

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. AUGUSTINE'S R.C. PRIMARY SCHOOL

Darlington

LEA area: Darlington

Unique reference number: 114240

Headteacher: Mrs M. C. Crawford

Lead inspector: Mrs M. R. Shepherd

Dates of inspection: 12 – 15 January 2004

Inspection number: 257589

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

© Crown copyright 2004

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	219
School address:	Beechwood Avenue Darlington County Durham
Postcode:	DL3 7HP
Telephone number:	01325 380819
Fax number:	01325 380812
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M. McLean
Date of previous inspection:	27 th April 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Augustine's Roman Catholic School serves pupils from a mixture of private and rented accommodation from within the parish of its church. There are 219 pupils on roll. This includes 119 girls and 100 boys. Twelve of the reception children only started school four days before the inspection began, joining the rest of the class who started school in September 2003. Attainment on entry to the school is average with a very wide range of ability in each year group. Standards on entry vary slightly each year. Older children begin school in September and younger children begin in January. Fifteen per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is average. There are six per cent of pupils from mixed ethnic origins and no pupils speaking English as an additional language. Fifteen per cent of pupils are on the special educational needs register which is average. Two point five per cent of pupils have full Statements of Special Educational Need, which is above average. Two of these pupils had only just joined the school before the inspection. The previous Year 6 class had nearly a third of pupils moving in or out of the school during the junior classes, which is higher than usual. The headteacher had a considerable period of illness last year, which interrupted the pace of her management changes.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
11328	Mrs M. R. Shepherd	Lead inspector	Science, information and communication technology, physical education
9986	Mr W. Twiss	Lay inspector	
22452	Mrs M. Farman	Team inspector	Mathematics, Foundation Stage, art and design, design and technology, music, special educational needs
8070	Mr J. Haves	Team inspector	English, geography, history, English as an additional language

The inspection contractor was:

Altecq Education Limited
102 Bath Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL53 7JX

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet 'Complaining about Ofsted Inspections', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	11
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	16
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	18
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	28

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good** school. The leadership and management of the headteacher are very good. Standards are steadily rising within the context of excellent relationships based firmly on Christian values. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in Year 6 are well above average in English, mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT) and painting but standards in investigative science are not high enough.
- Relationships are excellent. Attitudes, behaviour and personal development are very good.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher are very good. Leadership and management of governors and key staff are good.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because the school supports them so well, but the challenge for more able pupils is not consistent.
- Provision in reception is very good and ensures that children achieve very well but there is no direct access from the classroom for outdoor learning.
- Teaching is good with very good features. Classroom assistants work very effectively.
- The school takes very good care of its pupils.
- Partnership with parents and the community is very good.

There has been a good level of improvement since the previous inspection. Standards in Key Stage 2 have risen faster than the national average. Attendance rates are higher. The current headteacher has made significant improvements since joining the school. Relationships, attitudes and behaviour are improved and the partnership with parents is stronger.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Year 6 results

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

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average

Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2

The grade identifying standards compared with similar schools does not reflect pupils' achievement in the junior classes. Nearly a third of pupils either moved in or out of the school during their junior schooling and several pupils were very near to achieving Level 5¹. The inspection judges achievement as **good** in infant and junior classes and **very good** in reception. Standards in Year 6 are well above average in English, mathematics, ICT and painting. Standards in science in Year 6 are above average in the knowledge and understanding aspects but below average in investigative work. The inspection judges standards in Year 2 to be well above average in English and mathematics and above average in science, ICT and design and technology. Standards of the reception children who have been in the school for a full term are well above the expected level in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development. Standards in all the other aspects that were inspected are well above

¹ Level 5 is the expected level for Year 8 pupils. A higher proportion of pupils gaining this level increases the overall scores that are used to compare individual school standards with other similar schools.

the expected level. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because teachers and classroom assistants provide sensitive and well-focused support. Relationships throughout the school are excellent and pupils have a very high level of respect for each other's feelings because the school sets a high priority on caring for each individual. Pupils have very positive attitudes to school and behave very well. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good** and is developed particularly well in assemblies. Levels of attendance are above average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **good**.

The quality of teaching is **good**. It is very good in reception, which ensures a very effective start to the children's work in the school. There are very good features in the teaching of English, mathematics and ICT but unsatisfactory features in the teaching of investigative science. Classroom assistants make a very valuable contribution to the learning of pupils with special educational needs, more able pupils and to small groups of pupils. Teachers give pupils great encouragement to do their best and insist on high standards of behaviour. They do not challenge more able pupils consistently.

The quality of the curriculum for all pupils is good with very good features in ICT. There is not enough time spent on investigative science in Key Stage 2. Extra-curricular activities are good, with a very effective residential visit for all Year 6 pupils. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is very good, with very good quality individual education plans. The school prepares pupils very thoroughly for the next stages in their education.

The care and welfare of the pupils are very good. Health and safety are considered carefully. All staff take an active part in looking after pupils, both in lessons and around the school. Administrative, caretaking and lunch-time staff make valuable contributions to the care and welfare of pupils.

Links with parents and the community are very good. Parents receive very good quality information from the school. The parents' association is very active. The very good quality partnership with parents and the community makes a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good**. The headteacher provides very good quality leadership and a very clear educational vision for the work of the school. She is a very effective manager and sets up smoothly running systems through the school. Her performance management systems are excellent. She creates very well-organised teams of both teaching and support staff. The leadership and management of key staff are good. Governance of the school is good. Governors have a clear commitment to the work of the school and share the headteacher's vision for the work of the school. They have a good understanding of the strengths of the school.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents value the work of the school in developing both academic and personal development. They judge teaching to be good and are pleased that their children make good progress. They believe that pupils behave well and that their children enjoy coming to school. A very small minority of parents do not consider that the school consults them enough. Both parents and pupils appreciate that staff expect children to work hard. Pupils are confident that there is an adult they can go to if they are worried about anything and appreciate that there are new things for them to learn in lessons.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- raise standards in investigative science in Key Stage 2;
- challenge more-able pupils consistently across the curriculum;
- investigate ways of creating direct access to outdoor learning for reception children.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is **very good** in reception and **good** through the rest of the school. Standards are **above average** overall in Years 2 and 6. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, but achievement of more able pupils is inconsistent.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 6 are well above average in English, mathematics, ICT and painting but below average in investigative science.
- Standards in Year 2 are well above average in English and mathematics and above average in science, ICT and design and technology.
- Standards of reception children who entered the school in September are well above the expected level.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well but more-able pupils' achievement is inconsistent.

