

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **KIRKHAM ST MICHAEL'S C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Kirkham, Preston

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119550

Headteacher: Mrs L A Brookbanks

Lead inspector: Mrs J Morley

Dates of inspection: 22<sup>nd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> June 2004

Inspection number: 256643

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	225
School address:	School Lane Kirkham Preston Lancashire
Postcode:	PR4 2SL
Telephone number:	01772 683624
Fax number:	01772 673059
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Reverend K Brockbank

Date of previous inspection: 16<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> March 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

There are 225 pupils on roll: 108 boys and 117 girls.

Almost all pupils are white, British and very few have different ethnic backgrounds.

The first language for all pupils is English.

There are 27 pupils with special educational needs: a lower than average proportion. Of these pupils, nine have more significant difficulties (including four with statements, which is also below average). These cover moderate and severe learning difficulties; dyslexia; social, emotional and behavioural problems; and difficulties with speech and communication.

There are no travellers, asylum seekers or refugees, and very few pupils are in public care.

The social and economic circumstances of pupils are broadly average, as is the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals.

Pupil mobility is broadly average.

Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average.

The school is involved in the Lancashire Healthy Schools initiative and has the School Curriculum Award (2002); Activemark (2003) and the Basic Skills Quality Mark (2003).

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
25470	J Morley	Lead inspector	English Art and design Personal, social and health education and citizenship Design and technology Special educational needs
9619	R Miller	Lay inspector	
31838	M Williams	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Physical education
17757	J Willis	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Music Foundation Stage

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a good school with many very good features.** During her nine months in post the headteacher has established herself as a purposeful leader with a clear and praiseworthy vision for the development of the school. Teaching quality is good overall: as a result, pupils achieve well and leave the school with standards that are well above average in key areas of the curriculum. The school has tangible warmth and a very strong Christian ethos. The school's value for money is good.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Except in Year 2, pupils achieve well from Reception onwards and leave Year 6 with standards that are well above average in English, mathematics and science.
- The headteacher leads the school very competently, and with quiet confidence.
- The leadership and management skills of the deputy headteacher are currently ineffective.
- Support staff contribute well to pupils' progress.
- The use of assessment information to raise standards is very good in English and mathematics, but inconsistent across other areas of the curriculum.
- The many and varied opportunities during and after the school day combine to produce rich experiences for pupils.
- Pupils have mature attitudes to their work and behave very well.
- The school has forged very strong links with parents, with the community at large and the church in particular.
- Across the curriculum information and communication technology (ICT) is used well as a tool for learning.

The school has dealt successfully with one of the two key issues from the last inspection: raising standards in ICT. There has not been lasting success with the second issue because although standards at Year 2 improved markedly between 2000 and 2002, they declined again last year. This year, despite improvement in writing, overall they have not improved beyond the average levels reported in 1998. By Year 6, however, there have been significant improvements in English, mathematics, science, ICT, and physical education. On the arrival of the new headteacher, writing was clearly a relatively weak area. She viewed this as a priority for development and took swift, decisive and successful action. Combined, these changes reflect good improvement since the last inspection, not least because pupils now transfer to secondary school with much better skills in all key areas of the curriculum than was the case in 1998.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Overall, **achievement is good**. Attainment on entry to the school varies significantly from year to year but is broadly average overall. Children achieve well through Reception with the result that in all areas except physical development almost all reach the goals expected by the end of that year, and

many exceed them. In physical development most meet the goals expected. This good progress continues through Year 1, but not through Year 2. Standards at the end of that year are average overall, matching those with which the pupils entered school. However, the school is aware of the need for change and is in the process of dealing with the issue. Achievement thereafter is good and pupils transfer to secondary school with well above average standards in English, mathematics, science and physical education and an above average level of competence in ICT, geography, history and the singing element of music. Secure judgements were not possible in other subjects.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good overall.** Their spiritual development is particularly strong. Pupils behave very well and have equally good attitudes to work. They are sociable and confident, and they approach responsibilities with considerable maturity. Attendance is good and punctuality is very good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is good, as is the overall quality of teaching and learning.** Pupils enjoy relaxed yet respectful relationships with their teachers, and there is a good work ethic in classrooms. The large majority of lessons are taught at a good pace and present pupils with interesting and challenging tasks. Where teaching is less than good, particularly in Year 2, there are elements of slow pace, lack of enthusiasm on the part of the teacher and / or insufficient attention paid to the range of ability in the class. All pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, benefit from the good quality work of support staff. Overall, teaching of this quality leads to good progress. The school's assessment systems are very good in English and mathematics, but are not as effective in other subjects. They are earmarked for early development. The curriculum is broad and strongly enriched by out-of-school activities. The school is inclusive because it actively looks for opportunities to develop the skills and talents of all its pupils. Pupils benefit from very good care and the very good partnerships between school, home and church. The links with other schools are good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Overall, **leadership and management are good.** The headteacher leads the school very well. She has a clear view of what needs to be done, of how it can be achieved, and of how to prioritise the development. The success of her work to improve writing standards is testament to her skill in managing change, including an ability to take her staff with her. There is good overall curriculum leadership; in key areas such as English and ICT it is very good. There are definite strengths within the senior management team although the role of the deputy headteacher needs development. Governance is good. Key governors are sufficiently well informed and influential to provide both support and meaningful challenge to the headteacher. They meet all of their statutory duties.

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

Parents have no significant concerns: they think very well of the school and their views are fully justified. Pupils like school and enjoy very good relationships with their teachers and with other adults.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Improve pupils' achievement and standards in Year 2.
- Improve the leadership and management of the deputy headteacher.
- Extend the existing very good use of assessment information (in English and mathematics) to all subjects of the curriculum.



## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS**

Except in Year 2, pupils achieve well and, by Year 6, attain standards in English, mathematics, science and physical education that are well above average.

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

- Pupils' achievement is good overall throughout the school, except in Year 2 where it is unsatisfactory.
- Writing standards have improved significantly over those of last year.
- Year 6 pupils acquire literacy, numeracy, science and ICT skills that prepare them very well for secondary school.
- The latest trends available – 1999 to 2003 – are above average for Year 2 and average for Year 6. The Year 2 trend is misleading as it reflects the high standards achieved to 2002, but not the lower ones thereafter.

#### **Commentary**

1. In broad terms pupils achieve well. From an average start in Reception, Year 6 pupils achieve well above average standards in English, mathematics, science and physical education, and above average standards in information and communication technology (ICT). They leave the school very well equipped for transfer to secondary school. The average trend in Year 6 test results reflects the school's ongoing improvement despite its already high standards. Currently some Year 2 pupils achieve too little. However, the school is acutely aware of this issue and is dealing with it.
2. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs almost always make as much progress as their more able peers. When, as in Year 2, they do not, it is usually because tasks occupy rather than challenge. The above average trend reflected in the latest available data for Year 2 reflects the higher standards secured in 2002 and 2002 but does not fully reflect the decline evident in 2003.
3. For a number of years the school has used a baseline assessment to provide it with reliable evidence on children's attainment on entry to the school. Results of this assessment show that although the skills and aptitudes of the children sometimes exceed those expected nationally, they usually match them. Hence, attainment on entry to the school is broadly average.
4. Children achieve well overall, and often very well in the Reception classes. By the time they leave, almost all have reached the goals expected of children aged five, in five of the six areas of learning. Many have exceeded them. In the sixth area, physical development, most children meet the expected level. Hence, from a broadly average start, this represents good achievement for these children through their first year in school.

