

INSPECTION REPORT

SMALLWOOD CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Smallwood, Sandbach

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111257

Headteacher: Mrs P A McDonnell

Lead inspector: Mr M Newell

Dates of inspection: 29th September – 2nd October 2003

Inspection number: 257490

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	117
School address:	Smallwood Sandbach Cheshire
Postcode:	CW11 2UR
Telephone number:	01477 500362
Fax number:	01477 500509
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Ball
Date of previous inspection:	October 1997

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is smaller than average and is situated in the village of Smallwood near Sandbach in Cheshire. The school gained a 'Healthy School Award' in 2002 and a School Achievement award from the government in 2003 in recognition of the very high standards attained. The school is a popular school and enjoys a high reputation within the local community and wider afield. Although there is a low level of pupil mobility and most pupils spend all their early educational lives at the school a high percentage of pupils travel some distance to attend the school. Almost all pupils are of white ethnic origin and there are no pupils whose first language is not English. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and the percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational need are broadly in line with the national average. The nature of special educational needs includes moderate learning difficulties, emotional and behavioural and multi-sensory and autistic. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. Children's attainment when they start school covers the full ability range and is at an average level overall.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
10638	Mr M Newell	Lead inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language. English Information and communication technology Personal, social and health education. Geography History Music Religious education
9981	Mr S Hussain	Lay inspector	
31807	Mr D Carpenter	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Mathematics Science Art and design Design and technology Physical education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very good school with a number of excellent features. By the time that pupils leave school standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science. In the Foundation Stage and in Years 1-2 pupils achieve well. Pupils in Years 3-6 achieve very well. Teaching is good overall and very good in Years 3-6. The quality of education is very good. The leadership and management of the headteacher are excellent and have been most successful in creating an excellent team spirit and excellent links with parents and the community. The school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1-2 and very well in Years 3-6, often achieving high standards in English, mathematics and science. Pupils attain good and at times better standards in many other subjects of the curriculum.
- The headteacher provides exceptional and inspirational leadership of the school.
- Teaching and learning are good in the Foundation Stage and Years 1-2 and very good in Years 3-6.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good overall and excellent in Years 3-6.
- The provision made for pupils' personal development is very good.
- Opportunities for enriching pupils' learning are vibrant and exciting.
- Standards of care are very good and the manner in which the school values, listens to and respects the views of the pupils is excellent.
- The partnership with the parents and the community are excellent and impact very well on how pupils learn.
- Writing standards are not as high as reading standards.
- More use could be made of computers to support pupils' learning across different subjects of the curriculum.

The school has made very good progress and improvements since the last inspection and is an even better school than it was. All of the key issues identified at the last inspection were tackled in a highly effective and rigorous manner. Importantly, standards and how well pupils achieve have improved, the quality of teaching is better and many of the notable strengths identified have been built upon. This is a school with no sense of complacency, a school that never rests on its laurels and a school that continues to go from strength to strength.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	A*	A*	A*	A*
mathematics	A*	A*	A*	A*
science	A	A*	A*	A*

Key: A* - Very high; 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.

The above table shows that over time the school's results are very high when compared to all schools nationally, and pupils often attain standards that are in the top 5% of schools. The school performs equally well when compared to similar schools.

Achievement for pupils of all abilities is good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1-2 and is very good in Years 3-6. By the time that pupils leave school standards are high in English, mathematics, science, religious education, history, music, and above average in many other subjects.

Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well and most children are on track to attain the early learning goals in all areas of learning by the time that they start in Year 1. Attainment in creative development is a particular strength. Pupils continue to achieve well in Years 1-2 and by the end of Year 2 standards are above average in English, mathematics and science and other subjects. Pupils' learning accelerates even more in Years 3-6 because of the high quality of teaching with all pupils achieving very well and attaining high standards in English, mathematics, science, music and history and above average standards in many other subjects. Writing standards are improving rapidly but are not yet at the same very high level as the reading standards. Standards in information and communication technology are at an average level overall with the pupils currently achieving well although the school has rightly identified the need to use computers more consistently to support pupils' learning in other subjects of the curriculum.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is nurtured very well. The individuality of all pupils is fostered, recognised and celebrated in an excellent manner. Pupils' attitudes to all that the school has to offer are very good overall and excellent in Years 3-6. Behaviour is never less than very good and excellent for the older pupils in school. Attendance and punctuality are good. Learning is a thoroughly enjoyable and an exciting adventure and pupils' enjoyment of all that the school has to offer is visible in all that they do.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a very good quality of education for pupils of all abilities. The quality of teaching is never less than good and is consistently very good for pupils in Years 3-6. Teaching is stimulating, challenging, vibrant and fun. Teaching assistants make an excellent contribution to pupils' learning. Very good procedures are in place for assessing and tracking pupils' progress and very good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs and the higher attaining pupils. The curriculum that is provided for pupils is of a good standard and is enhanced by a very good range of learning opportunities outside of the formal curriculum, which add significantly to pupils' achievements.

The standards of care that are provided for all pupils are of a high standard and the provision for pupils' personal and social development is as good as the provision for pupils' academic development. Pupils' involvement in the life of the school and the way that their views are valued and acted upon are very impressive. Relationships across the school are excellent as are induction arrangements and the way in which the school prepares pupils for the next stage of their education. Pupils leave the school as very well rounded, mature, happy and high achieving individuals. The school has established excellent links with parents and the wider community, which add significantly to how well pupils achieve, and to the richly woven learning opportunities that are on offer.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the headteacher are inspirational and have contributed significantly to the many successes of the school. The headteacher's vision, commitment and enthusiasm are excellent and infectious and have been pivotal factors in establishing the excellent team spirit and ethos that permeate and illuminate the life of the school. She is excellently supported by a senior teacher, a dedicated and committed staff and a governing body that provides very good governance of the school.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents' views of the school are exceptional. Almost every parent that attended the meeting or responded to the questionnaire was very appreciative and proud of the quality of education that the school provides. Parents feel that this is an outstanding school where their children achieve very well and where everything that the school provides is of a high standard. Parents and pupils could not speak highly enough of the school. Pupils love coming to school, find it exciting, fun and thoroughly enjoy all the learning opportunities that are provided. A particular strength is the fact that pupils feel that they are valued and respected, are provided with many opportunities to contribute to the life of the school as a community and that their views are listened to and acted upon.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Seek to further raise standards in writing so that they align more closely with reading standards.
- Ensure that computers are consistently used to support pupils' learning across the curriculum.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects.

Children and pupils achieve well in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1-2 and achieve very well in Years 3-6. Boys and girls and pupils of differing abilities achieve equally well. By the time that pupils leave the school they consistently attain very high standards in all the core subjects and attain and achieve well and often very well in many foundation subjects, particularly in music.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Foundation Stage and pupils in Years 1-2 achieve well. Pupils in Years 3-6 achieve very well.
- The good and, in Years 3-6, very good teaching impacts significantly on pupils' achievement.
- Very good procedures are in place for assessing and tracking pupils' progress.
- By the time that pupils leave school standards are consistently high or better in the core subjects.
- Pupils achieve well and attain above and, in some instances, well above average standards in many of the foundation subjects.
- Although standards are good in writing they are not as high as in reading and speaking and listening.
- Better use could be made of computers to support and enhance pupils' learning across the curriculum.

Commentary

1. Children get a good start to their educational lives in the Foundation Stage. The reception aged children are educated alongside the Year 1 pupils but the good quality of teaching and the exciting range of learning opportunities that are provided for the reception aged children ensures that all children make good progress across all areas of learning and achieve well. By the time that children are ready to start in Year 1, they achieve the early learning goals in all the areas of learning with a higher number of pupils exceeding the nationally recommended early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development and in creative development.

