

INSPECTION REPORT

St Lawrence Church of England Primary School

Alton

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116267

Headteacher: Mrs V Palmer

Lead inspector: Mrs D M Lever

Dates of inspection: 22nd – 25th March 2004

Inspection number: 257394

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: 180

School address: Amery Hill
Alton
Hampshire
Postcode: GU34 2BY

Telephone number: 01420 84400
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Appropriate authority: Governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mrs Clare Allen

Date of previous inspection: January 11th 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Lawrence is a voluntary controlled primary school that draws its pupils from an area extending beyond the town of Alton. With 180 pupils aged between 4 and 11 years on roll, it is smaller than the average primary school. Pupils' home backgrounds vary but reflect broadly average socio-economic circumstances. The attainment of pupils entering school has improved in recent years and is now typical of that found nationally. Almost all pupils come from white British backgrounds and speak English as their first language. The number of pupils with special educational needs, including those with Statements of Special Educational Needs, has fallen in recent years and is now similar to the national average. Most of these pupils have either moderate learning difficulties or problems relating to speech and communication. The number of pupils joining or leaving the school at other than the usual time varies annually but is broadly typical of the national picture. The school has very well established links with the local community.

The school building dates from 1841 and, despite additions and improvements, remains in some important respects inadequate for the needs of its pupils.

The present headteacher leaves the school at the end of the summer term this year.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
13132	Mrs D M Lever	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage ¹ Religious education Music Physical education Personal, social and health education English as an additional language
9880	Mr A Comer	Lay inspector	
2758	Mr I H Jones	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology
26571	Mr P Dunn	Team inspector	English Science History Geography Special educational needs

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¹ The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three and ends at the end of the reception class. It is a distinct stage in preparing children for later schooling and is based on six areas of learning. These mainly refer to communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development, but also includes knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school. Standards are rising. Pupils make good progress and achieve well because of the good teaching they receive. Teaching has improved and reflects many of the qualities of good and very good practice. Pupils enjoy coming to school. Their behaviour and attitudes are very good overall. The school is well led and managed. The very good leadership of the headteacher is particularly effective in improving teaching and thus raising standards. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards attained in the Foundation Stage, and in reading, speaking and listening, art and design and French throughout the school are high.
- The very strong ethos of care and support, created by the headteacher, embraces all pupils very effectively and places their welfare and needs as individuals at the heart of the school's work.
- Teaching is consistently good throughout the school, and very good in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2.
- The attitudes and behaviour of pupils are very good overall.
- Throughout the school, teachers' marking varies in its quality, and is of limited value to pupils.
- The school's very good use of visits, visitors and support staff enriches the curriculum.
- Links with the community and other schools and colleges are strong.
- Limitations of the accommodation have a detrimental effect on some aspects of the curriculum.
- Standards of handwriting and presentation vary and are often too low.
- Recent monitoring of pupils' day-to-day work does not give a clear picture of standards attained.

The improvement since the previous inspection has been good. The school has acted effectively to address the issues identified at that time and secure improvement. In addition, standards are rising and the quality of teaching and learning has improved. Leadership is stronger, and the tracking of pupils' progress is more effective. The quality of information sent to parents has improved.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Year 6 results

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

Note: The results for 2003 relate to a year group of only 15 pupils and comparisons thus require cautious interpretation.

Overall, pupils' achievement is good.

The levels of attainment of children entering the school aged four have improved in recent years and are now typical of children of this age. Children make good progress in the reception class, achieving the goals expected in all areas of learning and moving beyond these in many aspects of their work. In Years 1 and 2, the standards attained in reading, speaking and listening and mathematics are above, and in writing in line with, those typical for this age. Overall, these pupils achieve well. Pupils now aged 11 attain standards broadly in line with those found nationally. In speaking, listening and reading standards are higher. Compared with their below average level of attainment when they entered the school aged four, these pupils have achieved well overall.

Information and communication technology (ICT) and literacy are used and developed well in other subjects. The use of numeracy across the curriculum is satisfactory.

Pupils' **spiritual development and self-awareness is very good**, largely as a result of the many opportunities teachers create to promote pupils' understanding. **Pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good**. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils overall are very good. Attendance and punctuality are good. The school's promotion of pupils' personal development is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good.

The **quality of teaching is good overall** and promotes pupils' learning effectively and at a good rate. In the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 it is very good. In Years 3 to 6 teaching is good overall and includes examples of very good practice. The teaching support for pupils with special educational needs is good and they progress well in their learning.

An extensive programme of visits and visitors, together with the very effective use of support staff, enriches the good quality of the curriculum well.

The overall care and attention to pupils' welfare is very good. The school's work in partnership with parents succeeds in enabling parents to support their children's learning effectively.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, the leadership and management of the school are good.

The overall leadership is good. The very good leadership of the headteacher is responsible for the very strong ethos and the emphasis on improving teaching and raising pupils' achievement.

Management of the school is good. Effective systems turn plans and intentions into whole-school action to bring about improvements.

The governing body is effective in providing good levels of support and challenge.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very satisfied with the work of the school, and praise in particular the school's knowledge and care of their children as individuals. They have very high regard for the staff and for the headteacher in particular. Pupils feel safe and very happy at school. They feel teachers value them as individuals, give them good advice, guidance and support and expect them to work hard.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise the quality of all aspects of teaching, including marking, to the standard of the very best.
- Reintroduce previously established arrangements for the monitoring of pupils' day-to-day work, and thereby gain an accurate picture of standards and achievement.
- Raise the standards of handwriting and the presentation of pupils' work.
- Continue to explore arrangements to overcome the limitations of the school's accommodation.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

The **standards** attained in the Foundation Stage reception class are **above** those expected of children aged five, and children **achieve well**. The **achievement** in Years 1 and 2 is **good**, and standards attained are **at least average**. **Standards** are **in line with expectations** by Year 6, and are rising. Pupils' **achievement is good** overall in Years 3 to 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising, due to improvements in the quality of teaching and learning.
- Pupils achieve well throughout the school.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well.
- Standards in handwriting and pupils' presentation are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

Foundation Stage

1. The attainment on entry to the reception class has risen in recent years and is now typical of that found for children aged four. Children make good progress in all areas of learning and achieve well. As a direct result of the very good teaching they receive, most are already working at the level expected by the end of the reception year, and the work of many children demonstrates elements of the standards expected of children aged six. Children are well prepared to move on into Year 1.