Commentary

1. Children who enter the school in September make very good progress because there are smaller numbers in the class. The teaching team takes full advantage of these smaller numbers and targets individual children systematically. Together with high expectations from staff, this ensures that every child achieves very well. Standards of these children are well above the expected level in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. Standards are well above the expected level for these children in all other aspects of the reception curriculum that was inspected. Children who only began school four days before the inspection have standards that are above the expected level in personal, social and emotional development. This is because the teaching team organises the children extremely carefully and has very thorough systems to introduce children into school. The well-established children take a great pride in supporting the new children and the sensitive approach of the teaching team ensures that the new children work and play confidently in their new surroundings.

Key Stage 1

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.3 (17.9)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	16.5 (16.9)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.9 (19.2)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 33 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. The trend in standards in the national tests of Year 2 pupils over the past four years is above the national level. This is due to both the determination of the headteacher to raise standards and the hard work of the staff. The headteacher has identified English, mathematics and ICT as areas for improvement and the school has a very clear focus on improving teaching, learning and the curriculum in these subjects. Standards in reading and writing of Year 2 pupils in the 2003 national tests were well above average. The inspection confirms these standards and judges speaking and listening to be well above the expected level. The standards in mathematics in the 2003 national tests were above average. The school identified a weakness in problem solving and has worked hard to improve their provision. This has had a positive impact on pupils' achievement and the inspection judges standards to be well above average.

The inspection was able to observe a lesson in Year 2 in design and technology. This showed standards above the expected level. This is because pupils receive regular opportunities to carry out interesting work in this subject.

Key Stage 2

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.7.(28.9)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	28.9.(27.8)	26.8 (26.7)
science	28.9 (29.6)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 31 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. The 2003 national data indicates that compared with similar schools, pupils make satisfactory progress in the junior classes in English and mathematics and well below average progress in science. This is not a true reflection of the school's work. Nearly a third of pupils either moved in or out of the school during their junior schooling. This has had a significantly negative impact on the data. There were also a number of pupils who narrowly missed gaining Level 5. The inspection judges that pupils achieve well in these classes in English and mathematics. However, the inspection identifies that there is a drop in achievement in scientific investigative work.
4. The trend in English and mathematics over the past four years has been upwards. Standards are now well above average in Year 6 in both these subjects. This is due to the school's priority in focusing on raising standards in these subjects. The inspection confirms these standards. Achievement is good because teaching is consistently good and there is a rich and stimulating curriculum. Speaking and listening standards are well above average because pupils are encouraged to express their views and because they benefit from regular drama lessons, which they thoroughly enjoy. The school identified lower standards in boys than girls in English. It has worked hard to match teaching and the curriculum to support the boys' needs more closely and their attainment is now consistently above the national level.
5. In contrast to English and mathematics, the trend in science has been downwards, although standards were above average in both 2001 and 2002. When the school received the 2003 national comparisons of standards, they began to analyse the reasons for this decline. The headteacher and co-ordinator identified the need to challenge more able pupils more effectively in science and set up very good quality additional work for small groups of these pupils. The inspection judges standards in pupils' knowledge of living things, materials and physical processes as above average because these aspects are covered systematically. However, standards in investigative science are below average because pupils do not get enough opportunities to carry out investigations for themselves and teachers do not emphasise the technical language well enough. Another reason for the lower performance in science is the lack of enough time devoted to this subject each week.
6. Standards in ICT are above the expected level in Year 2 and well above the expected level in Year 6. This is due to the high emphasis on this subject, the consistently good teaching, the efficient use of the computer suite and the use of the local education authority expertise. The inspection was able to observe a lesson of painting in Year 6 and judges standards as well above expectations. This is due to regular opportunities to develop these skills and very good quality teaching in Year 6.

7. Staff support pupils with special educational needs very skilfully. Pupils receive well-focused support in both whole-class lessons and in withdrawal work. This ensures that these pupils achieve consistently well. However, although more able pupils achieve well in English and mathematics, teachers do not challenge them systematically across other subjects. This is particularly evident in science and is having a negative impact on standards. The school has identified this and provides very high quality sessions for a small number of more able pupils who work in a small group outside the main class. However, teachers do not systematically provide challenging work in science lessons, or provide enough higher-level tasks in subjects, such as history and geography. Standards have risen in English, mathematics and ICT, painting and design and technology. Progress in reception is faster.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **very good**. Their personal development is **very good** and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. Attendance levels are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have excellent relationships with each other and adults.
- Pupils show an outstanding level of respect for other's feelings, values and beliefs.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to school.
- Behaviour in and out of lessons is very good.
- The school makes very good arrangements to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.
- Pupils' levels of attendance are above average.

Commentary

8. Pupils' relationships in lessons and around school are excellent. This has a very positive effect on their learning. They are supportive of each other, happy and secure and clearly thrive in a supportive atmosphere where all are valued. Pupils have an outstandingly high level of respect for other people and their feelings. This is evident in the care older pupils show for the youngest children and in the respect they have for school property. Pupils of all ages mix very well at break and lunchtimes and pupils with special educational needs take a full part in all activities.
9. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are very good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The vast majority of pupils are very well behaved, polite and courteous and respond very well to the caring Christian ethos of the school. All members of staff work very well together to reinforce and encourage high standards of behaviour. This has a very positive effect on the few pupils who display symptoms of challenging behaviour. A few children in reception enter the reception class with under-developed social skills. The consistently patient and firm teaching ensures that these children quickly learn the rules for acceptable behaviour and respond very positively to the clear routines. Pupils in the rest of the school clearly enjoy their work and are very proud of being members of the school community. All pupils are keenly interested in the full range of activities the school provides and involve themselves eagerly in lessons and out of school activities. The behaviour of pupils in and out of lessons is very good and there are very effective systems to deal with any unacceptable behaviour. No incidents of bullying or harassment were seen during the inspection and no pupils have been excluded from the school. There have been no racist incidents.
10. Pupils' very good spiritual development is firmly embedded in the Catholic faith. The school gives pupils many opportunities to reflect on values and the meaning of life. It celebrates achievement in all areas of pupils' development and increases self-confidence by encouraging pride in all activities. Pupils have a very good understanding of right and wrong. This is promoted from a very early age and qualities such as honesty, politeness and helpfulness are rewarded alongside academic achievements. All adults set good examples for pupils to follow and ensure that all their dealings are fair and equal. All pupils are very well aware of the school

and class rules and this ensures the school is a very orderly community. The school successfully promotes a sense of citizenship through its programme for personal, social and health education. Pupils in Year 6 act as 'buddies' for children in the reception class. This ensures that the new children settle into school happily. Residential visits give the oldest pupils very good opportunities to develop understanding of being part of a community. The school encourages all pupils to be honest, trustworthy and well mannered. Pupils' cultural development is promoted very well through links with Catholic charities, music and art. This ensures that pupils are aware of life in different cultures and countries, western and non-western. They have many good opportunities to understand western culture in lessons, such as history, dance and English. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

