

INSPECTION REPORT

**HIGHAM ST JOHN'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Higham, Burnley

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119387

Headteacher: Mrs J Walmsley

Lead inspector: Mrs J A Sharpe

Dates of inspection: 29th September – 1st October 2003

Inspection number: 256419

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:	139
School address:	Higham Hall Road Higham Burnley
Postcode:	BB12 9EU
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Gary Fox
Date of previous inspection:	9 th March 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

About seven in ten of the 139 pupils (79 boys and 60 girls) in this small village school are from Burnley and the surrounding towns and villages. Almost all are from white English-speaking families. Most pupils are brought to school by car because parents have chosen the school for their children. The school is full and some year groups are over-subscribed owing to successful appeals. It is distinguished by its Christian ethos and links with St John's Church and the community. The proportion of pupils receiving free school meals is well below the national average, as is the proportion with special educational needs, including statements. About 25 per cent of the pupils are identified as being more able and talented in one or more subjects. Most children attend a nursery before they begin full-time education, and the school's assessments suggest that attainment is typical for children at the start of the reception year. The school benefits from extra funding for small schools. It gained a national Artsmark Award in 2002 and a Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2003. There are no significant barriers to raising achievement.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18101	J. Ann Sharpe	Lead inspector	English, art and design, design and technology, music, English as an additional language.
31718	Denise Shields	Lay inspector	
10144	Pamela Mary Marriott	Team inspector	Science, geography, history, religious education, special educational needs.
30651	Margaret Entwistle	Team inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology, physical education, Foundation Stage.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **satisfactory** school with several important strengths. It runs very smoothly on a daily basis, and pupils come happily and attend very regularly. Satisfactory teaching, overall, enables pupils to achieve as well as pupils in similar schools at Year 6. The management of the school and the **value for money** that it provides are **satisfactory**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher's style of leadership encourages everyone to work together as a team.
- Pupils achieve high standards in basic literacy and numeracy skills at Year 2, reading at Year 6, and speaking and listening throughout the school.
- Children in the reception class make a very good start to their education.
- Pupils' behaviour and attendance are very good, and their attitudes to school are good.
- There is no secure way of checking that the school is as good as it should be.
- Standards in writing, investigative science and information and communication technology (ICT) should be higher at Year 6.
- Pupils do not always have the correct match of work they need to improve in lessons.
- Standards and teaching are now improving quickly in ICT.
- Pupils achieve very high standards in art and design at Year 6.

Since the last inspection in March 1998, there have been several important improvements, particularly higher standards in reading and a broader curriculum. The previous key issue was tackled, but teachers still do not always match work well to the needs of their pupils, particularly in the older classes. Standards at Year 6 now lag behind standards at Year 2, and this means that improvement since the last inspection is **satisfactory**.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Caution is needed when interpreting this data because the number of pupils tested was fairly small.

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

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

Pupils' achievement is **satisfactory overall**, and standards are **typical for pupils at Year 6**. Children in the reception class, Years 1 and 2 achieve well, and sometimes very well, in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards at the end of the reception year and at Year 2 are **above average**. The standard of listening, speaking and reading is high in all classes. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve well in reading, but do not make as much progress as they should in writing, investigative science, and sometimes in mathematics, especially the more able pupils. Although pupils are now making good progress in ICT from a very low starting point, their competence is still below what is typical for pupils at Year 6. Pupils achieve very high standards in art and design at Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs in all classes achieve well.

Pupils' personal qualities, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are **good** throughout the school. Behaviour, attendance and relationships are **very good**, and pupils' **good**

attitudes to learning show in their confidence and desire for learning. Children in the reception class make very good progress in personal, social and emotional development, and this gives them a flying start with their future work in the National Curriculum.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a **satisfactory** quality of education. **Good** teaching in the reception class and Years 1 and 2 ensures that pupils learn basic literacy and numeracy skills quickly. Teaching is **satisfactory** in Years 3 to 6, where not all lessons give pupils enough chances to improve. Teachers have started to involve pupils of all ages in working towards agreed learning goals. They do not plan consistently for this to happen in lessons, however, and parents are not fully involved. Good and very good lessons in art and design, ICT, music, physical education and religious education often enthuse pupils. The very good links with the community help to achieve the school's aim for a strongly creative curriculum. Pupils find lessons boring when they do not have to think hard, and the brighter pupils sometimes mark time. Adults watch over pupils' welfare well, and classroom assistants provide good quality extra help for pupils with special educational needs.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership, management and governance are **satisfactory**. The headteacher encourages everyone to work as a team by her very enthusiastic and approachable leadership style. She shares her vision for a creative curriculum very well, and sets a very good example for other teachers. Supportive governors make sure that the school meets its legal requirements. They have a sound overview of the school's main strengths and weaknesses, and these are reflected in plans for improving it. The school has no secure method of checking that it is as good as it should be. It has not acted with sufficient urgency to correct the dip in standards between Years 2 and 6, and has only recently halted falling standards in ICT. Senior teachers support the headteacher as well as they can, given that they teach for most of the time. The influence of subject co-ordinators on raising standards and improving teaching varies. The ICT co-ordinator is now taking the subject forward and lifting standards at a very good pace. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very well managed and helps them to make good progress in most lessons.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Pupils and their parents express a **good** level of satisfaction with the school. Many parents bring children long distances by car because they have chosen Higham Primary. Parents are pleased with most aspects of the school's work, including the creative aspects of the curriculum. A few, rightly, want better information about their children's learning and progress, and would like the school to work more closely with them – including homework and celebrating children's success in assemblies. Pupils almost all like coming to school, and feel secure that an adult will be there for them if they are upset or worried. They think that lessons often help them to find out new things, but they do not find all lessons interesting and challenging. Pupils like practical subjects, such as art and design, and feel proud of their school's achievements.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Drive up standards at Year 6 in writing, investigative science and ICT.
- Improve arrangements for assessing pupils and making sure that they reach agreed goals.
- Develop better ways of checking how well the school is doing and acting upon the findings.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is satisfactory, overall, although it is good in the reception class and Years 1 and 2. Standards are above average at Year 2 and average at Year 6, making them average overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils of all ages achieve high standards in speaking, listening and reading.
- Standards at Year 6 have dipped since the last inspection and lag behind standards at Year 2.
- Higher attaining pupils, particularly in the older classes, do not always achieve as well as they could.
- Reception children and pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well in literacy and numeracy.
- Standards in ICT are now improving, following a significant dip since the last inspection.
- Pupils reach very high standards in art and design by the time they get to Year 6.

