

INSPECTION REPORT

HARPLEY CHURCH OF ENGLAND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED PRIMARY SCHOOL

Harpley, near King's Lynn

LEA area: Norfolk

Unique reference number: 121092

Headteacher: Mrs J Walder

Lead inspector: Mr J Bald

Dates of inspection: 27 to 28 April 2004

Inspection number: 256342

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 controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	39
School address:	Nethergate Street Harpley King's Lynn Norfolk
Postcode:	PE31 6TN
Telephone number:	01485 520274
Fax number:	none
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs P Andersson
Date of previous inspection:	June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Harpley voluntary controlled Church of England Primary School is a very small school, serving a rural Norfolk village. It has 39 pupils, aged four to 11, with significantly more boys than girls. Pupils are taught in two mixed-age classes. There are no pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or learning English as an additional language. The number of pupils in each year group varies greatly from year to year, and a high proportion of pupils at the time of the inspection had started their primary education in other schools. The standards reached by pupils joining the school are average overall, but range from well above to well below average. An average proportion of pupils have special educational needs, mostly related to literacy problems, but above average numbers in some year groups need extra help from outside the school. The school's social and economic circumstances are favourable.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
17932	John Bald	Lead inspector	English Special educational needs Information and communication technology (ICT) History Religious education Music
9779	Suzanne Smith	Lay inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Geography Physical education
22147	Anne Holland	Lead inspector	Foundation stage Science

The inspection contractor was:

Open Book Inspections
6 East Point
High Street Seal
Sevenoaks
Kent
TN15 OEG

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides a very good education and is a very happy learning community.

Standards are high, particularly in English and mathematics, and all groups of pupils achieve very well. Teaching, learning, leadership and management are very good, and have some excellent features. Provision for care and for pupils' personal development is excellent. The cost per pupil is well above average, but the school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are well above average in English and mathematics, and above average in science.
- Pupils want to come to school. They work very hard, and attitudes and relationships are excellent.
- Leadership, management and governance are very good, with excellent use of ICT.
- Achievement is less consistently good in subjects other than English, mathematics and science.
- Teachers plan very well to meet the wide range of ages and learning needs in each class.
- The teaching of English is excellent in Years 3 to 6, particularly in writing.
- Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in learning and grow in confidence.

The school has made very good improvements in its work since the last inspection. Standards in English and mathematics have risen significantly, and provision for pupils with special educational needs and for those new to the school has been developed and extended. Management and governance have been made more systematic and effective, and now make excellent use of computers and all forms of external advice. Weaknesses in accommodation, assessment and the curriculum seen during the last inspection have been tackled very well and the school has built well on its strengths. Value for money has improved significantly.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Achievement is very good in the foundation stage, in Year 2 and in Year 6. The grade A* indicates that these results in 2002 were in the top five per cent of all schools nationally. However, test results need to be interpreted carefully, as year groups are very small, and the 2003 results also represented very good achievement. All pupils who did not have special educational needs achieved the nationally expected standard in English, mathematics and science, and a high proportion did better than this. The standard of work in Year 6 during the inspection was well above average in English and mathematics, and above average in science. Standards in other subjects inspected and sampled ranged from average to above average. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well, particularly in reading and mathematics. Standards in Year 2 during the inspection were above average in English, mathematics and science, and in other subjects inspected. All pupils in the reception class were on track to meet national learning goals for their age.

Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is excellent. Pupils have excellent attitudes to school, co-operate fully, and contribute much to the school community and to their own learning. Behaviour is excellent, and older pupils treat younger ones with exceptional consideration and kindness. Attendance is among the highest in the country.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is very good. Teaching is very good. Very good planning and teamwork from teachers and teaching assistants ensures very good teaching and learning, particularly in English, mathematics and science. Teaching is very well adapted to pupils' individual learning needs, and there is excellent teaching in English in Years 3 to 6. Teachers' very good use of discussion and questions promotes high standards in speaking and listening. Pupils develop good skills and confidence in independent learning.

The curriculum meets pupils' needs well, particularly in literacy, but the time for some subjects is only just adequate. The school makes very good use of its library, and there are very good opportunities for enrichment outside lessons. Teachers and other adults come to know pupils very well and provide them with excellent care, support and guidance. There is a very good partnership with parents and the community, and a good partnership with primary and secondary schools. The school is very well staffed by experienced teachers and teaching assistants, and accommodation is well designed. The school and its grounds are very well kept.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher has created a strong sense of common purpose among teachers, pupils, governors and everyone connected with the school. Her management, like that of the other teacher with management responsibility, is closely focused and effective. It makes excellent use of computers for administration and communication. Governors are closely involved in the direction of the school. The overall quality of their work is very good, and the school complies fully with statutory requirements.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have a very positive view of the school. They support it strongly, and are particularly happy with teaching, standards, personal development and the quality of care. Pupils told inspectors that they were happy in school, and demonstrated this through their excellent attitudes and behaviour and their consideration for teachers and for each other.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure that each subject is given sufficient time to enable pupils to reach good standards in it.
- Ensure that higher-attaining pupils are fully challenged in their work in all subjects.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Children join the reception class with broadly average standards for their age, and most reach the national learning goals by Year 1. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are well above average in most years, though they are lower when there is a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in a year group. Achievement overall in the school is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In most years, national test results are well above average in Years 2 and 6.
- Standards in Year 6 during the inspection were well above average in English and mathematics, and above average in science. They are very high in writing.
- Achievement in speaking and listening is very good throughout the school.
- Achievement could sometimes be higher in subjects other than English, mathematics and science.
- Almost all children under five achieve the early learning goals.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well in relation to their learning difficulties.
- Pupils have very good understanding of major world issues.