KEY STAGE 1

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2- average points score in 2002.		
Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.6(16.5)	15.8(15.7)
Writing	14.5(15.3)	14.4(14.3)
Mathematics	17.4(15.3)	16.5(16.2)

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

2. Based on the 2002 end of Year 2 National Curriculum tests pupils' attainment was above the national average in reading and mathematics and in line with the national average in writing. When compared to similar schools attainment in reading and mathematics was at an average level and well below average in writing. 2003 results show a similar pattern.
3. The small number of pupils in the year group and the differing levels of natural ability mean that there is fluctuation in attainment levels from one year to the next by the end of Year 2. Inspection findings show that standards in English, mathematics and science are above average although there is still scope for further improvement in writing, although standards are rising. Pupils of all abilities are achieving well.

KEY STAGE 2

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6- average points score in 2002.		
Standards in:	School results	National results
English	31.7(31.9)	27.0(27.0)
Mathematics	32.7(31.9)	26.7(26.6)
Science	33.0(31.9)	28.3(28.3)

There were 18 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

4. By the time that pupils leave school at the end of Year 6 attainment over time has been consistently very high when compared to the national average. The school's results are almost always in the top 5 per cent of schools nationally in English, mathematics and science. Results also show that the school performs very well when compared to similar schools on the basis of prior attainment or free school meals, with attainment being in the top 5 per cent of such schools nationally. The 2002 and 2003 results match this pattern with a very high percentage of pupils exceeding the level expected of 11-year-olds. The school gained a School Achievement award from the government in 2003 in recognition of its success.
5. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science. The consistently very good teaching and the excellent attitudes to work shown by all pupils means that pupils are working close to their capacity and sustain comprehensive gains in their learning. Writing standards are becoming more closely aligned with reading standards. In Years 3-6 pupils are achieving very well which is reflected in the sustained attainment levels in all three subjects by the time that they leave school. Inspection evidence shows that there is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls and gifted, higher attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs achieve equally well.
6. Standards in reading are very high by the time that pupils leave school because of the excellent manner in which reading skills are taught throughout the school. From an early age pupils are equipped with a wide range of strategies to tackle unfamiliar words or phrases. These skills are built on as pupils get older so that by the time that pupils leave school they can locate information at great speed, read with wonderful expression and fluency, read beyond the literal level and have a very good understanding of the text that they have read. The more systematic and direct teaching of writing skills, challenging and highly motivating writing stimuli together with exploiting of opportunities to write across other areas of the curriculum are seeing a continuing improvement in writing standards. Speaking and listening standards are high because pupils of all ages are encouraged to express and justify their views and

opinions, speak with an expressive vocabulary and listen to and respect the views of others in a wide array of discussions, debates, role play and other drama related activities. The high standards in mathematics and science are down to the way in which teaching provides so many opportunities for pupils to take part in demanding investigation, practical and problem solving activities where their knowledge and skills are put to the test. Pupils relish the challenge and perform at a high standard and develop a deeper conceptual understanding of different mathematical or scientific phenomena.

7. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6 standards in information and communication technology are at an average level. Pupils now have far more regular access to a very good number of computers in a designated computer suite, but this has not been the case over time and this has impacted adversely on pupils' learning. Pupils are currently benefiting from good teaching and all pupils are currently achieving well, although more could be done to raise standards further by encouraging pupils to put the good skills they acquire to good use across all subjects of the curriculum. In religious education, music and history standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and well above average by the end of Year 6. Pupils achieve well and at times very well. Standards are above average in physical education by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils throughout the school achieve well. No firm judgements were made about standards and provision in design and technology, art and design and geography, although discussions with pupils and scrutiny of pupils' work indicate that there are no concerns.
8. The school provides very good levels of support for pupils with special educational needs. Teaching assistants make a powerful and excellent contribution to how well these pupils learn and achieve. Equally good provision is made for gifted and talented pupils and higher attaining pupils. The school embraces the concept of inclusion in an excellent manner and ensures that the individual needs of all pupils are fully met. There are very good procedures in place for assessing and tracking pupils' progress and for data analysis and target setting. All of these factors together with the very strong partnership all staff have established with parents go a long way to explaining why pupils at the school attain and achieve so well regardless of ability or gender.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance is above the national average and punctuality is **good**. Behaviour and attitudes to school **are very good** overall and **excellent** for pupils in Years 3-6. **Very good** provision is made for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attitudes to work and all that the school has to offer are never less than very good and are excellent for pupils in Years 3-6.
- Pupils' behaviour is very good and is excellent for the older pupils in school.
- The excellent manner in which the school listens to and acts upon the views of all pupils enables them to make a significant contribution to the life of the school as a community.
- The way in which the pupils take initiative and responsibility for their own learning is very good overall and is excellent for pupils in Years 3-6.
- Pupils respond very well to the very good, varied and at times exceptional opportunities that the school provides for promoting their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Attendance and punctuality are good.

Commentary

9. Since the time of the last inspection behaviour has improved still further and is now very good overall and excellent for the older pupils in school. Throughout the school pupils have a very good understanding of the impact of their actions on others. Pupils are very proud of their school and all that it has to offer and their actions show that they want to make every contribution they can to add to the tremendous sense of community that pervades the whole life of the school. The younger pupils in school behave very well in class, in assemblies and in the playground. From an early age they show high levels of respect and courtesy to one another and to all staff. The older pupils in school know precisely what is expected of them in terms of behaviour and respond in a highly impressive way. Their behaviour at all times, their desire to extol the virtues of their school, their readiness to help younger pupils and just their natural courtesy are excellent and they provide wonderful role-models for younger pupils. All pupils have high levels of respect for the beliefs, views and traditions of others and this helps to create a truly inspiring ethos in the school. There have been no exclusions in recent years.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	100	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

10. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good overall and are excellent for the older pupils in school. Throughout the school there is a natural joy and enthusiasm in all that the pupils do and all pupils approach every task with high levels of interest, application and motivation. Pupils are often observed totally immersed and engrossed in their learning. The high levels of respect that staff and pupils share for one another means that pupils become very confident learners who are only too willing to offer their views and opinions. Pupils who are less confident benefit from excellent support from all staff members and this impacts significantly on their self-esteem. The school places a great deal of responsibility in pupils in contributing to the school as a community. By the time that pupils leave school they are very well rounded, mature, responsible, confident and very caring individuals. The pupils are highly appreciative of the fact that their views are listened to and acted upon. This doesn't just happen in the classrooms but also through the excellent school council where pupils play a genuine and significant role in the decision making process which has seen the school act upon their requests for such things as additional resources and play ground equipment. Discussions with pupils show that they are terrifically proud of their school, feel very valued members of the school community and know that their individuality will always be recognised and celebrated.
11. The school places a very high priority on pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development which adds a great deal to their personal development. This provision underpins all that the school does. Relationships are excellent and every opportunity is capitalised upon to enhance pupils' moral and social development. Adults and pupils are totally relaxed and at ease with one another and fun, laughter and humour pervade the life of the school. Within lessons and in assemblies pupils' spirituality is fostered

through celebration of the natural beauty and awe of the world, through the exploration of pupils' feelings and emotions and through uplifting spiritual occasions in collective worship. Pupils show a very good awareness of different cultures, faiths and traditions with a particularly impressive example being the school's links with the people of Somaliland and the Somalian community in England.

12. The school works very closely and effectively with parents to maintain good levels of attendance. Parents are playing their part by ensuring their child's good attendance and punctuality.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)			
Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	4.8	School data :	0.0
National data:	5.4	National data:	0.5
The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.			

