff foster their enthusiasm for learning successfully and the good teaching and sensitive support help them to gain in confidence and develop high standards of behaviour. Adults readily recognise and celebrate pupils' achievements by praising and sharing what they have achieved.

Communication, language and literacy

▲ CONTENTS

Provision in communication, language and literacy is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- well planned opportunities encourage and develop pupils' speaking and listening skills; but
- the development of their reading and writing skills in FS2 is too slow.

Commentary

42. Pupils start in FS1 with skills in speaking, listening and literacy that are average. Staff ensure that there are labels, key words and meaningful print as well as books around the classrooms. In FS1 the good teaching ensures that pupils are appropriately challenged to respond to questions, to communicate with others and to suggest their own ideas. They listen attentively to stories and enjoy joining in and acting out scenes, such as Jack chopping down the beanstalk. All pupils enjoy the role play areas and this encourages them to develop their conversational ability. There are many planned opportunities for them to attempt writing for different purposes. In FS2 pupils speak confidently and are keen to share what they have been doing. Although some of them are beginning to read and write independently, many are still at the early stages. They know individual letters and the sounds they make. The more able make good attempts to spell new words but very few are yet able to write independently and some have difficulty forming their letters correctly.

Mathematical development

▲ CONTENTS

Provision in mathematical development is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- pupils experience a broad range of practical activities to reinforce counting and their knowledge of space and shape; but
- the more able are not sufficiently challenged.

Commentary

43. Achievement is satisfactory. Pupils' knowledge of number is fostered through everyday routines as well as a wide range of practical activities. The pupils count, match and learn to recognise numbers. For example, they help to set the table at snack time and count out the number of spoons, plates and bowls needed on each table. Pupils in FS1 order shoes according to size and are learning to count up to ten. Well organised activities such as painting a symmetrical butterfly and number recognition games contribute to their learning. Pupils in FS2 build on this knowledge but there is not always enough challenge to ensure they move on in their learning. All pupils gain a sound awareness of common shapes and sequences and are beginning to understand and use simple mathematical language accurately.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- pupils achieve well and make good progress learning about the wider world;
- good use is made of visits to broaden their knowledge.

Commentary

44. Good teaching, combined with good opportunities to develop knowledge and understanding of the wider world, ensures that all pupils make good progress in this area of learning. The learning environment is stimulating in both FS1 and FS2 and this contributes to pupils' good achievement. In FS1 they use magnifying glasses to look closely at insects and leaves when they explore the gardens during a 'bug hunt'. Lego and construction kits are easily accessible for them to make models, which are displayed attractively. They develop a positive attitude and make sound progress learning to use the computer. They use the mouse confidently to move shapes on the screen. In FS2 they manipulate the mouse carefully draw a picture and then write their names in a text box on the screen. Staff value the opportunities that the local environment offers and visits to the local fire station, the hospital, the Hindu temple and the local church enhance pupils' learning successfully.

Physical development

Provision in physical development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- staff make daily use of the outdoor play areas to give pupils opportunities to use a range of equipment;
- teachers and key workers interact effectively to improve pupils' physical skills.

Commentary

45. The development of a dedicated outdoor area for the Foundation Stage has enhanced provision in this area of learning considerably since the last inspection. The area is used daily as an outdoor classroom. Consequently, achievement is good overall with most pupils reaching the expected goals for their age at the end of FS2. In both FS1 and FS2 pupils develop confidence riding bikes and scooters, balancing and climbing on the climbing frame. They negotiate spaces and change direction when playing games with others. They have a good understanding of safety. All pupils, throughout the Foundation Stage, experience a wide range of opportunities to improve their skills in using small tools such as pencils, scissors and brushes and are encouraged to shape and join materials.

Creative development

- the activities are well planned and resourced;
- good interaction with adults ensures that pupils acquire and practise skills confidently.