Commentary

1. The number of pupils in each year group is very small, and only seven pupils took national tests in each of Years 2 and 6 in 2003. The turnover of pupils is also very high, and many new pupils have special educational needs. Each year's results must therefore be analysed with caution, and in 2003 there was a high concentration of pupils in both year groups with special educational needs that required help from outside the school. Overall, pupils joining the school, both in the reception class and later, have reached average standards for their age. The standards reached by individual pupils range from well above to well below average, and a significant number of younger pupils have weaknesses in speaking.
2. In Year 2, in 2003, the concentration of pupils with learning difficulties resulted in well below average test results in reading and writing, and below average results in mathematics. However, no pupils were still working towards National Curriculum level 1 in any subject, and pupils who did not have special educational needs reached standards that were well up to national average levels in reading and above them in mathematics, though standards were slightly lower in writing. Results in the previous three years, however, have ranged from above average to very high in all three tests, and were very high in every test in 2002. Year 6 results in 2003 were below average in English, but average in science and above average in mathematics. All pupils who did not have special educational needs reached at least the nationally expected standard, and almost all did better; the proportion of pupils reaching higher than expected standards in the tests was well above average in English and science, and very high in mathematics. The Year 2 results represent good achievement from pupils' starting points, and the Year 6 results very good achievement.
3. The standard of Year 6 work seen during the inspection was well above average in English and mathematics. Pupils read widely and read aloud with very good expression. They speak confidently and fluently, and listen attentively to their teachers and to each other. Standards in writing in Year 6 are very high as a result of carefully focused teaching in the literacy hour and in other subjects. The use of word-processing is particularly effective in ensuring grammatical accuracy and in helping pupils organise extended pieces of work, the best of which are well up to the standard expected of good GCSE candidates. Year 6 pupils have very well established basic skills in mathematics, and apply their knowledge very effectively in solving problems and

in the study of new fields such as geometry and data analysis. Standards in science are above average overall, and represent very good progress from pupils' starting points, as many Year 6 pupils arrived from other schools knowing less science than would be expected for their age.

4. The standard of work sampled in other subjects in Year 6 ranged from average to above average. There are strengths in aspects that have been studied closely, but time is limited, and planning does not always ensure that higher-attaining pupils are working to the highest levels of which they are capable. Nevertheless, careful choice of topics, and their reinforcement through daily acts of collective worship and additional learning opportunities outside the classroom, give pupils very good understanding of major world issues, such as fair trade. This makes an important contribution to citizenship, and prepares them very well for secondary school. Pupils in Year 6 use computers confidently, and reach above average standards, with particular strength in their use of word-processing as a tool to improve and present writing. They also reach above-average standards in religious education, where the knowledge of detail and the principles of major religions they gain in lessons is re-inforced by very effective teaching in daily acts of collective worship. Overall, standards in Year 6 represent very good achievement for all groups of pupils.
5. Standards in Year 2 during the inspection were above average in English, mathematics and science. There were particular strengths in reading, in speaking and listening, and in pupils' understanding and use of number work. Pupils' writing in science showed very clear understanding of basic principles, which were often expressed very effectively in their own words in writing. The standard of work in subjects sampled was also above average. This included very good understanding of their own and other faiths in religious education, which contributes to literacy skills through work on Bible stories, and in artwork. Pupils' best work showed good use of computers for mathematics and very good word-processing, preparing them for the school's very effective provision for this in Years 3 to 6. Standards in Year 2 represent very good overall achievement from pupils' starting points. Pupils in the foundation stage during the inspection were on track to meet the national learning goals in all areas. All of these pupils had additional learning needs, sometimes in specific areas, and their achievement is very good.
6. The headteacher and governors set targets for improvement carefully, with full consideration of the needs and abilities of each group of pupils. New pupils, some with special educational needs, often join after targets for the year group have been set. In 2003, the school met its target for English and was very close to its target for mathematics. The overall pattern of achievement in the school shows very good improvement from the last inspection. Standards have risen strongly in Year 6 in English and mathematics, and have been maintained at above-average levels in science, despite the difficulties outlined above. As at the time of the last inspection, pupils with special educational needs make very good progress, and the range of learning difficulties facing the school has increased.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance is very high, and behaviour and attitudes to learning are excellent. Provision made for personal development leads to excellent growth in maturity, personal values and relationships.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent behaviour and relationships have a very positive impact on learning.
- Enjoyment of school and learning lead to very high attendance and excellent punctuality.
- Pupils treat each other and adults with friendliness, respect and consideration.
- Planning for pupils' personal development leads to excellent growth in maturity.
- Pupils care for each other, and develop a very strong sense of responsibility and citizenship.

Commentary

7. Pupils enjoy coming to school and their lessons and this leads to excellent levels of attendance. Parents told inspectors that their children were keen to attend, did not like to miss school through illness, and were pleased to return after holidays. Pupils often arrive at school early and punctuality at the beginning of the day and after break times ensures that lessons begin promptly. Parents support good attendance and punctuality very well and ensure the school is informed about absences. Registration procedures are efficient and effective.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	2.3	School data	0
National data	5.8	National data	0.4

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

8. Behaviour and attitudes to learning and are excellent. Pupils are keen to learn, and co-operate fully with their teachers. Very high levels of motivation lead them to do the best they can. For example, they show very real pleasure when they complete set tasks within time limits. They work enthusiastically and, throughout the age range, show themselves willing and able to remain focused on work until it is completed. They listen carefully to guidance from their teachers, and reflect it in improving their work. They enjoy the additional activities planned for them, complete homework regularly and take part in additional activities with interest and enthusiasm. Behaviour at break times is sociable and happy, and pupils' response to the bell for the end of break is instantaneous. Older pupils show high levels of care and responsibility for those younger than themselves. They play kindly and patiently with them at break-times, and take a leading part in paired reading activities. There have been no exclusions since the last inspection; pupils who have had fixed-period exclusions from other schools work and behave as well as all of the others.
9. There is excellent response to opportunities provided for personal development. Pupils have positive attitudes to, and high levels of interest in, the lives of people from other cultures and religions. Full advantage is taken of opportunities provided within the local community and beyond for pupils to interact with others from a wide range of backgrounds. This leads to tolerance and respect for other people and religions. The school takes every opportunity to put pupils in touch with cultural developments beyond the village; an excellent concert by the group Elastic Band, organised by a professor from the Royal College of Music, took place the day before the inspection; it was recorded by the school to a high standard and used as a basis for discussion and writing. Pupils express themselves confidently, listen to what others have to say and are well mannered and polite. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong and increasingly develop the ability to discuss views, reflect and form opinions about ethical and moral issues on a local and on a world scale. For example, they help sponsor a school for pupils with special educational needs in India, and work on display shows very good understanding of issues in world trade. Acts of collective worship present major issues sensitively and powerfully in the context of the school's Christian values, and make a major contribution to citizenship and moral and social development as well as providing excellent opportunities for reflection. Parents approve strongly of the school's work for their children's personal development, which builds on the values they bring from home.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is very good, with significant strengths in teaching and learning, provision for special educational needs and the involvement of all pupils. Care and guidance of pupils is excellent.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good throughout the school, and there are some outstanding features. The quality and use of assessment are good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan work very effectively to meet the wide range of interests and learning needs in each class.
- The teaching of English, mathematics and science is very good; English teaching in Years 3 to 6 is excellent.
- Teachers do not always challenge higher-attaining pupils fully in other subjects.
- Well qualified and experienced teaching assistants make a very effective contribution to learning.
- Marking is very consistent, gives very good guidance, and is followed up by personal discussion.
- Teaching promotes independent learning and co-operation very effectively, and builds confidence.
- Assessment and target setting are very effective in English, mathematics and science.
- Arrangements to assess additional learning needs are outstanding, particularly for pupils new to the school.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 13 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	6	4	2	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.