Commentary

1. Pupils' achievement, although variable across the school, is satisfactory, overall, and they do about as well as pupils in similar schools. They make a very positive start to their education in the early classes where they make good, and sometimes very good, progress in literacy and numeracy. The pace of pupils' progress slows down in the older classes, however, where teaching is not always as effective. They do not always learn as much as they could, even though teachers work hard and want them to do well. This is because the school's arrangements for gathering and using National Curriculum assessment information are not yet tied closely enough into day-to-day teaching and learning.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.7 (18.2)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	15.8 (16.1)	14.4 (14.3)
mathematics	16.9 (18.2)	16.5 (16.2)

There were 21 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.6 (27.6)	27.0 (27.0)
mathematics	27.3 (27.9)	26.7 (26.6)
science	28.3 (30.0)	28.3 (28.3)

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

2. Test scores were looked at with caution because of fairly small year groups. Average point scores at Year 6 dipped a little in 2002, and pupils' performance, overall, continued a downward

trend since 1999. The unconfirmed results for 2003 suggest a small improvement, but the school anticipates another dip in performance in 2004. It will be 2005 before the headteacher anticipates scores starting to pick up again. Pupils' performance in tests at Year 6 has not been keeping up with the national trend of improvement. Test data, although not entirely reliable standing alone, follow a similar pattern to the much broader range of inspection evidence, indicating that standards at Year 6 lag behind standards at Year 2, because pupils do not make as much progress over time between Years 3 and 6.

3. Since the last inspection in 1998, the school has lifted standards in English at Year 2 to well above average, and maintained the above average standards in mathematics and science. Although standards at Year 6 in English have remained above average, a gap has opened up between writing and reading. The school is finding it difficult to match attainment in writing with the very high standard of speaking, listening and reading. Teachers have concentrated on improving writing in recent years, but the co-ordinator is still concerned about standards in writing, and it has become a focus for school improvement once again. Standards remain above average in mathematics at Year 6, although only marginally so, but they have dipped in science from above average to average. Where standards could be higher, this is usually because teachers do not expect enough of their pupils, particularly the more able and talented ones. Standards throughout the school in ICT have not kept pace with improvements nationally, and markedly so by the time pupils leave the school. Although things are now improving quickly, standards at Year 6 are still not high enough.
4. Children in the reception class achieve well and standards are above average at the end of the reception year. They get off to a very successful start to their education. Children do especially well in communication, language and literacy, and in personal, social and emotional development, owing to very effective teaching. The positive start they make with learning the basic skills means that teachers in Years 1 and 2 can build on their achievements and lift the standard of their work. Pupils of all ages achieve high standards in speaking, listening and reading, because teachers encourage them to learn and use new words confidently in all subjects, and because they provide opportunities for pupils to use books to support their learning, as well as to read them for pleasure.
5. Standards in art and design have improved throughout the school since the last inspection. The school's determination to extend the creative curriculum has paid off. Standards at Year 6 are well above average, reflecting pupils' very good achievement, owing to the emphasis that the school places on the creative arts, and also to the inspiring leadership of the headteacher.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' behaviour is very good, and their attitudes to work are good. The school provides good opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and they respond well to this. Attendance is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy school, attend regularly, behave very well and are keen to join in all the school has to offer.
- Teachers do not sufficiently and consistently provide opportunities for pupils to take some responsibility for their own learning.
- Pupils develop into mature, confident young people during their time at school.
- Relationships between pupils themselves and with adults are very good.
- Good opportunities for personal development give pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong, and a growing appreciation of life in a culturally diverse society.

Commentary

6. Pupils like school and get on well with their classmates, teachers and other adults who work with them. They confidently express the view that bullying is rare. If it does happen, they tell their teachers, who then help both the bullied pupils and the bullies. Pupils' interest in school life results in very good attendance, and punctuality is not a problem at the start of the day. Pupils with special educational needs enjoy school and are equally keen to learn.
7. The older pupils carry out a very good range of responsibilities that contribute to the smooth running of the school. Pupils in Classes 1, 2 and 3 have small tasks to undertake to help their teachers. They talk enthusiastically about these jobs and are looking forward to reaching Year 6 when they know there are special tasks to do. The school places much emphasis on the development of individual children. Work, effort and achievement, both inside and outside school life, are valued and celebrated, and pupils say that they appreciate this.
8. Pupils are discreetly encouraged to behave well, to respect, respond to and value the views of others, and to understand about life in a multi-ethnic society. The very close links with the church and its everyday involvement in school life, as well as the school's rich curriculum, mean that pupils are developing good spiritual awareness. Their regular involvement in community activities, including the creative arts, helps them to become mature and responsible young citizens. The school's work with the 'Building Bridges' project has raised pupils' awareness of cultural issues. Discussions, even with the younger pupils, indicate that they have a very good understanding of both racism and sexism.
9. Pupils behave very well and usually enjoy learning, and this has a positive impact on how much they achieve in lessons. They confidently discuss their work with visitors, and are proud of their achievements and of their school. They talk with enthusiasm about many lessons, but find some boring. Pupils are not always clear enough about what they need to do to improve their work. Homework, they say, is set regularly, but does not always challenge them or build on what they have previously learned. In spite of their comments, in lessons pupils do remain on task and concentrate well, even on occasions when the tasks are not well matched to their capabilities. Pupils are not consistently given, in all classes, targets or goals to actively involve them in improving and taking responsibility for their own learning. Where teachers have recently given pupils targets, they have not always discussed them with pupils, who do not always know what the targets mean. Homework is often the same for all pupils in the class, regardless of their age or ability. Whilst there is much good practice, the school does not always provide all pupils with opportunities to begin to take responsibility for their own learning. This is a significant missed opportunity for building on pupils' good attitudes and very good attendance.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 96.2%

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.8	School data	0
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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

Exclusions

There have been no exclusions in the last school year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

10. The quality of education, although **satisfactory** overall, is good in the reception class and Years 1 and 2, where pupils receive a firm grounding in the basic skills. Teaching and learning are variable, however, and pupils' progress slows down between Years 3 and 6. Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are catered for well, and they are very happy at school. The school reaches out to the local community very well in its efforts to broaden the curriculum. It is working to extend the satisfactory partnership with parents, so that parents become more directly involved in their children's education.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with good teaching and learning in the reception class and Years 1 and 2. Assessment, while satisfactory overall, is still developing and there is important work to do.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Basic literacy and numeracy skills are well taught in the reception class, Year 1 and Year 2.
- Teaching is not as good as it was at the time of the last inspection in the older classes.
- Good teaching in the reception class gives children a successful start to their education.
- Teachers do not always give pupils the work they most need to improve.
- Pupils' understanding of their own learning and progress is limited and patchy.
- Teachers are quickly becoming more knowledgeable and skilled in teaching ICT.
- Teaching and learning in art and design are very good.
- Teachers secure very high standards of behaviour in most lessons.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 29 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	4	15	9	0	0	0