Commentary

46. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their creative skills through role play, art and music. In both FS1 and FS2 they are encouraged to use their imagination in the role play areas. They use paint and glue to make pictures of the mini-beasts found in the garden. In FS2 they use scissors with increasing accuracy. They use a

variety of media to make 3-dimensional flowers and a collage of jungle animals. Musical instruments are easily accessible and pupils sing simple songs and rhymes with enthusiasm. Pupils' ability to respond to experiences and express and communicate ideas is good, resulting in most of them achieving the expected goals in this area by the end of FS2. Teaching is good and the key workers make a good contribution to this area of learning, enabling all to achieve well.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2 (YEARS 1 TO 6)

▲ CONTENTS

English

▲ CONTENTS

Provision in English is satisfactory overall. It is unsatisfactory in Key Stage 1, but satisfactory in Key Stage 2 and Year 7.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- standards are average at Year 6 and 7; they are below average at Year 2. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2 and in Year 7; they make unsatisfactory progress in Key Stage 1;
- pupils' presentation of their work is weak across most of the school, with the exception of one or two classes;
- the vast majority of the teaching in Key Stage 2 is good and occasionally very good and outstanding. Teaching in Key Stage 1, overall, is unsatisfactory;
- the teaching of basic skills of reading and writing in Key Stage 1 is unsatisfactory;
- parental support for the voluntary reading programmes in Key Stages 1 and 2 is very high and contributes positively to pupils' progress;
- reading resources are unsatisfactory; too few reading books and other texts of poor quality, and outdated library stock are hampering pupils' progress in reading, across all key stages.

Commentary

47. In the 2004 national tests for eleven year olds, results were above the national average. Boys performed better than girls. This is an unusual picture. Girls performed very weakly in the reading test; their results were lower than the average figure for girls in SCE schools overall, whereas their writing results were similar to the average SCE figure. Evidence for why girls are underperforming in reading is reported below.

48. In the tests for seven year olds, the proportion of pupils gaining Level 2, the expected level, was above the national average; and around the national average for Level 3. Girls outperformed boys in all elements of the tests and the boys' performance in writing was lower than the average SCE figure for boys, with just over one third attaining level 2b, the recognised threshold for pupils to access effectively the Key Stage 2 curriculum. Evidence for why boys are underperforming in Key Stage 1 is reported below.

49. Evidence gained from discussions with pupils and scrutiny of their work confirms the general picture of overall satisfactory standards in Key Stage 2 and Year 7 but with clear pockets of underachievement, and of achievement in Key Stage 1 being unsatisfactory. By the end of Year 2, pupils' writing skills are weak; they are not able to recall and write from memory the 200 key words listed for this age range, nor write simple words built up with phonic sounds. Their letter formation is insecure, and, as too much of their work is on worksheet or on individual pieces of paper; they are not required to set out and present their work in a satisfactory manner. Generally, pupils in Key Stage 1 struggle to write well. They do not receive their entitlement to a daily, structured, highly focused teaching session on phonics, which at this age is the key to successful reading and writing. Phonics is taught, but it is sporadic and not sequential. Teachers are not following the list in the National Literacy Framework which details the very large amount of phonic knowledge that Year 1 and Year 2 pupils should acquire. When phonics are taught, pupils are mainly required to recognise sounds; they are not normally required to practise writing them. This is to miss out on a vital part of teaching infants to write and to give them the confidence to 'have a go'.

50. Elsewhere in the school, standards of writing are variable, with the best work seen in Year 5 and in Year 3. Sometimes the work presented does not reflect the knowledge and understanding that pupils have and there is a lack of a sense of pride in what has been produced. There was at least one example of a new pupil entering the school and producing very well presented, high quality work, but nine months later producing ill formed, poorly presented, scrappy work, which was accepted as good.