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **very good quality of education** for pupils of all ages and abilities. Teaching is **good overall and very good** in Years 3-6. The school's curriculum is **good** and enriched by a **very good** array of learning opportunities outside the formal curriculum. The levels of care, support and guidance for all pupils are **very good** and the school listens to and acts upon pupils' views in an **excellent** manner. Links with parents and the community are **excellent** and impact impressively on pupils' learning and achievement.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1-2 is **good** with some **very good** features. Teaching in Years 3-6 is **very good** with some **excellent** characteristics. Procedures for assessing and tracking pupils' progress are **very good** in the core subjects and **good** in the foundation subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in the Foundation Stage strikes a good balance between direct teaching of specific skills and learning through practical, child initiated activities.
- Work is well matched in Years 1-2 and very well matched in Years 3-6 to the individual needs of pupils which means that work set is demanding and challenging.
- Reading skills are taught in an excellent manner and every opportunity is capitalised upon to enhance pupils' speaking and listening skills. Writing skills are increasingly being taught in a most effective manner and writing stimuli are often motivating and exciting, although there is a need to further seize on opportunities to enhance pupils' writing skills in other areas of the curriculum.
- Good and, in Years 3-6, very good opportunities are provided for pupils to learn through practical, investigative and problem solving activities in mathematics and science.
- Teaching assistants make an excellent and powerful contribution to how well pupils learn and achieve.
- Teachers use their subject knowledge and general enthusiasm most effectively to motivate the pupils and in doing so make learning fun and enjoyable across many subjects of the curriculum.

- Very good procedures are in place for assessing and tracking pupils' progress.
- More needs to be done to further promote pupils' learning through the use of computers across the different subjects of the curriculum.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 23 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	12	7	3	0	0	0

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

- Teaching has improved since the time of the last inspection and is now a significant strength of the school and is one of the main reasons why pupils of all abilities achieve well and for the older pupils very well.
- Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good and on occasions very good. The children are educated alongside the Year 1 pupils but the very good planning ensures that the needs of the reception aged children are met well. A good balance is struck whereby children are directly taught early communication, language, mathematical, and other key skills well, alongside opportunities to learn through practical, experiential and child initiated activities. The support staff in the reception class play an excellent and much valued role in enhancing and supporting children's learning and achievements. Occasionally, when teaching is not as effective as it could be, it lacks a little pace or there is some over direction or not enough is expected of children in finishing tasks within a given time.
- Reading skills are taught in an excellent manner throughout the school and this is one of the key reasons why standards are consistently so high. From an early age, a love of literature is nurtured in all pupils and this is then strengthened by the way in which reading skills are taught in a systematic and direct manner. The emphasis that the school has placed on improving writing standards is paying dividends. The need is now to further capitalise upon opportunities for pupils to enhance their writing skills through other subjects of the curriculum. Good teaching in Years 1-2 and very good teaching in Years 3-6 ensure that pupils' speaking and listening skills are promoted very well through regular discussions, talks about pupils' own experiences, debates and role play activities.
- The high standards that are attained in mathematics and science owe much to the quality of teaching. Teachers throughout the school place a great emphasis on pupils' learning through investigation and problem solving. In mathematics pupils are given every opportunity to learn and consolidate key mathematical skills but then these skills are put to the test in demanding problem solving activities which have a real life meaning and relevance for pupils of all abilities. In science pupils are taught a high level of scientific knowledge across all elements of the subject and then are expected to put this to the test through investigative work. Pupils show high levels of curiosity and inquisitiveness as they seek answers to hypotheses that are set whether it be which materials make the best insulators, what factors impact most greatly on how plants grow and even carrying our experiments to assess the impact of global warming and the 'greenhouse effect'. Older pupils are given every opportunity to instigate their own investigations with teachers always stressing the need for pupils to use their impressive bank of knowledge to make more informed predictions or in articulately explaining why things happen as they do. Teachers recognise that there is a need for

computers to be used more regularly to support and enhance pupils' learning across the curriculum.

17. A great strength of the teaching is the fact that teachers strive to ensure that work is well matched to the individual needs of all pupils. Teachers recognise that pupils learn in different ways and adapt their teaching styles appropriately. Tasks for the gifted and talented pupils and the higher attaining pupils often make sure that pupils are expected to work close to their capacity. The role played by the teaching assistants in the school is excellent. They work very closely with teachers but are always ready to use their initiative. The assistants enable less able pupils to take a full and inclusive role in all lessons through their cajoling, sensitive questioning whilst at the same time making sure that tasks are sufficiently demanding. Teachers often make learning an enjoyable adventure where their subject knowledge in subjects such as music, religious education or history is infectious and provides a learning environment where pupils are totally engrossed and desperate to find out more, which they often do by carrying out personal and unprompted research at home and then are eager to share it with the rest of the class. Pupils consistently work very hard, take a great pride in how they present their work and regularly produce a great deal of recorded work both in individual lessons and over time. The quality of the teaching and the very positive attitudes of pupils form a very powerful combination which goes a long way to explaining why pupils achieve as well as they do.
18. Very good procedures are in place for assessing and tracking pupils' attainment, particularly in English, mathematics and science. This means that teachers always have a good grasp of pupils' prior learning, know which pupils are making better or not as good progress as anticipated and which pupils are on track to attain, miss or exceed the targets that are set for them. A great strength is that pupils are fully aware of and involved in setting some of their own targets. The teachers use assessment information very skilfully to help plan the next steps in pupils' learning across all subjects of the curriculum and this again impacts most positively on pupils' achievements.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **good**, with **very good** opportunities for enriching pupils' learning through extra-curricular activities and through visits and visitors.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The promotion of equality opportunity and inclusion for all pupils is very good and the provision for citizenship and personal social and health education is very good.
- The school provides a good curriculum.
- Opportunities for enriching pupils' learning are very good
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- There is a very good match of teachers and support staff to meet the demands of the curriculum.
- Accommodation is very good.
- Although resources overall are good, library resources should be expanded to include more classic and recent fiction books for older pupils and more multi-sensory play apparatus is needed to support the curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage.

Commentary

19. The curriculum and opportunities for enriching pupils' learning have improved since the time of the last inspection. Provision for the Foundation Stage is good and prepares the children well for the National Curriculum. All subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are taught regularly and for an appropriate amount of time. The National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy are well and often very well taught throughout the school with the school making innovative adaptations to meet the particular needs of the school's pupils. Information and communication technology lessons now take place on a regular basis in the new technology suite but the school has yet to fully extend the use of information and communication technology as a tool for learning across all subjects in the curriculum. All classes consist of mixed age groups and teachers produce high quality plans to ensure that each age group has equality of access to a curriculum appropriate to their age and ability.
20. The good breadth of curriculum provision for pupils in Years 1-6 is well enhanced by the very good extra-curricular activities offered by the school and by the very good range of visits and visitors to the school. There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to participate in music and the arts and to take part in inter-school sporting competitions. These enrichment activities have a positive effect on pupils' achievement but they also make a very good contribution to their social and cultural development.
21. The promotion of equality of access and opportunity is very good and the school has a strong ethos of inclusion that is received very positively by pupils. Pupils with special educational needs make good and at times very good progress and receive very good levels of support in all areas of the curriculum. Individual education plans are of very good quality and involve pupils in assessing their own needs and setting personal targets for success.
22. Provision for citizenship, personal, social and health education is very good and reflects the high priority given to the personal development of pupils throughout the school. Pupils are encouraged to accept responsibility for each other through the excellent playground buddy system and the School Council is a popular and effective forum for raising issues and solving problems. Pupils have a strong sense that they and their values are highly respected and incorporated into actions taken as part of the leadership and management of the school. The curriculum provision that is made both formally and informally for pupils, the provision for pupils' personal and social education and the inclusivity which embraces all that the school does helps to prepare all pupils in an excellent manner for the next stage of their educational lives.
23. There is a good range of qualifications among the teaching staff and the very good use of their expertise and that of the teaching assistants makes a significant contribution to the rich and full curriculum and learning opportunities that the school provides. The accommodation is very good both internally and externally. Very good use is made of the school's grounds to support and enhance pupils' learning with pupils' knowledge and experience of caring for animals significantly enhanced by the school's two donkeys which are stabled in a field next to the school and are very well cared for by pupils of the school. The very attractive displays which abound in school and provide a riot of colour and fascinating information act as a valuable additional learning resource. Resources are good overall and add to the quality of learning although there is a shortage of classic and recent fiction books for older pupils and more multi-sensory play apparatus is needed to support the curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage.

Care, guidance and support.