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

Commentary

11. Although the above sample of lessons covered most subjects, inspectors' judgements give emphasis to English, mathematics and science. Several of the very best lessons were in the creative, aesthetic, practical and physical subjects, where there are clear strengths, owing to the emphasis that the school places upon them, and to the very good role models provided by subject co-ordinators. As well as lessons, judgements take account of pupils' current and previous work, and the discussions with them about it. All the evidence was set within the context of how well pupils are achieving as a result of teaching now and in the recent past.
12. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve very high standards in reading and writing because teachers concentrate on making sure that they quickly get a good grasp of how to use phonics (the sounds represented by letters) in both reading and writing. The very good direct teaching in the reception class gives children the flying start that teachers in Years 1 and 2 then build upon. The reception class teacher also puts a lot of emphasis on children's personal, social and emotional development, so that pupils come to Year 1 with good learning skills already established. The attention to teaching basic skills is just as evident in numeracy, where the reception class teacher finds interesting ways to help children to learn to count, to recognise numbers and to use mathematics in real situations. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 build on this well, and focus on helping pupils to learn to calculate in their heads and on paper. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is mainly good. This is because they usually have clear

targets to work towards, and the good quality support from classroom assistants helps them to reach the goals in their individual education plans.

13. The national strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are firmly in place. Teachers were always clear about what they wanted pupils to learn in lessons, and aimed to make sure that they did. The effect of the teaching upon pupils' achievement is variable, however, because teachers do not always recognise sufficiently, when planning their lessons, the wide range of abilities within the mixed age classes. Often, all pupils in the class or year group have the same or very similar work, and teachers do not tailor it to match closely their prior attainment in the National Curriculum. In a Year 4 and 5 literacy lesson, for example, there was plenty of challenge for older and more able pupils, but a small group of pupils spent half their lesson trying to keep up with the rest of the class doing work that was significantly beyond their capabilities. Their achievement in this part of the lesson was unsatisfactory. The fairly new arrangements for setting targets for teachers and pupils to aim for over time are still very unclear and inconsistent across the school. While a good example is being tried out successfully in Years 1, 2 and 3, pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 have too little knowledge and understanding of their own learning and how they need to improve next. Also, this weakness sometimes means that pupils have mundane work, such as copying out passages, and this does little to motivate them or take advantage of their obvious thirst for new learning. Teachers consistently secure good behaviour and often deploy classroom assistants thoughtfully. They rarely have to waste time dealing with problems and pupils are very receptive, but teaching, particularly in the older classes, is not always sufficiently practical, investigative and inspiring to lift standards in writing, mathematics and science. This weakness is holding some pupils back, and there are pockets of underachievement.
14. Teaching in ICT is improving quickly because teachers have increased their own technical knowledge and have become more confident to teach it. Although they did not use the computers in classrooms and the suite efficiently during the inspection, they are trying to find appropriate ways of doing so. The very good teaching in art and design leads to work of a very high standard in Year 6. The headteacher sets a very good example of teaching, and pupils achieve very well because class teachers' expertise is growing all the time. Teachers give art and design a high profile in displays, and this encourages the pupils to take an interest. They do not always capitalise on pupils' rich creative experiences, however, to lift standards in other subjects. The school development plan (SDP) shows that the headteacher and governors already know about some of the main weaknesses in teaching and learning, and have plans to tackle them in the near future.
15. Teaching in the older classes is not as good as reported in 1998. Although the school tackled the key issue on assessment at the time, everything has moved on a lot nationally, and teachers are still trying to make the changes necessary to bring the school right up to date. The main weakness in teaching relates to assessment, in that, where pupils could achieve more, it is usually because teachers have not matched their work to their prior National Curriculum attainment sufficiently well.

The curriculum

The increasingly broad, balanced and inclusive curriculum is satisfactory, overall. It is enriched well by visitors and educational visits. The accommodation and resources make a satisfactory contribution to pupils' learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Improvements in the ICT curriculum are now helping to lift standards.
- Provision does not always help the higher attaining pupils to achieve as much as they could.
- Provision for pupils' participation in the creative arts enriches the curriculum well.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs enables them to make good progress.

- Very good links with the local community enhance pupils' personal development.
- The creativity of the curriculum has still to filter through to some subjects

Commentary

16. The school uses financial grants and curriculum time adventurously to give all pupils access to high quality creative experiences. A local potter and batik, glass and sculpture artists work with pupils, leading them to produce high quality work. A theatre visit and a company of dancers enrich the work on Victorians in history. Such activities broaden pupils' understanding of cultures other than their own. Provision awakens interests and aptitudes, enhances pupils' self-esteem and confidence and stimulates positive attitudes towards school. Teachers help pupils to see the connections between the subjects they study, but they do not take full advantage of such exciting experiences to lift standards in other subjects, such as writing, mathematics and science.
17. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum, including for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers and classroom assistants help them to take a full part in lessons, as in the very good physical education lesson in Years 5 and 6, when they made as much progress as all the other pupils in the class. Teachers know which pupils are the more able and talented ones in each class, and the school has started to consider how best to meet their learning needs, especially in the creative aspects of the curriculum. The SDP for last year and this year reflects a decision to improve the curriculum by providing more challenge for pupils, particularly the more able and talented ones. While there is evidence of success in the creative and physical aspects of the curriculum, there is further work to do in other subjects. This weakness means that more able and talented pupils mark time in some lessons, because their thinking skills are not always increasingly challenged.
18. The fairly small team of teachers make good use of skilled classroom assistants. Friends of the school help with sporting activities and clubs, and this strengthens the personal, social and health education curriculum. Links with the local community and church are strong. Pupils are proud to contribute to festivals, exhibitions and special events, and these all play a significant part in preparing them for future citizenship. The newly developed school website is beginning to strengthen links with the community, as well as parents. The school also prepares pupils well for life as a responsible member of the global community, through its eco-friendly recycling, for example, and through assemblies and fund-raising that highlight current issues.
19. The school has significantly improved the curriculum and provision for ICT recently, and it is now satisfactory. It has up-graded hardware, and capitalised upon funding available for training to increase the expertise and confidence of staff. The computer suite was under-used during the inspection, but staff expect that a new scheme of work for ICT will help it to provide better value for money in the future.