#### ***Standards in national tests at the end of year 2 – average point scores in 2003***

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.2 (17.5)	15.7 (15.8)

Writing	13.6 (16.1)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	17.3 (18.7)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 32 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

5. The Year 2 test results from 2003 (see the table above) show pupils attaining standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are average, well below average and above average respectively. These – particularly the reading and writing results - are not at all typical of pupils' attainment over the longer term. In the three preceding years standards had been at least above average, and often well above. The data in brackets, for example, shows how much better results were in 2002. Indications from the 2004 (as yet unvalidated) test data - and from inspection evidence - are that the higher standards associated with the years prior to 2003 will not be restored this year. While there has been some improvement in reading (from average to above average) and in writing (from well below average to average), there has been a further decline in mathematics (from above average to average). Inspection evidence indicates that pupils attain the expected standards in science.
6. From above average attainment at the start of Year 1, progress through the next two years is uneven. Using nationally recognised standardised tests annually, the school assesses the attainment of all pupils in Years 1 to 6 in reading, writing and mathematics. These show clearly that pupils make progress through Year 1 that matches the good progress that they make in Reception. Thereafter, however, it declines. In Year 2 it is sound for a little over half of the pupils in the class, but for a large minority – and particularly for the less able pupils and those with special educational needs - it is unsatisfactory. This is because teaching is mundane, and because it fails to engage pupils and to offer them sufficient challenge. Hence, this significant minority will begin Year 3 in September of this year, having lost the advantage - particularly in writing and mathematics - that they gained through Reception and Year 1.
7. The 2003 test results for Year 6 (see the table below) show attainment to be average in English and well above average in mathematics and science – both when compared to all schools nationally and to similar schools. Inspectors found that the current Year 6 pupils are attaining at a well above expected level in all three subjects: this is also confirmed by the 2004 unvalidated test results. English standards have improved as a result of a clear focus on improving writing standards throughout the year. These standards are the result of the good progress that pupils make through Years 3 to 6, where the quality of teaching and learning is good overall, and sometimes very good.

**Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003**

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.0 (26.8)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	28.9 (27.2)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	30.5 (30.5)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 35 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

8. Standards in ICT have improved significantly since the last inspection, when they were unsatisfactory. They now meet expectations at the end of Year 2 and exceed them at the end of Year 6. Year 6 standards in geography and history have been maintained at the above-expected levels reported at the time of the last inspection. Attainment in physical

education has improved significantly: it was sound and is now well above average. Standards in the singing element of music are above average. There is insufficient evidence to make secure judgements in art and design and design and technology, and about some elements of music.

- This good overall performance reflects the clear pursuit of high standards by the headteacher, her clarity of vision, competent teaching and the strong teamwork evident in the school.

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

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are very good. Pupils' moral, social, cultural and spiritual development is good overall. Attendance is good and punctuality is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils show a great interest in the life of the school and what it provides.
- The school promotes very good relationships, including racial harmony, and pupils have a very clear understanding of their individual and corporate roles and responsibilities within the school community.
- Pupils develop very good spiritual awareness and self-knowledge.
- They have very good self-confidence and high self-esteem.

### **Commentary**

- The rate of attendance is above that of similar schools nationally and is an improvement since the last inspection. Most parents are very good at letting the school know when their child is going to be absent. Pupils arrive punctually.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.9	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

- Pupils enjoy coming to school, they develop very good relationships and have very good attitudes to their work and their life in school. This is reflected in their enjoyment of lessons and their participation in extra-curricular activities, particularly sport and music, and is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils say that some lessons are fun and that they have lots of friends. They transfer to secondary school as mature young people because of the effective way in which the school helps them to develop all their personal skills.
- Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are very well behaved and co-operative in lessons. There is occasional restlessness by younger pupils, when teaching is not stimulating or when behaviour management is not consistent. Most pupils listen to adults and follow instructions because most staff set high expectations for their conduct. Incidents of

bullying are rare and where they do occur, the school is quick to deal with them effectively. There have been no exclusions in the past academic year.

13. Almost all children in Reception are on course to achieve the expected standards in their personal, social and emotional development, and a significant minority will exceed them. This good start is built on systematically: pupils are encouraged to take growing responsibility as they progress through the school. Year 6 pupils, in particular, relish opportunities to act as prefects and monitors, and to look after the younger children during lunch and playtimes. All pupils learn the difference between right and wrong and the older ones see it a part of their duty to help to ensure that younger ones behave appropriately. Moreover, younger pupils respect the authority of the older ones. Pupils generally are enthusiastic and enterprising: for example they take regular opportunities to raise money for various charities. Consequently they are confident and self-assured and they develop good social and moral skills.
14. The development of pupils' spiritual awareness and self-knowledge is very good. There are very strong links with the nearby church, where regular acts of collective worship take place and a good number of the community attend. Pupils are given the opportunity to explore religious beliefs and the way they impact on peoples' lives. They are encouraged to give readings in the church to the congregation and to reflect upon the issues raised, such as human feelings and emotions. There is good provision for pupils' cultural development and opportunities are provided for pupils to participate in literature, drama, music, art and other cultural events. However, the school has recognised that there are limited opportunities in the local area for pupils to appreciate cultural diversity. It is planning to develop links with a multi-ethnic school elsewhere in Lancashire and is also building links via the website with schools abroad in developing countries.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The overall quality of education is good. Teaching and the curriculum are of good quality and lead to good learning. The level of care the school offers and its partnerships, particularly with parents and the local church and community, are very good.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Assessment is satisfactory: it is very good in the key subjects of English and mathematics, but limited or unsatisfactory elsewhere.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The proportion of teaching that is good or better has improved since the last inspection.
- The work of support staff is good when they are well briefed by the teacher.
- Literacy and numeracy skills are taught well overall, but not well enough to a large minority of Year 2 pupils.
- Assessment is used very well in English and mathematics but development is needed in other subjects.