10. Each of the two classes has pupils in three to four year groups, who have reached standards ranging from well above to well below average for their age; in addition, the younger class contains children in the foundation stage, who follow a different curriculum based on national guidelines, and the older class has a significant proportion of pupils who have started their education in other schools. Some of these pupils have significant gaps in their skills, particularly in science and literacy. Teachers' planning to meet this exceptionally broad range of learning needs is the foundation of the very good education provided by the school. They use early assessment very well to establish what pupils already know, understand and can do. The early assessment of special educational needs is excellent, and is used from the start to direct additional teaching to the point of need. The register of gifted and talented pupils is equally well used. This approach enables pupils to make a good start on their learning, and allows teachers and teaching assistants quickly to build excellent relationships that build confidence and promote independent thinking. Excellent teamwork among full and part time teachers and teaching assistants ensures a high level of consistency in planning lessons, relationships, and teaching techniques, particularly in the national primary strategy.
11. Teaching is very good in English, mathematics and science; it is excellent in English in Years 3 to 6. Teaching in these subjects is based on very close assessment of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding, which is used to plan carefully focused lessons. Themes are chosen to interest all pupils in the class, and excellent class management ensures that pupils learn as

effectively when working in groups as in sessions involving the whole class. Teaching and learning in English, mathematics and ICT are reinforced by sessions at the start of the day with activities that range from quiet reading, independently or with an adult, to using computers to practise basic skills. This very systematic approach was enabling all pupils to make very good progress in English and mathematics, and the outstanding use of ICT in writing led the highest-attaining pupils to reach exceptional standards for their age. Because of timetabling, there was limited evidence of teaching in ICT, but teaching seen was good, and helped pupils learn to use computers and the Internet independently and with confidence. The teaching of science throughout the school is focused clearly on developing independent scientific thinking and understanding – a higher-attaining pupil in Year 2, for example, wrote a very clear description of the interruption of light from the sun to produce her shadow. In Years 3 to 6, teaching often has to focus on tackling gaps in the knowledge of pupils who have started their education in other schools, and is reinforced by an additional voluntary class after school, which all pupils in Year 6 choose to attend. Pupils with special educational needs during the inspection, all of whom had joined from other schools, were making rapid progress in the early stages of reading, writing and mathematics as a result of highly skilled teaching, focused on helping them develop effective learning strategies.

12. Observation of teaching in other subjects during the inspection was limited by the timetable and by the need to avoid excessive observation. The overall quality of teaching seen in these lessons and through analysis of pupils' work was good. As in the core subjects, planning was based on a theme that would engage all pupils, followed by individual activities adapted to the range of learning needs in the class. In the most successful lessons – including art and design for children in the reception class and pupils in Years 1 and 2 – activities were equally demanding for all pupils. In some, however, activities were very well matched to the needs of lower-attaining pupils, but could have been more challenging to higher-attaining pupils in parts of the lesson. Homework is regular and effective, and includes a very systematic home-school reading scheme that makes very good use of the library.
13. The overall quality of assessment and its use is good, and it has significant strengths in English, mathematics and science. Teachers in these subjects make very good use of marking to encourage and guide pupils. This is followed by target setting and a high level of personal guidance in discussions. However, assessment is not always used in other subjects to ensure that all pupils in the class are fully challenged. Formal assessment is very well followed up by teachers' excellent knowledge of individual pupils and their progress, and by monitoring of all pupils' use of the library and computers.
14. Parents were unanimous in praising the quality of teaching, both at their meeting with inspectors and in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire. They particularly appreciated the priority given in teaching to ensuring that all pupils developed a good grasp of literacy and numeracy skills, the early and effective action taken to help pupils with special educational needs, and the progress made by higher-attaining pupils. All parents appreciated their children's progress in independent learning and their preparation for the next stage of education. When the school was last inspected, teaching was good overall, and occasionally very good, with some weaknesses in the organisation of group work. The current pattern of teaching shows very good improvement on this position. The proportion of very good teaching has risen significantly, the best is excellent, and organisation of group work has shown outstanding improvement, not least through the high quality and effective deployment of additional adult support from teaching assistants and volunteers.

The curriculum

The curriculum provides a good range of learning opportunities, and has some very good features. There are very good opportunities for enrichment outside lessons. The school is well staffed and has good resources for learning. Accommodation is adequate, but has some limitations.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum makes very effective provision for literacy, numeracy and speaking and listening.
- Teachers and associate staff have very good experience and qualifications for their work.
- Provision for the foundation stage in the reception and infant class is very well organised and effective.
- The curriculum provides very well for pupils with additional learning needs.
- There is barely sufficient time for pupils to reach good standards in some foundation subjects.
- The curriculum makes very good provision for pupils' personal development.
- There are very good opportunities for pupils to enrich their learning outside lessons.

Commentary

15. The school provides a good range of learning opportunities, with particular emphasis on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The curriculum is very well adapted to needs of the pupils, many of whom have moved from other schools. Early assessment of pupils' strengths and weaknesses is used to ensure that special educational needs and gifts and talents are identified at an early stage, and reflected as far as possible in lesson planning and the grouping of pupils. This leads to very good learning and achievement in all of the core subjects, and ensures that pupils have the skills they need to succeed in secondary school. On the other hand, while legal requirements are met for all subjects, some have only just enough time. This leads to achievement that is sometimes satisfactory rather than good, and some skills, such as drawing, are underdeveloped.
16. The curriculum makes very good use of available time to promote personal, social and health education and citizenship. This includes daily acts of collective worship of high quality, that allow important issues to be examined in the context of the school's Christian ethos. Since the last inspection, the curriculum for the reception class has been revised to take full account of national guidance; it is now very good, and benefits greatly from highly skilled teaching that enables these pupils to work alongside others who are already following the National Curriculum. The school has also made important extensions to its use of ICT. As recommended in the last report, the strategic role of the governors has been very well developed.
17. The school works very well with the community to provide a wide and rich range of learning opportunities outside lessons. Like the main curriculum, these are adapted to the needs of the pupils – for example, the science club at the time of the inspection was focusing on filling gaps in pupils' previous knowledge and understanding. There are regular sports and homework clubs – sometimes alternating with the weather, as there are no indoor sports facilities – and there is a very good range of visiting speakers, writers, artists and performers from the community and beyond.
18. The school is very well staffed with experienced teachers and teaching assistants, who have developed a strong sense of shared commitment and teamwork. Staff keep their skills under continuous development – for example, by co-operation with a specialist secondary school on science. Other associate staff provide very effective technical and administrative support. The school has assembled a good collection of resources for learning, including a wide range of reading resources, and it supplements these by well-chosen loans from the county library for specific purposes. ICT provision is good, and both computers and the library are used regularly

and well. Accommodation has very good features, including good improvements since the last inspection in teaching accommodation, toilets and access for people with disabilities. There are adequate facilities for pupils in the foundation stage to play outdoors. There is, however, no separate dining room, so that a classroom has to be used for lunch, and no room for indoor physical education. The school has arranged for this to be provided at a local estate, which involves some travel. The school grounds are imaginatively laid out with interesting activities for the pupils, and beautifully maintained.