Care, guidance and support

The school caters for pupils' care, welfare and safety well. Pupils receive satisfactory support, advice and guidance, and staff involve pupils satisfactorily in the school's work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good relationships and the good standard of care ensure that pupils feel happy and secure.
- Induction arrangements in the reception class are very good.
- Pupils think highly of the newly established School Council.
- Prior to the start of this school year, the school has not sought pupils' views formally.

Commentary

20. Staff follow the agreed policies and practices relating to health, safety and child protection well. Adults know pupils as individuals and recognise their personal needs, acting quickly if pupils are unhappy. Staff are particularly careful to make sure that new arrivals settle in quickly. They

attend regular meetings with other professionals and keep up to date with potential concerns by meeting with other staff. The very good links with parents of children starting in the reception class, and the sensitive arrangements for phasing children into full-time education, help children to quickly feel at home with the expectations and routines of school life. As a result, they do very well in their personal, social and emotional development.

21. The school provides a caring and happy atmosphere in which all pupils feel safe and secure. When responding to the inspection questionnaire, almost all pupils said that there was an adult they could go to if they were worried at school. Pupils are encouraged to respect one another and their teachers. The school code is a simple set of rules that pupils are expected to abide by. The rules help everyone to work and play in a harmonious atmosphere. The weekly merit assemblies and well-done cards encourage pupils to show kindness and courtesy towards other people. The very good relationships between adults and pupils help pupils to show mutual respect.
22. Teachers notice when pupils are having particular difficulties with their work and take action to try to put matters right. This sometimes leads to identifying pupils with special educational needs, and the co-ordinator then ensures that pupils have the support they need to improve. Higher attaining pupils, however, do not always receive enough help, and consequently, there are pockets of underachievement amongst this group.
23. Staff spent a long period preparing to introduce the School Council in September 2003. Pupils are very enthusiastic and are looking forward now to further opportunities to find out how it will operate and the benefits it will bring. Their views have not been formally sought before, and so the school has not been able to take them into account when agreeing priorities for improvement.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with the community are very good, and liaison with other schools and education providers is good. The school has developed a satisfactory partnership with parents.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are not as closely involved in their children's education as they could be.
- Very good involvement with the church and community enriches the curriculum and enhances pupils' personal development.
- Links with other education partners improves the quality of pupils' education.
- The headteacher and staff are very approachable and listen to suggestions and concerns.
- Parents have a lot of involvement in helping their children to settle into the reception class.
- Parents of pupils with special educational needs are provided with good information.

Commentary

24. The school is very much involved with, and at the heart of, the local community. This, together with the very close links with the church, helps pupils to grow into mature and responsible young people. Pupils take part in many local community events, the highlight being the annual Higham Exhibition, held at the school. Joint fund-raising events involve parents, village residents and members of the church together, so that all who participate benefit from the proceeds. The wider community provides a rich source of visits and visitors that are used very well to broaden pupils' experiences.
25. Despite that fact that pupils transfer to many different secondary schools at the age of eleven, arrangements to transfer information and for pupils to gain first-hand experience of their new schools are effective. The school is keen to ensure that pupils are well prepared for their next

stage of education, and it is successful in this. Even at this early stage in the school year, pupils confirm that leaving at the end of Year 6 holds no great fears for them. The school readily accepts students on placements from secondary schools, further education and higher education colleges. Students speak highly of their placements and of the support they receive from the school.

26. Although the school does not formally seek the views of parents, it encourages them to come in, at any time, if there are concerns or issues to discuss. The headteacher, in particular, keeps a very visible presence outside at the start of the school day, and is often seen chatting to parents. Parents appreciate this, as well as the more formal opportunities to meet with teachers. Whilst there is a very active parent and teacher association, from which the school gains financial benefit, parents are not always encouraged to become involved in other aspects of school life, for instance the celebration of their children's achievements or family learning initiatives. There are plans to increase the involvement of parents in the near future.
27. There are a few parent helpers, and the school is proud of the fact that several parents who started out as helpers have gone on to gain formal qualifications and employment. Parents of children who have special educational needs receive regular information and are invited to review their children's progress and attend annual reviews; the vast majority do. Parents are fully involved when their children first start school, and this ensures that they soon settle into the routines of school life. Reception class children mix well in the playground, and enter school happily in a morning, confirming the effectiveness of the school's induction arrangements.
28. Parents are satisfied with the day-to-day written information they receive. However, some expressed concern or uncertainty about the level of challenge in homework and the quality of annual written reports. Very few parents were clear about what their children's learning targets are, or when, if at all, they will be discussing the targets with teachers. Inspectors confirm these matters as genuine concerns. Good quality newsletters are sent out, but there is limited information for parents about what children will learn each term. Information about homework is also limited, and tasks are often the same for all pupils in the class. Annual written reports do not always reflect pupils' individual strengths and areas for improvement sufficiently clearly, and the school has plans to review them. The school could do more to involve parents in their children's learning, especially helping to set and support learning targets through work at home.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Satisfactory governance, leadership and management reflect the satisfactory quality of education provided and the satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's very positive style of leadership is one of the school's main strengths.
- Best value principles are not yet fully embedded into management and governance.
- Priorities for improving the school largely reflect the most important weaknesses, but weaker areas in pupils' work are not always spotted and dealt with quickly enough.
- Very good leadership in ICT is now lifting standards quickly.
- The special educational needs co-ordinator manages provision very well.
- Inspirational leadership in art and design helps the school to achieve its particular mission.

Commentary

29. The headteacher's very positive, enthusiastic and approachable leadership style motivates people to do their best because they feel valued, welcome and important. She is often seen inside and outside the school throughout the day, and has an 'open door' approach. She knows what is happening in the school, and takes a fair share of supervision duties. As a result, relationships are very good, and the school runs very smoothly on a daily basis. Parents,

governors, staff and pupils have confidence in the headteacher, and she communicates her vision for a creative curriculum very clearly to everyone. The headteacher is not afraid to tackle serious problems if they arise, such as past weaknesses in teaching. She demonstrates her keen desire to take advantage of opportunities for external checks on the quality of education provided by the school, as a means of improving it. Although several school initiatives are fairly new, the headteacher is taking the school forward in the right direction. She makes sure that priorities for improving the school, such as raising standards in writing, are largely the ones most likely to raise standards and improve quality over time.