## **Commentary**

### ***Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 38 lessons***

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (3%)	9 (24%)	17 (45%)	10 (26%)	1 (3%)	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.*

15. As is clear from the table above, about seven in every ten lessons are of good or better quality. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection, when this was the case in five of every ten lessons. The headteacher has a realistic view of the quality of teaching and learning in each class and has the skill to be able to influence and improve it. All staff work hard for the benefit of the pupils and are eager to learn and to improve further. This bodes well for the future.
16. In the majority of lessons there are no significant weaknesses, but a number of important strengths. For example, teachers establish warm and respectful relationships with pupils, who happily reciprocate. They have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They take proper account of the range of ability in the class when setting work. They communicate well with support staff who, as a result, are able to work productively with the pupil(s) to whom they are assigned. This is usually to the least able in the class (including those with special educational needs) and is a good arrangement as it enables these pupils to progress as well as their classmates. Finally, they teach at a good pace.
17. One lesson of outstanding quality was seen during the inspection. The teacher rushed into the classroom, overflowing with life and energy. The bright eyes and broad smiles that greeted her were a brilliant advertisement for what was to come! Within seconds all pupils were working to capacity. Less able pupils checked out their ideas with an extremely effective support assistant, and their hands shot up as quickly as those of their classmates. The teacher picked up on individual misconceptions as they arose and, incredibly, dealt with them instantly in a schedule already crammed with new things to learn. She found something of genuine value to say to each pupil as they worked; something designed to move them on, but to leave them feeling clever and successful.
18. Where teaching is less than good it is because of the presence of one or more of the following features:
  - too little account is taken of the range of ability in the class and some pupils are given work that occupies them but does nothing to help them learn;
  - the teacher does too little to motivate or engage pupils;
  - the pace of the lesson is slow, causing restlessness among pupils.
19. Teaching was unsatisfactory in one of the lessons seen during the inspection. Year 2 pupils became restless because the pace was slow and because there was little to interest them. Support staff had been poorly briefed and, as a direct result, were unnecessarily inactive while the teacher worked with the class. Pupils with special educational needs were not well served because their independent task kept them productively engaged for only a small fraction of the 20 minutes allotted. Although this was the only lesson during the inspection that fell short of being satisfactory, scrutiny of pupils' work and of extensive school tracking data shows that teaching and learning in Year 2 is unsatisfactory overall, and pupils do not make the progress they should in the development of their literacy and numeracy skills. This is an example of inequality of opportunity in a school that, otherwise, is fully inclusive. The headteacher is aware of these shortfalls and has begun to address them. More needs to be done.

20. Teachers' use of assessment to raise pupils' attainment is satisfactory overall, but this judgement disguises significant differences between subjects and classes. In English and mathematics it is very good, and teachers have embraced the changes led by the headteacher. For example, at the beginning of the school year, a range of strategies was put in place in order to improve writing standards. Data were used to identify individuals / groups who were underachieving, and these pupils were given additional support. These same pupils became the target groups, linked to class teachers' performance management objectives. Pupils were given individual targets so that they could be involved in their own learning. Although raising standards in mathematics has not been a whole school priority this year, the outstanding analysis undertaken by the mathematics coordinator has provided her with detailed and valuable information about the progress of individuals and year groups. In addition, older pupils found to be particularly able mathematicians now benefit from extra tuition through a link with the local secondary school.
21. End-of-unit assessments are completed in science and in ICT, but their use in raising standards has yet to be developed. There is no formal assessment in the other subjects of the curriculum. This, therefore, is unsatisfactory. However, the assessment coordinator (the deputy headteacher) already has plans for their development, which will include pupils in assessing how well they are doing against clear criteria linked to National Curriculum levels.

## **The curriculum**

There is a good curriculum overall. There are very good enrichment opportunities including extra-curricular activities in sports and the arts. Staffing, accommodation and resources are good.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum for the Reception class is well planned and well balanced.
- The curriculum in English, mathematics, science and ICT is well developed. ICT is well used throughout the school. Cross-curricular approaches are beginning to enhance provision in other subjects but are not fully developed.
- A very good programme of personal development contributes to pupils' equally good attitudes and behaviour.
- Pupils with special educational needs receive good support from their teachers and teaching assistants, and there is good provision for gifted and talented pupils.
- A broad and varied programme of additional experiences and visits complements and enriches work in the National Curriculum.

## **Commentary**

22. The good curriculum enables children to achieve well in all areas of learning in the Reception class. There are good outdoor facilities and the school intends to improve these further by renewing, shortly, some of the large play equipment.
23. The key areas of literacy, numeracy and science are emphasised well. The approaches recommended by the national literacy and numeracy strategies have been effectively implemented. This has resulted in the curriculum progressively developing pupils' skills

and knowledge and making the learning relevant to all groups. In English the recent focus on writing is bearing fruit: pupils in Year 1, for example, achieve very well. Mental methods effectively underpin mathematical achievement. Problem solving is increasingly evident and there are good opportunities for investigation in mathematics. Pupils regularly have to explain the steps they are taking, which contributes to the good and improving achievement. This aspect is, however, still being developed in science.

24. The very good leadership of the headteacher and the overall effective leadership of coordinators in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science have ensured that the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils and that literacy and numeracy are reinforced well throughout the school. Provision for ICT has improved greatly since the last inspection and pupils now achieve well over their time in school. In other subjects the curriculum is generally satisfactory, and in most cases the school follows nationally recognised guidelines. Some links are being strengthened, for example between ICT and geography, and science and physical education, but the school recognises that, in general, cross-curricular links are points for development.
25. Such links are, however, well established in supporting pupils' very good personal development. Although there are discrete lessons and 'circle times', and a school council through which pupils have a say in how their school is run, much is accomplished relatively informally in all subjects. Thanks to teachers' very good examples and high expectations of behaviour, whether as individuals or in group activities, pupils learn to think maturely and act responsibly.
26. Social and educational inclusion is strongly fostered. The school ensures that pupils with special educational needs are identified as soon as possible so that, from an early stage, provision responds to their individual curricular needs. Booster lessons and other forms of additional support are used to help older pupils secure the expected standards in national tests. In addition, the good numbers of teaching assistants, working in close liaison with the teachers, use their experience and skill well to meet the varying needs of individuals. Provision for gifted and talented pupils makes good use, for example, of strong links with the local secondary school to give able mathematicians opportunities to reach high levels. Extra-curricular activities - which include entries to local and national competitions in sports and music - also help talented pupils to achieve well in those areas.
27. Sports and the arts are areas where the curriculum is particularly rich. The school holds the Activemark award from the Sports Council for its commitment to physical activity and there are many clubs that enhance the physical education curriculum including football, netball, athletics and dance. The choir and brass band, together with opportunities for instrumental tuition, add considerably to the music provision. In addition, pupils from Years 2 to 6 enter the national Festival of Music for Youth. The timing of some instrumental tuition, however, results in certain pupils missing the same lessons each week. The school realises this and is working to resolve the problem. Clubs for science, computers, art and gardening also extend provision beyond the normal school day. There are regular residential experiences including visits to Europe, which add a broader dimension to studies in the humanities and also support pupils' social and cultural development. A good range of visits and visitors enhance a programme of personal development to help make provision in that area very good.
28. A strength of the accommodation is a well-equipped ICT suite and both an infant and junior study area. The library functions satisfactorily, although it is too small for whole

classes to use at once and is positioned well within the infant area, not readily accessible to junior pupils. The school intends to move it to a larger and more convenient location. Staffing levels overall are good and include well-trained and well-briefed teaching assistants who help pupils with special educational needs to achieve well. Resources are good and improving: the stock of home reading books, for example, is being renewed.