51. Throughout the school there is no systematic policy for teaching or monitoring reading. The impact of this is felt most acutely in Key Stage 1. Teachers plan for group reading activities within their literacy lessons, but as these may occur on an irregular basis, there is, in practice, limited direct input into the pupil's acquisition of reading skills. Parents, mainly mothers, run the popular reading award schemes for Key Stages 1 and 2: 'Mr Reader' and 'Super Reader'. Many pupils are highly motivated by these programmes and, when well supported by parents at home, achieve satisfaction in their reading. However, within school, even the very youngest pupils are left to choose their own 'reading books' from a range of books within a level, to be heard at home, with no guidance from teachers about the type of book they should next have. As a result, there is no professional keeping a close eye on how pupils are progressing in their reading and how they can best be moved forward. It is not unusual therefore, for some pupils, frequently boys, to choose the same books repeatedly, or to choose books that are simply too easy for them and are not challenging enough. Without clear and firm guidance from teachers, most pupils do not gain the necessary skills they need to become fluent readers and writers. In Key Stage 2, similarly, there is no school policy for teaching or monitoring pupils' reading beyond the opportunities available within literacy lessons. However, some individual teachers have established their own systems for monitoring pupils' progress. Nevertheless, too many pupils in upper Key Stage 2 and Year 7 have very limited knowledge of a range of authors and a range of texts, despite this being a major area of the national literacy strategy for both Key Stage 2 and 3. Resources for teaching reading are woefully inadequate across the school; one teacher uses his own copies of well-known childrens' novels to engage pupils' interest in a wider range of authors. The quality of the book stock held elsewhere in the school, for example in the libraries and classrooms, is very poor, frequently outdated or simply worn out.

52. In many other respects, pupils' skills are good. Their speaking and listening skills are well developed. They listen attentively and take turns. Even the youngest pupils can engage in conversations and talk about events that interest them. They are interesting pupils because they have, in the main, already had interesting lives and travelled well. They are able to talk about people, places, events and issues with conviction and the school develops these aspects well.

53. The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory. There is some good and outstanding teaching, but from a scrutiny of pupils' work, expectations of what they can achieve have been too low. Outstanding teaching was observed in Year 3. In a lesson on poetry, on limericks, the teaching was sharp and demanding. Pupils were introduced to limericks and had to clap out the rhythm and pick out the rhyme. The teacher, seeing that some pupils had understood, immediately challenged them to think about a lesson earlier in the week and try to define the rhyming scheme for limericks. They got this too. With that, the challenge was on for them to identify whether lines of poetry they were given fitted the rhyming scheme, and then to add their own second line. Pupils were highly motivated, especially the able and more able as they rose to the challenge. The less able pupils were well supported by the teaching assistant in their associated task of finding rhymes and achieved well.

54. Leadership and management of the subject are now satisfactory. The subject manager is aware of the issues raised and, with colleagues, has for some time been working towards improving provision generally and raising standards overall.

Language and literacy across the curriculum



55. Pupils' research skills are satisfactory. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 can use a dictionary and a thesaurus and can locate specified books in their libraries. Their use of the internet to seek out information is at least good. Pupils report, however, that they make limited use of the libraries, particularly pupils in Key Stage 2 and Year 7, because too often the books, or type of books, they need are not there. There are some effective teaching links made to other subject areas, notably history.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- provision for mathematics is satisfactory in Key Stage 2 and Year 7, but it is unsatisfactory in Key Stage 1;
- standards in Key Stage 1 are unsatisfactory;
- pupils in Year 7 and in Key Stage 2 attain standards which are in line with the national average;
- the subject leader has a clear understanding of the tasks to be undertaken if pupils are to make greater and more consistent progress in mathematics.

Commentary

56. By Year 6, pupils attain standards which are in line with the national average. The majority of Year 6 pupils use suitable and concise methods in written calculations. They are able to order a mixed set of numbers, round decimals to the nearest whole number and to two decimal places. They are able to reduce a fraction to its simplest form by cancelling and can convert fractions to percentages or decimals and find fractions of numbers or quantities. Pupils use ratio to compare two quantities. They both identify and describe number relationships such as multiple, factor and square number and tackle problems involving the extrapolation of data from graphs and tables. Overall in Key Stage 2, pupils with SEN receive good support from teaching assistants during mathematics lessons. However, these pupils make only satisfactory progress because few of them have mathematical targets within their IEPs. As a result, their needs are not sufficiently diagnosed and met over the longer term.