Key Stage 1

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	17.4 (15.1)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	15.4 (13.4)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	18.2 (15.5)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 26 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. The results of national assessments for Year 2 pupils in 2003 show that compared with schools nationally and also with similar schools, standards were above average in writing and well above average in reading and mathematics. This represents significant improvement since the year 2000. The overall trend of improvement since 1999 is above the national average.
3. Inspection findings indicate that this upward trend of improvement is continuing in most areas of the curriculum. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 due to the very good teaching they experience. The standards attained by pupils currently in Year 2 are above average in reading, speaking, listening and mathematics. Standards in writing are average. This lower level of achievement in writing is partly due to an over-reliance on worksheets that do not match pupils' specific needs and reduce their rate of progress.

Key Stage 2

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.6 (26.4)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	27.4 (25.8)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	26.6 (28.0)	28.6 (28.3)

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

The number of pupils in Year 6 in 2003 was small. The results indicated above, and findings based on an analysis of these results, need to be treated with caution.

- Improvement over the past five years has been below the national trend. However, when they entered the school aged four in 1996, the attainment of pupils referred to in the chart above was well below that typical of pupils of their age. By 1999, their performance in national assessments indicated that their attainment was below average, demonstrating good progress over the three years. Against this level of prior attainment, their achievements four years later as 11-year-olds were well above average in English and mathematics, but below average in science, where several pupils narrowly missed attaining the higher Level 5. Standards in English and mathematics were in line with the national average, but were well below average in science. Pupils' performance compared with that of similar schools varied from above average in mathematics and average in English to well below average in science.
- Inspection findings indicate a similar picture in the good achievement of the present Year 6 pupils, whose attainment on entry to the school in 1997 was below that typical of pupils aged four. By 2000, national assessments indicated that their good rate of progress had brought them broadly in line with the national average for pupils aged seven, although their performance in mathematics still lagged slightly behind that in English. The current standards of work in Year 6 are average overall and above average in reading and speaking and listening. More able pupils also attain this higher standard in writing and mathematics.
- Throughout the school, standards are rising due to improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. High standards in French have been maintained since the time of the previous inspection, and standards in art and design have improved and are now high. Standards in ICT, science, history and geography are in line with expectations. Standards in religious education are in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Other subjects of the curriculum were only sampled during the inspection, and there is consequently insufficient evidence available on which to base secure judgements about standards. Recent implementation of the school's teaching and learning policy, led by the headteacher, has made a significant impact on the quality of teaching, which has improved considerably since the previous inspection. However, this recent, marked improvement, whilst evident in the standards seen in pupils' speaking, listening and thinking skills, has yet to have a full effect on end-of-key stage national assessments.
- Pupils with special educational needs receive well-targeted support from teachers and classroom support staff. As a result, these pupils make good progress and achieve well. The decision by the governing body to provide a support assistant in every class is having a beneficial effect on the learning of all pupils, and represents good use of the school's available funding.
- Standards of handwriting and the presentation of pupils' work are unsatisfactory. Too often work is untidily and unevenly set out in exercise books, with pages left blank for no reason. Such work demonstrates a lack of pride by pupils. By contrast, the work displayed in classrooms is often attractively presented, with handwriting of the standard expected of pupils of this age.

9. Pupils' skills in English, mathematics and ICT are secure and contribute well to the progress pupils make in all areas of the curriculum.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Overall, pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are **good**. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to their work are **very good**. Attendance is **good**. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good overall** with specific areas of strength.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The attitudes and behaviour of younger pupils are particularly positive.
- Opportunities for pupils to develop their thinking skills and reflect on their work are very good.
- Pupils demonstrate high levels of care for one another and very good relationships.
- The presentation of the written work of many older pupils indicates lack of pride.
- Occasionally immature behaviour by a small minority of pupils slows the rate of learning down.
- Most pupils respond very well to opportunities to work independently and without supervision.

Commentary

10. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils in the reception, infant and first junior year classes are consistently very good and an area of strength. Pupils, eager to engage in learning, listen carefully and respond quickly to instructions. They enjoy coming to school and are happy there. They feel the school values them as individuals. The school's recent focus on the development of pupils' thinking skills is having a very positive impact on pupils' learning and progress. Improvement is especially evident in the expression of their feelings, thoughts, analysis and evaluation of issues discussed.
11. Teachers are very good role models for pupils in the way they form relationships. This element of the school's ethos is reflected in pupils' relationships with one another and the support they offer to pupils experiencing difficulties. Pupils are courteous and helpful to visitors. They enjoy being with friends during breaks and lunchtimes, and treat each other with care and respect.
12. The work of many older pupils is untidy and its presentation is unsatisfactory. Pupils' relaxed attitudes to this aspect of their work detract from its overall quality. In mathematics, insufficient care in the recording of calculations does occasionally lead to inaccurate responses to tasks.
13. Occasionally a small minority of pupils in Years 5 and 6 demonstrate immature behaviour. Teachers are constantly alert to this and usually deal with it effectively. However, this invariably involves them in breaking off from teaching, reducing the lesson's pace and pupils' rate of learning.
14. Pupils' willingness and ability to work as part of a group are very good. They demonstrate a mature and sensible attitude in taking some responsibility for the organisation of their learning. In all classes, pupils respond well to the many opportunities given to them to work independently and without supervision. Even very young pupils concentrate well on such occasions.
15. Provision for pupils' spiritual development and self-awareness is very good. Frequent opportunities for pupils to reflect on their personal response to a range of issues are given added value by teachers' skills in probing pupils' thinking. Teachers' use of a range of grouping strategies effectively promotes pupils' social skills. The school's very strong Christian ethos, together with teachers' high expectations, provides pupils with a clear set of values and moral code. The school has broadened the scope of its work in relation to developing pupils' awareness of other cultures and this aspect of provision, together with the development of their moral and social awareness, is good.

Attendance

Attendance and punctuality are **good**.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	4.6	School data:	0.5
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.

16. Attendance has remained above the national average since the previous inspection. Effective monitoring procedures are now in place and parents and carers ensure their children attend school regularly. The above average level of unauthorised absence is due largely to the long-term absence of one pupil. Pupils arrive punctually and lessons begin on time.

Exclusions

There have been no exclusions in the current school year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good overall. Teaching and learning are good. The curriculum is good, and it is very well enriched. Accommodation is poor but resources are good. The school's attention to pupils' care and welfare is very good. Links with the community and other schools are very good, and links with parents are good.

Teaching and learning

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is **good**. In the reception, Year 1 and Year 2 classes it is **very good**. In Years 3 to 6, it is **good overall** with some very good features. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is **very good**. The assessment of pupils' work is **satisfactory** overall, and **very good** in the reception and infant classes.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 37 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3 (8%)	19 (51%)	11 (30%)	4 (11%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The management and use of teaching assistants and other support staff is very successful.
- Teachers' very good subject knowledge and questioning skills promote learning at a good rate.
- Implementation of the teaching and learning policy is having a powerful effect on pupils' learning.
- Strategies, methods and resources used appeal to pupils. Learning is relevant, exciting and fun.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs successfully engages them in learning.
- Throughout the school, teachers' marking varies in its quality and value to pupils.
- In the reception and infant classes, assessment is used well to plan future learning.
- Expectations of pupils' handwriting and presentation of their work are varied and often too low.