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

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

Exclusions: none

- The school consistently achieves good rates of attendance that are above average. It works hard with parents and pupils to reinforce the importance of good attendance. As a result, parents support the school's efforts and pupils come to school regularly and on time. The pupils value rewards that they receive for 100 per cent attendance. When there are very occasional deviations from the high levels of attendance expected, the school works tirelessly with individuals to help them improve. Overall rates of attendance have improved since the previous inspection.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **good**. Teaching is of good quality and there is a broad curriculum. Care and guidance is very good as are the links with parents and the community.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good** in junior and infant classes and **very good** in reception. Assessment is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers work very effectively with the high quality classroom assistants.
- There are very good features in English, mathematics and ICT teaching but unsatisfactory features in investigative science in the junior classes.
- Teachers give pupils great encouragement and insist on high standards of behaviour, which ensures that pupils try hard and work conscientiously.
- The reception teaching team has an excellent understanding of the areas of learning and planning is extremely detailed.
- The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good, but teaching of more able pupils is inconsistent.
- Teachers produce high quality displays, but the whole-class discussions at the beginning of lessons are sometimes too long.
- Assessment systems are good in English and mathematics but are not effective enough in science.

Commentary

12. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. There is now a higher proportion of very good teaching, which has had a significant impact on raising standards.
13. Teachers work in close partnership with the high quality classroom assistants. There is a high level of shared understanding about the key focus for the learning and this ensures that pupils receive very carefully targeted support. Teachers organise classroom assistants in a range of different ways, from talking to individuals in whole class sessions to withdrawing individuals and small groups to carry out special work. The planning of the classroom assistants is very detailed and ensures that their independent work is carefully structured.
14. Features of the very good teaching include a fast pace, very effective use of the ICT facilities in classrooms and succinct summing up of learning at the end of lessons. These lessons also feature careful organisation and the skilful teaching of basic skills. These characteristics ensure that pupils achieve well and develop their skills quickly. The unsatisfactory features in the teaching of science in the junior classes include a lack of regular opportunities for pupils to carry out investigations. Teachers do not use specific scientific technical language effectively enough to extend pupils' learning and communication skills when they are carrying out experiments. Teachers do not provide a balance in recording science and in Years 4 and 5 there is an over use of worksheets.
15. Teachers provide a high level of encouragement for pupils to do their best. They celebrate when pupils get their answers right or try their best. They value the contributions of pupils and celebrate their individual responses. This ensures that pupils try their best in lessons, work hard to contribute in whole class discussions and work steadily until they have completed the tasks they have been set. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well in lessons. They are firm but sensitive to individual needs. This produces high standards of behaviour in lessons and allows pupils to concentrate on their work.
16. Despite there being a new classroom assistant in the reception class, the very careful organisation of adults and the very high emphasis on relationships ensure that the teaching team is already operating extremely well. Each adult has a very clear understanding of their role within lessons and adults move smoothly between individual groups or whole class teaching. There is an excellent understanding of all the different aspects of the reception curriculum and children receive a carefully balanced variety of experiences every day. The class teacher is meticulous in her planning, which ensures that every minute of children's time is well spent.
17. There is very effective support in class for pupils with special educational needs. This increases their self-esteem and enables them to work well alongside their classmates. Support outside the classroom links closely to work planned for the whole class in English and mathematics. Targets on individual education plans are clear and easy for staff, pupils and parents to understand. The reviews of pupils' achievement and progress are regular and systematic. Teachers challenge more able pupils consistently in the infant classes, but not in the junior classes. Whilst there are consistently higher demands made of these pupils in English and mathematics, the level of challenge in science is too low. This is having an adverse affect on standards. In other subjects, such as history or geography, the written tasks for more able pupils are too easy.
18. Teachers produce high standards of display that celebrate pupils' work. All pupils benefit from these displays because the open plan nature of the school building means that they can see into classrooms of other year groups. In a small number of lessons teachers spend too long in whole class discussion, which reduces the amount of time spent on group or individual tasks.
19. The overall quality of assessment procedures is similar to the previous inspection. There is, however, a significant improvement to the procedures and use of assessment in reception. All members of staff use assessment very effectively to highlight any areas of difficulty. They use

these findings to plan work that meets emerging needs. Pupils in the rest of the school have frequent and useful tests in English and mathematics. The school analyses and uses the statutory test results effectively to plan work in these two subjects. It does not use these results as effectively in science. This has a negative effect on standards. All members of staff give pupils good verbal feedback on their work and helpful written comments. This gives pupils a clear picture of what they need to do to improve. There are clear and carefully structured systems for recording achievement and progress.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 33 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	11 (33 %)	18 (55 %)	4 (12 %)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0 %)

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

The curriculum

Provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum for English, maths and ICT is of very good quality.
- There is not enough emphasis on investigative science for junior pupils.
- The provision for special educational needs is very good but does not provide consistent challenge for more able pupils.
- The curriculum in reception is of very good quality.
- The curriculum is enriched with a wide range of additional activities.
- The school prepares pupils very well for their later stages of education.
- There is no direct access for outdoor learning in the reception class, which reduces opportunities for children's development.

Commentary

20. The overall quality of the curriculum is good. It is broad in offering all subjects of the National Curriculum as well as a wide range of additional activities. The curriculum is innovative and makes very effective use of drama to support both learning and personal development. Pupils appreciate these opportunities. However, it is not sufficiently well balanced, because there is not enough time for science in the junior classes and there are too few opportunities for scientific investigative work. This is having a negative impact on standards. The school recognises the need for improvement here and science is currently a focus for development. The strengths of the curriculum in English, mathematics and ICT are reflected in the high standards being achieved in these subjects. This reflects the key priorities identified by the headteacher. All pupils have access to a rich and varied curriculum with specific opportunities designed to meet the needs of differing age and ability groups. The innovative mathematics curriculum offers very good levels of challenge to pupils and provides good support for work in other subjects. ICT provision is very good throughout the school, with good links being established to the local education authority's 'e-centre', and it provides effective support for other subjects of the curriculum. The school provides a good quality personal, social and health programme of work.
21. The reception curriculum is of very good quality. The teacher is now in her third year of teaching this age group and has a very good understanding of the new curriculum requirements for this age group. She organises a very carefully balanced programme for children and ensures that individual children receive carefully targeted work to meet their needs. She provides different, very carefully focused group tasks for the children who started school in January and September for key activities such as learning letter sounds. This provides a higher level of challenge for the more able children, whilst supporting the less able

children's needs. There is no direct access to outdoor learning in the reception class, which reduces children's opportunities to extend their independent learning in this different context.