57. Standards attained by pupils in Year 7 are satisfactory. Most pupils are able to generate the term of a simple sequence when given the rule, add and subtract positive and negative numbers, solve problems involving ratio and proportion and add and subtract fractions. They can solve more complex problems involving length, area and perimeter.

58. In 2004, Key Stage 1 pupils attained standards which were above national expectations. Work scrutiny and lesson observations do not reflect these high standards for the current Year 2 cohort. Overall, evidence from exercise books indicates that standards are below those expected nationally. Some pupils use recalled addition and subtraction facts to ten and apply their knowledge that subtraction is the inverse of addition. They are able to shade in a half or quarter of a square and find totals using money. However, some teachers do not securely underpin their teaching with the objectives of the mathematics scheme of work, so some objectives are taught in too little depth or unnecessarily repeated. As a result, the mathematical experience of some pupils, particularly those of middle and lower ability, lacks coherence. There is little evidence to suggest that pupils in middle and lower ability groups have sufficient experience of using and applying mathematics, or of handling data, so they are unable to reach national expectations in these areas. In addition, the mathematical ability of pupils, including those with SEN, is not properly assessed and so they often undertake work which is ill-matched to their needs. Therefore, some pupils are not making the progress of which they are capable.

59. Teaching overall in mathematics is satisfactory; the best teaching is found in Key Stage 2, where some teaching is of high quality. In a very good lesson for Year 5 pupils on reflective symmetry, the teacher used the interactive whiteboard to exemplify the difference between symmetrical and congruent shapes. Key vocabulary was displayed and used by the teacher, teaching assistants and pupils. The teacher ensured that all pupils were participating by framing questions of varying difficulty to specific individuals. The effect of this was that all pupils paid close attention in case they were asked a question. Pupils were given a very good opportunity to explain and discuss their thinking so that the teacher was able to build on their existing knowledge and clarify misconceptions. In this lesson, the teaching assistant had been fully briefed and displayed excellent subject knowledge, which she used to ensure that pupils were consistently challenged.

60. In Key Stage 1, a scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work shows teaching to be unsatisfactory. In Year 2, middle and lower ability pupils have not made enough progress because too many objectives are taught simultaneously, demonstration to pupils is weak and lacks clarity and too much time is spent dealing with avoidable class management issues. Despite some good teaching within this key stage, pupils' overall progress is unsatisfactory because they are not being taught the full range of objectives from the scheme of work in a logical sequence of steps and in the necessary depth to secure understanding.

61. The school's recently introduced assessment system for mathematics is not yet securing an appropriate match between the ability of some pupils and the mathematical tasks they are asked to undertake. As a result, some pupils are taught objectives they already know or teachers present them with tasks which assume a level of understanding or knowledge they have not yet acquired. Some teachers are not evaluative enough when they mark work and thus fail to grasp what groups of pupils know and can do, and what they ought to be taught next.

62. Leadership and Management of mathematics are satisfactory. The mathematics subject leader is reflective and committed to securing improvements in the teaching and learning of mathematics throughout the school. He has recently undertaken a scrutiny of work which has revealed strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning across the school. In addition, he has undertaken an analysis of test results to reveal gaps in the understanding of each cohort of pupils. Teachers are not obviously using this information when they plan lessons to ensure that these gaps are filled. The subject leader has devised an appropriate assessment system which some teachers are beginning to use systematically to ensure that all pupils are taught a mathematics curriculum which is rich, challenging, and meets the needs of all pupils, including those with SEN.

Mathematics across the curriculum

▲ CONTENTS

63. There are no planned mathematical links with other areas of the curriculum, and very little evidence of these was observed in pupils' work or during the inspection.