Care, guidance and support

Arrangements to promote pupils' health, safety and well-being are very good, and the quality of care and guidance is excellent. Teachers actively seek and value pupils' views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very positive relationships give pupils a sense of security and build confidence and independence.
- Teachers and other adults know pupils and their circumstances very well.
- Arrangements for pupils joining the school, both in the reception class and later, are excellent.
- Personal support and guidance are very well informed by monitoring and assessment.
- Pupils are very well prepared for secondary school.
- Pupils know that their views will be carefully considered and valued.

Commentary

19. The school has maintained the high quality of this aspect of its work since the last inspection, and the extension of its work on care and guidance to include groups of pupils new to the school has been excellent. Very positive relationships throughout the school ensure that pupils are happy to share concerns with adults where they need to do so. They are very well supervised when out of the classroom and the school works hard to eliminate and minimise hazards. The person responsible for health and safety has a good understanding of requirements and ensures that risks are suitably assessed and dealt with as required. Staff training has ensured that the school is very well placed to deal with first aid emergencies, and arrangements for child protection are fully in place. Maintenance programmes ensure that equipment and appliance servicing fully meets requirements.
20. Very effective relationships with pre-school groups and well-planned induction ensure that children settle into the reception class very well. Pupils joining the school after this time are also supported very effectively; procedures to establish their needs are thorough. Very well planned personal, health and social education (PHSE) and citizenship lessons, together with discussions during circle time, make significant contributions to personal development. Staff know individual pupils, their achievements and development very well indeed. This enables them to provide very effective individual support and advice in lessons. It ensures that difficulties pupils have with learning are dealt with promptly. Pupils value the individual attention they receive. Marking is helpful and errors in work are followed up with pupils individually. Targets are thoughtfully set and regularly revisited and pupils are aware of what they must do to improve. Overall, the quality of this care and guidance is excellent, and it plays a key role in giving pupils the confidence and skills they need to succeed in secondary school.
21. Arrangements to ensure that pupils' views are known and acted on in this very small school are very effective, and have been thought through carefully; for example, as there are very few pupils in some year groups, the format of a school council was not judged to meet the school's needs. All pupils know that their views are sought during regular circle time and sometimes during surveys carried out in PHSE. They receive feedback directly from their teachers. They are very confident about expressing views and opinions and know that these will be valued.

They are particularly pleased about the planned action in response to views sought about the school environment.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's very good partnership with parents and the community makes a strong and consistent impact on learning. Links with other schools are good. Parents strongly approve of the school's work and support their children's education very well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have full confidence in the school and provide strong and consistent support.
- Parents have regular and very effective contact with all teachers.
- Voluntary help within the school makes a very effective contribution to learning.
- Community involvement supports learning and personal development very well.
- The school benefits from its contacts with secondary schools and the small schools cluster.

Commentary

22. The school has sustained and developed its very positive working partnership with parents since it was last inspected. Parents are very confident of their welcome in the school and value the availability of staff before and after school each day. Communication is very effective. There is a weekly bulletin for parents, and the school prospectus and governors' annual report to parents are prepared to a professional standard. Attention was drawn by the inspection team to some small details missing from the annual report. Annual progress reports provide very good information about attitudes, personal development, work covered and what pupils are able to do. Those for older pupils give parents a very clear idea of their children's strengths and areas for development, though some writing in reports for younger pupils does not set out individual achievements so clearly. Parents and some members of the community provide very effective voluntary support during lessons and in accompanying trips out of school. The parent and teacher association very successfully organises a range of events that raise funding; this is carefully spent on equipment and resources.
23. The school makes full use of the very small but immediate community to extend opportunities for learning and personal development. Local people and small businesses willingly offer support, and many share their talents and interests with pupils by giving well-received talks. Every opportunity for pupils to meet and interact with a wide range of people is used and has included those from a range of cultures and backgrounds. Local facilities are used well for physical education.
24. The school works well with its local secondary school, ensuring an effective transfer of information before pupils transfer to Year 7. Well planned opportunities to become familiar with the school before they start ensure that they settle in quickly and well. The school also co-operates closely with others in the local small schools cluster to ensure that learning opportunities are kept up to date. Links to pre-school groups are close and supportive. Their regular visits and use of school equipment ensure that children look forward to joining the reception year.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

25. Very good leadership and management enable the school to provide a full range of educational opportunities for its pupils and to promote high standards and achievement for all. Very good governance ensures that standards and achievement are closely monitored and contributes to the school's strong sense of direction. The school makes very good use of all of its resources, and provides good value for money, despite the high cost per pupil.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's clear and thoughtful leadership has built a strong sense of teamwork, involving everyone connected with the school.
- Governors are closely and effectively involved in all aspects of the school's life and work.
- Management is equally effective in promoting high achievement and equal opportunities for all pupils.
- Excellent use of ICT enables the school to be managed without distracting attention from teaching.
- All aspects of the school's work, including finances, are closely and effectively monitored.
- The school makes very good use of external advice and resources.
- Core subjects and special educational needs provision are very well managed; the management of some other subjects could do more to stretch the highest-attaining pupils.

Commentary

26. The headteacher provides a very clear lead for the school, based on teamwork, equal opportunities and the promotion of high achievement for all pupils, and gives a high priority to personal development and citizenship, based on the school's Christian ethos. She works very closely with the school's other full-time teacher to ensure that management promotes these goals, with clear priority given to meeting all of the needs of the pupils and to equipping them with the skills and values they need to be successful in the next stage of their education and in later life. There are particular strengths in the management of English, mathematics and science, which enable all pupils to achieve very well by Year 6, even when there have been earlier gaps in their knowledge and skills. Special educational needs are identified very quickly, with best use of all available resources to meet them. The school site is very well managed, and new building has been very well planned to extend learning opportunities as well as to promote equal opportunities. On the other hand, the very small number of teachers available to take management responsibility, and the priority given to core subjects, have had some impact on the management of foundation subjects, where time is limited, and planning does not always ensure that higher-attaining pupils are fully stretched. Since the last inspection, national guidelines for the foundation stage have been fully adopted, and the school has developed highly successful policies for race equality and special educational needs. These are fully reflected in its work.