22. The school plans the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs very carefully. It ensures that pupils have full access to the National Curriculum and all extra activities. Pupils' work matches their needs and meets the requirements of the Code of Practice².
23. There are a number of strengths in the curricular provision of foundation subjects³ in Years 1 to 6. These include good links to English, mathematics and ICT. The school's provision for developing extended writing, with a focus on grammar, influences the work in history well. ICT is used effectively to support statistical work in geography and graphical design in design and technology. However, although more able pupils are challenged effectively in English and mathematics, this does not happen consistently across the curriculum. There are not enough planned opportunities in subjects other than English and mathematics to extend the work of the more able pupils. As a result, opportunities are missed to raise standards further in foundation subjects, and equality of opportunity within the curriculum is therefore good rather than very good.
24. The school is very successful in preparing pupils for the later stages of their education. Provision here is very good. There are very effective transfer arrangements between the reception class and Year 1 and between Year 2 into Year 3. These are based upon careful record keeping and effective staff collaboration. The opportunities provided for pupils in Year 6 ensure they are well informed and can exercise choice on transferring into secondary education. This is based upon very effective liaison arrangements with all local high schools. Pupils have very good opportunities to visit schools, meet staff and so evaluate the differing opportunities available.
25. There is a considerable range of learning opportunities that enriches provision both within and outside the school day. A wide range of educational visits supports learning across a range of subject areas. In Year 6, the residential visit to Winmarleigh Hall provides all pupils with very good quality opportunities to further their skills in outdoor activities and ICT. In addition, by mixing with pupils from other schools, their personal development is significantly enhanced. There are good take-up rates for a range of activities at lunchtime and after school. Over 40 pupils attend the school choir and a number of pupils learn guitar. There is very good provision for learning the violin and cello, through peripatetic very good quality music tuition, which ensures high standards in these aspects of the musical curriculum. A number of clubs offer a range of further activities; for example, the French Club is very popular. In sports, the school offers a number of team games as well as individual activities. All pupils attend swimming lessons from Year 4.
26. Despite there being areas for improvement, the curriculum now offers significantly more opportunities for all pupils than at the time of the previous inspection and therefore overall improvement is good.

Care, guidance and support

Provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's induction procedures are very effective and children settle quickly into the school's routines.
- Staff know pupils very well and offer kind and sensitive support for individual needs.

² The government produced the Code of Practice to ensure that pupils with special educational needs receive the same entitlement across the country.

³ Foundation subjects are all subjects other than English, mathematics and science.

- The school's procedures for child protection and health and safety are well established, applied and understood.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and feel safe and secure because of the trusting relationships with staff, adults and each other.

Commentary

27. The school has sustained the high standards identified in the previous inspection. There are very effective induction procedures which are well thought out. They are strongly focused on the needs of individual children and aim to give them the best possible start as they take their first steps into formal education. The school encourages and welcomes all newcomers and offers very good opportunities for familiarisation visits. All staff, including clerical staff, the caretaker and midday staff, are kind and sensitive to the feelings of the parents and their children. They offer very good support and advice and make sure that parents feel comfortable, as they trust the care of their children to the school for the first time.
28. The youngest children settle very quickly into school routines and rapidly start to achieve very well in their lessons. The Year 6 pupils take their responsibilities for looking after their younger peers very seriously and a thriving 'buddy' system is a strong feature of school life. All staff have a role in welcoming children into school. The office staff will, for example, check up on any individual or routine concerns raised by the parents and offer feedback to them.
29. The school works in harmony with its local nurseries and playgroups. From the very start, this helps staff to know and understand the pupils and their families. They are adept at dealing sensitively and compassionately with a diversity of needs. The school has very good working relationships with the professional support agencies and uses these as a useful way of supplementing its own expertise in the care and guidance of the pupils. In classes, the teachers and their support assistants are alert to individual needs. They will, for example, skilfully assist the less mobile pupils so that they can participate fully in lessons and assemblies. Because of the staff's very good knowledge and monitoring of the pupils, they are able to identify and meet each individual need.
30. The school's child protection and health and safety arrangements are robust and are well promoted. All staff receive guidance on what they must do if they have any concerns and their knowledge is up to date. Regular inspections of the premises are assiduously supported by one of the governors and ensure that any hazards are dealt with quickly. In lessons, the staff are careful to make sure that pupils work safely. In subjects, such as art and design and technology, for example, the teachers point out to pupils the importance of using tools and equipment sensibly.
31. The school's mission of enabling pupils to enjoy life to the full permeates through its approach to care and guidance. Pupils feel that the staff and adults are fair and firm but that they also show compassion and forgiveness. Consequently, pupils of all ages have very trusting relationships and know that they can approach anyone for help. They know that they will be treated with dignity and as valued individuals. As a result of this approach, they are not afraid of discussing and seeking help, even for deeply personal issues such as bereavement. The trust between pupils and staff helps to create the safe and secure environment and to make sure that pupils enjoy coming to school every day.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership with parents and the community is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are actively involved in the life of the school and help their children to achieve well.
- The school's links with the community are productive and enrich pupils' learning.

- The school provides parents with good quality information about events, what is being taught and their children's achievements.

Commentary

32. Parents fully support the work of the school and are highly satisfied with all that it provides. They enjoy organising social and fund-raising events. They have a very successful parent and teacher association that provides money for extra resources, such as additional computers and equipment for the playground. Parents regularly come into school and help pupils in different activities such as hearing them read. From time to time parents share their special experiences with the pupils. For example, one parent enhanced a geography lesson by giving a talk about Kenyan cultures. Parents often visit the school to see assemblies. They support visits and appreciate the annual residential visit that the pupils make to Winmarliegh Hall.
33. The school's relationships with the community are very good and it uses them well to help the pupils achieve. There are positive links with the local area and these help the pupils to learn about local history and to offer ideas about improving the environment. During the typical year, the school organises many interesting visits to places of interest, such as museums and the theatre. The pupils' community work extends into raising significant sums for well-known and local charities. Through this work, they achieve a sense of pride in helping those in need. Strong links with the local secondary schools make sure that the parents are well informed and the pupils are well prepared as they move on to the next stages of learning.
34. Communication between the school and home is very good and of a consistently high standard. Pupils, parents and teachers value the home book as a useful means of highlighting what is being taught and in monitoring homework. Regular newsletters inform the parents and carers about school events. Consultation evenings often attract a full attendance and are helpful in letting the parents know how their children are doing and how they can achieve even more. The staff are very accessible and they often discuss matters such as homework with parents as they bring and collect their children from school. The school responds quickly and courteously to any matters raised by the parents. This is valued by them and is effective in preventing escalation of potential problems. The very good quality partnership between parents and the community is an improvement on the previous inspection.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides very good leadership and sets a very clear direction for the work of the school.
- The headteacher sets up very efficient management systems and her use of performance management is excellent.
- Key staff support their areas of responsibility well.
- Governors have a good level of commitment to the school and a good understanding of the strengths of the school.
- Financial management is very efficient.