The school provides **very good** levels of care, support and guidance for all pupils and the manner in which the school values and acts upon the views of pupils is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a very caring and supportive environment where all pupils are valued as individuals.
- Pupils have excellent, trusting relationships with adults in school.
- The involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is exceptional.
- Induction arrangements are excellent.

Commentary

24. The school has made good improvements in this area of its work since the last inspection. Pupils are cared for very well and this includes very strong arrangements to ensure their welfare, health and safety. The school provides very good advice and guidance for pupils, based on the monitoring of their achievements and personal development. The school's arrangements for child protection are very good. The school's designated officer for child protection is fully trained, as is a deputy officer. All staff are issued with very good quality guidance about their obligations. There are very good arrangements for emergencies and first aid and the school works very well with external agencies to promote health and safety.
25. Pupils and adults are totally at ease in one another's company and pupils are likely to be sharing, animatedly and enthusiastically, with staff day to day happenings in their lives or some special occasion or event. Staff set high expectations in terms of pupils' academic achievement and set equally high expectations in terms of pupils' social and personal development. Pupils are fully aware of this and respond in an exemplary manner. The very good procedures that are in place for monitoring pupils' personal as well as academic progress together with staff's very good personal knowledge of pupils mean that advice and guidance can be provide whenever an individual pupil's circumstances demand it.
26. The way in which the school values the views of pupils is excellent. Within class, pupils are only too ready to share their views and opinions because they know that their views will be valued and respected even if not agreed with. The school council provides many opportunities for pupils to develop their self-esteem, personal and social skills and the school's confidence in the council is equally clear. For example, pupils chair the meetings and the council has a substantial budget.
27. The arrangements for children starting at the school are excellent. Very good information is provided and meetings are held with parents to help them become accustomed to the aspirations that the school has for their child. Once children have started school, there is an excellent 'buddy' system where older pupils are paired up with the reception-aged children and help them to settle into the routines of school life. During the inspection the older pupils were seen playing with the younger children, helping them at lunchtime and also reading to them in lesson time. Parents were eager to point out how much their children appreciated this, how much their children looked up to the older pupils as role models and what an impact it had on helping their children settle in at school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership with parents and the community is **outstanding**. Both parents and the community are making an **excellent** contribution to learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have a remarkably high opinion of the school.
- They have excellent opportunities to express their views and the school deals very well with any concerns.
- Parents receive very good information about their children's progress.
- Parents are particularly well involved in the school and in their children's learning at home.
- The school has an excellent reputation in the wider community and every opportunity is taken to enrich pupils' learning through these links.

Commentary

28. The exceptional relationship with parents is underpinned by very good information and communications. Parents receive regular high quality newsletters, excellent information about the work that their child is being taught as well as excellent information and meetings concerning local and national initiatives. Reports on pupils' progress are equally impressive and state clearly how well they are doing in each subject and as compared to the national expectation for their age. Future targets for improvement are helpfully listed at the end. The school also operates a genuine open-door policy and parents know that they are welcome to come into school at any time should they have any concerns or worries. Many parents and members of the local community help in school knowing that their contributions will be very much appreciated by children and staff alike.
29. The Parents and Teachers Association works very hard in organizing many popular social and fundraising events. The group has raised much money for the school that has been used to buy additional learning resources such as computers. Many parent helpers give their time generously by helping in lessons and many after school activities.
30. The headteacher is very highly regarded and continually and tirelessly capitalises on opportunities to enrich pupils' learning through a wide array of events both within the local community and wider afield. An outstanding example is the link with the Horn of Africa Learning Trust. Although there is hardly any Somalian community in the area the school has developed remarkable links with this community both in Britain and Somaliland. This has resulted in much fundraising by the school through pupils' choir singing and participation in concerts at many venues. Pupils have also supported the Somaliland Women's Support Group based in Moss Side, Manchester. Consequently, pupils learn a great deal about this culture, race relations and life long lessons about the need to respect and value others in a multi-cultural society. Very good links with other schools include very effective mechanisms for pupils to transfer. Teachers from local high schools support transition arrangements very well by leading some lessons at Smallwood.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Both the leadership and management of the headteacher are **inspirational and excellent**. The governing body provides **very good** governance of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's leadership is inspirational and is a key factor in the success of the school.
- The support provided by the senior teacher and totally committed staff is excellent and all share the drive for high standards.
- The governing body is very effective, astute and totally supportive of the work of the school.
- Evaluation is embedded in school practice and is open, frank and accurate.

Commentary

Financial Information for the Year April 2002 to March 2003.

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	381 638	Balance from the previous year	0
Total expenditure	368 735	Balance carried forward to the next	12 903
Expenditure per pupil	3650		

31. The leadership and management of the headteacher are excellent. She carries out her duties in an inspirational manner and influences all in the school in a very positive way and brings to life her total commitment to inclusion and equality of opportunity for all pupils in all that she does. Her drive and commitment for providing a high quality of education for all pupils are inspiring and her leadership is dedicated to ensuring the highest possible standards and achievement in all areas of the school's work. She courts innovation in an excellent manner and always seeks creative ways to improve performance and to tackle any problems. Her drive, determination and ambitions for the school illuminate the school and in doing so she has gained the total respect of pupils, staff, governors and parents. Much of the school's successes and very good improvement since the last inspection are due to the outstanding leadership and management qualities of the headteacher.
32. The headteacher is excellently supported by a senior teacher who leads by example through her very good classroom practice and complements the headteacher's leadership style very well and makes a very important contribution to the decision making process. In a small school such as this responsibilities for the co-ordination of subjects are shared between a small number of staff. However, teachers and the headteacher monitor and evaluate standards and teaching in all subjects well through lesson observations and through scrutinies of pupils' work. The headteacher also carries out very good analyses of test and assessment data paying very good attention to factors such as gender and pupil mobility. The information gleaned has been put to very effective use in identifying areas for improvement, target setting and for addressing issues such as the boys not appearing to do as well as the girls.
33. The governance of the school is very good. The governing body carry out their duties in a highly effective manner. Governors make a major contribution to the leadership of

the school and its success. Governors are fully involved in strategic planning and formulating and implementing policies. The partnership between the governors and the school is excellent whilst at the same time the governing body's role as 'critical friend' is carried out openly and frankly. Governors have a very good grasp of the school's strengths and areas for development and support the work of the school in a highly committed manner.

34. The school makes very good use of the available finances and over the last 2 years very prudent monitoring of finances and other fund raising activities have resulted in major improvements to the accommodation which is now of a high standard. Very good procedures are in place for monitoring spending and the day-to-day management of finances, carried out by the school secretary, is very good. The governors and the headteacher are very aware of the need to evaluate the cost effectiveness of major spending decisions. A very good example is the recent completion and instillation of a computer suite where the cost effectiveness is being directly assessed against an improvement in standards and quality of learning. Financial management overall is very good because the school constantly seeks to ensure that it gets the best possible value from any goods or services purchased. Any additional funding is used very well to support a range of educational priorities identified in the school development plan. Taking all factors into account this is a school that is providing very good value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The quality of provision in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

Provision in the Foundation stage is good and has improved since the time of the last inspection. At the time of the inspection children in the Foundation stage had been in school for three weeks. The children are taught alongside the pupils from Year 1. The vast majority of the children have attended the playgroup that meets on the premises and they are already familiar with many aspects of the school. As a result they settle quickly and happily into school routines and receive high quality support from the wider school community. Good contact between home and school is a strength of the provision and information gained from this contact and from playgroup is effectively incorporated into the teaching and planning in the Foundation Stage. Attainment on entry to school covers the full ability range and is at an average level overall. Children of all abilities achieve well and make good progress during their time in the Foundation Stage because teaching is good and children's learning activities are very well planned and meet their needs. A good balance is struck between the direct teaching of specific skills and practical, investigative and child initiated activities where children learn to experiment and find things out for themselves. By the time that children are ready to start in Year 1 they all meet the early learning goals in all of the areas of learning, with more pupils exceeding the nationally recommended early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development and in creative development.