- In the junior classes, assessment information is not always used to plan work matched to the needs of higher attaining pupils.

Commentary

17. The governing body's decision to provide a teaching assistant in each classroom is having a very beneficial effect on pupils' standards and learning. Support staff are well trained and effective in all lessons, and particularly English and mathematics. In the reception class, the skills of the teaching assistant enable her to take over the teaching, whilst the teacher focuses on assessing pupils' learning
18. Daily assessment and recording of pupils' progress complement the school's longer-term tracking systems well. The work of teachers and support staff in the reception and infant classes is particularly good. The information gained is used well to plan the next steps in pupils' learning. In these classes, and the class for younger junior-age pupils, the good match of tasks to the needs of different ability groups is highly successful in moving all pupils forward in their learning and raising the standards they attain. The needs of older pupils, especially higher attainers, are less well met because assessment information is not used sufficiently for lesson planning. As a result, tasks for these pupils do not always move them on in their learning at an appropriate rate.
19. All staff are highly skilled in encouraging pupils, and especially those with special educational needs, to engage in learning. As a result, they get the best from pupils who confidently take part in all activities, make progress at a brisk rate and achieve well.
20. Good subject knowledge, especially in English and mathematics, enables all teachers to teach with confidence. Their use of different types of questions makes demands on pupils' thinking and moves learning on effectively. Regular and frequent opportunities for pupils to think and then share their ideas are part of all lessons. This strategy is highly effective in developing pupils' abilities to reflect on their feelings in response to situations, and to analyse and evaluate elements of their work.
21. Teachers are skilled in employing a range of strategies and methods that recognises pupils' different styles of learning. Lessons make good use of stimulating resources including role-play by adults, such as when a local historian, dressed as a Parliamentarian, joined a history lesson that took place in the local church as part of pupils' study of the Civil War. Teachers' enthusiasm adds further excitement, pace and richness to lessons. Pupils clearly enjoy such intense experiences and are keen to engage in learning. This is evident in lessons across the curriculum, including the highly successful teaching of French.
22. Teachers' marking of pupils work varies in its quality and completion. Gaps in the marking of some older pupils' work are of concern. Although pupils receive regular verbal feedback on their work, this is insufficient to give them a detailed picture of their progress. The majority of marking, although completed regularly, is of limited use to pupils as it rarely indicates how they can improve their work. This has a particularly negative impact on the work of lower attaining pupils, for whom such guidance is essential to their progress and attainment.
23. Although most teachers have high expectations of pupils, the standard of handwriting and presentation they accept varies and is sometimes too low. Consequently, many pupils' handwriting lacks neatness and an appropriate style. Their books indicate insufficient attention paid to the layout and appearance of their work. That they are capable of a higher standard of presentation is evident in the appearance and quality of work displayed in classrooms.

The curriculum

The school's curriculum is **good** and meets all requirements. There is **very good** enhancement through extra-curricular provision. Resources are **good**, but accommodation is **poor**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- An innovative approach to the curriculum ensures it is rich, relevant and stimulating.
- All pupils are fully included in the curriculum.
- The organisation of literacy and numeracy promotes the year-on-year progress of pupils well.
- Links across the curriculum help pupils make connections between subjects.
- Links with the community, other schools and colleges reduce many of the problems affecting the teaching of physical education and ICT, caused by limitations in accommodation.

Commentary

24. The curriculum provided by the school is a major factor in pupils' positive attitudes, and their keenness to come to school. The school works hard to enrich the curriculum through a wide range of visits, resources, use of the environment and visitors who have an expertise to share. An example of this was the loading and firing of civil war muskets by local experts during a history lesson. The arts curriculum is particularly good and is well supported through the expertise of staff and by visits to the local gallery. Good use is also made of the specialist skills of the school music service and involvement in the local annual proms. Secondary school sports facilities and the expertise of their teachers provide coaching for pupils in a wide range of team and individual sports. A further link is being developed with a specialist physical education secondary school as part of a sports partnership programme. The range offered is far wider than would normally be the case in a small primary school. French lessons for all pupils represent further highly effective enrichment of the curriculum.
25. All pupils, irrespective of their gender, ethnicity or ability, have access to every aspect of the curriculum. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Clear procedures, reflecting the Code of Practice, are in place and implemented. Individual education plans are of good quality. Their use is carefully checked so that pupils receive the right support for their needs. Specific extra help, whether because of physical or learning difficulties, is provided so that pupils are able to participate fully. Arrangements to extend the learning of pupils with higher abilities through extra activities, such as weekly attendance at the English master-class "*Writing for results*", are also effective.
26. At the time of the previous inspection, provision for younger pupils in some mixed-age classes was judged to be falling short of meeting their needs. In addressing this issue, the governing body's decision to employ an additional teacher part-time is effective in enabling all pupils, regardless of their age, to be taught as year groups for literacy and numeracy lessons. Because learning opportunities now build on what pupils have learned and more closely match their needs, pupils' rate of progress is more consistent.
27. Termly plans make useful links between subjects so that pupils can see the connections and apply their skills and knowledge. This supports pupils' learning well.
28. The school continues to work hard to ensure that the restrictions of the accommodation do not reduce pupils' learning. Although the use of the secondary school sports hall and ICT facilities overcomes some of these problems, valuable time is lost in moving between the buildings. The school also lacks space for small group work and better provision for ICT. The recently completed library area is a very useful addition to the accommodation. The imminent building of a school hall is designed to improve provision for physical education and reduce lunchtime demands on classroom areas.

Care, guidance and support

The school ensures that pupils are cared for and protected **very well**. The support, advice and guidance that pupils receive about their achievements and their personal development are **good**. The school's involvement of pupils in its work and development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is a very caring environment.
- Pupils have trusting relationships with adults in the school.
- Very effective arrangements are made for the induction and transfer of pupils.

Commentary

29. Policies and procedures for child protection and for promoting the general welfare of pupils are in place, regularly reviewed and very effective. All pupils have trusting relationships with one or more adults in the school. Teachers and support staff know pupils and their families very well and cater for their needs. The 'outreach' support provided for pupils on the autistic spectrum is one example of how the school caters for the needs of individual pupils, but the availability of support from external health and social agencies is variable and often inadequate
30. All adults provide good role models for pupils. The advice, support and guidance that pupils receive are good, and support their learning well. 'Behaviour logs' kept by teachers provide a good record of the personal and social development of pupils who have problems. Arrangements for the induction of pupils into the school and for their transfer to the next phase of their education are very good, enabling pupils quickly to feel secure and ready to learn. Pupils are involved in some aspects of school life, for example setting rules and monitoring targets, but the absence of a formal group, such as a school council, reduces their opportunities to express their views and opinions.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents are **good**. Links with the community, including those with other schools and colleges, are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have very positive opinions of the school.
- Very strong links are established with the local community, to the benefit of all pupils.
- Very effective links with other schools and colleges in the area do much to reduce the impact on the curriculum of limitations in the school's accommodation.