Commentary

35. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. She has a very clear vision of how she wants the school to improve and is determined to ensure that standards continue to rise in all aspects of the school's work. She sets a high quality role model, based firmly within the Christian faith, which sets the standard for all staff. She is a very efficient manager and sets up carefully organised systems across the school's work. She works in a very efficient partnership with the good quality administrative team. This ensures that the daily life of the school runs smoothly and that visitors receive a warm welcome when they arrive. The headteacher manages change skilfully whilst sustaining staff morale. This leads to a high level of commitment towards the school from staff and a great sense of unity across the school community. The headteacher has a very good knowledge of every pupil and every member of staff. Her personal example of valuing everyone leads to very high quality relationships, which

ensures that staff work in well organised and co-operative teams. This has a very positive impact on pupils' personal development.

36. The headteacher organises co-ordinators very effectively. Several key subjects have a pair of co-ordinators representing the infant and junior classes, which promotes very effective communication about issues within these subjects. All co-ordinators receive regular time to monitor and support their subjects. This has a very positive impact on standards. The headteacher uses national data very carefully to establish priorities for school development. For example, when the most recent data showed a weakness in the achievement of more able pupils, she established a high quality additional session for these pupils, which is having a very positive impact on achievement. She makes very good use of the strengths of the local education authority to improve the school's provision. This contributes well to the rising standards in English, mathematics and ICT.
37. The headteacher places a high emphasis on performance management. She makes excellent use of the national systems to continually raise standards by developing the work of the staff. She organises an efficient senior leadership team, who make valuable contributions to developing the work of the school. Leadership of key staff is good overall, with every co-ordinator working hard. The impact of the work of the English, mathematics, ICT and special educational needs co-ordinators on the rising standards is significant and reflects their very effective leadership.
38. Governors share the headteacher's aspirations of the school. They have a good level of commitment to the school. They have a very good understanding of the place of the school in the local community and support its work well, both within the school and the larger area of the parish. There is a wide range of expertise across the governing body and in several areas, such as health and safety, this expertise is used very effectively. Governors have a good understanding of the key strengths of the school.
39. The headteacher works closely with the chair of the governor's finance committee to plan and monitor the school's finances. This governor's expertise as a bank manager provides a valuable asset to this aspect of the school's work. The headteacher works very effectively with the office manager to ensure that the daily handling of finance runs smoothly. The local education authority provides very good quality support for using the principles of best value and the headteacher uses this support very well.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	£568,609	Balance from previous year	£27,696
Total expenditure	£554,504	Balance carried forward to the next	£14,105
Expenditure per pupil	£2,679		

40. The quality of leadership and management of the headteacher is considerably better than the previous inspection. All the previous management key issues have been tackled very effectively.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The provision for children in the reception class is **very good**.

41. Most of the judgements are based on the achievement of the children who have been in school since September. The younger children had only been in school for four days at the time of inspection. Children achieve very well. The majority of children enter the reception class with average levels of attainment overall with a very wide range of attainment. Most September-entry children are already working within the early learning goals⁴ in the areas inspected. Observations of the children new to the school show that they settle very quickly into the reception class routines. Outstandingly positive relationships ensure they are secure and confident with each other and adults. The teaching is consistently very good. It has many excellent features such as the very high quality teamwork. This ensures that children achieve very well. They respond very well to the interesting, varied and stimulating activities. All adults use assessment very effectively to build on children's previous learning and ensure that individual needs are met. Children do not have enough opportunities to increase their learning and physical skills outside the classroom. This is because there is no immediate access from the classroom to a secure outdoor area.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well because of adults' high expectations and careful and sensitive teaching.
- All adults give the children many opportunities to develop positive relationships with each other and adults.
- Children make very good progress in this area because of careful planning to include all needs and abilities.

Commentary

42. All members of the reception team provide a very strong foundation for children's future development in this area. The carefully timetabled sessions increase children's self-awareness, listening skills and patience in taking turns to respond. All members of staff take great pains to ensure that children are able to join in all activities. For example, the use of Communication Link⁵ signing and specially adapted chairs includes all children in registration and learning activities. Children tackle their work with enthusiasm and are keen to have a go at new experiences. This is because of the encouragement that the teaching team provides. Adults organise group work very carefully to ensure that children learn to work and co-operate with each other. This makes a very positive contribution to the harmonious relationships amongst all groups of children in the class. There is a significant improvement to the inclusion of children with special educational needs since the previous inspection. Most children are already working within the early learning goals. This is well above the standards expected for children who have had one term in the reception class.

⁴ Children are expected to reach the early learning goals by the end of reception.

⁵ Communication Link is a system that uses a range of physical gestures that support people who have delayed spoken language skills.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching team ensures that all children have chances to increase their speaking and listening skills.
- Children with special educational needs achieve well because the work matches their identified needs.
- There is systematic teaching of letter sounds and shapes throughout the Foundation Stage.

Commentary

43. The reception team works extremely well together to encourage children to listen carefully. They use stories very effectively to ensure children enjoy books and realise that print has meaning. Children achieve very well in developing their speaking skills and most speak clearly in sentences. The teaching team use role-play to increase children's ability to speak clearly. This makes a very positive contribution to developing their imagination and skills in speaking to an audience. Children already write clear letter shapes and words and many create simple sentences. They recognise the sounds that letters make and use this knowledge to read simple words. The younger children who have only been in school for one week are confident in speaking and listening to each other and adults. Most children are on track to achieve standards well above the expectations of the early learning goals by the time they leave the reception year. This is a good level of improvement since the previous inspection.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All adults take every opportunity to promote and increase children's awareness of shape and number.
- A wide range of activities is planned to ensure children learn and achieve very well.

Commentary

44. The reception team organises a very carefully planned range of opportunities for children to increase their confidence in using numbers. All adults make very effective use of number rhymes and songs to help children develop their skills in counting. The older children support the new intake very effectively in their counting. This increases the youngest children's confidence and the older ones' self-esteem. Adults organise the use of the interactive whiteboard very effectively to increase children's understanding of number. Very skilful teaching increases children's ability to use suitable mathematical language. The structured programme of work builds very effectively on children's previous mathematical experiences. It ensures that children make very good progress and are on track to achieve standards well above the early learning goal requirements by the time they enter Year 1. This is a very good level of improvement since the previous inspection.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

45. There is not enough evidence to make an overall judgement on the quality of provision or standards. Observations of children working in the reception class show very effective development of their imagination in the role-play area⁶ of an estate agent's office. More able children identify the floor plans of houses and all work imaginatively with construction materials. For example, a child made a maze, explained clearly what it was and went on to

⁶ This is an area set up in the classroom to extend children's imaginative play in different social contexts.

increase the difficulty of escaping from it. The lack of immediate access to a secure outdoor learning area restricts children's ability to learn about change and investigate natural events.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

46. It was not possible to make an overall judgement of provision or standards. However, children do not have immediate access to a secure outdoor area. This restricts opportunities for them to develop independence in their learning and work effectively with large equipment. All children have ample chances to increase their skills in shaping materials and using tools, such as pencils, scissors and brushes. This shows a good level of skill and rapid progress towards achieving the early learning goals in this aspect of physical development.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

47. It was not possible to see direct teaching of children's creative development during the course of the inspection. There is, therefore, not enough evidence to make a secure judgement on provision or standards. The work around the walls indicates that children develop their skills of using media and materials very well. They develop their imagination very effectively through role-play and using construction kits. The staff promote this area of creative development very well.