Personal, Social And Emotional Development

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

Main strengths and weaknesses.

- Children achieve well because of the good teaching.
- Relationships are strong and so children quickly settle into school routines.
- Adults set high expectations and are very good role models.

Commentary

35. The quality of teaching and learning is good and children achieve well. By the time that they start in Year 1 all children will have attained the early learning goals for this area of learning and a good number exceed them. All adults make clear to the children what is expected in terms of behaviour and most conform very well. Only occasionally are children not as attentive as they should be but sensitive, firm cajoling from adults soon brings them back on track. Children are already becoming familiar with class and school routines, enabling them to settle down to their tasks or attend whole school assemblies with a minimum of fuss and a good level of participation. All adults provide very good role models and there is a consistency as to what each expects from the children.
36. The classroom is orderly and children are well managed so they feel secure and happy in the calm but suitably challenging atmosphere that staff have created. Teaching and learning are most effective when there is a very good balance between adult and child initiated activities and where expectations are high as to the effort and commitment children are to put into their work. This helps children to discover that school is about learning but is also about fun and soon they become eager to learn. Children are encouraged to share resources and to take turns and to put up their hands when

asking or answering questions. Many conform to these requests. Many pupils work for good periods of time on specific tasks and show good levels of concentration and perseverance and are keen to learn. Children are expected to tidy up and dress themselves after physical exercise. There is a good atmosphere of mutual respect already being engendered in the classroom and the early seeds of children wanting to do well and work hard are already starting to flourish.

Communication, language and literacy

Provision is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and children achieve well.
- Good emphasis is given to the development of children's early reading and writing skills.
- Listening skills could be improved.

Commentary

37. The good quality of teaching in this area of learning is enabling the children to achieve well and to reach the early learning goals. Opportunities are capitalised on to develop the children's speaking skills as they take part in activities such as model making, painting, baking or carrying out experiments in sand and water. Adults consistently encourage children to answer in complete sentences and to try and expand their vocabulary. The children love listening to stories and the animated way in which the teacher reads captivates the children and they are brimming with excitement as they try to predict what is going to happen next. The quality of relationships in the classroom means that children are always ready to offer their views and opinions or talk about happenings in their life. Sometimes it is over exuberance, but there are occasions when a small number of children are not prepared to listen attentively to classmates. Staff tackle this well through gentle reminders about conforming to class rules by showing respect to others. Such occurrences are becoming less as all children are developing a greater awareness of what is expected. Children handle books well and are already starting to link pictures with print and recognise that print conveys meaning. Children have begun to develop emergent writing and some make a recognisable attempt at writing their own name. Teaching ensures that early phonic awareness is taught well.

Mathematical development

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and all children achieve well.
- Good opportunities are provided for children to learn through practical and investigative activities.
- Mathematical vocabulary is not very well developed.

Commentary

38. Teaching and learning are good and this helps to ensure that all children achieve well and attain the early learning goals by the time that they are ready to start in Year 1. Children learn a good range of songs and rhymes to reinforce their understanding of numbers and of addition and subtraction. The opportunities that are provided for children to play in sand and water give them a good early grasp of concepts such as 'heavier' or 'lighter' and an understanding that containers can be quite deceptive in terms of how much they hold. Good teaching puts children's investigative powers to the test and provides good opportunities for peer collaboration between the reception aged children and pupils in Year 1, who act as good role models as mathematical investigators. Children use beads, counters and other practical and visual aids to help reinforce their number skills. These practical activities, rather than continually filling in number worksheets, help children to get a far more concrete understanding of number and also keep them interested and alert and they are certainly not bored. Children recognise simple shapes and count to ten in harmonic unison with higher attaining children going well beyond this. The area for improvement is for children to acquire a better mathematical vocabulary by ensuring that teaching reinforces such terminology at every appropriate opportunity.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

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

Main strengths and weaknesses.

- Teaching and learning are good and children achieve well.
- Children are provided with a good range of learning opportunities to enhance their learning.
- Children's knowledge of living things is limited.

Commentary

39. Teaching and learning are good, children achieve well and by the time that children start in Year 1 they have attained the early learning goals. Teaching is effective because it continually encourages the natural curiosity of children to explore the world around them. Through well-led discussions staff tap into children's own experiences and share them with the rest of the class. Children's holidays, trips, family life, pets and pastimes are often discussed in class as this provides a good platform from which the children's wider knowledge of the world can be extended. Observational skills are enhanced through growing plants in the classroom and through exploring the sensory areas of the school ground, although children's knowledge of living things is not particularly strong. Regular discussions about children's feelings and happenings in their lives engender an early awareness of care and respect for others. The children have regular access to computers which they operate in a satisfactory manner. Adults ensure that a good balance is struck between allowing children to discover, to find things out for themselves and to experiment, and interventions which skilfully expand children's natural curiosity, understanding and language development.

Physical development

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good.
- The newly created outdoor play area enhances children's physical development.
- More large play apparatus is needed.

Commentary

40. The good quality of teaching ensures that children achieve well and attain the early learning goals by the time that they are ready to start in Year 1. The newly created outside play area offers good opportunities for playing with different toys and apparatus and well structured and planned activities ensure that children's physical development is catered for well. It would be further enhanced by more large play apparatus. Fine motor skills are being developed well as children play with play-dough, clay and other malleable materials and staff also make sure that children are directly taught well how to use scissors, glue, paint, pencils and crayons.

Creative development

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good.
- Children benefit from a good range of learning opportunities.

Commentary

41. Teaching and learning are good and all children achieve well and attain the early learning goals by the end of the reception year with a significant percentage likely to exceed them. The good teaching provides children with stimulating activities which allow them to experiment with materials and colours. The children benefit from the strong musical tradition of the school and take part in a good range of musical activities both in class and with the rest of the school, where children take part with great gusto, enthusiasm and not without a good level of musical skill. Good opportunities are provided for children to take part and initiate role-play scenarios which allow their creative imagination to run wild and inventively as well as adding much to their language development.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Years 1-2 achieve well and pupils in Years 3-6 achieve very well, attaining high standards by the time that they leave school.
- Teaching is good overall and very good in Years 3-6.
- Very good procedures are in place for assessing and tracking pupils' progress.
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good.
- Writing standards, although improving rapidly, are not as high as reading standards.

Commentary

42. Results over time show that pupils consistently attain very high standards in English by the time that they leave school. For the last four years the school's results have been in the top 5 per cent of schools nationally and the school performs equally well when compared to similar schools on the basis of prior attainment. The percentage of pupils that exceed the level expected of 11-year-olds is well in excess of the national average. Unvalidated data for 2003 indicates that these high standards have continued. Inspection findings show attainment to be above average by the end of Year 2 and well above average by the end of Year 6, with a high percentage of pupils on track to achieve Level 5. Pupils of all abilities in Years 1-2 achieve well and pupils in Years 3-6 achieve very well. Writing standards are improving rapidly because of the focus the school has placed on this area of the subject but are not yet as high as reading and speaking and listening skills. Over the last two years the school identified the fact that boys were not achieving as well as girls but has now fully addressed the issue most effectively. This was done through the purchase of reading resources specifically aimed at the interest of boys, the setting of writing foci that hooked and tapped into the imagination and interests of boys and through additional targeted support and the very careful monitoring of boys' progress. Pupils achieve as well as they do because of the quality of teaching, pupils' very good attitudes and the very good leadership and management of the subject.
43. In speaking and listening pupils achieve so well across the school, particularly in Years 3-6, because teachers ask open-ended questions and ask pupils to justify their views and expect pupils to speak with a more expressive and expansive vocabulary. The language they use and their attentiveness are of a high standard.
44. The school cultivates a love of literature in reading alongside the excellent manner in which reading skills are systematically and rigorously taught. From an early age pupils are taught a good range of strategies to help them tackle new words. Parents support the development of younger children's reading in an excellent manner and this impacts most positively on how well they achieve. This good start is built on very well in Years 3-6. By the time that pupils leave school they have excellent skills in locating information, skimming and scanning for information, reading beyond the literal level and have very well developed comprehension skills because of the very good and at times excellent teaching and because reading skills are promoted at every opportunity. Although reading resources are generally good, there are not enough classic and recent fiction books for older pupils.