Commentary

31. The parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire (88) or who attended the parents' meeting (22) have very positive views of what the school provides and achieves. The inspection evidence supports these views.
32. The school successfully encourages parents to become involved in the life of the school and in their children's education. The 'family learning' initiative, run in conjunction with the local college of further education, is having a significant effect on the confidence and involvement of many parents in their children's education at home and at school. The Friends of Saint Lawrence School (FOSLS) are very supportive and there is also a committed group of parent governors.
33. The information that parents receive, through meetings, newsletters, noticeboards and reports, is of good quality. Pupil reports give satisfactory information about pupils' progress, attainment and personal development and now contain full attendance data. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the setting of their children's targets and, where appropriate, are fully involved in the individual education plans of pupils with special educational needs. Homework diaries now provide effective two-way communication between home and school for those parents who use them.
34. The school's links with the community are very good. The school enthusiastically embraces the wider community through a number of initiatives and activities:

- very effective partnership with the local secondary school involving shared use of facilities, resources and skills;
 - active involvement with the 'cluster group' of schools that benefits both pupils and staff;
 - support from the whole community, including sponsorship from local businesses, in the development of the new library facilities;
 - support for pupils and parents through initiatives with a local special school and the college of further education (described above);
 - visit by the local ice-hockey team to inspire pupils to work hard and practice their skills;
 - work with the church and local experts to provide innovative curriculum opportunities;
 - a wide range of education visits and visitors;
 - regular visits from members of the local community who act as reading mentors;
 - welcoming students for work experience and extensions to their diploma studies.
35. All of this activity has a beneficial effect on the learning and personal development of pupils and on the school and its staff in helping them to provide a broad and effective education for the pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The leadership by the headteacher is **very good**. The governance of the school is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The governing body, headteacher and staff work together as an effective team to raise the standards achieved by all pupils.
- The headteacher is a highly proficient leader.
- The well-targeted planning for the school's improvement is being implemented with energetic determination.
- The management of the school is efficient and focused on supporting the drive to improve the attainment of all pupils.
- Inconsistencies in the monitoring of pupils' work limit the school's picture of current standards and provision.
- The governing body takes a full and active role in all aspects of the work of the school.
- The school's finances are managed wisely and are appropriately focused on the school's priorities, which are designed to raise standards.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	469,998	Balance from previous year	57,752
Total expenditure	438,199	Balance carried forward to the next	31,799
Expenditure per pupil	2,434		

Commentary

36. Under the skilled and determined leadership of the headteacher, the school is well focused on improving its effectiveness and meeting the individual academic and personal needs of all pupils. The headteacher has a clear and accurate view of what needs to be done to raise standards even higher. She demonstrates the determination, professionalism and sensitivity needed to lead the school forward. Through good strategic thinking and planning, the headteacher manages the drive for improvement very effectively. She is supported by all members of the staff who, working as a team, are successful in improving the quality of education provided by the school. The headteacher is highly respected by the parents, school staff and pupils.

37. In this relatively small school, each permanent, full-time teacher, including the headteacher, carries responsibility for co-ordinating more than one subject or aspect of the school's curriculum. They fulfil their responsibilities well, ensuring that resources and systems are in place to support teaching and learning. The overall quality of teaching and learning is monitored well by the headteacher. In addition, teachers track every pupil's progress closely in English, mathematics and science as pupils move up through the school. During the current academic year, the school has concentrated most of its available monitoring and development time on implementing its policy for teaching and learning, to very good effect. However, time available for staff to monitor and evaluate the day-to-day work of pupils in their subject areas has been limited. Aspects of pupils' work have not been monitored recently, and subject leaders have a limited picture of standards and progress as a result. In addition, inconsistency has developed in the quality of teachers' marking and the standards of presentation of pupils' work.
38. The school is well organised and managed. Formal and informal systems work well and help to ensure that the school runs smoothly. This supports the day-to-day teaching and learning process as well as the implementation of the longer-term initiatives to raise standards. The school has been very successful in identifying its main strengths and weaknesses and directing appropriate support and guidance to where it is most needed. It has a well-conceived improvement plan, which is correctly focused on raising the overall quality of education and the standards achieved by all pupils.
39. The governors have a clear understanding of the achievements of the school and the challenges that it faces. Their decisions, often based on first-hand knowledge, are well informed and well focused on priorities. Their funding of a support assistant in every classroom, and also of an additional part-time teacher enabling all pupils to be taught literacy and numeracy in single age classes, are examples of effective action they have taken to improve provision and raise standards. They fulfil the statutory aspects of governance well and play an active role in holding the school to account for the quality of education that it provides. They are always ready to question and challenge the school when necessary in fulfilling their role as its 'critical friend'. The school finances are managed well, are guided by the principles of 'best value' and are targeted on supporting the school's improvement plan. The large financial balance carried forward from previous years forms part of the school's plans to improve its accommodation, which is currently limited.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the **Foundation Stage is very good** and has improved since the previous inspection.

40. Attainment on entry to the school has improved in recent years and is now typical of that expected nationally. The work of all children, other than those with special educational needs, indicates that they will achieve the goals expected by the end of the reception year. Indeed, some elements of many children's work already reflect the level expected of pupils aged six.
41. Very good teaching in all areas of learning, and children's very good attitudes and behaviour, ensures they make good progress and achieve well. Support staff contribute very effectively to teaching in small groups. The very good support they receive enables children with special educational needs to make good progress in their learning. Stimulating and well-planned activities make learning fun. Leadership of this highly effective team is strong. The tracking of individual children's progress gives a very clear picture of their attainments and learning needs. This is used well to plan activities that will move each child forward at an appropriate rate.
42. Staff work hard and effectively to overcome the limitations of the school building and outside areas. However, the absence of a school hall means that activities such as drama, dance and whole-school assemblies take place in the nearby church hall. This inevitably results in the loss of some curriculum time, although the impact on children's progress and achievement is minimal.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good induction arrangements ensure children settle quickly and feel safe, secure and happy.
- Children co-operate well together, sharing ideas and supporting one another in their learning.
- The very good teaching and high expectations of staff move children on quickly in their learning.
- Staff promote children's independence and explore their thoughts and feelings well.