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good curriculum stimulates pupils to achieve well above average standards by Year 2 and Year 6.
- The very good leadership and management ensure the maintenance of high standards.
- All staff encourage pupils to do well and this promotes their very good personal development.
- Equality of opportunity is very good and is firmly based upon a clear understanding of pupils' individual needs.
- In a few lessons, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to initiate and present ideas.

Commentary

48. In the 2003 national tests, standards in reading and writing for Year 2 pupils were well above the national average. Standards in English for Year 6 pupils were well above the national average. However, standards were average when considering the value added in the junior classes of similar schools. This does not truly reflect pupils' achievement in the junior classes, where nearly a third of pupils moved in or out of the school and where several pupils were very near to achieving Level 5.
49. The current Year 6 pupils achieve very good standards in all aspects of English. Pupils listen carefully and speak with confidence. They enjoy discussion of both contemporary and classical literature. They read competently and have the ability to compare and contrast the work of different authors. Their written work provides ample evidence of both quality and range; they analyse plays, write imaginative stories and describe events in detail. Handwriting is well formed and most pupils have a secure understanding of grammar, punctuation and spelling. This is because of consistently good teaching throughout the juniors.
50. Pupils in Year 2 achieve very good standards in speaking and listening activities. This is because skilful questioning encourages them to reflect upon stories and use language accurately when providing answers. Pupils know what is expected of them, because clear guidelines are provided for discussion work. Standards are well above average in reading and writing. The most able readers are accurate, expressive and fluent. They confidently describe

the plot and pronounce new, difficult words accurately, because they possess good phonic skills. Most pupils read accurately, though a few are hesitant where they are not sure about pronunciation. Standards are above average in writing. Pupils use a cursive style, with the more able beginning to join their letters. Whilst the quality of handwriting varies between pupils, most have improved this during the last six months. Basic punctuation is used correctly. Pupils explore different forms of writing effectively when set through specific tasks.

51. The quality of teaching is consistently good in all infant and junior classes. Teachers ensure that objectives are stated clearly and pupils have a good understanding of what they are going to learn during lessons. Where teaching is very good, the well-organised lesson draws effectively upon the specific skills of the class teacher and support staff. As a result, all ability groups make very good progress. In a poetry lesson, pupils' personal development was encouraged by celebrating a birthday and using the traditional song to investigate rhyme and rhythm. The strengths in teaching include very good relationships that promote positive attitudes; the care taken to meet the needs of all pupils and well planned lessons that use challenging materials to help raise standards. In a 'booster' class pupils' vocabulary was broadened as they explored the language of Charles Dickens. On occasion, staff provide ideas rather than draw them from pupils through questioning. In a small minority of sessions, not enough attention is given at the end of lessons to ensure pupils present their ideas clearly. These instances reduce opportunities for pupils to contribute to the overall progress of the class. Teachers use display very effectively to celebrate pupils' achievements. Teachers support pupils with special educational needs very sensitively and emphasise basic reading and writing skills. This ensures that these pupils make good progress. Teachers challenge more able pupils effectively.
52. The curriculum is enriched through drama and good links with other subjects, such as history. Effective use is made of ICT to develop grammar and writing. Tasks are well matched to differing abilities as pupils receive specific support in 'booster' classes, through the work of teaching assistants and where extension tasks are set for the more able. As a result, equality of opportunity is very good. Pupils' achievement is good throughout Years 1 to 6. Their personal development is very good because they relate well to all staff, know what is expected of them and have positive attitudes to learning.
53. The high standards being achieved are also a result of the quality of leadership and management of the two co-ordinators for English. Both provide very good leadership because they have a clear view of priorities and know their subject well. They provide expert guidance to colleagues and use data effectively to identify future priorities. Management is also very good. There is a wide range of monitoring procedures in place to track standards, careful records are maintained and resources are being developed effectively.
54. Improvement since the previous inspection is good because standards of attainment by Year 6 are higher; the curriculum is more diverse; pupils' attitudes have improved and the quality of leadership and management is higher.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

55. Teachers ensure that pupils make good use of literacy skills across the curriculum, particularly in extended writing in geography and history. There are very good links between literature, history and drama. Teachers use drama very effectively to extend speaking and listening skills. The good reading skills of most pupils help open the world of information and imagination, so that pupils' experiences are enriched significantly. Very good opportunities in assemblies help pupils to become confident in presenting ideas visually and orally to both adults and other young people.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils achieve well because of teachers' consistently high expectations and the current focus on problem solving.
- Teachers use assessment very effectively to match work to pupils' identified needs.
- Pupils respect each other and adults, enjoy excellent relationships and work hard.
- In a small number of lessons the introductions are too long and a few pupils begin to lose interest and become noisy.