30. The headteacher involves the two senior teachers in making decisions. They also have responsibilities for teaching and leading subjects, however, and their role in finding out how well the school is performing is still developing, with plans to involve them further in managing the school in the future. Staff know that teaching and learning need to improve in numeracy, ICT and writing, as well as making better provision for more able and talented pupils. The headteacher delegates responsibilities for co-ordinating subjects and areas of school life, and makes it possible for teachers to have some influence on other teachers. Co-ordinators do not always spot weaker areas in pupils' work, however, such as when it is too easy or too hard for them. Further work is planned to improve monitoring the standard and quality of pupils' work in the future.
31. Supportive governors are keen for an inclusive school, and provision for pupils with special educational needs is very well organised. Systems allow for a good amount of involvement of class teachers and well-trained classroom assistants, as well as the governor assigned to oversee provision. Similarly, the co-ordinator for ICT has been enabled to drive the school forward with improving teaching, the curriculum and resources. She knows what still needs to be done in order to lift standards to meet national expectations at Year 6. The headteacher's passion for the creative arts is known and verbalised by staff and governors, as well as much appreciated by parents and pupils. Changes to the curriculum in several subjects have widened pupils' experiences of artists and craftspeople. This is what the school wants for its pupils, and the staff and governors ensure that it happens in practice. The determined drive on the creative arts has improved teaching and lifted standards, notably in art and design.
32. The school has yet to absorb the four principles of best value fully into its management routines. Governors know that national test results are an incomplete picture of the school's performance, when comparing it with all schools and with similar schools. When discussing the weaknesses in Year 6 results, as suggested by the school's data, they stress that the progress of individual pupils is a more reliable indicator of standards. Improving arrangements for tracking pupils' progress through their school lives and reviewing the use of data for setting targets, however, have been identified as areas for further improvement as part of the SDP, and there is more work to be done. At present, the school does not have sound evidence to compare its performance with what it should be, and with what is achieved by other schools (benchmarking). This makes it difficult for governors to hold the school to account as well as they need to, for example when significant differences in performance arise between Year 2 and Year 6. The helpfulness of the SDP as an aid to managing the school has improved very recently. The latest plan gives greater emphasis and focus to raising standards than the previous plan. At the time of the inspection, governors had still to approve the new plan that the headteacher had prepared for them to discuss.
33. Governors do not formally consult parents about their satisfaction with the school's provision. The headteacher, however, describes plans to begin to consult those who depend on it, such as parents, in running the school in the future, in order to ensure best value. The new School Council has started to provide information about what pupils think about their school, but it is too early for governors to give consideration to information as part of their planning for future improvements. The SDP does not yet place strong enough emphasis upon measuring the school's success in the light of how much projects have cost. The recorded evaluations of progress with the SDP are sometimes too brief to have much significance in planning for the future. Funding set aside for ICT, special educational needs provision and classroom

assistants, for example, is not set clearly enough in the context of finding out to what extent these very large financial investments have been value for money in terms of raising achievement for all pupils. The new computer suite and computers in classrooms were greatly under-used during the inspection, and there is no clear indication of how much improvement in teaching and standards governors want to see to justify their spending. While financial control is good, financial planning is satisfactory. Governors hope to be able to keep the budget on track in the future, but unexpected expenditure, such as sudden staff absences, takes spending plans off target. Similarly, unexpected but approved additional spending on provision for pupils with special educational needs has contributed towards the deficit budget for last year. The headteacher cites the 'tight budget' as the only barrier to raising achievement for all pupils, and in these circumstances, applying the principles of best value more robustly than has been done so far is essential.

34. Since the last inspection in 1998, the school has moved forward well in several important ways, including dealing with the key issue, tackling a significant weakness in the teaching and introducing the national strategies for teaching literacy, numeracy and the Foundation Curriculum. Teachers speak with strong conviction about the many welcome improvements they have seen in recent years. During this time, however, there have also been significant national developments in relation to leading, managing and governing schools. Governors take their own training seriously, and the school is making some of the changes needed to reflect the national developments and guidance. The standard of work at Year 6 is not as high as it was in 1998, and the reasons are not only the varying composition of successive year groups of pupils. Pupils at Year 2 now outperform pupils at Year 6, and the school knows that this is the case. Improvement since the last inspection, therefore, is satisfactory.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	366,360
Total expenditure	373,986
Expenditure per pupil	2,652

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	2,250
Balance carried forward to the next	-5,376

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **good**, with some very good aspects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good provision is one of the school's main strengths.
- Children achieve well, and very well in personal and social development and in communication, language and literacy.
- Very good use of direct teaching methods pushes children on quickly.
- The well-planned curriculum gives children a head start in their learning.
- Staff work very well together as a team so that children feel happy and secure.
- Good quality and well-organised resources complement the teaching and learning.
- Very good links with parents are a considerable aid to children's learning.
- Adults do not intervene enough in children's play in order to maximise learning opportunities.

Commentary

35. Provision in **personal, social and emotional development** is **very good**. This is because of the ethos of self-respect between children and adults, but also because of children's good attitudes when they start school. Most children quickly achieve the early learning goals (ELGs) set nationally for children at the end of the reception year. They tug on their 'wellies' with very little help before an environmental walk, sit quietly and show interest in assembly, and take turns happily in the classroom and beyond. The phased introduction to full-time school helps children to settle in extremely well. Parents speak highly of the induction meetings, and of the one-to-one discussions with the teacher about what children can already do at home. The high expectations that adults have of children's behaviour lead to a very attentive group of children who are eager learners. The very good teaching and learning make sure that children benefit from other important areas of their learning.
36. Provision in **communication, language and literacy** is **very good** and children achieve a very high standard of speaking, listening, reading and writing. The class teacher leads the development of English across the whole school, and has an up-to-date knowledge of recent developments in teaching early reading and writing skills. Teaching is highly structured, well focused and lively, with high expectations made clear to children in an engaging way. Good links between communication and other areas of learning, such as knowledge and understanding of the world, help children to understand what they are learning about. As a result, by the week of the inspection (only the second full week in school for some children), they were attentive listeners and eager participants in activities. The teacher has a delightful repertoire of songs, rhymes and circle games, and makes excellent use of unscheduled time in the school hall to share these with children, who delight in the experiences. Stories, poems and rhymes are shared, discussed and enjoyed each day, so that many children are already beginning to recognise familiar words and read simple sentences. Many children can also link sounds to letters, and name and sound most letters of the alphabet (phonic knowledge). This is because 'phonics' is taught accurately, with insistence upon correct articulation, while also making the work fun. Work from pupils who have just transferred to Year 1 indicates that children make very good progress in learning to write. Children of average ability exceeded the ELGs by April, writing at least two simple sentences with capital letters and full stops, using phonetic spelling and correctly spelled common words. By July, they were beginning to connect sentences to create a very short story. The highest attaining writers produced several lines of connected and cohesive writing.