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

The school provides very good levels of care and attention to the welfare, health and safety of the pupils. Provision of support, advice and guidance for the pupils is good. There is good involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school provides a very warm, caring and purposeful learning environment.
- Pupils have a very good and trusting relationship with at least one adult in the school and access to well-informed support and guidance.
- There are good induction arrangements.
- The School Council is to be extended to take into account the views of Year 1 children.

### **Commentary**

29. This is a very caring school where staff treat pupils with respect. This ensures that pupils are comfortable about approaching individual teachers or support staff for help or guidance. Pupils are highly satisfied with the school and what it provides. The care the school provides has improved since the last inspection.
30. The staff know the pupils and their families very well, are sensitive to their needs and are able, therefore, to provide good support and guidance. Induction arrangements into the Reception classes are good: they ensure that, over a suitable period of time, parents and children alike enjoy a progressive and helpful transition into the formal stages of education. Parents say that the school is helping their child to become mature and that staff treat their children fairly and equally. The very good personal, social and health education programme and satisfactory assessment procedures enable staff to provide targeted support for pupils of all capabilities. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is maintained well through reviews in relation to the targets set for them. This support and guidance is helping to raise pupils' achievement. Pupils with special educational needs contribute to their annual reviews. Some pupils are beginning to assess their own work and to set personal targets.
31. Health and safety arrangements are securely in place. Risk assessments are carried out rigorously in lessons and for school trips. The school is maintained in a very good and clean condition. The school meals provided are nutritious and there is plenty of choice. Pupils say that the lunches are always good.
32. Very effective child protection procedures are in place. These are well known to all staff including those arriving at the school for the first time. There are good links with outside agencies.
33. The school actively encourages pupils to express their views both in formal and informal ways. There are class councils as well as a School Council that considers matters as



diverse as school uniform and which charities to support. This opportunity to influence school improvement contributes very well to pupils' personal development. However, the school has identified the need to further develop this area by introducing Year 1 membership to the Council. This will ensure that the voices of the younger children will be heard on a more regular and formal basis.

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

The school has very good partnerships with parents and the community. Links with other schools and colleges are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are kept very well informed about the school and their children's progress.
- There are very good procedures for ensuring satisfaction and to deal with any parental concerns or complaints.
- The contribution made by parents to their child's learning at home and in the school is very good.
- The good links with other schools and colleges ensure a smooth transition for pupils to their next stage of education.

### **Commentary**

34. Parents are highly satisfied with the work of the school and what it provides. They say that their children enjoy coming to school, that teaching is good and that staff expect their children to work hard. They say that the school is led and managed well and feel comfortable with approaching the school. Teachers are always available at the beginning and end of each day to deal with any concerns or complaints parents may have. This informal contact ensures very high levels of parental satisfaction and enables issues to be dealt with swiftly and effectively.
35. Parents are well informed about the school through the website, the school prospectus and annual report from governors. There are regular newsletters and school notice boards that keep parents abreast of events happening in the school and local community. They appreciate the opportunities to discuss their child's progress at both formal and informal meetings with teachers. A helpful end-of-year academic report, containing targets to help improve, accompanies these meetings. Questionnaires and newsletters are used regularly to seek parents' views on school improvement.
36. The school has engaged a good number of parents to come and help in school. Some listen to children read and others help on school trips. The vast majority of parents contribute to their child's learning at home, supported by useful curriculum information and workshops provided by the school. There is a very active 'Friends of St. Michael's School Association' that provides resources such as home reading books and audio cassette players through regular fundraising events.
37. The school links well with other schools in the area. 'Best Practice' is shared between headteachers and the schools take part in joint initiatives and events. There is a strong link with a local secondary school that provides opportunities for teachers' professional development and pupils' higher attainment in mathematics and ICT. The sharing of

information between the school and a number of secondary feeder schools ensures a smooth transition for Year 6 pupils to the next stage of their education.

38. The very good links with the community include a close liaison with the Church and the senior citizens who live in close proximity to the school. Pupils regularly visit the residents and provide entertainment for them and food parcels at harvest time. A number of outside groups use the school's facilities during the course of the week and a good number of people from the community work or help in school. Frequent, high quality outside visits, such as that recently to the Netherlands for Year 5 and 6 pupils, enrich the curriculum and make a positive impact on pupils' personal development. These links with the community have improved since the last inspection.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are good. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. The leadership of staff with key curriculum responsibilities is good overall. Governance is good and the overall management of the school is effective.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has a very clear vision and high aspirations for the development of pupils' academic, pastoral and welfare needs. She has the full support of her staff in pursuing these.
- The very good strategies outlined in the school improvement plan form an effective working document in which all staff have ownership and input.
- The role of the deputy headteacher is insufficiently developed.

### **Commentary**

39. The overall good quality of leadership and management seen in the last inspection has been maintained. The headteacher has been in post for a year and leads the school very well. She has a very clear understanding of what needs to be done and prioritises skilfully. She took immediate action to improve the falling standards in writing and the impact of her work is reflected in improved achievement throughout the school. A robust system of performance management is in place but the headteacher has plans to develop this to ensure that objectives are more closely linked to achievement targets and reflect the priorities in the school's strategic planning. The school improvement plan has been formulated with input from the whole staff and curriculum subject leaders have outlined their strategies for development. Leadership of this quality takes full and proper account of the school's duty to be inclusive.
40. Mathematics, science, music, physical education and the curriculum for the Reception children are well led and managed, and the leadership and management of English and ICT are very good. In all of these areas, leaders provide good role models for other staff. They have clear ideas for development in their curriculum areas and good understanding of how to implement change. They are able to lead staff training and development, and effectively monitor teaching, learning and standards. Staff in Reception classes work well together as a team, regularly monitoring children's performance and taking effective action to ensure that all children achieve well. The subject leader for ICT has effectively addressed all areas of the key issue identified in the previous inspection and has raised

staff confidence and understanding. This has resulted in improved teaching and achievement.

41. The deputy headteacher joined the school shortly before the new headteacher and her role in leadership and management is not currently well established. She has responsibility for developing the assessment systems in the school and is preparing the application for the Healthy School's Award. However, at present she does not effectively lead by example or take an active role in motivating staff and managing change. Further development of her role is needed if she is to make an effective contribution to both leadership and management. The school is aware of this and plans are in place for her enrolment on a leadership and management course leading to nationally recognised accreditation.
42. The leadership and management of special educational needs provision is effective, but unnecessarily cumbersome. This is because the designated coordinator, the headteacher and the consultant teacher (employed for one morning each week) all contribute. Although each makes a valuable contribution, no one person has a clear and complete overview. That is not to say that pupils suffer: they do not. They benefit from the combined work of all three involved, and from the focused communication - on a lesson-to-lesson basis - between their teacher and the member of the support staff assigned to work with them. The school is very aware of the benefits that could be accrued from greater cohesion in management and plans are already in hand to make changes, ready for next term. In addition, it intends to improve provision further by sharpening practice related to the early identification of pupils' needs.
43. Governance is good. Governors have a very open and effective working relationship with the school, which supports wholly frank discussion. They know what the school does well and what are its current priorities for improvement. They undertake their duties professionally, including taking advantage of training. They challenge appropriately, while accepting (and expecting) educational expertise from the professionals who lead and work at the school. Governors have undertaken their own self-evaluation and have their own focus in the school development plan. Currently this deals with induction of new governors; effective committee arrangement; best value; and compliance with control procedures. Most are frequent visitors to school.
44. The school's funds are effectively managed with prudent spending and clear evidence of its impact: improvement in writing standards is the key example during the first year of the headteacher's tenure.

***Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004***

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	505,104
Total expenditure	522,805
Expenditure per pupil	2,324

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	42,427
Balance carried forward to the next	24,726

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

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

45. Children join the Reception classes in the September after their fourth birthday. Their attainment on entry varies from year to year. It is usually average but is sometimes above. By the end of the Reception year most children meet the Early Learning Goals expected for their age and over 30 percent exceed them. This represents good achievement. The good provision identified in the previous inspection has been maintained and teaching, learning and achievement in mathematical development and in personal, social and emotional development have improved.
46. Children achieve well because of the good teaching. Teachers provide a wide range of interesting and challenging activities that make learning fun for the children. Activities are planned well to cater for different learning styles and to ensure that all children are fully involved in their learning. Both teachers and support staff have a very good understanding of what children can do and have high expectations of their learning. Strong systems of planning and assessment enable them to monitor children's progress and to plan effectively to meet their individual needs and ensure good achievement.
47. Staff work well as a team to manage and monitor teaching, learning and achievement and to ensure that children are provided with good opportunities for learning in all six areas of the curriculum. Good induction arrangements are in place. These enable children to settle well into school and good links with parents are established from the outset. Training courses for parents, related to supporting their children's learning, are run by the school and well attended. Parents are kept fully informed of their children's achievements and there are good opportunities for them to become involved in their learning through shared sessions in school and through home / school diaries. Leadership is innovative and teachers provide good role models for children and other staff.
48. Classrooms are bright, spacious and well used with interesting role-play areas and stimulating displays. The outside area is used effectively as an extension of the learning area. There are plans to extend and develop this area to make even better use of the facility.

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

Provision for children's personal, social and emotional development is **good**.

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

- Teaching is good.
- Children learn well about friendship and cooperation.

#### **Commentary**

49. Children achieve well because of the good teaching and the high expectations of children's personal and social behaviour set by the staff. They are safe and secure in the Reception classes and this, along with the very good relationships established between

children and staff, ensures that they are confident and happy in their learning. Children work and play well together, sharing equipment and co-operating to complete a task. They show a growing and mature respect for the feelings of others and were frequently observed offering help and support to each other. Wall displays reflect their understanding of what it means to be a friend and their actions support this understanding. They are eager to learn and to show a real interest in their own and each other's work. They concentrate well to complete tasks in response to the good encouragement offered by teaching staff. As a result, most children will exceed the expected goals by the end of the reception class.

## **COMMUNICATION LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

Provision for children's communication, language and literacy is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers plan engaging reading and writing activities.
- The work of support staff is good.

### **Commentary**

50. All children achieve well because teaching is good and staff have high expectations of children's work. They speak with confidence and listen well to teaching staff and other children when discussing their work. During the inspection they had great fun and showed good achievement in developing their understanding of positional vocabulary by moving Davy Duck to different places and describing where he was.
51. Teachers plan lots of good opportunities for developing writing and children respond well to these. For example, each class had a writing table, which was in frequent use by children writing their own lists, labels and captions. They use whiteboards daily to write their own sentences and all children know that a sentence ends with a full stop. Most children can write simple sentences with minimal support and make good attempts at spelling simple words. About a third of pupils exceed the goals expected for their age and write sentences independently on a range of topics. This exceeds the overall expectations at the end of Reception. Children make good gains in their reading because of the good support given by teaching staff and the well-planned activities that are matched to individual needs. They thoroughly enjoy books and talk with enthusiasm about the story and characters. Well-planned games and practical activities effectively develop their understanding of phonics and word building.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for children's mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve very well in counting and in their knowledge of shape.
- Role-play is used well to enhance mathematical understanding.

### **Commentary**

52. Children's achievement is good overall and very good in their knowledge and understanding of shape and counting. Teaching quality mirrors this achievement. Most children meet the goals expected for their age and about a third exceed them. All children can recognise 2D shapes and talk about the number of sides and corners they have. During the inspection they made very good gains in their learning about 3D shapes. Teachers plan interesting activities to develop children's mathematical understanding well. For example, a lively chant with actions ensured that most children could double numbers up to 20, and number songs and games encouraged them to calculate one less and to count forwards and backwards in 2s and 10s.
53. In both classes work is well planned to meet children's different needs and higher attaining children are provided with challenging calculations, allowing them to attain standards that are well above those expected for their age. Role-play activities in the 'Garden Centre' and the 'Travel Agent' provide good opportunities to become familiar with money and to recognise the values of the different coins.

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

Provision for children's knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good because it engages children.
- Children have regular access to computers.

### **Commentary**

54. A good range of interesting and lively topics provide well for the children's development. Teaching is good and children achieve well because they find the work exciting and fun. Most meet and many exceed national expectations by the end of the year. During a topic on 'Journeys' children represented local buildings, including the church, school and shops, on a plan and made a simple key to identify their drawings. They looked at and discussed pictures of vehicles from the past, including penny-farthing bicycles and the horse and carriage. They enjoyed role-play in the 'travel agents' and advised the inspector about what sort of things to pack for a holiday in a hot country. They use computers regularly and with confidence, displaying good control with the mouse and the ability to print their work. During the inspection, children used 'Dazzle' to draw ladybirds and to write a caption for their drawing and a group worked well with a teaching assistant to program and control a 'Roamer'. ICT is used well to support learning in phonics, word building and rhyming words, and for mathematical activities including ordering numbers, shape work, symmetry and simple addition.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for children's physical development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils handle small equipment well.
- Opportunities for physical development outdoors are not fully developed.

## **Commentary**

55. Children's achievement is satisfactory. Teaching is good but children meet rather than exceed the goals expected for their age because of limited outdoor opportunities. Their pencil control is good and they handle small tools such as paintbrushes, glue sticks and cutters for play dough with confidence. In the one physical education lesson seen, children demonstrated sound spatial awareness and skills of balance and movement appropriate for their age. They enjoyed moving to music in different ways and showed a good sense of rhythm. The outdoor area contains appropriate climbing equipment and space for the use of wheeled toys. There are plans for further development to provide more opportunities for physical development.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for children's creative development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- As a result of good teaching, achievement in music and role-play is particularly good.