Example of outstanding practice

Excellent use of ICT in management and administration enables this small school to manage its work very effectively and to keep in touch with all current educational developments at minimal cost to teaching time.

The school has invested carefully in equipment, training and technical support to meet its specific needs. The headteacher has set up templates for a wide range of purposes, from policy making to weekly bulletins for parents. These enable her to focus solely on the content of documents, and allow the other teacher, the school's part-time secretary, other staff and governors to contribute quickly and effectively. Computerised registers of gifted and talented pupils and of those with special educational needs allow efficient and up to date record keeping and target setting. Regular use of the Internet, including bulletins and guidance from the local education authority's website, keep the school abreast of new statutory requirements, which its systems enable it to meet while leaving the headteacher free to devote as much time as possible to teaching and supporting colleagues. Financial and performance data are analysed accurately and in detail to keep the headteacher and governors in touch with performance, and expenditure is tracked from month to month. This outstanding use of new technology allows the headteacher to teach a mixed-age class effectively for four full days each week, and at the same time to manage the school to a very good standard.

27. The governors have a very clear strategic vision for the school, backed by a well-organised practical approach that keeps them fully in touch with all developments. They monitor all aspects of the school's work closely and accurately in comparison with that of similar schools, and make an important contribution to its ethos and management. They ensure that pupils, staff and parents are regularly and fully consulted, and allocate funds carefully to meet the

school's aims. They keep all policies and the curriculum under regular review, and set clear priorities, based on the needs of the pupils. Governors are strongly committed to providing equally well for all pupils – as one put it, 'We don't turn anyone away' – and have been particularly effective in promoting relevant acts of collective worship that make a major contribution to pupils' personal development and citizenship in a Christian context. Governors have made significant improvements in their strategic role and organisation since the last inspection, and have a good development plan, backed by training.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	161,250	Balance from previous year	22,495
Total expenditure	155,862	Balance carried forward to the next	27,893
Expenditure per pupil	4,031		

28. The very wide fluctuation in numbers between year groups leads to exceptionally large variations in the school's income from one year to the next, and the balance carried forward reflects prudent planning to ensure continuity in the school's work once pupils in Year 6, who currently make up almost a third of the school, move on to secondary education. These circumstances require the school to keep spending under close control, and it has invested wisely in resources, equipment and services from the local education authority with a clear eye on benefits and costs. Its investment in technical support for ICT has been particularly effective in ensuring reliability and in allowing the ICT co-ordinator to concentrate on teaching, and its spending on support staff has played a key part in enabling it to match teaching to the very wide range of learning needs in each class. This has been particularly important in helping the large number of pupils who have started their primary education in other schools, including those with special educational needs, to settle in quickly and make progress. Necessary improvements to the site since the last inspection have been carried out at minimal cost, with excellent use of best value principles, both in ensuring competitive pricing and in obtaining maximum benefits for the school, including a major extension of access for people with disabilities. While the cost per pupil is significantly higher than in most schools, the quality of education provided and the school's very effective work in meeting pupils' additional learning needs represent good value for this investment.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

29. Provision for children in the Foundation stage is very good. There are three reception age children in the school, all of whom have additional learning needs. They are in a mixed-age class of ten children, which includes one Year 1 pupil and six Year 2 pupils. The school has very close links with the pre-school playgroup and, as a result, the children adjust to school very quickly. All three of the children are achieving well because the teaching is very good and the curriculum is appropriately planned to provide a wide range of interesting and relevant activities, which are well matched to their needs. All adults set excellent role models for the children and manage them well. The headteacher and part time teacher work very closely and effectively together, and monitor the children's progress carefully. The accommodation inside is satisfactory and there is a secure, appropriate, outdoor area, equipped with a range of suitable equipment. Sensitive timetabling maximises children's access to this area, though budgetary constraints mean that it is not available at all times of the day. Planning is very good and in line with the recommended curriculum for children of this age. Assessment is thorough and used very well to support future learning. It is particularly strong in the early identification of individual learning needs. The headteacher is a very effective co-ordinator for children in the foundation stage.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because of very effective teaching and the high expectations set by staff.
- Children feel confident and happy as a result of the support of adults and older pupils.
- Individual needs are identified at an early stage, and specialist support is provided.

Commentary

30. Children respond very well to the high expectations set by the staff. They know what is expected of them; they understand the clear boundaries set for them and know school routines very well. They settle to tasks with a minimum of fuss and behave sensibly. The very good team work of all the adults in the class gives the children an excellent example of co-operation and a calm but rigorous approach to work. All three show interest in what they are doing and are confident and happy to talk about it. They concentrate well, even when not directly supervised, and are eager to learn.
31. Children are continually encouraged to be confident about what they achieve, to share and take turns amicably. They are already aware of the needs of others in the class and wait their turn to share their achievements in whole-class sessions. Their rapid gains in learning are as a result of the continual reinforcement of rules by the adults, who treat the children, and each other, with courtesy and respect. This leads to trusting relationships and helps the children to succeed. A particular strength is the early identification of the needs of individual children, followed by careful planning to ensure that these needs are met. This leads to very good progress, not just in their social development, but in each aspect of the foundation stage curriculum. All three children are on target to meet the early learning goals in this aspect of their learning and will probably exceed them by the time they transfer to Year 1.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers and support staff take every opportunity to develop the children's language skills.
- Teaching is very closely adapted to pupils' specific needs.
- Children receive a very effective introduction to books and reading.

Commentary

32. Inspection evidence indicates that all three of the children are on course to meet expectations in this area of learning and one is likely to exceed expectations for children of this age. All three children have made very good progress as a result of the many opportunities they are given to talk and to listen. Working closely with older children enhances these opportunities. Teachers and support staff take every opportunity during all activities to develop and extend the children's vocabulary through probing questions and by involving them in whole-class carpet sessions. For example, during a literacy lesson, the children had to pack a bag with things they might need if they went on holiday to Africa. The support assistant continually chatted to the children, asking them questions as to why they thought they would need sun cream and why they could not pack an ice cream. The children had to think hard about what they were actually doing and to choose appropriate words to describe the differences between a holiday in Africa and a holiday in England. Very good relationships mean that the children have the confidence to talk and adults listen carefully to what the children have to say. Children enjoy books and listen attentively when stories are read to them. A higher-attaining child is already reading a simple text and writing simple sentences unaided. Many opportunities for writing are created and the children all hold their pencils correctly and are learning to write their letters correctly in cursive form. Teaching is consistently very good, planning is meticulous and ensures that, in a mixed-age class, the children have appropriate activities to support their learning in aspects of literacy.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A wide range of well planned learning activities leads to very good achievement.
- Teaching is closely and effectively focused on developing understanding.