37. Provision in **mathematical development** is **good**, and children achieve well. The teacher knows how to develop their interest in numbers through singing games and songs, so that most children are already well on the way to counting accurately up to ten. They learned to recognise several flat shapes during a single lesson, and began to use the mathematical names, suggesting that they are already close to meeting the ELGs.
38. Insufficient evidence was collected to make a firm judgement on **physical development**, but during informal observations, children demonstrated at least average skills. Their **knowledge and understanding of the world** is good for children of their age. This is because the teacher plans work that leads into the National Curriculum very well, making sure that children have opportunities to meet the ELGs. A follow-up to listening to the story of 'Mrs Lather's Laundry' took children's imaginations into a Victorian washday, complete with flat-irons and washboard. When visiting the environmental area, children observed closely, looking for things and noticing features. Most children can already open up and follow a simple painting program on the computer, using the mouse to click on selected colours. **Creative development** appears at least **satisfactory**. Work displayed shows that children can explore colour, texture, shape and form, and work creatively. They have started to build up a repertoire of songs, and often use drawing and painting to record their experiences. They play imaginatively in the home corner, as they pretend to iron with the flat-iron and prepare a special meal. Provision for developing the imaginative aspects of the curriculum, however, is not as strong as it needs to be. This is because adults do not have as much direct involvement in the play and activities as they do in the more formal lessons.
39. It was not possible to make reliable comparisons with the previous inspection report. This is because of the national changes since that time in relation to provision and the revised guidance about inspecting it. Nevertheless, the school appears to have at least maintained the good provision, and in some cases improved it. The co-ordinator for the Foundation Stage has led the changes well, and children's high achievement, especially during formal teaching sessions, is due to good teaching and learning, overall.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching of literacy skills in Years 1 and 2 is one of the school's main strengths.
- Teachers are good at extending pupils' vocabulary through work in other subjects.
- Current checks on pupils' work do not always pinpoint weaknesses in provision for writing.
- The standard of writing lags behind reading at Year 6.
- Pupils of all ages achieve well and reach very high standards in speaking, listening and reading.
- Pupils' very good behaviour and good attitudes give them a head start with their learning.
- Teachers sometimes set work that is too easy or too hard for pupils, and they do not involve pupils in their learning well enough.

Commentary

40. Standards are well above average at Year 2 and above average at Year 6. Since the last inspection, the school has improved at a steady pace. It has maintained the above average standards, and has improved standards in reading and writing at the end of Year 2. The unconfirmed 2003 national test results reflect pupils' very good achievement in Years 1 and 2, showing an improvement on the previous year's results, especially in reading. Year 6 national test results are not showing much improvement over time, however, owing to poorer

performance in writing tests than in reading tests. The school already knows about this weakness and has new plans in hand to deal with it. Staff and governors have tackled weaknesses in writing before, but they have not been very successful in securing lasting improvements. This is because they do not have clear, consistent and effective ways of making sure that teachers pinpoint precisely how pupils of differing ages and abilities in each class most need to improve their work in order to reach a higher level. Pupils in the mixed age classes often have the same or very similar work, and it does not always excite them or encourage them to want to do better. Also, there is a very mixed picture across the school in terms of how well teachers set targets for pupils' future learning and involve the pupils and their parents in working towards reaching increasingly difficult goals. Some work does not challenge the higher attaining pupils sufficiently, and they mark time.

41. When taking account of the full range of pupils' work, most achieve well, overall, and pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve very well. This is because teachers give them very good opportunities to improve their listening and speaking skills by answering questions, working with the many different visitors to the school and taking part in drama. As a result of very good teaching of early reading skills, pupils quickly learn different ways of reading new words and how to use a variety of books. By Year 6, they read widely, use extensive terminology of books correctly, use a library or computer for reference, and can talk with genuine understanding about the books they have read. Most pupils are good listeners and very confident and articulate speakers. They have a very wide vocabulary and use a good standard of grammar in their speech, and most are very good at explaining their ideas in all subjects.
42. Teaching and learning are very good in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. Teachers are always well organised, prepared and confident about their teaching. They make sure that pupils with special educational needs have good support from classroom assistants. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils, who know exactly where they stand in terms of behaviour. As a result, no lesson time is wasted dealing with problems, and pupils show respect and listen carefully when teachers are talking to them. A strong feature of teaching in Years 1, 2 and 3 is that teachers are currently introducing a system to improve the way that they plan their work to match the widely differing needs of their pupils in reading and writing. They have set learning targets for pupils and are starting to involve the pupils themselves in working towards achieving their targets in lessons. In Class 2, for example, the teacher read with a group of pupils with a very clear focus on which aspects of their reading she wanted them to improve. Although there is further work to be done, this is a good start to improving provision. Many older pupils, when asked, however, knew too little about what their teachers wanted them to focus their learning on next. Some had very recently added targets for improving writing to the front of their books, but did not know much about the targets or how they were expected to use them.
43. Teachers do not always take enough advantage of pupils' obvious thirst for learning, and pupils confirm that they are bored when they copy from the board or complete exercises that do not require them to think hard. Leadership and management are good, overall. The co-ordinator gives a good lead to other teachers in terms of applying the national guidance about teaching literacy, although weaknesses, such as lack of challenge in pupils' work, are not always pinpointed and dealt with quickly.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

44. Provision is **good**. Teachers understand well the importance of teaching pupils to use language and literacy skills in other subjects. In a music lesson for Year 2 and 3 pupils, for example, the teacher asked pupils to listen to classical music and find words to describe how it made them feel. The pupils made some very thoughtful suggestions. Teachers regularly emphasise the vocabulary specific to subjects, such as art and design, music and physical education, and they ask questions in ways that encourage pupils to use the new words they have learned. Pupils read and write in most subjects at times, although teachers could do more to improve pupils' writing skills by reducing the amount of copy writing and completing worksheets in

subjects such as science, geography and history. Pupils are beginning to use ICT more frequently now to extend their reading and writing skills, but teachers do not make full use of the computers in classrooms and the new computer suite.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2, and standards are above average at Year 2.
- Pupils' ability to solve problems, especially in test situations, has improved recently.
- Work does not always challenge the more able and talented pupils sufficiently.
- Pupils do not know much about what they need to learn next in order to improve.
- Teachers and classroom assistants give good support to lower attaining pupils.
- Pupils concentrate, work hard and set out their written calculations neatly and accurately.
- Pupils have few opportunities to learn to use and apply mathematical skills in interesting and varied situations across the curriculum.
- ICT is underused in the teaching of mathematics, especially with older pupils.