Commentary

56. Standards in mathematics exceed those expected for most pupils by the age of seven. This is an improvement from the national test results of 2003 because of the closer focus on problem solving. By the age of 11, standards are well above those expected nationally because of the emphasis on investigating mathematics. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. All groups of pupils make good progress and achieve well because teachers have high expectations. This is evident in the work planned for more able pupils and those with special educational needs. The very high quality support from well-trained classroom assistants enables pupils with special educational needs to achieve as well as their classmates. Boys and girls are currently achieving similar standards and make equally good progress.
57. Since the previous inspection the school has worked hard to raise standards in mathematics. These steps have been effective. This is evident in the increased number of pupils achieving not only the expected levels in Years 2 and 6, but also the higher levels. In 2003, standards represented average value added from Year 2. This is because of pupils moving away from and into the school during the junior years. Most pupils moving into the school midway through their junior schooling enter with average standards in mathematical understanding. By Year 2, most are working above the expected levels for their age. They have a good understanding of place value, number patterns and how to use different strategies to solve mathematical problems. As pupils move through the school they increase their ability to solve mental calculations quickly. For example, Year 4 pupils use number patterns to work out problems involving numbers up to 1,000 speedily and accurately. By Year 6 pupils explain their thinking and give articulate reasons for their answers.
58. Pupils throughout the school make effective use of computers to practise and consolidate numeracy skills. The use of interactive whiteboards in classrooms makes a positive contribution to improving pupils' awareness of ICT as an integral part of their work.
59. The strong focus on increasing pupils' numeracy and problem solving skills is helping to improve pupils' skills of mental recall. Work since September shows that the curriculum covers all elements of mathematics systematically and that all abilities achieve well.
60. The quality of teaching was consistently good in all the lessons seen. There was a small proportion of very good teaching in both the infant and junior classes. All teachers use classroom assistants very effectively to support pupils with particular needs. This increases pupils' self-esteem and ensures they give of their best. Adults consistently encourage pupils and have clear expectations of high quality behaviour. Pupils of all abilities respond very positively and quickly, develop a sense of purpose and urgency and concentrate very well. They show high levels of respect for adults and for each other's efforts. This is evident when pupils listen to each other's explanations. The excellent relationships within the classrooms ensure all pupils do their best and work hard. A significant factor in the very good teaching was the use of the summing-up session at the end of the lesson. These sessions enabled pupils to think about what they had learned and to say what they needed to improve. Occasionally, the

introduction at the beginning of lessons is too long. On these occasions, a few pupils begin to lose interest, talk amongst themselves and do not listen carefully. This wastes time because the teachers have to explain the work again. All adults check and record pupils' progress very carefully. They use their findings to set work that closely matches pupils' identified needs and abilities. The effectiveness of these steps is evident in the standards that pupils of all abilities achieve.

61. The shared leadership of mathematics is working very well. Both leaders have a clear overview of standards across the school and know what needs to be done to raise standards further. There is a regular and carefully structured programme of monitoring teaching, learning, standards and progress. This is having a very positive effect on improving these areas.
62. The school has made good progress in using the National Numeracy Strategy to improve teaching and learning. There is a good level of support from the recently adopted commercial scheme that covers all strands of the National Curriculum for mathematics. It provides a useful basis for assessment and planning.

Mathematics across the curriculum

63. Pupils use mathematics as an integral part of their work in other subjects. As a result, they develop a clear understanding of the practical uses of mathematics. For example, they use graphs and tables to record data in science and geography and measure accurately to scale in design and technology. Teachers plan these opportunities systematically.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in most aspects of the science curriculum in Year 6 are above the expected level, but standards in investigative science are below the expected level.
- Standards in Year 2 are above the expected level.
- Teaching in infant classes is well balanced. Teaching in junior classes is good in knowledge and understanding but unsatisfactory in investigative science.
- The headteacher and co-ordinator are determined to regain the previous higher standards.
- The science curriculum in the junior classes is not balanced effectively and assessment systems are not fully in place.
- Teachers use ICT very well throughout the school.

Commentary

64. The 2003 teacher assessment for Year 2 shows that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level is above average. The inspection confirms these standards. The school has sustained the standards from the previous inspection. Although standards in the national tests in Year 6 have been consistently above average or even higher in previous years, standards in the 2003 national tests fell to average. Compared with similar schools, the progress of the pupils taking the tests in 2003 in the junior classes was well below average. As soon as the school received the national comparisons of the national tests last term, they began to analyse the reason for this fall and put in strategies to raise standards. The inspection judges standards in pupils' knowledge of living things, materials and physical processes as above average in Year 6 because pupils receive regular opportunities to work across these aspects of the science curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school because they are supported in understanding the work and in recording their understanding. However, standards are below the expected level in investigative work because pupils do not get enough opportunities to develop these skills. This is a fall in standards since the previous inspection. There is a lack of challenge for more able pupils in developing skills in using scientific processes.

65. Teaching in infant classes is good, resulting in good levels of achievement. It is well balanced and provides a good variety of scientific experiences for pupils. There is a strong emphasis on investigative work and teachers encourage pupils to respond in imaginative and individual ways, which extends their personal development very effectively. Pupils thoroughly enjoy working together to solve the interesting problems that the teachers set for them. Lessons are well organised and have a good mix of whole-class discussions and individual and group work. Learning is reviewed sensitively at the end of lessons and pupils swell with pride when the whole class celebrates their efforts. Teachers ensure that pupils record their work regularly in a range of different formats. This ensures that literacy and numeracy skills develop well because pupils write about their investigations and complete different mathematical charts and diagrams.
66. Teaching in the junior classes is good in living things, properties of materials and physical processes because these aspects are covered systematically in each class. Pupils achieve well in these aspects of the curriculum. In Year 3, pupils continue to experience a range of interesting investigations and record them well, using both diagrams and written records of their work. However, in the rest of the junior classes teachers do not ensure that pupils systematically carry out their own scientific investigations. This reduces their development of scientific skills and achievement is unsatisfactory. Teachers do not emphasise the use of scientific language well enough in Years 4, 5 and 6 and older pupils do not understand key technical terms, such as 'hypothesising' or 'variables'. The proportion of more able pupils reaching the higher levels in the national tests this year is lower than usual. The school has already identified this weakness and has initiated additional sessions for more able pupils. The classroom assistant who takes these sessions is of high calibre and has a very good understanding of science. She organises challenging investigations for these pupils and ensures that they record them using high-level mathematical skills, such as very small scale line graphs. However, in whole class lessons teachers do not provide challenging enough work for more able pupils. Teachers have inconsistent systems for pupils to record their work. In Years 4 and 5 there is an over-reliance on worksheets, which reduces pupils' opportunities to write about their work in their own words. In all junior classes there is not enough use of tables and charts. This reduces opportunities to develop numeracy skills.
67. Teachers use ICT very effectively through the school to support scientific learning. In infant classes, teachers use the interactive whiteboard to extend pupils' skills with tasks, such as moving different objects into categories. In the junior classes, teachers extend pupils' understanding very effectively through equipment such as the digital microscopes or sensory monitoring hardware. Teachers in junior classes do not allocate enough time for science every week, which reduces opportunities for carrying out complex scientific investigations.
68. The headteacher and co-ordinator have acted quickly to restore standards to their previous level. Science has not been a priority because standards have previously been above average and the school has been concentrating on English and mathematics. It is now a focus for school development. Assessment systems are not as comprehensive as English and mathematics and the school has introduced a more detailed system to track pupils' progress more effectively. However, this has not allowed the school to analyse progress closely enough.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for ICT is **very good**.

Strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is very good and standards are well above average by Year 6.
- Teachers use the computer suite very effectively and pupils develop skills systematically through the school.
- The co-ordinators are very enthusiastic and support staff very effectively.
- The curriculum is stimulating and very carefully balanced. The Year 6 residential visit plays a valuable role in raising standards in this subject.
- The school uses the very innovative local education authority initiative very effectively.