Commentary

43. An extensive programme of home visits before children start school ensures each child is welcomed as an individual and treated as such from the first day. Feeling safe and settled, children are quickly ready to begin to learn. Frequent changes of approach and teaching methods sustain the children's interest over considerable periods of time. They concentrate and learn well, sharing equipment happily and frequently volunteering help for each other. They enjoy opportunities for independence, referring to a poster to confirm individual letter formations as they were writing. They are in line to reach the expected goals by the end of the year, and some have already exceeded these.
44. Adults provide very good role models for children, constantly demonstrating how they expect them to behave. Praise is used and received well. Children are comfortable within the class group and enjoy the well-established routines, demonstrating increasing levels of confidence. The use of "thinking time" and "talk time" effectively encourages children to reflect on their responses to situations as well as to their own and other's feelings. In a discussion about a sad giant, they were able to recognise his need of friends and the importance of friends to them.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good. All adults make constant use of language to explore children's knowledge and understanding and promote their learning very effectively.
- Children make good progress in developing their early reading and writing skills.
- Children listen carefully and speak clearly, expressing their thoughts, feelings and ideas well.

Commentary

45. The development of pupils' language skills is at the heart of Foundation Stage practice. Almost all children are well on the way to meeting expectations in this area of learning. Many already show evidence of working beyond these in some aspects of their language work. A rich and extensive range of exciting activities and resources stimulates and sustains learning very well. Adults are skilled in questioning children and moving them on in their thinking and understanding. The constant use of language to accompany all activities, and encouragement of children to talk, widens children's vocabulary and enriches their own speech very effectively. As a result, children have good levels of spoken English and good listening skills. They enjoy stories read to them, and choose books sensibly to share together, handling them with care. Almost all read simple sentences with support and recognise many words without help. Most children form written letters of the size expected for their age. More able children are starting to write their own sentences.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good. Children make good progress and attain high standards.
- The use of other adults is very effective in supporting and promoting learning.

Commentary

46. The very good teaching of mathematics is responsible for the good rate of progress the children make and the standards they attain. Most children have already achieved many elements of the expectations for mathematics. Discussion, such as that exploring the size of numbers, is exciting and children are awe-struck by the hugeness of 100. The use of well-prepared and attractive resources stimulates children visually. References to earlier learning help children make links in their understanding. Homework is used well, as when items children brought from home were used to develop counting skills. Very sensitive support from teaching assistants enables less able children to take part in class activities and achieve well. All children count in tens to 100, and the majority count accurately from zero to 100. Children use language, such as bigger, smaller, less, more than, confidently when discussing their work. They use suitable vocabulary to describe familiar mathematical shapes.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A stimulating classroom environment supports children's learning well.
- Very good teaching and support from adults focuses on precise learning objectives and gives well-chosen activities purpose and meaning.

Commentary

47. Teaching and learning are good and children achieve well. Most are working at levels expected for their age. Colourful, imaginative and dynamic classroom displays reflect the breadth of the curriculum. Adults encourage children to engage with the items displayed and use their senses to explore and develop their awareness, for example, by feeling the texture of paper they have made. The richly resourced classroom is used in ever-changing ways to reflect current work. Adults deepen the children's understanding by asking questions reflecting the clearly defined learning purposes of activities. Their understanding of how children learn is evident in the quality of the first-hand experiences they provide.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and makes effective use of the outdoor space available.
- Children are very well behaved and confident to move around the whole of the outdoor space.
- Opportunities to develop children's skills when working with their hands are well promoted.
- Journeys to the nearby church hall reduce the amount of time available to deliver the curriculum.

Commentary

48. A variety of outdoor activities taught in small groups, makes full use of the entire school playground. Children's confident use of the large space shows good awareness and care of each other. Lessons involve children in demanding levels of physical effort. Adults point out to children the effects of exercise on their bodies, and how physical activity benefits their health. Adults are skilled in encouraging children to hold tools such as pencils, brushes, pens and small apparatus correctly so that their work reflects good levels of skill. Sensitive adult support for children with special educational needs enables them to dress and undress independently and as quickly as others. All children are working at the levels expected for their age.
49. The absence of a school hall involves dance and drama activities taking place in the nearby church hall. Although children walk briskly, inevitably some time is lost making the journey and reduces the overall amount of time available for the development of related skills.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching is highly successful in engaging children's imaginations and creative thinking.
- Children behave very well even when excited and totally absorbed in imaginary situations.

Commentary

50. The teacher's enthusiasm and ability to take children into the world of their imaginations fires their creativity and they make significant gains in their learning as a result, achieving standards higher than those expected for their age. Even when excited and totally involved, for instance, during a visit to beanstalk land, the children remain well behaved and respond sensibly but with huge enjoyment. Adults urge children to share their thoughts and ideas with them and each other, and every child's use of language is clearly valued. Children's work demonstrates their good use of fabric, colour and a range of artistic media to express their feelings and ideas.

Example of outstanding practice

Foundation stage drama lesson as part of provision for creative development.

Opening music during which children climbed the beanstalk was very exciting and led to a brainstorming of ideas about what they might find in giant land. The scale and quality of resources –the giant’s breakfast, the key to his castle, his button and mobile phone – and the teacher’s superb use of role-play transported all the children to the world of the giant and for half an hour this became their reality. So fired were their imaginations by the intensity of the experience that they saw a river ahead of them and decided to swim across, the child carrying the breakfast taking special care that it did not get wet. All adults gave sensitive but focused support to children with special educational needs, enabling them to participate fully. The children made significant gains in using their imaginations to empathise with fictional characters, and to recognise the needs of others and respond. Their use of language to express wonder, feelings and suggestions for how they might act was very well promoted.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards attained in English are satisfactory overall, and improving. All pupils achieve well.
- Standards in speaking, listening and reading are consistently good.
- Teaching and learning are good overall with some very good features.
- The marking of pupils’ work is often unsatisfactory and does not support improvement.
- Teachers make very good use of the learning support assistants.
- The standard of handwriting and the presentation of pupils’ work are often unsatisfactory.