Commentary

45. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 and standards are above average at the end of Year 2. This picture is reflected in the unconfirmed and improved 2003 national test results. Pupils' previous work also confirms this good standard. In particular, Year 2 pupils can use a good range of addition and subtraction methods, begin to record these accurately and have a firm grasp of shape and measures. Pupils' achievement at Year 6 is satisfactory and standards are above average, overall, although only marginally above. Unconfirmed 2003 test results show an improvement on 2002, although targets for the current Year 6 suggest that the school is expecting a dip in 2004. Boys achieve broadly the same as girls, because of the high work ethic and expectation that they will contribute fully to lessons. Additional work on problem solving has raised pupils' competence in answering the 'real life' problems they are set in national tests, and pupils' calculation skills are strong. This is where the higher attaining pupils show their competence the best. Nevertheless, in pupils' current and previous work, there are few examples of explaining their strategies, or of using creative methods to investigate number patterns and relationships.
46. The school has largely maintained the above average standard of work since the last inspection, although teaching is not always as strong as reported previously in the older classes. Teaching and learning, although satisfactory overall, are good in Years 1 and 2. Teachers balance lessons correctly between mental calculation and problem solving, and they explain new work clearly. They expect full concentration, and work output is high, so that most pupils have sufficient chances to practise new methods. Classroom assistants help lower attaining pupils to understand the work and to stay in touch with the class. All pupils in a year group sometimes have the same or similar work, however, and it is not always fully matched to their needs, especially the highest attaining pupils. This is most evident in the older classes, where they mark time in some lessons. Even in the improved area of problem solving, teachers do not challenge the most competent mathematicians to think deeply. They do not expect them to explain their strategies often enough or to search for new relationships between mathematical ideas. Marking is regular, but makes little reference to the targets set by teachers for pupils to aim for. Also, the targets are not fully known or understood by the pupils, and they have too little involvement in their own learning and progress.
47. Leadership is satisfactory. The co-ordinator keeps staff informed about current national and local developments and suggests ways of improving areas of weakness, such as problem

solving. Existing arrangements for checking provision, by looking at pupils' work, do not always pinpoint weaknesses, and there are plans to improve this aspect of the school's work.

Mathematics across the curriculum

48. Provision is **satisfactory**. Teachers are careful to give pupils opportunities to apply mathematics in other subjects, such as science and geography. They provide fewer opportunities for pupils to use their own initiative, however, or to follow through their own ideas about mathematics through investigational work as part of other subjects. This limits the development of critical thinking skills and the free-ranging approach to problem solving that many pupils are capable of. In a similar way, despite good access to the computer suite, the school does not yet make full use of ICT resources to enhance the teaching and learning of mathematics.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at Year 6 are not as high as reported at the last inspection.
- Higher attaining pupils underachieve in some lessons.
- Pupils use the vocabulary of science well when discussing their work.
- Pupils work hard and enjoy any opportunities for investigative work.
- Lessons do not always take enough account of pupils' ages and prior attainments.
- Classroom assistants provide good support in lessons for pupils with special educational needs.

Commentary

49. Standards at Year 6 have dipped since the last inspection. Although the unconfirmed results of the 2003 national tests indicate a greater proportion of higher attaining pupils than in 2002, the 2004 targets suggest that the school is expecting a fairly significant dip in the overall performance of the current Year 6 pupils. The full range of inspection evidence confirms that standards are currently above average at Year 2 and average at Year 6. Pupils' achievement is good in Years 1 and 2 and mainly satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Pupils of all ages do well with learning and using the vocabulary of science and using new words in their discussions. In Years 5 and 6, for example, pupils discussed the conditions affecting germination and used dictionaries to find the meanings of words such as 'dormant' and 'radical'. Teachers are good at introducing pupils to new words and questioning them to encourage listening carefully and answering using new words and terminology correctly. Classroom assistants are often on hand to support lower attaining pupils and to ensure that pupils with special educational needs can access the work. The assistants know the pupils and their individual education plans well.
50. Teaching and learning, although satisfactory overall, do not always give pupils the wide range of investigative experiences they need to reach the highest possible standards. Staff already know that this is an area for improving provision. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 had an opportunity to plan an investigation into germination, but they had little idea of what is involved because they are not sufficiently accustomed to doing this kind of investigative and collaborative work. Pupils' previous work indicates that they sometimes spend time completing tasks that do not challenge their scientific thinking sufficiently, such as copying, colouring and completing worksheets that ask too little of them. The main reason for this is that teachers do not take enough account of pupils' prior attainment in science skills when they plan lessons for the mixed age classes. The higher attaining pupils are particularly disadvantaged, and they underachieve in some lessons. Pupils work hard, even when their lessons are not very interesting. They enjoy practical work,

however, and would like to do more. They do not know how they need to improve in science, and the marking of their work does not help them as well as it could.

51. The subject leader ensures that resources are good, although pupils do not yet use ICT to increase their research skills. Staff know that target setting for groups of pupils is an area for improving provision, but there is further work to do to make sure that weaknesses in pupils' work are pinpointed and tackled quickly.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving, and pupils are achieving well in the areas of work they cover.
- The very good leadership of the ICT co-ordinator is one of the school's main strengths.
- The school has improved the resources, and there is now good quality hardware and a growing amount of software.
- Staff have become more confident, and direct teaching of skills is lifting standards.
- The computer suite is under-used and does not yet represent value for money.

Commentary, including information and communication technology across the curriculum

52. Year 2 pupils have broadly average skills. They are best at using text to record their ideas, and at making things happen through the use of ICT. They use the escape key to alter text spacing, and show very competent mouse control when highlighting and dragging text. Work in books and displays suggests that they are not as good at presenting information in tables, charts and text using ICT, or at evaluating their work as it progresses. Older pupils in the school are now catching up on time lost during the period when teachers' expertise did not keep up with the changing demands of the National Curriculum. Many pupils are very confident when using a search engine on the Intranet to locate information, and they understand how they need to frame search questions carefully, and skim and scan text before making a selection. Technical problems mean that there is little previous work to examine in Year 6, but, from discussions with pupils, it is clear that they have used databases and created charts and graphs. There are still large gaps in their knowledge and skills, however, particularly for those pupils who do not have computers at home. They have not used e-mail in school to exchange information, and have limited experience of using the computer to control events or monitor change. Standards are, therefore, below what is typical for pupils of their age.
53. The school asks a lot of the new and fairly inexperienced co-ordinator, but she has more than 'delivered the goods' by her good leadership. She has worked extremely hard and intelligently, seeking advice from the headteacher and local education authority advisory service about best approaches to improving provision. She prepared a very suitable subject action plan and ensured that it has been carried through. It is this positive action that is beginning to make such a difference to pupils' achievement. Staff confidence and expertise have risen because she showed them how to capitalise upon the new opportunities fund training received during 2002, so that they are managing the direct skill teaching well. The wise purchase of resources, especially the data projector, means that teachers can explain new skills directly to a whole class and follow this with tailor-made focused tasks for further practice. Along with the headteacher, she has organised the updating of computer equipment and put in place an 'acceptable use of the Internet' policy. This has helped the school to extend the use of ICT to promote inclusion for pupils with special educational needs, and increase the use of ICT links with families and the community.
54. Standards were described as above average at the last inspection, but National Curriculum requirements are now much higher than in 1998, owing to rapid national technological

advances. It will take time to regain that standard, despite the current improvements in teaching and provision. Although pupils use computers to enhance work in literacy, teachers do not yet fully exploit the potential for enriching learning across the curriculum. The co-ordinator has suggested links to other subjects in planning, and intends to check how well this is working. She has not had much opportunity to see other teachers in lessons, however, to check how well they are doing with making improvements to their teaching.