## Commentary

56. Children are well provided for and they achieve well, particularly in music and role-play. Teaching is good and planning indicates a good range of interesting and creative opportunities for children. They produce still life paintings of fruit in the style of Cézanne and competent paintings of different vehicles. They use dough for modelling, produce toy windmills that move and use chalk, collage and printing in their pictures of a journey to the moon. They excel at singing and can sway and clap in time to the music and add appropriate actions. Their singing is tuneful and enthusiastic and they show a strong sense of rhythm. They have good understanding of loud, soft, high and low sounds and thoroughly enjoy the high quality musical opportunities provided for them. Teachers plan well to provide exciting opportunities for role-play. During the inspection a garden centre with a cafeteria was well used by children in the outdoor area while both classrooms had areas set up as travel agents and children enjoyed booking and selling holidays.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Writing standards have improved significantly this year.
- Pupils transfer to secondary school armed with very good literacy skills.
- Standards in Year 6 have improved since the last inspection.
- Too many Year 2 pupils 'mark time' through the year.
- Leadership of the subject is very good, particularly in the use of assessment to raise standards.

## Commentary

57. Standards in English are in line with expectations in Year 2 and well above them in Year 6. In both year groups this is an improvement since last year, particularly in writing. It is an improvement at Year 6 since the last inspection when standards were judged to be above average overall, but is no improvement on the average standards overall in Year 2, reported in 1998.

58. Listening skills are good, not least because of the sterling work of the Reception teachers in developing them from the start. On the rare occasions when pupils are less attentive it is because the pace of the lesson is sedentary and they become restless. The very best listeners are in Year 5: the teacher is a highly skilled motivator and, because pupils are fully engaged, they then delight in listening intently to keep up with the Formula One pace of all that follows!

59. By the time they leave the school, pupils speak with confidence. The experiences the school offers for discussion in lessons, reading in church and in collective worship in school, and participating in dramatic productions all contribute well. Pupils' range of vocabulary, however, is not extensive and this is evident in their writing.



60. Reading standards in Year 2 are above average: better than in the other elements of the subject. By Year 6 they are well above average. Parents play a vital role in developing their child's reading skills, particularly with the younger children. Teachers have regular reading sessions with small groups from their class whose abilities are similar and, where a pupil does not appear to be making the progress they should, extra sessions are provided. The work of governors is also valuable as they share reading sessions with pupils.
61. Writing standards have improved significantly this year: from well below average to average by Year 2, and from average to well above average in Year 6. The decisive action taken by the headteacher on her arrival through the whole school focus on raising standards is clear when looking through pupils' books. This improvement is most evident in Year 1: pupils use cursive script worthy of much older children; they write at some length and some already have a good 'sense of sentence'. As pupils become older, the technical accuracy of their writing, accurate spelling and neat cursive script are the key strengths in their work. The headteacher and staff are aware that the use of more adventurous and figurative language is an area to which they must now turn their attention. They have plans to do so.
62. Achievement is good overall and in some classes, very good. However, it is weak in Year 2 because some pupils do little more than mark time. This negates the above average standards with which pupils leave Year 1. Several factors other than teaching quality contribute to this otherwise good and very good achievement in other year groups. Key amongst these are:
- the absence of undemanding worksheets;
  - good writing opportunities in subjects other than English.
63. Teaching is good overall but ranges from outstanding to unsatisfactory. Crucially it is the failure to give all pupils activities capable of moving their learning forward, combined with a sedentary pace, that makes teaching unsatisfactory in Year 2. It is the stunning reverse of these two features that most defines the excellence in Year 5.
64. As a result of the long-term absence of the English coordinator, the subject is being led and managed by the headteacher. The sharp improvement in writing standards since her arrival nine months ago is testament to her understanding of what needed to be done, and of her skill in taking her staff with her. This represents very good leadership.

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

65. The opportunities for pupils to write in subjects other than English are relatively plentiful and varied. They undoubtedly contribute positively to the writing standards pupils achieve. To date there has been no formal audit of the range or balance of these opportunities, and the headteacher rightly feels that this would be a useful development.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

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

- Standards have risen in Year 6 since the last inspection.

- Achievement is good overall.
- The good gains made in Year 1 are not sustained in Year 2.
- Good leadership and management have led to improvements in the curriculum and the quality of teaching but some inconsistencies remain.
- Very good assessment systems help teachers to plan challenging work and to show pupils how to improve but these are not used equally well in all classes.
- Numeracy skills are developed well across the curriculum.

## **Commentary**

66. Pupils in the current Year 6 entered the school at above average levels of attainment. Test results and observations confirm that boys and girls are leaving at well above average standards. This represents good achievement. The school's records show that younger pupils come to the school at broadly average levels. Pupils in Year 1 are doing well: their number skills, for example, are well developed and, as a result, they have a good grasp of addition and subtraction. By the end of Year 2, however, pupils have not moved much beyond this. Although they reach broadly typical standards, which represent satisfactory achievement overall, they do not move forward as well as pupils in the rest of the school.
67. There are several reasons why standards have risen overall and provision has improved since the last inspection. The school has ensured that an effective and well-linked curriculum is in place. This includes good provision for pupils with special educational needs (including good support from teaching assistants), and appropriate challenge for the highest attainers through additional lessons and links with the local secondary school. This also makes for a good transition from Year 6 to Year 7.
68. The competent coordinator has monitored lessons and pupils' work and has analysed the outcomes of statutory and non-statutory tests extremely well in order to gain an understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the subject. The revised assessment systems enable pupils' progress through the school to be tracked. Teaching and learning are now good and, at times, very good throughout most of the school, contributing to the very good attitudes that pupils bring to their work. Although teaching is satisfactory in Year 2 it is not strong enough to raise standards.
69. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers usually plan effectively, using the methods promoted by the National Numeracy Strategy. Lessons start with a challenging mental session, which pupils enjoy and in which they participate well. Teachers use available interactive whiteboards well to make learning vivid and to involve pupils. They ask a range of challenging questions and encourage pupils to explain the strategies they have used to solve the problems. Together, these help pupils to think about their level of mathematical understanding. Their responses give teachers a quick assessment of how well they are learning, and the good verbal feedback gives them an understanding of how well they are doing. Feedback is not always so well focused in books: ticks and words of praise are more common than constructive comment. Where teaching is less successful the match of tasks to needs is not as close as it should be. As a result, teachers do not probe the limits of what each group of pupils can do. In consequence, pupils do not achieve well. This is partly because information obtained from the very good assessment procedures is not used well enough to set suitable targets.