Commentary

51. Standards in reading have improved throughout the school, and in speaking and listening in the infant classes. Standards in writing remain the same as those found at the time of the previous inspection, but have started to show recent improvement by Year 6. In the 2003 national tests, standards attained by pupils aged seven were well above average in reading and above average in writing when compared with national and similar schools data, demonstrating good achievement from when they joined the school aged four. Standards attained in English by pupils aged 11 in the same year were in line with national and similar schools data. However, these pupils’ levels of attainment when they entered the school as four-year-olds in 1996 were well below those typical for their age, particularly in relation to their language skills. Taking this into account, they achieved very well during their time in school.
52. Currently, standards are average for both seven and 11-year-olds in writing, but above average in reading, speaking and listening. Work in pupils’ books shows that not all pupils make the progress they are capable of in writing. In some classes, there is too much reliance on published worksheets that require one-word or sentence answers. This substantially reduces the opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills. Recent improvements in teaching and learning mean pupils are likely to meet or exceed their statutory targets for 2004, representing an improvement on last year’s results.
53. Standards in writing are beginning to improve because teaching now focuses more closely on the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Teachers’ skills in questioning pupils are beginning to improve the depth of pupils’ responses and the quality of their work. However, these improvements are too recent to have made a full impact on the outcomes of the latest national assessments. A useful tracking system enables the school to monitor the progress of pupils and, if necessary, allocate additional resources to help specific

groups improve. An example of this is the current extra support for Year 6 pupils who are better writers.

54. Pupils in Year 2 are good readers and cope readily with harder text. By Year 6 pupils put their high levels of reading skill to good use in interpreting a range of texts. They refer to a text to support their views, retrieve information from a variety of sources and discuss how writers make links between events and characters. The “reading roundabout” sessions that take place three mornings a week make a useful contribution to the good standards of reading seen across the school.
55. Standards in speaking and listening are above average. Teachers encourage pupils and insist that they explain their ideas clearly. Many opportunities enable pupils to discuss their work together in small groups or in pairs. Pupils listen carefully to each other and, on most occasions, to their teachers. The school’s implementation of its teaching and learning policy, currently focused on promoting pupils’ speaking, listening and thinking skills, has had a marked effect on their learning and is one of the reasons for improving standards.
56. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers use their good subject knowledge, and national guidance on the teaching of literacy, to develop pupils’ understanding. However, some marking is unsatisfactory and often fails to let pupils know how they can improve. Teachers assess pupils’ levels of understanding accurately and provide activities that are well matched to their needs. Relationships are good, but teacher expectations of pupils’ presentation are often too low. Day-to-day handwriting is often below the standard expected for the various age groups. The use of well-qualified teacher assistants, skilfully deployed by classroom teachers, is starting to impact on pupils’ achievement. This is particularly the case for pupils with special educational needs. In all classes pupils are valued for their efforts and have very good self-esteem as a result.
57. The co-ordinator provides effective leadership and good subject management. She ensures that resources are adequate and that curriculum requirements are met. Her monitoring through the observation of lessons provides a clear view of current teaching and learning quality. However, lapses in the monitoring of pupils’ work mean that unsatisfactory marking, handwriting and presentation have not been identified.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

58. Pupils’ good standard of reading supports their work in other subjects. When reading instructions, text in books and on the computer, pupils cope well and make good progress. Pupils write in a range of styles including letters of complaint, flowcharts in science and reports on life in Tudor times in history. Strengths in speaking and listening make major contributions to pupils’ progress in a wide range of subjects including art, science and mathematics.

Modern foreign languages (French)

Provision in French is **very good**.

59. Although the teaching of French was not a focus for the inspection, it was sampled because it is taught in all classes on a weekly basis and is therefore an integral part of the school’s curriculum. French is taught exclusively by the teaching assistant who is herself French. Two lessons were observed, and in both the quality of teaching was very good. A combination of short, varied and lively activities including songs, games, role-play and mime makes learning fun and keeps pupils engaged and interested. Skilful but tactful support for pupils with special educational needs ensures they are able to play a full part in lessons, contributing and learning well. By the time they are 11, pupils speak confidently, clearly and with good accents. The teaching of French represents highly effective enrichment of the school’s basic curriculum.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Due to good teaching, standards in mathematics are improving and pupils achieve well.
- Pupils with special educational needs make consistently good progress.
- The tracking of pupils' progress as they move up through the school is very good.
- The presentation of pupils' work is very variable and is often of an unsatisfactory standard.
- The quality of teachers' marking of pupils' work varies and its completion is irregular.

Commentary

60. In the 2003 national tests, the pupils in Year 2 attained standards in mathematics that were well above the national average. When compared with similar schools, the pupils also performed very well. Currently, the standards achieved by Year 2 pupils are above those expected for their age at this stage in the school year. Over their time in the school, these pupils have achieved well.
61. The performance of pupils in Year 6 in the 2003 national tests was broadly similar to the national average. However, their performance was judged to be very high when compared with their prior attainment. It was the highest performance achieved by the school in the last five years. This comparative data does need to be interpreted with caution, however, as the number of pupils in that year group was small. The performance of Year 6 pupils in national tests in recent years indicates that standards overall are rising.
62. The current Year 6 pupils are attaining standards that are typical for their age. When these pupils first joined the school in the reception class in 1997, assessments indicated that on average their level of attainment was below that typical for their age. They have, therefore, made greater gains in their mathematical performance than expected. Consequently, these pupils have made good progress and achieved well.
63. The work for pupils with special educational needs is carefully planned and builds steadily on their previous learning. In lessons, very good support by all adults moves them on well in their learning.
64. Overall, the teaching of mathematics in the school is good. During the inspection, mathematics teaching was observed in each year group. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen and in half the lessons the teaching was judged to be very good. This teaching of high quality had a very positive impact upon the rate of pupils' progress and led them to achieve well.
65. The impact of the school's efforts to improve the quality of teaching was evident in each lesson. Teachers' skilled use of 'open-ended' questions encouraged pupils to think through mathematical problems and to explain their findings, and how they reached them, in a clear and logical way. The very best lessons made learning exciting and fun. Frequent links to other subjects made mathematical work more relevant and purposeful. For example, as part of their literacy work, Year 2 pupils had written to a local car distributor asking what colour of new cars was most popular. Pupils listened very carefully as the teacher read out the reply. They then conducted a survey of the colour of vehicles passing the school, and used this information to create graphs. By the end of the lesson, pupils had a very clear understanding of how to communicate collected data through graphs. They could interpret the information and explain it clearly and concisely to the rest of the class. The lesson captured their interest. As a result, they worked hard and made very good progress.
66. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and press them on well in their learning. However, the work in pupils' books is often untidy and poorly presented, resulting in instances of inaccurate calculations. Additionally, the marking of pupils' work is of varying quality and

irregularly completed. Whilst pupils generally receive sound verbal feedback, few comments are written in their books that encourage them and help them to understand how they can improve.

67. The schools own system for tracking pupils' attainment and progress year on year contributes very effectively to the setting of individual pupil targets. Its use to monitor their rate of progress and to identify any emerging issues before they become major problems is also highly effective.
68. Good management of the subject ensures that the curriculum is covered and well resourced. The headteacher's observation of lessons gives a clear view of the quality of teaching and learning. Recent limited monitoring of work in pupils' books has not noted its untidiness, or the uneven marking of pupils' work. It has furthermore provided an insufficiently precise picture of current standards and progress, from which improvement can be planned.