45. Writing standards are at an average level by the end of Year 2 and above average by the end of Year 6. Writing standards are rising at a rapid rate. This is due to the fact that the skills necessary to write for a variety of audiences and purposes are now being taught in a more systematic manner, writing assessments are now embedded in school practice which outline well what pupils need to do to improve, strategies are in place specifically geared at raising the attainment of boys and an after school writing club has been set up. These strategies need to continue to be consistently applied in order to push up standards even further.
46. The quality of teaching and learning are good overall and very good for pupils in Years 3-6. Teachers plan lessons very well and always seek to choose texts or writing stimuli that capture the imagination of the pupils. They often succeed and pupils respond in a very positive manner and show a great work ethic both in terms of the quality and quantity of work they seek to produce. Work is very well matched to the individual needs of the pupils, particularly in Years 3-6, and tasks set are demanding and challenging. Teaching is often very focused and precise. For example in lessons in Years 3/4 and Years 5/6 such focused teaching enabled pupils to clearly write well structured fiction and non-fiction texts with a very good awareness of the different requirements and to very accurately distinguish between writing in the first or second person. Throughout the school, teaching assistants make an excellent contribution to how well pupils learn and achieve. The marking of pupils' work is very good because it either clearly states what pupils need to do to improve or why specifically a piece of work is so good.
47. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. Over time teaching and learning have been monitored and evaluated through many lesson observations and scrutinies of pupils' work. These, together with the very good procedures for assessing, target setting, data analyses and tracking pupils' progress, are all factors that have contributed much to the good improvement in the subject, to the rise in standards and to how well pupils achieve.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

48. This is satisfactory. Whilst there are some good examples of pupils' language and literacy skills being used in other areas of the curriculum this good practice is not as consistent as it could be in terms of the further development and enhancement of pupils' writing skills. However, this is an identified area for improvement in the school development plan.

MATHEMATICS

The overall quality of provision for mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and well above average by the end of Year 6. Pupils achieve well and very well in Years 3-6.
- Teaching is good overall and very good in Years 3-6.
- Pupils' problem solving and investigative skills are very high.
- The subject is very well led by an able and knowledgeable co-ordinator.
- Very good procedures are in place for assessing and tracking pupils' progress.
- The use of computers to enhance learning could be improved.

49. National Curriculum test results over time show that Year 6 pupils consistently attain standards that are very high and consistently place the school in the top 5 per cent of schools nationally. A high percentage of pupils attain Level 5 each year and the school attained similarly high standards when compared to similar schools. Unvalidated data for 2003 test results show a similar picture. Results from tests for Year 2 pupils in 2002 and 2003 show attainment overall to be above average. Inspection findings indicate that standards by the end of Year 2 are above average and well above average for pupils by the end of Year 6. Pupils of all abilities achieve well overall and very well in Years 3-6. The very good analyses of data that the school carries out highlighted over time that boys appeared not to be achieving as well as girls. The school tackled this by more targeted support for boys, more rigorous target setting and the careful monitoring of the progress of boys. These strategies have proved to be very successful and inspection evidence clearly shows that there is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls.
50. The good quality of teaching in Years 1-2 ensures that pupils are given plenty of opportunities to learn through practical and investigative tasks and real-life practical solving activities which have a sense of reality. Pupils are encouraged to look at different ways of solving number problems or recognise number patterns. This results in pupils being good mathematical investigators by the end of Year 2. Teachers are also effective in the way that teaching builds carefully on pupils' prior learning and new mathematical concepts are introduced at a good rate whilst ensuring that previously learned concepts are practised and consolidated before moving on. Pupils have good numeracy skills and have a good recall of number facts to 20 and, for some, well beyond this. Pupils have acquired a good knowledge of shapes and know their properties and are becoming more efficient at data handling, although not as many pupils are always confident in interpreting the data that they have collected.
51. Teaching in Years 3-6 is very good and at times excellent and ensures that pupils acquire very good mathematical skills and knowledge at a fast rate. By the time that pupils leave school they transfer mathematical knowledge from one situation to another very well. Pupils manipulate metric weights and measures very effectively, have a very good knowledge of shape and handle data and tackle probability in an impressive manner. Pupils' numeracy skills are very good and pupils carry out mental calculations with great speed and accuracy. The mental agility sessions, which start many lessons, offer pupils the opportunity to put their skills to the test in challenging and demanding activities that are set. The pupils relish the challenge and invariably meet it. The attitudes that pupils show in these sessions exemplify the very positive approach that pupils have to mathematics throughout the school and the enjoyment they have for the subject is a key factor in how well they achieve. A particular strength by the time pupils leave school is in the area of using and applying mathematics. The school has focused on the improvement of teaching and learning in this area and has achieved significant success. By the time that pupils leave school they possess high quality investigation and problem solving skills.
52. Teaching and learning are never less than good and often very good and excellent for the pupils in Years 3-6. Lessons are often pacy and have a real sense of challenge where the work is very closely matched to the individual needs of the pupils. A very good balance is struck between the teaching of mathematical skills and then providing stimulating problem solving activities where these skills can be used and applied. Teachers insist on pupils using correct mathematical terminology and what pupils are to learn is shared with them at the start of the lesson. The re-cap at the end of the lesson is often used to assess if the objectives have been met and the best teaching in Years 3-6 ensures that the information is consistently used to guide and inform future lessons. Teaching assistants play a significant role in the progress that pupils with

special educational needs make and in how well they achieve. All pupils are very aware of their progress in mathematics and have a strong sense of what they need to do in order to improve their work because of good and, for the older pupils, very good marking of their work.

53. The school has an able and knowledgeable mathematics co-ordinator who offers high quality leadership to the subject. Very good procedures are in place for monitoring teaching and learning through direct observation of lessons and through scrutiny of pupils' work. Equally good procedures are in place for assessing, target setting and tracking pupils' progress and these are all features that have contributed to the significant rise in standards since the last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

The use of mathematics across the curriculum is satisfactory. With the use of the new computer suite, data handling skills are beginning to be transferred to subjects such as geography and there is a good interaction of skills between mathematics and science but there is still scope for further development.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well overall and very well in Years 3-6. Standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and well above average by the end of Year 6.
- Teaching is good and often very good in Years 3-6.
- The quality of pupils' work in the field of scientific enquiry is very good.
- Leadership and management in science are very good.
- The quality and use of assessment data to inform planning is very good.
- Opportunities are missed to use the subject to enhance pupils' writing skills or to use computers to enhance learning further.

Commentary

54. National Curriculum test results over time show that the school's results for pupils in Year 6 are often in the top 5 per cent of schools nationally. The school compares very favourably to similar schools. Results are often very high because of the high percentage of pupils that reach Level 5. The 2002 data shows a similar picture with, for example, 100 per cent of pupils reaching Level 5. Unvalidated data for 2003 shows another strong picture of attainment. Inspection findings indicate that standards at the end of Year 6 are well above average and pupils of all abilities are achieving very well. Teacher assessments for pupils in Year 2 show that over time pupils' attainment is often above average and on occasions better. Inspection findings indicate that attainment is above average and that all pupils are achieving well. The key factors as to why pupils achieve so well are the quality of teaching, the very good and at times excellent attitudes of the pupils and the way in which the subject is led and managed. Good improvement has been made in the subject since the last inspection.
55. The good and at times very good teaching in Years 1-2 makes sure that pupils acquire scientific knowledge at a good rate through well planned topics that ensure that all the different elements of the subject are covered in depth and re-visited if necessary to

reinforce pupils' learning. A great strength is the emphasis that is given to the practical and investigative aspects of the subject. Pupils are encouraged to find things out, to experiment, to test out ideas and are already getting a good idea of what is and is not a fair test. Whether working on materials, habitats, or light and sound this approach engenders in the pupils a great sense of scientific enquiry. As a result pupils carry out their work with high levels of motivation and interest. By the end of Year 2 pupils have a good scientific knowledge base of materials, living things and physical processes but, importantly, they are good scientific investigators. This good start is built on very well in Years 3-6. Scientific knowledge is expanded at a fast rate. By the end of Year 6 many pupils, for example, know that different organisms are found in different habitats because of different factors, they know how to alter the current in a circuit and can identify a range of contexts in which evaporation or condensation take place. The strength remains in their level of scientific enquiry. Pupils make very good use of their scientific knowledge to make accurate predictions or to set hypotheses. They draw conclusions that are consistent with evidence and skilfully relate these back to their scientific understanding and by the end of Year 6 are instigating their own investigations, which they carry out with great skill, concentration and enthusiasm.