Science

▲ CONTENTS

Provision in science is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- the quality of specialist teaching in science in Key Stage 2 and Year 7 is good and is having a significant impact on raising attainment;
- pupils achieve satisfactorily in Key Stage 1;
- greater emphasis is now given to developing pupils' scientific enquiry and investigation skills; but
- the arrangements in place for the leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

64. In the 2004 national tests for pupils aged eleven, and the latest teacher assessments for pupils aged seven, standards were average. Nearly all pupils attained the expected levels for their age group with several attaining the higher levels. This maintains the standards reported at the previous inspection. Inspection evidence confirms that, throughout the school, the majority of pupils, including those in Year 7, are working at the expected level for their age but few achieve above this level due to a lack of challenge for more able pupils. However, pupils' achievement overall is satisfactory as they acquire a sound understanding of the main areas of scientific knowledge. Pupils with SEN make satisfactory progress due to the appropriate support they receive in the classroom. Since the last inspection, the school has improved the quality of investigative work.

65. By the time pupils leave school at the end of Year 7 they are working on topics well within the Key Stage 3 programme of study and have made reasonable gains in their knowledge and understanding about science, which they use well to explain everyday phenomenon. Pupils enjoy science and have a very good understanding of scientific procedures. They explain the investigations they have completed confidently, using appropriate scientific vocabulary. Pupils in Year 2 have a sound understanding of what plants need to grow, while pupils in Year 1 understand the need for exercise to keep fit and healthy. Pupils in Year 6 use their knowledge of electrical circuits effectively to make an electric quiz game that either lights up or buzzes when questions are answered correctly. In

Year 7, pupils plan a fair test to investigate how chemicals such as ammonium nitrate and magnesium react when heated or when mixed with water.

66. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with instances of good specialist teaching in Years 5, 6 and 7. Most teachers have good questioning skills and ensure that all pupils are given the chance to contribute their ideas. Learning objectives are clearly communicated to pupils and teachers refer to what pupils have already learned in previous lessons. Teaching is most successful when the teacher's subject knowledge is secure and the teacher uses a variety of strategies throughout the lesson to assess pupils' understanding. In the one unsatisfactory lesson seen, the pace of the lesson was slow and pupils became distracted. Consequently, too much time was spent trying to regain pupils' attention and, as a result, they learned very little. Teachers are beginning to assess progress at the end of each science topic, but marking is inconsistent and does not often focus on what pupils must do to improve. The quality of written work is not as good as it could be.

67. The leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. The subject is led by a newly appointed co-ordinator in Key Stage 1 and a supply teacher in Key Stage 2. Both are enthusiastic and have recently begun to work together to provide a consistent approach to the science curriculum. However, neither has an overview of the subject's strengths and weaknesses across the school or had the opportunity to attend training for subject leaders. Although the Key Stage 2 subject leader is carrying out this role on a voluntary basis, she has introduced a number of effective initiatives that include detailed plans covering the science topics for Key Stage 2 and Year 7 and the introduction of assessment activities at the end of each science unit.

68. The use of literacy and numeracy to enhance pupils' learning is limited. Group and partner discussion is used appropriately to reinforce learning and develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. However, opportunities for pupils to hypothesise and explain their findings in writing or record them on charts and graphs are more limited. The use of ICT is also under developed.

Information and communication technology

▲ CONTENTS

Provision in ICT is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- ICT is generally very well taught;
- there have been rapid improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and standards achieved;
- pupils attain standards that are above the national average at Years 6 and well above at Year 7;
- the subject leader is very focused on raising standards of achievement and attainment. He fulfils his role very effectively.

Commentary

69. Teachers root their planning and teaching securely in the very good scheme of work provided by SCE. As a result, the teaching of ICT is generally very good, pupils' achievement is good and often very good and standards in ICT are above average in Year 6 and well above average in Year 7. Work undertaken by the school has resulted in excellent improvement since the last inspection, when standards in the subject were unsatisfactory.