Mathematics across the curriculum

69. The use of mathematics in other subjects is satisfactory. Year 5 pupils used their understanding of line graphs well in a literacy lesson to plot a character's chances of surviving after falling into the sea. In a Year 2 science lesson, pupils' knowledge of time helped them to set up and conduct an investigation about the rate at which ice lollies melt. Teachers clearly recognise the importance of such opportunities to engage pupils in using their emerging mathematical skills.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards show yearly variation but are currently in line with national averages for Years 2 and 6. This represents improvement for older pupils.
- Teaching seen was of a high standard.
- Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have too few opportunities to plan their own investigations.
- Pupils' recording skills are underdeveloped and do not match their scientific understanding.
- The school's current picture of standards and progress is limited.

Commentary

70. Since the previous inspection, standards in Year 2, as judged by teacher assessment, have been maintained at a level above that found nationally and in schools with similar characteristics. Pupils make good progress and achieve well. Inspection findings confirm that standards in the current Year 2 class are at least in line with national expectations, and in some respects higher. Over the last four years, national assessment results indicate considerable variations in the attainment of Year 6 pupils. This is partly due to differences in the overall abilities of year groups, and also because the most capable pupils have not achieved enough. However, a rising trend is indicated. The better results predicted by the school reflect inspection findings of satisfactory standards in the current Year 6.
71. Two science lessons, in Years 2 and 3, were observed during the inspection. This is insufficient to enable secure judgements to be made about the quality of teaching overall. In the lessons seen, teaching was good and in one lesson very good. Lessons were well planned, prepared and organised, reflecting the teachers' very secure subject knowledge. Pupils were challenged to think through and explain their ideas, using their good speaking and listening skills well. Expectations of achievement were high and behaviour was excellent. Work was well matched to the abilities of all pupils including those with special educational needs.

Learning support assistants worked effectively to promote learning, under the skilled direction of class teachers.

72. Although practical work is a part of the school's day-to-day provision for science, there are too few opportunities for pupils in Years 5 and 6 to plan and conduct their own investigations to test ideas, select the type of equipment needed and draw conclusions. This limits the development of pupils' enquiry skills and their overall attainment.
73. Work completed in pupils' books since September 2003, while satisfactory, is not extensive and does not fully reflect pupils' understanding of science, particularly in Year 2, and Years 3 to 6. However, more recent work is much improved. Pupils are starting to structure their recording and have more time during lessons to do this properly.
74. Management of the subject is satisfactory and science is well led. Improvements in teaching are already having an impact on standards and progress. Resources are good and carefully looked after. Good links are made with other subject areas, such as mathematics where the skills of interpreting graphs and tables are used. Although individual pieces of pupils' work are sampled regularly by staff, the co-ordinator's view of current standards is limited by insufficient monitoring of work in pupils' books. Recent evidence of pupils' performance from which improvement can be planned is not available.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The standards attained by pupils are in line with those typically found for their age nationally.
- Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and that of pupils with special educational needs is good.
- ICT is used well to support learning in other subjects.
- The school accommodation restricts pupils' learning in the subject.

Commentary

75. The progress and achievement of pupils throughout the school are satisfactory. Overall, standards are in line with those typical for their age. There are, however, examples of pupils working at higher levels. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by teachers and teaching assistants and, as a result develop their computing skills and knowledge well.
76. As pupils move through the school, they follow a scheme that helps to ensure the systematic development of their skills and knowledge. Specific ICT skills are taught and then used by pupils in their work in other subjects, giving relevance and purpose to ICT lessons. In Year 1, for example, pupils were taught to use a computer-controlled device in an ICT lesson. The next day the pupils used these newly acquired skills and the device well in a mathematics lesson to help them estimate and measure distances. Through this use of ICT, they gained a clearer and more secure understanding of the mathematical principles being taught. In applying their ICT skills, pupils were working at a more advanced level than is typical for pupils of their age.
77. The school has made arrangements for pupils in Years 3 to 6 to use the computer suite at the local secondary school. This arrangement, designed to help overcome the limited accommodation and ICT facilities in the school, works well and provides pupils with good learning experiences. However, the journeys to and from each school limit the teaching time for a weekly 50-minute lesson to just 30 minutes, and inevitably reduce pupils' overall rate of learning and progress.
78. During the inspection only one ICT lesson was observed. Consequently, there is insufficient evidence to make any overall judgements about the quality of teaching in the subject. The

lesson observed took place in the computer suite at the secondary school. The teacher was very aware of the limited time available. Working well as a team, she and the teaching assistant maximised its use, ensuring effective individual support for all pupils that enabled them to make good progress.

79. Although the subject is well led and satisfactorily managed, the school's view of current standards, based on limited monitoring of pupils' work, is insecure.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

80. The school uses ICT well to aid learning across the curriculum. Overall, ICT forms an integral part of the wider learning process. During the inspection, ICT was observed being used by pupils to support work in English, mathematics, art and design and science.

HUMANITIES

81. This area of the curriculum was not a focus for the inspection. No **geography** lessons, and only two **history** lessons were seen. No overall judgement about provision in these subjects can therefore be made. Indications from pupils' work are that standards are broadly in line with expectations with some improvement since the previous inspection noted in Years 2, 4 and 5.
82. The use of a range of visits, many within the local area, and specialist visitors do much to bring these subjects alive for pupils. History taught in this way is making a major contribution to raising standards since the previous inspection. In a Year 2 class, pupils were able to describe the events of the Great Fire of London and understand the value of eyewitness accounts about events long ago. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 spoke with enthusiasm about their study of the Civil War using the local area as an information source. The outstanding teaching seen totally engaged all pupils so that they made excellent progress. Many opportunities provided for pupils to think and reflect about what they have learned help them to appreciate how people have interpreted events in the past differently.

Example of outstanding practice

Year 2 history lesson studying the Great Fire of London.

Pupils were totally surprised when their routine sharing of last week's history lesson was interrupted by the bustling arrival of Samuel Pepy's maid in full period dress. It's amazing how some teachers use their support assistants! Although some pupils recognised the lady in question, such were her thespian skills that all concerned quickly believed that they actually were back in the days of the Great Fire and talking to an eyewitness. Teaching skilfully modelled questioning to ensure that pupils learnt how to ask questions that would provide information about what the fire was really like. "Were you scared?" "Where were you when it started?" "What did Samuel Pepy's do?" "Did you see it spread?" A relentless barrage of questions demanding answers, a modern day press conference in free fall. As pupils turned their attention to writing their own Fire of London diaries they were bursting with facts and figures. They had met someone who was there. History is alive today.