56. Teaching is never less than good and often very good, particularly for the older pupils. Teaching enthuses the pupils. Topics are introduced in a lively manner, which leaves the pupils wanting to find out more. Seeds are planted in pupils' minds and then they cannot wait to check out their ideas. Resources are always very well prepared so that pupils can get on with their task with no time being wasted. Very good use is made of pupils' previous learning and teachers make constant reference to this so that pupils can make more informed predictions. In investigative work teachers allow pupils to explore, to find things out but then give gentle but focused pointers if pupils are going off track. The emphasis that the school places on practical work means that by the time pupils reach Year 6 they are able to set up their own investigations to test out different phenomena which they do with great aplomb. Teaching assistants throughout the school make a major and pivotal contribution to how well pupils with special educational needs learn. The marking of pupils' work is a strength as it always gives pointers for improvement. Areas for development and improvement centre around the need for pupils' writing skills and computers to be put to more consistent use so that pupils can present the findings of their work in more varied ways.
57. The subject is very well led and managed. The co-ordinator has carried out lesson observations and work scrutinies and used the information very well to help improve teaching, learning and achievement in the subject. Very good use is made of assessment data. Analyses over time had shown up issues such as investigative work and the achievement of boys as being areas of concern. The school tackled these through ensuring that investigative aspects of the subject were taught well and given a high priority and that boys were given more support and their progress closely monitored. These initiatives proved to be very successful and are another example of the way in which the school is open and frank about its weaknesses and the staff then work together very well and tackle them.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The provision for information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Recent improvements in resources and accommodation are now enabling pupils to achieve well in the subject.
- The direct teaching of specific skills is good.
- The school's commitment to further improving standards and provision is high.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- Not enough use is yet being made of computers to support pupils' learning across the curriculum.

Commentary

58. The school has recently had a computer suite installed and this is of a high standard with a very good number of computers. All classes are timetabled for regular use in the suite and benefit from good quality teaching where specific skills are being taught in a direct and systematic manner. This means that pupils are currently achieving well but over time achievement has only been satisfactory because pupils have not had the benefit of regular access to computers because of problems with equipment and accommodation. This has prevented standards from being higher. Improvement since the time of the last inspection has been satisfactory but the school has a high commitment to raising standards and provision in the subject and has earmarked further money to ensure that this aim is fully realised.
59. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6 standards are at an average level. Year 2 pupils know how to save and print work, use the keyboard in a satisfactory manner, name different parts of the computer and are beginning to learn how to merge pictures and text. Pupils understand that you can write instructions for a computer to follow but have less of an awareness of the uses of computers in the wider world. By Year 6, pupils have a secure knowledge of databases, data handling and spreadsheets and have constructed PowerPoint presentations and have made a DVD film. Pupils are confident at using computers for research purposes and are very confident at merging text and graphics. They increasingly use computers for drafting and editing their work. Pupils are less confident in using electronic mail as a means of communication. Pupils are making up a lot of lost ground quickly now that they have regular access to computers and all strands of the subject are now being taught systematically and in sufficient depth. However, the fact that whole class or large group sessions in the computer suite are a recent occurrence means that there are still some gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills which the school is addressing very well. The fact that many pupils have regular access to computers at home has alleviated the problem a little over time.
60. Teaching and learning in the subject are currently good. Teachers' expertise has improved much as a result of sustained and good quality in-service training, which also means that any technical difficulties can usually be dealt with quickly with little time being lost. The school makes very good use of the skills of teachers and support assistants to teach a wider number of pupils. A strength of the teaching is the way in which specific skills are taught in a direct manner and then pupils are given time and challenging tasks where they can put these newly acquired skills to the test. Provision is also being made for pupils to develop better keyboard skills through specific exercises carried out at lunchtimes as well as in lessons. Pupils are thoroughly

enjoying the access to the computer suite, which they also use before school and at lunch times. Their very positive attitudes, their desire for new skills and just their high levels of enthusiasm, attentiveness and motivation are key factors in the rapid progress that they are currently making.

61. The subject is well led and managed by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator who knows exactly what is needed to move the subject on. He has monitored teaching and learning and further opportunities are to be provided in the near future to assess the impact on standards and learning of the new computer suite. Assessment is good and all the evidence indicates that the school is very well placed to continue to move forward and to raise standards.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

62. Although there is more recent evidence of computers being used to enhance pupils' learning in other subjects of the curriculum such as religious education, English and geography, evidence clearly shows that over time this has not been the case and scrutiny of pupils' work suggest that opportunities have been missed. This is an area that the school has identified as in need of improvement.

HUMANITIES

Work was sampled in geography although insufficient teaching was observed to make a firm judgement about standards and provision. Discussions with pupils, scrutiny of pupils' work and of teachers' planning indicates that over the course of the year pupils are taught all elements of the subject and there is a good emphasis given to the development of pupils' mapping skills and development of a good technical vocabulary. Pupils enjoy the subject and have a natural curiosity to find out about different places in the world and compare and contrast them to their own locality. Pupils' learning is enhanced in geography by visits and visitors.

Religious education

The provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above those expected in the Agreed Syllabus by the end of Year 2 and well above by the end of Year 6. Pupils achieve well.
- Teaching is good.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- The subject makes a very good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
- Occasionally there is an over-reliance on worksheets that hinders the development of pupils' writing skills.

Commentary

63. Standards are above those expected in the Agreed Syllabus by the end of Year 2 and well above by the end of Year 6. Pupils of all abilities achieve well in the subject because of the good teaching, the very good attitudes that pupils have to the subject and the high levels of interest, respect and value that pupils have for other faiths and beliefs. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

64. By the end of Year 2 pupils are confident in discussing their feelings and emotions and know the importance of stillness and quietness in assemblies. They have a good awareness of different festivals of different faiths and know the importance of symbols, such as the cross and a lighted candle, and know that followers of different faiths have different but equally important places of worship. Teachers are very effective in promoting a serene atmosphere in lessons and this heightens pupils' spiritual awareness. By the end of Year 6 pupils' knowledge of other faiths and cultures as well as Christianity is very strong. They name, without hesitation, festivals and ceremonies linked to Judaism, Sikhism, Islam and Christianity. They are very aware of the power of symbolism and name many differences as well as countless similarities between different faiths. Pupils show high levels of respect for the beliefs and traditions of others and show an eagerness to find out as much as they can about the differing cultures associated with different faiths. Their search for knowledge and greater understanding is heightened by the links that the school has established with people from Somaliland and with the Somalian community in Manchester.
65. The quality of teaching and learning is good, and often very good for the older pupils in school. Teaching strikes a very good balance between learning about Christianity and other faiths. Teachers provide very good opportunities for discussion and heighten pupils' interest in the subject through visits and visitors. Pupils are provided with opportunities to reflect on what they have learnt and this increases their spiritual awareness. In a very good lesson in Year 3/4 the pupils set up an interview with the local vicar with an 'invited' studio audience. What followed provided the pupils with a terrific insight into the daily work of a vicar as well as providing a golden opportunity for pupils to put their considerable speaking and listening skills to very good use in a lively and enjoyable manner. Computers are now being used more to support pupils' learning. Although there are some good examples of pupils' writing skills being enhanced in the subject, an element of teaching about Christianity for the oldest pupils in school relies too much on worksheets which do little to enhance pupils' writing.
66. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator monitors teaching and learning well and assessment is good.