## **Mathematics across the curriculum**

70. Outcomes show that numeracy has been well developed across the curriculum. There are many examples such as the use of graphs in science, time-lines in history, mapping in geography, measurements in design and technology, and awareness of lines of symmetry in art and design. These show that pupils' skills are applied well outside mathematics lessons. The school is seeking to develop cross-curricular links further, and these include greater use of ICT: there was evidence in pupils' books to show that this is part of their learning but during the inspection the use of computers was infrequent during the numeracy hour itself.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average at the end of Year 6 and pupils achieve well.
- Scientific knowledge and understanding are well taught throughout the school.
- Leadership and management are good.
- In most classes there is not enough emphasis on the teaching and learning of skills of scientific enquiry.
- Work is not always effectively matched to pupils' needs and, in some classes, higher attaining pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

### Commentary

71. Standards and achievement in Years 3 to 6 have improved since the previous inspection because of improvement in teaching. Standards are now well above average and achievement is now good. By the end of Year 2 standards are average and achievement is satisfactory overall, reflecting similar findings to those of the previous inspection.
72. Pupils achieve well in developing their knowledge and understanding of science because teaching and learning are good. Teachers in most classes set high expectations, provide well-planned activities and explain ideas well. However, throughout the school there is a tendency for teachers to set the same work for all pupils in their class, regardless of their differing needs and abilities. In the best lessons, good support from teachers and teaching assistants helped lower attaining pupils to complete their work, and extension activities were provided for higher attainers. However, in other classes, higher attaining pupils were not set work that was sufficiently challenging and lower attaining pupils did not always complete the work set because it was too difficult.
73. In a very good lesson in Year 5, pupils carried out research to develop their understanding of the functions of the different roots of a plant. They used an interactive computer program to investigate conditions for plant growth, modelled different scenarios and compared the results. Their achievement was very good because the exciting and challenging activities were well matched to their level of understanding and there was very good ongoing support by the teacher and teaching assistant.
74. In discussion, pupils in Year 6 displayed a very good understanding of the wide range of work they have covered. They find their science lessons interesting and enjoyable. They can explain the functions of the major organs of the body and describe how oxygen is transported round the body in the blood stream. They are able to discuss the effects of

drinking and smoking knowledgeably and show a clear understanding of changes of state in materials. They have used ICT in a variety of ways including the use of light, sound and temperature sensors, and the Internet for research.

75. Although all classes provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to carry out investigations there is not a clear progression throughout the school in the development of these skills. As a result, pupils' achievements in this area are satisfactory overall, rather than good. Pupils are taught to predict, to present their findings in tables and block graphs and to identify the key factors involved in a fair test but by the end of Year 2 there is little evidence that they can explain their results or make clear links between cause and effect. As they progress through the school pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to evaluate their findings, identify patterns in data and relate their explanations clearly to scientific understanding. By the end of Year 6 they have had too few opportunities to devise, plan and carry out investigations independently.
76. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The coordinator has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning and has already begun to address the teaching of scientific enquiry through staff training. She is aware of the need to develop the current system of assessment to ensure that teachers plan work that is well matched to pupils' needs.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above average by the end of Year 6 and pupils achieve well.
- Teaching and learning are good overall and ICT is well related to work in other curriculum areas.
- Leadership and management are very good.

### **Commentary**

77. The key issue from the previous inspection has been fully addressed, demonstrating very good improvement.
78. Pupils achieve well overall and well in Years 3 to 6 because of the good teaching. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and are able to demonstrate and develop skills well. Activities are interesting and often linked to work in other areas of the curriculum, making the work meaningful for pupils. Work shows good progression in skills and understanding and, by the end of Year 6, pupils are able to apply a range of skills to produce work independently. For example, Year 6 pupils have produced talking books for the Reception children, incorporating text, graphics, sound and simple animation. They were eager to demonstrate the animated film sequence they had made in a series of lunch hour sessions and could clearly explain the process used. In a good lesson seen they designed leaflets to advertise the school's Barn Owl magazine, downloading pictures and information from the Internet and understanding the need to acknowledge sources.
79. By the end of Year 2 pupils attain average standards because work covered in Year 2 is at a similar level to that in Year 1. Teaching is good in Year 1 and pupils achieve well but achievement is just satisfactory in Year 2 because work does not build sufficiently on

previous learning and there is a lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils in the work seen.

80. The subject coordinator leads very well by example. He has developed teaching and learning well through arranging staff training and offering very good support. He has a clear understanding of what still needs to be done and has plans to involve pupils in the development of the school website and to improve the current assessment systems to ensure consistency throughout the school. The subject is supported well by two technicians: one is from the local secondary school, and this is a worthwhile link between the two schools.
81. ICT is used well as a tool to help pupils learn across the full curriculum. For example, a microscope link to the Smartboard (a computer-linked interactive whiteboard) enabled Year 5 pupils to observe plant roots closely and Year 4 to produce a branching database to display information about King Henry VIII and his family.

## HUMANITIES

History was sampled because insufficient evidence was available during the inspection. Geography is reported in full.

82. Sampling of pupils' work in **history** suggests that standards meet those expected at the end of Year 2 and exceed them at the end of Year 6. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall because the current Year 2 entered the school at broadly typical levels of knowledge and understanding of the world, whereas pupils in Year 6 were above them. This presents a similar picture to that found at the last inspection.
83. From work in their books, pupils in Year 1 show that they can remark on certain features of the past, such as examples of toys, but do not draw conclusions. They are starting to use time-lines to recall their own early years more clearly. By Year 2, pupils use time-lines to set events in context and have a reasonable grasp of some of the changes that have been made over the periods concerned. They have a satisfactory recall of major events but do not suggest any reasons for them. Their work indicates that they all attempt the same tasks so any differences in outcomes are more a result of expression than of historical understanding.
84. The lesson seen in Year 3 was good because the variety of questions and tasks about the Vikings offered suitable challenges to pupils of different abilities. This kept them motivated and working hard. Thanks to effective support from the teaching assistant, pupils with special educational needs worked as hard as their classmates. As the teacher moved from group to group his probing questions made pupils think not just about what was happening but, more importantly, why.
85. The work of Year 6 on World War 2 shows good research, recently enhanced by a visit to Holland and the Anne Frank museum. The use of their own school logbook from the time also served to bring the human elements home and encouraged feelings of empathy. Pupils use terms and dates well, having a good understanding of cause and effect. Their structured accounts show they have put together well information from a variety of primary and secondary sources, including the use of ICT, but it is not clear how well they appreciate their relative worth.

86. The satisfactory curriculum is based on national guidelines. It includes a good range of extra-curricular visits to enrich pupils' experiences. The assessment system is barely satisfactory because it uses only broad outcomes to indicate how well pupils are doing. Subject coordination is satisfactory because planning and pupils' work are sampled but there has been no monitoring of lessons to see how teaching and learning may be improved.

## **Geography**

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are examples of good teaching and learning but they are unevenly spread through the school.
- ICT is generally well used.
- Extra-curricular visits and links with other countries contribute to a good curriculum.