Commentary

33. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers plan a wide range of interesting activities which promote mathematical understanding. All three children are working at levels expected for children of their age, they count confidently to twelve and can match the symbol to the number. They are able to record numbers and to recognise numbers around the room. The excellent relationships they share with adults give the children great confidence: in one session observed, a child exclaimed excitedly, 'I understand. I can do it now!' They know simple shapes such as square, triangle and are beginning to link their mathematical knowledge to other tasks – for example, when choosing objects to make shapes creatively. A strong element of fun in their mathematical learning encourages the children to take it further and apply it to new situations. All three are likely to exceed the early learning goals in this aspect of their learning.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff use questioning very effectively to enhance the children's knowledge and understanding of the world about them.
- Children are sensitively introduced to a range of world issues.
- Children learn to use ICT with confidence.

Commentary

34. Teaching and learning are good and the children achieve well. All three children are on target to reach the early learning goals in this aspect of their learning. During the inspection the children were observed experimenting with glues to find out which would be the best adhesives, and what would happen if they left them to dry. By the end of the lesson, the children had found out that if they wished to make a sand picture, they needed to put the sand on the glue before it dried and that they could colour the sand too. They had also learnt that some mixtures were not very effective as a sticking agent. During this activity the support assistant and the teacher both questioned the children to extend their thinking and to ensure that they had understood what they were doing. Children have opportunities to use the computer and they know how to use the mouse and how to click and drag pictures. They listen with interest to discussion of world issues in assemblies and in class, and respond well when asked what they think.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

35. It was not possible to make an overall judgement of provision or standards. No indoor physical education lessons were observed, and very wet weather limited observation in the playground. On the one fine day during the inspection, however, children were seen playing very happily and constructively with older pupils, and appeared to be growing in confidence as a result of these pupils' patient and kindly support.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

36. It was not possible to make an overall judgement on provision or standards. However, work on display, including three-dimensional work in clay, indicates that children are on track to meet early learning goals. Children worked enthusiastically with clay during an art lesson with older pupils, and handled glue and brushes competently. Assessment records indicate that children make very good progress; they achieve well and are likely to reach the early learning goals in creative development.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 6 are well above average, and the best writing is of a very high standard.
- Speaking and listening skills are developed very effectively throughout the school.
- Teaching and learning are very good overall, and excellent in Years 3 to 6.
- Work is matched very effectively to the learning needs of all pupils.
- The teaching of reading to pupils with special educational needs is very effective.

- Teachers use the library very well to foster wide and independent reading.
- Provision for English is very well organised and managed throughout the school.

Commentary

37. Pupils begin Year 1 with average overall standards for their age. However, standards among individual pupils range from well above to well below average, and there is a similar pattern of standards among pupils joining the school from other schools. The results of national tests in Year 2 have been well above average in recent years except for 2003, when they were well below average; these results were influenced by a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, including some who had recently joined the school and who had barely begun to learn to read. The standard of work seen in Year 2 during the inspection was above average in reading and in pupils' best writing, though there was some inconsistency in the standard of written work. Speaking and listening skills were broadly average overall, but represented good achievement, particularly from pupils who had joined the school with difficulties in speaking. Overall, achievement in Year 2 is good.
38. National test results in Year 6 are almost always well above average to very high. While the overall point score was below average in 2003, all pupils except those whose special educational needs required additional help from outside the school reached the expected standard, and all but one exceeded it. The standard of work seen during the inspection in Year 6 was well above average, with a high proportion of pupils reaching higher than expected standards, and some very high achievement in reading and writing. Pupils in Year 6 speak confidently and clearly, and listen attentively to their teacher and to each other. Standards in spoken English are well above average. By Year 6, standards in English represent very good achievement among all groups of pupils.
39. Teaching and learning in English are very good. All teachers and teaching assistants have a very clear understanding of patterns of learning in English, including the diverse needs of the highest-attaining pupils in Year 6 and of young pupils in the early stages of learning to read and speak. They plan lessons around themes that will engage all pupils, and use carefully directed questioning to ensure that all take part at the highest level of which they are capable; each pupil is expected to make at least one contribution to discussion in every lesson. Lessons include a very good balance of reading, writing and speaking and listening skills, all of them very effectively reinforced in additional sessions at the start of the day and in homework, which encourages a wide range of private reading and extended writing. Work at word and sentence level is very effectively reinforced by the use of computers, both to practise basic skills and to help pupils apply their knowledge of grammar in redrafting their writing. Marking and assessment are very consistent, with a very effective balance of encouragement and guidance on improvement. Work is particularly well matched to the needs of the highest-attaining pupils, who are entered on the gifted and talented register, and to those who arrive with serious weaknesses in their literacy and speaking and listening skills. Teaching assistants carry out their work to the same standard as the qualified teachers. This promotes consistency in learning.

Example of outstanding practice

Excellent teaching of writing over an extended period, including outstanding use of word processing, enabled a teacher of a class of pupils in Years 3 to 6 to develop their writing to an outstanding level by the end of Year 6.

Excellent achievement in this class for pupils in Years 3 to 6 stemmed from careful assessment of their knowledge, skills and understanding when they joined the school (sometimes in Years 4 or 5), followed by teaching that closely adapted all aspects of national strategies to meet their specific needs. An excellent literacy lesson during the inspection began with the choice of a theme – how writers use small details to build up a character – that interested pupils of all ages in the class and enabled them to focus on factors involved in choosing words. Careful questioning developed pupils' understanding of the vocabulary in selected texts and its impact, and this was followed by a series of written tasks that had pupils build up their own character profiles and sketches in a suitable format for each age group. The final session examined pupils' work, in the context of a longer-term learning goal of having them use varied and complex sentences. All pupils are expected to make at least one oral contribution to each literacy lesson. Literacy work is enhanced by additional sessions at the beginning of each day, including extensive use of ICT for work at word, sentence and text level. This encouraged pupils to use the full resources of the computers, including the grammar checking feature, to draft, polish and check their work, incorporating specific aspects from their lessons. All twelve boys in the class were producing writing at the nationally expected standard for their age; most were achieving significantly higher standards, with the best work consistent with high GCSE grades.