70. The best ICT lessons are conducted at a brisk pace which keeps pupils concentrating on their work. Teaching builds very effectively on work undertaken previously and pupils are encouraged to consider ways in which they could improve their work. Key technical vocabulary is displayed and clarified. Teachers use the interactive whiteboard very effectively to support their very clear explanations, and ask well considered questions to assess pupils' depth of understanding. As a result, pupils work with great application and interest and thoroughly enjoy their lessons.

71. Pupils in Key Stage 1 achieve well and attain in line with national expectations. Overall effective teaching of ICT skills ensures that pupils use these skills with increasing confidence during their time at the school. Pupils are able to

select the program they require, and they have good mouse and keyboard skills. During a Year 2 lesson, the majority of pupils, including those with SEN, were able to select pictures of machines from a clipart program and save these into a personal electronic file. Year 2 pupils have learned about, and are able to discuss, applications of ICT at home and at school. During one very good ICT lesson Year 2 pupils were transfixed as the school secretary and school keeper demonstrated the use of a bleeper.

72. Teachers build very effectively on pupils' prior skills and knowledge. For example, in Year 1, pupils learn that instructions to a screen roamer may include both the use of direction and units of length. They enter one-step instructions for the screen roamer using their mouse to operate a simple command pad on the computer screen. By the time they reach Year 4, pupils are able to write a program containing several steps, including the use of the 'repeat' command, for the screen roamer to follow. In Year 2, pupils create pictures using a graphics program; they are able to select appropriate tools for the task. In Year 5, pupils have experience of graphical modelling and create graphical pictures in the style of the artist Matisse. Throughout the school, pupils use tools such as digital still and video cameras; older pupils have produced a set of animated cartoons, with the guidance of, and using equipment personally provided by, the ICT subject leader.

73. This carefully planned progression through the scheme of work, combined with highly effective teaching, ensures that pupils attain standards which are above national expectations in Year 6. Standards continue to rise in Year 7 where pupils are able to present ideas in differing ways, demonstrating a clear sense of audience. They are able to use information from different sources and critically refine their work to improve its quality.

74. As well as providing very effective ICT teaching for older pupils, the subject leader demonstrates very effective leadership and management. He has a very good overview of standards attained by each cohort in the school, gained by perusing pupils' electronic files. He has not yet undertaken formal observations but offers support and advice based on his informal observations of teaching in the ICT suite. The subject leader makes himself available for a period after school each week to assist staff in developing their technical expertise and subject knowledge. He has provided training for the ICT technician who provides very good technical support for the school's hardware and also provides very good support as a teaching assistant during lessons in the well equipped ICT suite. In addition, the subject leader has provided training for teaching assistants so that they are able to support pupils with word processing.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

▲ CONTENTS

75. ICT is beginning to be used to support teaching and learning across the curriculum. Teachers are becoming increasingly confident in the use of interactive whiteboards, and pupils use word processing packages to a limited extent to support their work in English.

Humanities

▲ CONTENTS

History, Geography in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 and Citizenship in Year 7

▲ CONTENTS

Standards in **history and geography** are in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 and in Year 7. Standards in **citizenship**, in Year 7, are in line with national expectations. Generally, pupils know more than the work in their books or on display suggests. Overall, pupils are not expected to produce high quality, sustained pieces of work. Too often their work is poorly presented and too much of it, especially in Key Stage 1 and parts of Key Stage 2, is in the form of worksheets. This lowers the requirement for pupils to think, organise and present their knowledge and understanding independently and more adversely impacts upon the more able pupils. In Key Stage 1, pupils' weak grasp of reading and writing skills limits considerably their response to the subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- pupils enjoy this range of subjects and, as many of them are well travelled, they bring much experience and knowledge to their studies;
- pupils' written work, and the work presented in their books, does not fully reflect their knowledge and understanding;
- there is some good teaching within these subjects; a range of interesting and engaging teaching activities are planned;
- the teaching allows for many opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills; but
- there are too few resources, especially class sets of textbooks, related fiction books and audio-visual material, to support the work in these subjects.