HUMANITIES

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching helps pupils to achieve well, including furthering their spiritual and social development.
- Using good quality resources assists pupils' enthusiasm for the subject.
- ICT is not a sufficiently well-used source of learning.

Commentary

55. Only one lesson was seen, and inspectors looked at pupils' books and talked to them about their work. Beginning in Year 1, pupils start to learn about world religions, such as Christianity, Islam and Hinduism. In Years 2 and 3, they know many stories from the Bible and know about the major Christian festivals. In Years 4, 5 and 6, pupils extend their understanding of Christianity and learn about religious practices in Judaism, Buddhism and Sikhism. This good grounding that teachers provide helps pupils to understand the significance of religion in people's lives. Teachers promote pupils' personal development well through religious education lessons. This was seen in a good Year 5 and 6 lesson, planned on a theme of 'Life is a Journey'. Pupils re-enacted the first chapter of *Pilgrims' Progress* with great enthusiasm, and the teaching furthered their understanding of the significance of special events in people's lives. It also helped them to make good connections with their work on writing play scripts in literacy. The co-ordinator makes sure that teachers use good quality resources well to cover fully the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. The good collection of artefacts from various world religions helps to maintain pupils' interest and to increase their understanding. Pupils benefit from handling real objects that are specially valued by their owners. This limited evidence suggests that standards at Year 6 have improved since the last inspection. Pupils do not yet use ICT as a regular and integral part of their work, however, and this limits their understanding of how to further their own learning, especially for the older pupils.
56. It was not possible to make judgements about provision in **history** or **geography**. Pupils' previous work and evidence from the few lessons seen suggest that they make good progress in learning historical facts, and are becoming aware of major events in British **history**. A strong feature of provision is that pupils learn to handle artefacts and place them on a time line. In Years 2 and 3, for example, pupils enjoyed discussing and handling artefacts, as they pretended to be 'time detectives', and placed them in order from the oldest. In **geography**, pupils are developing an understanding of different places in the world, and they are learning to use maps to assist their knowledge and understanding of features of particular locations. In a very good Year 4 and 5 lesson, pupils used maps when they contrasted the village of Higham with the village of Beled, and learned a lot by studying the lives of inhabitants. The way that the curriculum is organised in blocks of time throughout the cycle of topics allows pupils to study things in depth. Teachers make good links with other subjects, such as speaking and listening in discussions, and reading information. They aim to give pupils direct experiences whenever possible, including a few opportunities to use ICT for researching topics.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

57. The school places strong emphasis upon the creative and aesthetic subjects of the curriculum, and was awarded the national Silver Artsmark in 2002. Governors and staff are determined to enrich pupils' experiences in as many ways as possible, and are successfully doing so. As part of this quest, pupils have regular class **music** lessons. There was too little evidence to make judgements, but a **music** lesson in Years 5 and 6 was excellent. It was based on African drum music, and pupils were engrossed throughout, as they practised rhythms in groups to accompany a song, and finally performed it together. Pupils who are learning to play tuned musical instruments in extra-curricular activities were also challenged to achieve as much as they could. The standard of work was well above what is typical for pupils at Year 6. No lessons were seen in **design and technology**, although previous work indicates that pupils reach at least standards that are typical at Years 2 and 6. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 designed coats, and some used a computer program to do so. They knew how to find out which method of joining materials works best. Only two lessons were seen in **physical education**. The lessons, for pupils in Years 4 to 6, suggest that teaching and learning are good, because teachers know how to get the best from their pupils. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 made good progress with learning to throw and catch properly. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 worked very hard to improve their gymnastic skills when planning and performing, and evaluating their own performance and the performance of other pupils. Pupils with special educational needs made good progress in all these subjects, because they had the right kind of support to be able to take an active part in class lessons. Evidence suggests that provision is good, overall, and that the school successfully motivates pupils so that they grow in self-esteem and become increasingly mature in their approach to lessons.

Provision in art and design is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision is one of the school's main strengths.
- Pupils achieve very well and the standard of their work at Year 6 is well above average.
- The subject co-ordinator is a very good teacher who inspires other teachers.
- Pupils' learning is enriched greatly by working with artists and craftspeople from the community.
- Art and design is often pupils' favourite subject, and they try very hard to produce careful work.
- Teachers do not take full advantage of pupils' artistic and creative experiences to improve standards in other subjects.

Commentary

58. Art and design hold an increasingly special place in the curriculum because staff and governors are keen to give pupils an enriched education. Teachers value pupils' work and celebrate their achievements as often as possible. The headteacher recently led a project for several local schools, and pupils' work is part of a high quality exhibition in Barrowford. The many examples of work on display in the school, such as observational drawings and paintings, sculptures, modelling using natural materials and landscape paintings, make a very good contribution to pupils' personal development. The work suggests that very good teaching helps pupils of all ages to achieve very well. Pupils are proud of their work and try very hard in lessons. Although the subject co-ordinator taught the only lesson seen, pupils' previous work in all classes indicates that other teachers are just as determined to make art and design an enjoyable subject. The school has at least maintained the above average standards since the last inspection, and clearly lifted standards at Year 6. Since that time, staff have also extended pupils' opportunities for creative work, and given art and design a higher profile within the whole curriculum. They do not always take full advantage of pupils' creative experiences to improve standards in other subjects. In writing, for example, although pupils' observational, listening and speaking skills improve a lot as a result of having interesting things to do, this is not reflected as much in their writing. The subject co-ordinator is a very good role model for other teachers, and

this helps everyone to work together to achieve her strong visionary mission. Parents are, rightly, pleased that children enjoy lessons and have very good opportunities to work with visitors to the school.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
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	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	2
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	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
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).