40. Leadership and management in English are very good, and reflect the high priority given to the subject by the school and by parents. A strong sense of teamwork among teachers, teaching assistants and volunteers ensures that ideas and techniques are shared and used consistently. Standards and target-setting are carefully tracked by the headteacher and governors, and provision for pupils with special educational needs is very well organised, ensuring a close match to their needs in English and in the linguistic demands of other lessons. Reading resources, centred on the library, are chosen with care and very well used. The school takes every opportunity to extend pupils' horizons through visits from authors and theatre visits. There have been extensive improvements in standards and in the organisation of English provision since the last inspection, particularly in standards and progress in writing. Parents told inspectors that they were particularly pleased with the school's provision for English for all groups of pupils, and their views were confirmed by inspection evidence.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

41. There is very good provision for reading, writing, speaking and listening in other subjects. Pupils are consistently encouraged to write in their own words, and to present work to the same standard in all subjects. They use a good range of written forms, including effective retelling of stories in religious education and close personal observation and interpretation in science. Special events, such as the Elastic Band concert, are used very well to promote writing based on pupils' personal response. Reading and writing tasks are consistently well modified to meet the needs of individual pupils, with very effective use of ICT.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching and learning lead to well above average standards in Year 6.
- Teachers plan lessons very well to match pupils' existing skills and learning needs.
- Lessons include a wide range of interesting tasks, and are delivered with infectious enthusiasm.
- Pupils enjoy mathematics and apply their knowledge and skills well in solving problems.

- ICT is used very well to establish and reinforce basic skills.
- Mathematics has high priority in the school and provision is very well organised.

Commentary.

42. The standard of work seen during the inspection was above average in Year 2, and well above average in Year 6. This represents very good achievement among all groups of pupils, and also very good improvement since the last inspection, when pupils were reaching only average standards. As in English, the results of national tests in Year 2 and Year 6 have been well above average to very high in most recent years, but were affected in 2003 by the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. However, while these results were below average in Year 2, they remained above average in Year 6, with a very high proportion of pupils reaching higher than expected standards. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in response to teaching that is very carefully matched to their needs. This includes very effective use of ICT.
43. All teaching seen during the inspection was very good. Strengths included:
- Excellent relationships, based on detailed knowledge of individual needs and good humour.
 - Very good pace in both whole-class teaching and independent work.
 - Good planning based on pupils' previous knowledge and achievement.
 - Very good use of experienced and knowledgeable assistants.
44. Teachers plan very effectively to meet the wide range of learning needs in each class. This includes material presented to the whole class, work carried out in groups by the teacher and the teaching assistant, and independent learning. There is equal emphasis on developing and consolidating basic skills and on the application of mathematical skills to solving problems. A system of 'Maths Mates' is very effective in promoting work in pairs, where pupils discuss methods and results, and try out each other's suggestions. Teachers' very good questioning encourages pupils to consider reasons for and possible improvements to their methods. Pupils are eager participants, and take pride in their progress. Close and detailed assessment, using a wide range of formal and informal techniques, plays a key part in teachers' planning and in the grouping of pupils to maximise learning. Additional formal and informal teaching and practice, including consistent and monitored use of ICT, makes a significant contribution to standards and progress.
45. As in English, management and organisation of the subject are very effective, reflecting its high priority in the school. The subject leader liaises closely with other teachers, monitoring teaching and planning and involving all in reviewing progress and need. She knows all the pupils very well and is quick to identify particular needs. She analyses work and test results to support individual and group target setting. Governors are closely involved in reviewing standards and targets with the headteacher and co-ordinator. The school has a good range of resources, including a well-chosen range of computer software, and uses them very well.

Mathematics across the curriculum

46. Mathematical skills and knowledge are very well developed wherever there is a relevant application in a subject. For example, graphs are used to display findings in science and geography, and pupils learn to use and interrogate databases.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good, and well matched to the needs of all pupils.
- Pupils are encouraged to observe closely, and to think hard about what they see.
- The curriculum is well organised so that scientific skills are developed effectively.
- Pupils learn to write clearly and accurately, using their own words.
- Good use is made of other areas of the curriculum to support learning in science.

Commentary

47. Pupils have reached average standards in Year 6 national tests in each of the last three years. Nevertheless, 2003 results represent very good achievement in view of the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs; the proportion of pupils reaching higher than expected standards was well above average. As in English and mathematics, all pupils who did not have special educational needs requiring help from outside the school reached the nationally expected standard. Standards in Year 6 during the inspection were above average, despite gaps in the scientific knowledge and skills of significant numbers of these pupils when they joined the school.
48. Standards in Year 2 are also above average. Pupils can sort materials according to their properties and are using scientific methods and language to record their findings. They can define a fair test accurately and are aware that there are particular methods – such as a table – for recording scientific findings. They are particularly good at observing closely and explaining their observations clearly in writing. Throughout the school, standards in science represent very good achievement from pupils' starting points.
49. The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers provide a good range of experiences across all aspects of the science curriculum, so that pupils develop a broad range of knowledge and understanding. Lessons are very well planned, with a wide range of activities, many involving practical work and direct observation. Group activities are well chosen and support staff are used well to enhance learning experiences. Pupils discuss their findings enthusiastically and they work particularly well together in developing their skills of observation, measuring and recording. Language skills are promoted very well through the use of discussion and writing in both classes. Work is clearly written, well presented, and shows pupils' personal understanding and interpretation of their observations. Mathematical skills are well developed and ICT skills are used to record findings.
50. The subject is led and managed very effectively by the headteacher and the teacher of the upper school. Plans for improvement are well focused. The school has also established very strong links with a local specialist secondary school, and learning opportunities are enhanced by access to its advanced facilities. Arrangements for assessment are very good. Strengths and weaknesses in pupils' knowledge and understanding are identified, targets are set, and additional teaching is provided in the Year 6 revision club, which is very well attended. Marking is very consistent, and provides useful comments to help pupils to improve on their written work. When the school was last inspected, standards in science were above average; current provision, which has restored above-average standards despite the difficult circumstances of students joining the school late, represents good improvement on that position.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

51. It was not possible to observe sufficient teaching to support an overall judgement on provision, work was sampled by observing pupils using ICT for English, mathematics and ICT, and by discussions with them. This evidence showed that, by Year 6, pupils develop good fluency in using computers across the range of ICT skills in the National Curriculum. They have well above average skills in word-processing, which pupils use to improve and develop their grammatical skills and to organise their writing. Pupils across the school use computers confidently, particularly to reinforce their basic skills in literacy and numeracy, and older pupils make effective use of the Internet for research.