Commentary

76. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of historical concepts; for example they have a sense of time past and understand that things were done differently then. They are learning about significant people and events in British history, such as the Great Fire of London, The Plague and Samuel Pepys. They are beginning to understand how we know about events from the past and the importance of recorded and other evidence. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are beginning to search different forms of evidence, for example photographs or texts, to place events in time. They know about British history post-1948, medieval monarchs, the Romans and both world wars. In Key Stage 2, they also study some of the history of Gibraltar and effective links are made in English lessons with historical topics; for example, Year 4 pupils covered the experience of Anne Frank as part of their work on diaries and Year 6/ 7 looked at the work of war poets in their poetry lessons.

77. Only two history lessons were observed during the inspection; one in Year 2 and one in Year 6/7. The teaching and learning in both lessons were good. In Year 2, pupils had to recall what they had learnt about the Great Fire of London and from which source, then prepare a series of questions to ask 'Samuel Pepys' when he came to visit them. The class, consisting mainly of boys, behaved immaculately and were focused intently on listening to 'Mr Pepys' and finding out more. As a result of their interest, and the very tight time frame given to them by their teacher, when they had to write they did so purposefully and productively. In the Year 6/7 lesson on Britain post-1948, pupils had to work in small groups to examine a wide range of photographs and identify the decade. To support their understanding they had to tell their partners what evidence the photographs provided to support their choice of decade. This required them to recall, amongst other things, the establishment of the National Health Service in the 1940s, immigration in the 1950s; and the popular culture of the 1960s. Pupils knew quite a lot and this activity helped them and their teacher clarify misconceptions and identify gaps in their knowledge. The lack of text books for the pupils to refer to immediately was a significant hindrance to their further learning. Without access to high quality texts their learning is sometimes in danger of being superficial.

78. No teaching of geography or citizenship was observed during the inspection. Scrutiny of the planning and pupils' work showed that the requirements of the National Curriculum programmes of study are covered appropriately. Pupils' geography books show satisfactory progress across the key stages, although there is too much that is worksheet based in Key Stage 1. The most comprehensive and detailed work is seen at upper Key Stage 2 and Year 6/7. In Year 6/7 the work is planned mainly from the Key Stage 3 programmes of study with some from Key Stage 2. Evidence from work on display and from speaking to pupils in Year 7 shows that provision for citizenship is satisfactory. They are learning about the British political system; for example, they followed the national election closely and participate in their school and community based activities.

79. The management of the humanities is satisfactory. The planning is securely embedded and teachers' subject knowledge is satisfactory. Resources, however, are unsatisfactory.

Religious Education

80. Insufficient evidence was available to support overall judgements on provision in RE. Only one lesson was seen and the work in pupils' books was examined.

81. In RE, pupils in Year 2 have a good knowledge of major Christian festivals, such as Easter, Christmas and Palm Sunday. In Year 4, pupils discuss the relevance of the Torah in everyday life. Older pupils in Year 6 and Year 7 explain how the religious practices of pilgrimage made a difference to Hindus and examine the significance of water in both the Hindu and Christian religions. Through discussion and reflection, pupils make a connection between learning about different religions, such as Judaism and Christianity, and develop an understanding and tolerance of others. Pupils' understanding is further extended by hearing visitors talk about their beliefs and through visits to the local church, synagogue and Hindu Temple. The subject is appropriately led and managed and the SCE Agreed Syllabus for RE has been implemented effectively.

Creative, aesthetic, practical and physical subjects

▲ CONTENTS

Art and Design, Design and Technology, Music and Physical Education

▲ CONTENTS

Main strengths and weaknesses

- standards in art and design are above national expectations in both key stages and in Year 7;
- standards in music are in line with national expectations in Key Stage 2 and standards of singing are above national average in Year 7;
- specialist teaching is of very good quality in art and design and DT.