History

The provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and well above average by the end of Year 6. Pupils of all abilities achieve well and at times very well.
- Teaching is good and at times very good.
- A good range of visits and visitors enhances pupils' learning.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- Opportunities are sometimes missed to enhance pupils' writing and computer skills through the subject.

Commentary

67. Standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and well above average by the end of Year 6 and pupils of all abilities achieve well. Improvement has been good since the time of the last inspection. Year 2 pupils show a good knowledge of the events in history that they have studied, such as the Tudors and Ancient Egypt, and have a good sense of chronology. By the end of Year 6 pupils' historical knowledge is very

good. They recall in great detail historical facts associated with World War 2, Ancient Greece, Ancient Egypt, The Vikings and The Tudors. The particularly strong feature is the enquiry skills that pupils have developed. They have a great enthusiasm for the subject and this shows in their readiness to find things out for themselves through independent study and research. Pupils have a very good understanding of how different events in history might be interpreted differently by different people and are very astute at explaining why events, such as the 'Battle of Marathon', occurred and what might have happened if people's responses or actions had been different. It is this ability and pupils' inquisitive flair that allows them to interpret history so well. Teachers are effective at introducing powerful language and this enables pupils to develop a good understanding of words such as 'tyrannical' and 'democracy' and 'autocracy'.

68. Teaching and learning are good and at times very good, particularly for the older pupils. The emphasis that the teachers place on historical enquiry as well as factual knowledge gives the pupils a deeper understanding of the periods of history that they have studied. Teachers' subject knowledge is strong and this is clearly transmitted to the pupils who become equally enthusiastic and motivated and carry out independent study and research and are then eager in the next lesson to share it with the rest of the class. Using the subject as a vehicle for enhancing pupils' writing skills or the regular use of computers to support pupils' learning is not as consistent as it could be. Good use is made of visitors to the school and of visits to places of historical interest to help bring the subject to life.
69. The subject is well led and managed by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator. Good procedures are in place for monitoring teaching and learning and for assessing and tracking pupils' progress as they move through school. These factors impact positively on how well pupils learn and achieve.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

No lessons were seen in art and design and design and technology during the week of inspection. It is not possible therefore to make a firm judgement on the quality of provision or the standards that pupils attain. Discussions with pupils, scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning and observations of work on display around the school suggest that provision, standards and achievement are at least satisfactory if not better.

It is evident from planning and other evidence that in art and design pupils are directly taught how to use brush strokes to create different effects, how to print, how to weave and are provided with many opportunities to work with a range of different materials in both two and three dimensions. Pupils have a good knowledge of different artists and produce work in the style of these artists that is of a good standard. Pupils look at art from different countries and cultures and this adds much to their cultural development, as do the visits they make to art galleries. Pupils put their artistic skills to good use in other subjects such as history when they produced some quite striking pictures of bombing raids from the Second World War. In design and technology pupils have made a variety of differing products including wallets, photograph frames, purses and toys with moving parts. Evidence indicates that good attention is paid to the designing, making and evaluating aspects of the subject. Pupils have used a good variety of materials, often making their own choices, and use a good array of different fixings and joining techniques to make their models sturdier. Less evidence was available of how computers might have been used to enhance pupils' learning in these subjects.

Music

Provision for music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in music are above average at the end of Year 2 and well above average by the end of Year 6. Pupils achieve well and at times very well.
- Teaching and learning are good and at times very good.
- There are very good opportunities for performance related activities, and extra-curricular provision and the contribution of visitors to music in the school are excellent.
- Leadership and management of the subject are excellent.
- Opportunities for composing music are a little more limited.

Commentary

70. Standards in the subject are above average at the end of Year 2 and well above average by the end of Year 6. Pupils of all abilities achieve well and at times very well. This is due to the quality of teaching, the high levels of enthusiasm of the pupils, the high profile that the subject is afforded within the school and the excellent way in which the subject is led. Improvement has been good since the time of the last inspection.
71. By the time that pupils leave school they reach high standards in music across all elements of the subject although the composing element is not quite as strong as other elements. From an early age the enthusiasm of the teachers and the good teaching instil in pupils a love of music.
72. The musical experiences that pupils encounter as they move through the school are renowned within the school and beyond, and this helps pupils to achieve so well. The good and at times very good teaching from teachers in the school and other visiting teachers and helpers with musical expertise impact most positively on how well pupils attain. All who teach the subject are very committed to maintaining the high reputation of the school for standards in music. Pupils perform regularly in school and in public and their performances are a significant part of the links between the school and community. In addition, the regular school assemblies give many opportunities for pupils to sing and make instrumental contributions to the daily life of the school. Many pupils are accomplished musicians. Extra-curricular provision for musical activities is excellent. Those that take place during the school day are carefully planned to ensure that withdrawal from other classes does not harm equality of access to the regular curriculum. Outside of the school day pupils have high quality tuition from a variety of visitors to the school, including parents, and their expertise and teaching abilities result in high quality performances by the pupils. Pupils indicate that they have more limited opportunities for composing and standards could be raised still further if these opportunities were provided. The subject makes a major contribution to pupils' cultural development, and the enjoyment with which pupils take part in all the musical activities brings a tremendous sense of joy and spirituality.
73. The co-ordinator offers inspired leadership of the subject and her infectious enthusiasm for music communicates itself to teachers and pupils alike and is a key factor in why pupils achieve so well and why the subject has such a high status within the school. Monitoring of teaching and learning are good and good assessment procedures are in place.

Physical Education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good overall.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic in their attitudes and responses.
- The range of extra-curricular activities, including links with other organisations, is excellent.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.

Commentary

74. Standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils of all abilities achieve well. Improvement has been good since the time of the last inspection. The good quality of teaching across the school contributes much to the good standards that are achieved. Younger pupils have a good awareness of space and move with a good level of poise as well as a good sense of balance. Pupils are aware of the impact that exercise has on the body and that it is important for a healthy lifestyle. Pupils continue to make good progress as they move through the school. By the time that pupils leave school they have developed good ball skills and show a good understanding of dodging and avoiding tactics in games. Pupils know that vigorous exercise causes the pulse and heart rate to increase and fully understand the importance of warm up and cool down activities.
75. Throughout the school, boys and girls participate equally in all activities and the subject makes an important contribution to the school's equality of access policy. No evidence was found to suggest any significant difference in the achievements of boys and girls. Teaching is good because it ensures that all elements of the subject are covered in depth over the course of the year, ensures that skills are directly taught, uses the exemplars of pupil performance to help improve other pupils' performance and keeps pupils physically active throughout lessons. Planning is very good both during the day and in linking class activities with the excellent range of extra-curricular activities. Links with a local professional football club and the nearby university give pupils access to a range of skills and experiences that could not be provided for within the normal school day. As a result, pupils are very positive and enthusiastic in their attitudes towards physical education and very responsible in carrying through their commitment to extra-curricular activities.
76. The co-ordinator offers good leadership for the subject through good monitoring of teaching and learning and effective assessment procedures.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

On the basis of what was seen, provision for this area of education is **very good**.

Pupils have regular opportunities for expressing views thoughts and feelings through the medium of circle time, the school council and in their mature and confident relationships with all staff in the school. They are encouraged to take responsibility for a whole range of tasks and events and become socially mature and confident individuals as a result. Health education is dealt with directly, through subjects such as science and through the promotion of healthy eating and healthy mind programmes. In discussion pupils in Year 6 express the

strong feeling that the school has surpassed itself in preparing them for the transition to the next phase of their education and for life as citizens in a multi-faith and multi-cultural community.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	1
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	1
The quality of the school's links with the community	1
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	1
The effectiveness of management	1
<i>Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).</i>	