HUMANITIES

52. Religious education was inspected fully. Work in history and geography was sampled by observation of a history lesson in Years 3 to 6 and analysis of pupils' written work in geography. The quality of work sampled in history and geography was above average in aspects of the subjects that had been closely studied, such as world trade and aspects of ancient Greek democracy. Pupils in lessons were interested in the work, particularly when it was clearly relevant to modern society. Over the year, however, the amount of time for these subjects is lower than in most schools, and as a result standards are broadly average overall.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in Years 2 and 6.
- Pupils have good and detailed knowledge of Christianity and other major faiths.
- Acts of collective worship make an important contribution to religious education.
- Religious education provides very good opportunities for pupils to reflect on moral issues.
- Some work in Years 3 to 6 could offer more challenge to higher-attaining pupils.

Commentary

53. The school gives high priority to religious education in the context of its Christian ethos. The consistency of teaching and learning leads to above-average standards throughout the school, both in pupils' knowledge and understanding of their own and other faiths, and in their understanding of ethical issues in a religious context.
54. Teaching and learning is of good overall quality, with very good teaching in the context of the daily act of collective worship. Much effective and relevant teaching of moral, social and ethical issues is incorporated into lessons and into the very well planned daily acts of collective worship. Discussion of these issues makes a consistently good contribution to speaking and listening skills, and written work in Years 1 and 2 promotes writing skills well, through activities such as recording pupils' views of a Hindu wedding and retelling Bible stories. Teachers communicate the importance of the subject very effectively to pupils and sustain their interest by choosing relevant themes, such as the experience of Anne Frank. The choice of topics for the Years 3 to 6 class effectively engages all pupils in their work and promotes good discussion, though higher-attaining pupils are not always pressed to analyse material to the limit of their abilities, and there are limited arrangements to assess progress. Pupils make good use of the Internet for research.
55. Good leadership and management ensure a consistent approach to the subject across the school, and it is monitored well by governors. There is a good collection of resources for

learning, including a well chosen selection of books in the library. The school has made good improvements on the broadly average standards seen during the last inspection, and is in a good position to raise standards further.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

56. Art and design and physical education were inspected. Because of the timetable, it was not possible to inspect or sample work in **music**. There was too little evidence on which to base a full judgement on provision or standards in **design and technology**, which was sampled by analysing work on display and talking to pupils. This sampling indicated satisfactory achievement and broadly average standards. Pupils enjoy design and technology and have had opportunities to work with a range of materials. In Year 2, they can plan an activity and describe how it will work, for example when making puppets for Mother's Day. However, the finished puppets are based on a general design and there are few individual variations. Older pupils made hats for characters from books, matching them to personal attributes of the character. For example, the hat for Winnie the Pooh had bees hanging from it to distract the bees when he stole honey. In this work, pupils refined their original plan through discussion and reference to the original story text. One pupil designed a hat for Nhama in *A Girl Named Disaster* and revised her design following research on the Internet on African dress.

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils reach above average standards in three-dimensional work by Year 2.
- Pupils have good skills in analysing and evaluating art and techniques by Year 6.
- Drawing skills are below average in Year 6.

Commentary

57. Standards are above-average in Year 2, with good achievement in painting and in clay and other three-dimensional work. Standards in Year 6 are broadly average, but stronger in pupils' analysis and evaluation of art than in drawing, where skills are below average.
58. Teaching during the inspection was very good in the class for the foundation stage and Years 1 and 2, and good in Years 3 to 6. The teacher's enthusiasm spread to the children in the younger class as she explained and demonstrated the difference between two and three-dimensional art, using a range of sculptures, objects and pictures. When presenting the children with clay, she used the opportunity to explore where clay is found and how 'nuclay' is made. Year 2 pupils could explain that a kiln was needed to dry the clay to prevent it from snapping. The teacher encouraged pupils to 'play with it, stretch it, have fun,' and they did, exploring its properties while she explained simple techniques such as thumb pots. Pupils were quick to relate this to the divas they had made for Diwali before Christmas. Good teaching of older pupils during the inspection was focused on analysing artistic techniques. Analysis of pupils' work over the year, however, indicated that not enough attention had been paid to developing drawing skills.
59. Pupils apply their artistic skills well in some other subjects – for example, in creating book jackets – and have the opportunity to study sculpture at Houghton Hall. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall, but the limited allocation of time for art and the balance of teaching are not addressing weaknesses in older pupils' skills. Standards in Year 6 are similar to those at the time of the last inspection, and have improved to above average levels in Year 2. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Well laid out and attractive grounds encourage pupils to take part and enjoy the subject.
- There is good use of facilities outside the school and of professional coaching.
- Older pupils organise athletics events for the whole school.
- The subject is led and managed well.

Commentary

60. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and are broadly average throughout the school. As in the last inspection, only one lesson was observed, in Years 3 to 6, and this was satisfactory. Activities were well organised, and pupils fully engaged and exercised, though there could have been more emphasis on developing advanced skills for higher-attaining pupils.
61. Resources are good. The school has identified weaknesses in provision and made very good arrangements to tackle them, so that all pupils now have access to specialist local facilities and tutors at a local gymnasium. All pupils in Years 3 to 6 have swimming lessons, and learn to swim at least 25 metres before they leave. A particular success last year was when a pupil with cerebral palsy swam 10 metres. The school field is an excellent, well used resource, both at lunchtime and in lessons. A very good feature of the PE programme is the involvement of the older pupils when classes are vertically grouped to teach athletics. An example of this is the setting up and planning of activities for the 'Compass Run', involving all pupils in athletics activities using compass directions. The school takes part in inter-school football and rounders activities. They won the football tournament this year and have never fallen below third in the competition.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

62. Provision was sampled through discussions with pupils and co-ordinators, observation of assemblies, and analysis of work on display. All of the work sampled was of high quality, and confirmed the priority given to personal development as part of the ethos of the school. Pupils have very good knowledge and understanding for their age of significant world issues, which are presented in a relevant way – for example, their study of fair trade was focused on the example of chocolate manufacture. From the time they join the school, pupils are encouraged to see themselves as members of a community which will support them, and for which they share responsibility. They learn to put themselves in other people's shoes, and to see things from viewpoints other than their own. They develop good understanding of the range of cultures represented in modern society, and the school's consistent emphasis on discussion equips them with the skills they need to play a full part in it.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	1
Attendance	1
Attitudes	1
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	1
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	1
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	1
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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