Commentary

82. A limited number of lessons were seen in these subjects. Evidence from portfolios, displayed work, teachers' planning and discussions with pupils and staff indicates that standards in art and design are above national expectations in both key stages and in Year 7. Lessons observed in Key Stage 2 indicate that standards in music are in line with national expectations in Key Stage 2. Too few lessons were observed in DT and PE to support a judgement on standards in these subjects.

83. In art and design, evidence from portfolios and work on display indicates that pupils make good progress in colour mixing, painting, collage work and observational drawing skills. Specialist teaching in Key Stage 2 promotes high standards of work. Pupils collect visual information to assist them in their work. They evaluate and discuss ideas, methods and approaches used in their own and others' work. In an outstanding lesson for Year 5 pupils, different pictures by the artist Picasso were shown on the interactive whiteboard to encourage pupils to respond to the artist's varying styles. The pupils were highly engaged, discussing the use of complementary and contrasting colour, texture, shade and angle. The teacher used the discussion to clarify technical terminology and presented the pupils with interesting and relevant information on the Spanish Civil War as a background to Picasso's work. The pupils moved to the art room to use different media to create a picture which expressed their essential character. The excellent introduction and the teacher's encouragement to take risks with the available media inspired pupils to experiment and to modify and discuss and demonstrate their vision of its intention and meaning.

84. The co-ordinator is a very skilled teacher who maintains an overview of standards through the maintenance of portfolios. She has a clear understanding of how she intends to develop the subject throughout the school. A specialist teaching room is available for art which is well used and very well resourced.

85. Music in Key Stage 2 and Year 7 is taught by a specialist teacher. Standards are in line with national expectations overall. Lesson plans clearly identify learning objectives and progression in pupils' learning over time and within each session. In an effective Year 3 lesson, pupils used various instruments to express the differing types of sounds heard in a supermarket. This lesson gave pupils the opportunity to recognise and explore ways in which different elements of music may be combined and expressively used and to discuss their work and its desired effect. The teacher made effective use of a digital recording package on a computer to record each pupil's contribution and replayed these so that pupils could analyse and improve their performance. In a singing lesson for Year 7, the digital recording package was used to record the class singing. Pupils discussed their efforts and, with guidance from the

teacher who modelled the weaker parts of the performance, modified these so that their singing audibly improved. In so doing, they achieved a high quality product.

86. Resources for music are very good. A spacious specialist room enhances curricular provision for the pupils and ensures that they have plenty of space to work without close distraction from instruments which may create louder sounds than those they are using.

87. One lesson was observed in DT. This was for Year 7 pupils and comprised an introduction to using wood. The quality of teaching was very good. The teacher used her very good subject knowledge to describe different types of wood, and these were handed from pupil to pupil to feel. With a very good accent on health and safety, the teacher modelled the use of different types of saw and a drill. Pupils practised using these on various types of wood as a prelude to using these tools accurately to make frames for mirrors, the design of which they had drafted during a previous lesson. During this lesson, a teaching assistant provided much valuable support to a pupil whose special educational needs made it difficult for her to saw accurately. This support enabled the pupil to taste success. During the lesson, pupils' sawing and drilling techniques improved very quickly because of the high quality teaching they received. The teacher used humour well to maintain pupils' engagement.

88. Resources for DT are satisfactory overall, but the number of available tools for the class observed was barely adequate.

89. One sound lesson was observed in PE for Year 5 pupils. The teacher questioned the pupils carefully to ascertain the importance of 'warming up' before strenuous physical activity. The activities for pupils were well planned, with three groups each undertaking different activities, swapping batons, running and long jump. Each group focused on improving pupils' performance and pupils were very involved in the lesson; competing to improve their personal best. The teaching displayed good subject knowledge. However, only one group of pupils benefited from her expertise throughout the lesson because a teaching assistant and parent helper were used to support other groups.

Inspection judgements

▲ CONTENTS

Inspection judgement	Grade
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	0
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3

Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	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	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	4
The role of SAC	5
The leadership of the headteacher	9
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7); insufficient evidence (9).