### **Commentary**

87. Standards are similar to those found at the last inspection: they meet expectations by Year 2 and exceed them by Year 6. As with history, pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall.
88. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, but inconsistent. Pupils in Year 1 have a good start: they compare and contrast, for example, an African and an English home and look at maps to compare town, country and seaside locations. Pupils in Year 2 go only a little further and describe the features which give the neighbouring town of St Anne's its character as a seaside resort. They offer some opinions but comparisons with their own town are limited and views are seldom supported with reasons. This is because all pupils undertake the same tasks. These do not offer the best match to different abilities so pupils do not all do as well as they should. However, the interactive whiteboard was used well to present a 'virtual tour'.
89. A good lesson in Year 4 made effective use of the ICT suite where pupils had to undertake research about the Amazon Basin. A balance of close direction from the teacher and paired and independent tasks ensured that the vast majority found out a lot about physical and man-made changes to the environment and their impact. A good lesson for Year 5 incorporated a variety of activities to cater for all abilities and develop a variety of skills. The well-briefed teaching assistant made sure that pupils with special educational needs were fully included. A satisfactory lesson in Year 6 stimulated - through a video - pupils' interest in features of rivers. However, subsequent written tasks had a greater focus on geographical vocabulary than on geographical skills. Hence, these did not develop to the same extent.
90. The curriculum follows the national guidelines and visits contribute very well to pupils' achievement. For example, Year 2 pupils will shortly visit St Anne's to explore 'for real' those features they have studied in class. Year 6 pupils will be going to a field study centre where they can see the reality of what they have looked at in class. The benefits of a recent visit to Holland by pupils in Years 5 and 6 were clear in an assembly where they shared with their audience observations on conservation, land reclamation and economic

activity. Charitable links with an Indian village give pupils a more personal insight into the climate, features, and activities of a distant land.

91. Subject management is satisfactory because plans are regularly monitored to check that the requirements of the National Curriculum are met. Lessons are not observed so the strengths in teaching are not shared, nor are the areas for development addressed. As with history, assessment is barely satisfactory. Changes since the last inspection are satisfactory.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

*Art and design, music and design and technology were sampled. Physical education was inspected in full.*

92. Although no lessons were observed in **art and design**, the work in pupils' books is limited. While, in some classes, there was evidence of books being used for experimenting with techniques – with tone, for example, in Year 1 – it is frequently the case that work in these books is limited to pencil sketches. Work on display was predominantly of an expected standard, although from a few pupils in Year 4 there was good quality work in the use of colour to reflect mood. In addition, a few Year 6 pupils produced good quality work, experimenting with different media to generate light and dark tonal variation. There is no effective assessment system.
93. There was very little **design and technology** work on display and no lessons were observed. However, in most classes there was written evidence of a range of appropriate work. From Year 4 in particular there were good links with science and ICT in a model lighthouse project. The design element in pupils' books was considerably more thoroughly covered than the evaluation. There is no effective assessment system in the subject.
94. Only one **music** lesson was observed during the inspection so it was not possible to make overall judgements on provision, standards, achievement or teaching. However, standards in singing, heard throughout the school in assemblies, a concert performance and on CD, are above average in all year groups. Pupils sing tunefully and with confidence and enjoyment. Older pupils competently sing in parts and show a good understanding of rhythm. In the well-taught Year 6 lesson seen, pupils demonstrated good achievement in developing their skills of appraisal and their understanding of the composition and deployment of the orchestra in the different movements of the Planets Suite by Gustav Holst. The teacher had strong subject knowledge and high expectations of pupils' understanding and involvement - to which they responded well.
95. Leadership and management are good. The coordinator ensures that pupils have good opportunities to perform both within school and in the local community. The school took part in the Music for Youth Festival earlier this year and intends to participate annually. A good range of instrumental tuition is available and the coordinator leads the lower and upper school choirs. She is an inspirational leader and has developed an enthusiasm for music in both staff and pupils during the year that she has held the post. Assessment in the subject needs development if it is to be used to raise attainment.

## **Physical Education**

Provision in physical education is **good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards have improved since the last inspection.
- Teaching expertise is often shared well, raising standards in more classes.
- Extra-curricular activities, including competitions, support the main curriculum very well.

### **Commentary**

96. At the last inspection standards were in line with national expectations by Year 2 and Year 6. Only a small number of the highest attainers in Year 6 moved above them. There has been a good improvement. Pupils in Year 2 enter the school at a broadly typical level of physical development and continue to achieve satisfactorily, reaching national expectations. The vast majority of pupils in Year 6 reach standards that are well above average. This represents good achievement because they entered the school with above average standards of physical development. Most pupils have achieved well in swimming, dance and field sports by the time they leave school. The current summer focus on athletics reveals increasingly well-honed performances, based on highly developed skills of evaluation and a great deal of very well motivated application.
97. This is the result of overall good teaching and learning. The subject coordinator, who teaches Year 6, is an experienced athlete and practising athletics judge. Her very good knowledge and enthusiasm give pupils clear models of what is required and skilful questioning makes them think hard about strengths and weaknesses in performance. Discussions are fruitful because pupils know exactly what they are looking for, both in their own movements and in the work of others, and can bring advanced techniques to bear. Very good relationships mean that constructive criticism is given and received maturely.
98. Subject management is good, and includes the exchange of expertise where timetabling permits. The coordinator, for example, also teaches Year 4 pupils. This brings specialist knowledge to a wider range of classes. However, this expertise is not as widely spread as it could be. The co-ordinator monitors all planning but has not been able to observe lessons, nor has it been possible for colleagues to gain from watching her teach. This means that the quality of teaching and learning through the school varies from satisfactory to very good. There is no assessment system in place that has the potential to raise standards. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 3 for example exercise in safety, learn the basic skills they need, but do not evaluate or refine what they are doing well enough to reach high standards of precision and fluency because teachers do not have the expert knowledge to take them further.
99. The very good range of extra-curricular activities helps bring more specialist tuition to more pupils. There are clubs and classes for all ages that promote enjoyment through physical activity. The school puts teams forward for local and regional competitions, regularly doing very well: the netball team for example went unbeaten through the season to win at the inter-schools sports; the football team reached the semi-finals. The school holds the Sports Council Activemark in recognition of its commitment to the benefits of physical activity.

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

*This curriculum area was sampled because no direct teaching was observed and evidence was insufficient to report in detail.*



100. The school follows a very good programme based largely on published materials that have been adapted and supplemented to suit pupils' needs. The programme contributes strongly to their very good attitudes and behaviour and overall rounded development. All classes have two lessons per week. These include 'circle times' where pupils discuss freely matters of importance to themselves, their classmates and the school community as a whole. The programme also makes use as far as possible of cross-curricular links so that pupils learn how to express themselves within an appropriate social framework in whatever context they find themselves. The school is committed to the concept of healthy eating, for example providing fruit for all each break time. This has links with both science and PE, and an extra-curricular fitness club so that pupils gain a clear idea of the benefits of diet and exercise. There are very good opportunities for pupils to take responsibility, for example, as monitors for a variety of purposes. A particular strength is the "buddy" system where older pupils act as guides and mentors for their younger schoolmates, helping them to settle in and generally looking out for them as older brothers and sisters. Provision is greatly enhanced by a range of visits and visitors from the community, which helps prepare pupils very well for life.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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