83. In geography, pupils have studied the differences between man-made and physical features of the area in which they live. The recording and interpretation of weather data has enabled pupils to use their mathematical and scientific skills to help with their learning in geography.
84. Outcomes of the headteacher's monitoring of teaching and learning in this small school are shared with all staff. Subject leaders monitor their subjects through looking at plans and discussing these with colleagues, and also by talking to pupils and examining samples of their work. However, this does not give them a sufficiently clear picture of standards from which to plan future improvement.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards, broadly reflecting expectations and sometimes above these, are rising.
- The curriculum builds well on pupils' earlier learning and supports their steady progress.
- The links made with other subjects promote pupils' learning well.
- Monitoring and assessment procedures are insufficient to provide a detailed picture of standards and provision.

Commentary

85. By Year 2 and Year 6, standards, as seen from samples of pupils' work, are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. The standard of work seen during a lesson for pupils aged nine and ten was above that expected for their age. Poems written by Year 6 pupils relating to the Easter story were of high quality. On the basis of the limited evidence available, the indications are that pupils make satisfactory and sometimes good progress and achieve well. This demonstrates some improvement since the time of the previous inspection.
86. Only two lessons were seen during the inspection, and a secure judgement about the overall quality of teaching cannot be made. In the two lessons seen, teaching of good and very good quality was stimulating and made very good use of first-hand experience, such as when infant-age pupils designed and built an Easter garden. Year 2 pupils' responses to the candle as a symbol demonstrate their ability to recognise and share the feelings it inspires. This moves them on from the work completed in Year 1 on the same theme, and demonstrates good curriculum planning. The work of pupils in Year 6 indicates thoughtful reflection on a variety of religious themes. They compare different versions of the life of Christ, and their understanding of religious symbols shows greater depth. Good links are made with other subjects, such as the use of paintings depicting scenes from Christ's life, giving pupils the opportunity for artistic appreciation. Writing for a range of purposes and in different styles, including poetry, reports and descriptions, provides good opportunities to practise language skills taught in literacy lessons.
87. The subject is well led and satisfactorily managed. Outcomes of the headteacher's monitoring of teaching and learning in this small school are shared with all staff. Although the co-ordinator ensures that the curriculum is covered, other monitoring is limited. Little assessment of pupils' work takes place. As a result, the picture gained of standards and provision overall is insufficiently precise to enable improvements to be planned.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

88. Physical education, art and design, design and technology and music were not a focus of this inspection. In total seven lessons were observed: one each in music and design and technology, two in art and design and three in physical education. Insufficient evidence was gathered for each subject to enable a secure judgement to be made about the quality of provision.
89. An analysis of **physical education** plans indicates that all elements of the curriculum are covered. On the limited evidence gained, the indications are that standards in dance are good and in games skills are in line with national expectations. The teaching seen ranged in quality from satisfactory to very good. Pupils demonstrated good levels of control, co-ordination and use of space in dance. The work of older pupils in practising ball skills was of a satisfactory standard, as was the teaching seen.
90. To overcome the inadequacies of its accommodation, the school uses the sports facilities of the nearby secondary school. Whilst this enables all elements of the curriculum to be covered,

the journeys back and forth reduce the time available for lessons. On occasions, pupils lack urgency when walking to the hall, and more time is lost in refocusing them on the learning in hand.

91. Only one lesson was seen in **music**, and in addition music was also observed taking place within whole-school collective worship. Younger pupils were observed singing as part of a French lesson. Plans were examined and a brief discussion with the co-ordinator of music took place.
92. The nature of the subject means that it is not possible to make overall judgements about standards. From the limited evidence available, however, indications are that standards in singing are good. Pupils aged six sing with confidence, enjoyment and a pleasant tone. Year 6 pupils sustain the singing of a song in three parts, performing confidently, in tune, and with clear diction. They compose and play rhythms using chime bar chords. More able pupils compose instrumental melodies and perform these well on a range of instruments. They play entry and exit music confidently for collective worship. Time given to pupils to reflect on their music making effectively enables them to identify areas for improvement, indicating sensible attitudes and depth of thought.
93. Improvements have been made to the school's accommodation since the previous inspection so that it no longer has a limiting effect upon the provision of music. As a supplement to lessons that take place in classrooms, additional space in the newly built library area enables small instrumental groups to practise and perform when the library is not in use.
94. Although the evidence gathered by inspectors in **art and design** was limited to the observation of two lessons and the analysis of pupils' work, there are clear indications that the overall standard attained is above that expected for pupils of their age.
95. Displays throughout the school show a wide range of good art work, including paintings, some in the style of famous artists, portraits drawn in charcoal, pencil and pastel and clay work. When exploring the works of great artists, pupils extend their analysis to include not only the painting style but also the feelings the work evokes in them. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 undertook high quality work of this type when studying the Salvador Dali painting '*Christ of St John of the Cross*'.
96. The well-constructed scheme of work guides teachers well when planning, and results in the systematic development of pupils' skills and knowledge as they move up through the school. For example, pupils in Year 1 were seen making simple clay 'thumb' pots, whilst pupils in Year 2 were making clay 'coil' pots, which demanded greater skill and knowledge.
97. In the two art lessons observed the teaching was of a very high standard. Pupils, responding well to the teachers' demanding expectations, were highly productive. They made very good progress and attained standards well above those typical for their age. In both lessons, a range of exciting activities motivated the pupils, made them think for themselves and spurred them on in their learning. Much art and design work is well linked to learning in other subjects.
98. A sampling analysis of pupils' **design and technology** work, and work produced in the one lesson observed, indicates standards above those typical for pupils of their age. This is, however, too small a sample on which to base a secure judgement about standards overall. Plans show that pupils develop their design and technology skills and knowledge systematically, building steadily upon previous learning. In the lesson seen, very good teaching enabled the pupils to make rapid progress and produce work of a high standard. Previously produced designs for a battery-powered torch had been evaluated and adjustments made to improve them. During the lesson, pupils moved to the construction stage, following their design plans and demonstrating good use of tools to cut and shape materials with a good level of accuracy. Some pupils tested and evaluated their torches as they constructed them, making changes to them to help them work more efficiently.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

99. As only two lessons were seen in this area of the school' work, no judgements can be made about overall provision or standards. Pupils' personal development is given high priority, reflecting the school's powerful ethos. Specific lessons about aspects of their personal development allow pupils to discuss and reflect on issues pertinent to them as members of the school and wider community. Use of a variety of pupil groupings in lessons encourages the development of pupils' social skills. The programme for personal, social and health education is good and includes work on health, exercise, diet and drugs. It supports pupils well in recognising the choices available to them about how they will live their lives. Although the school encourages pupils to take responsibility for their actions and to see themselves as emerging adults, consultations with pupils about how the school is run are limited.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
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	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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