Commentary

69. The headteacher has taken full advantage of the expertise from the local education authority. Together with the co-ordinators, she has ensured that the high priority for this subject in the school has produced high standards. This is a considerable improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers use the computer suite skilfully and ensure that all pupils are fully included in the work. They also ensure that they provide a thorough coverage of all aspects of the curriculum. These features produce very good achievement in the infant classes and standards in Year 2 are above the expected level. Pupils handle graphics with imagination and produce individual and beautifully designed pictures and patterns. They handle word processing confidently and choose different coloured fonts and sizes to match their different tasks. Although the computer suite has only been operational for two years, the high profile given to this subject has ensured that junior pupils achieve very well. By Year 6 pupils handle new projects such as 'PowerPoint' presentations with confidence because they are familiar with the range of skills needed. Pupils have a very good level of understanding of computers, which allows them to move between menus confidently, saving their work as they go. They work at a fast rate and complete new work quickly because of their high levels of confidence.
70. Teaching is very good. Teachers have a good level of subject knowledge. This allows them to respond to pupils' individual needs very effectively and produces very positive attitudes from pupils for the subject. All teachers use the interactive whiteboards confidently in classes, which provides a very good model for pupils to follow. Previous pupils' work is used very skilfully in Year 6, which sets a high standard. Pupils accept this challenge and strive to produce even better work. Teachers provide interesting tasks for pupils, such as producing very attractive brochures to advertise different products. The high standards of display celebrate the range of pupils' work and show how skills develop as pupils get older. Occasionally, the whole class discussion at the beginning of lessons is too long. Teachers use demonstrations very skilfully and handle equipment such as digital microscopes and sensor equipment with confidence. This extends pupils' understanding of their use very well. Teachers organise classroom assistants very effectively to support pupils with special educational needs. This ensures that they achieve well. The open-ended nature of the work ensures that more able pupils can reach new heights.
71. Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher organises the team of an infant and junior co-ordinator very effectively. She ensures that they have regular time to monitor their subject and support teachers. These systems and the high level of enthusiasm of these co-ordinators are having a significantly positive impact on the work of the school. The use of the junior co-ordinator to teach Years 3, 4 and 5 ensures that this teacher has a very good understanding of pupils' achievement as they move through the school. The efficient assessment system ensures that pupils' progress is tracked throughout the school. The monitoring ensures that all elements of the curriculum are covered thoroughly.
72. The school takes full advantage of a high quality scheme from the local education authority, which provides teaching for a small group of more able pupils in a different school. These

pupils then teach the rest of the class, which extends their self-esteem very effectively. There is a reward system of different badges that can be won and pupils are very keen to get the full set. The school organises a high quality residential trip, which includes a large element of ICT. This makes a very valuable contribution to pupils' learning. It incorporates a high level of evaluation, which extends pupils' personal development very well.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

73. This is very good. Teachers plan these opportunities carefully. They use the interactive whiteboards skilfully to extend pupils' learning, both by demonstrations and by organising tasks for pupils using the boards. They regularly use computers to extend pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.

HUMANITIES

Strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a varied curriculum with good opportunities for developing skills.
- Pupils are positive and engage actively in learning.
- There are not enough planned opportunities to extend the work of more able pupils.

History

74. Two lessons were seen in history in Year 4 and 5. This means it is not possible to make a secure judgement about provision. On the evidence of analysis of work, the high quality class displays and discussions with pupils, the inspection judges that teaching is good and pupils' attitudes are very positive.
75. The work seen is varied and offers good opportunities for pupils to discuss issues and develop skills. There is evidence of early skills of sequencing emerging in Year 1. Pupils complete a range of topics systematically. There is a strong emphasis on local history in Year 6. Good use is made of educational visits and local speakers to enrich the curriculum. Pupils enjoy and gain good insights into the Victorian period where they have opportunities to recreate that period through drama and role-play. There are good links with literacy and classical studies. Pupils develop their thinking skills effectively in a lesson that considers the myths and legends of Ancient Greece. Overall standards of work seen are at least satisfactory. However, there is a need to systematically extend the work of more able pupils further.

Geography

76. No lessons were seen in geography. This means it is not possible to make a secure judgement about provision. On the evidence of work analysis and high quality displays, it is clear that pupils develop a range of skills as they progress through the school. They gain good insights into map work and in Year 3 use Ordnance Survey maps to locate different features and plan journeys. Pupils in Year 5 make good use of a visit to Barton village to investigate land use and hear local speakers. This gives them a good opportunity to compare a rural environment with their home locality. Overall standards of work seen are satisfactory for the age groups represented. However, there is a need to further extend the work of more able pupils.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

77. Only one lesson, in Year 6, was seen in art and design. It is not, therefore, possible to make a secure judgement about provision. However, standards of painting in the lesson seen were well above those expected for Year 6 pupils. Curriculum plans, high quality displays of work around the school, work in pupils' sketchbooks and discussions with the subject leader show that standards are good. Work planned in art and design is varied and interesting. Above average standards are evident in the display of winter landscapes inspired by music. They show well-developed skills of perspective drawing and the use of pastel techniques. This

development is evident in displays of artwork throughout the school and is an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils' artwork makes a very positive contribution to their cultural development through, for example, their tissue paper collages of African landscapes.

Design and technology

78. It was only possible to see one lesson, in Year 2, in design and technology. Standards in this lesson were good and above those expected for most seven-year-old pupils. There was a clear focus on the investigative element of design and technology, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. There is not enough evidence to make a secure judgement about provision. However, standards of work in the high quality displays around the school, curriculum plans and discussions with the subject leader indicate that all elements are covered. For example, pupils throughout the school list equipment, give clear instructions, produce careful plans, follow them to make products and make very careful evaluations of their designs and products. Pupils suggest improvements and use accurate measurements to produce scale plans.

Music

79. It is not possible to make a secure judgement about provision because it was only possible to see two lessons in Years 1 and 4. However, standards in these lessons were above the expected level. The visiting cello teacher makes a very valuable contribution to the music in the school. Standards of instrumental playing of the cello in Year 6 are well above the expected level. These very good standards are a direct result of the very skilful and patient teaching of techniques that builds carefully on pupils' previous achievements. Pupils clearly enjoy their music and are very positive about their work. All pupils sing enthusiastically, sweetly and melodically in assemblies. Music makes a very positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development. Pupils listen attentively to music and reflect on the feelings it evokes. This is evident in the writing and painting inspired by music. They work very well together in their singing and instrumental playing and experience a wide range of western and non-western music.

Physical education

80. Only one lesson was seen during the inspection so it is not possible to make any overall judgements. The lesson showed good quality teaching, with the classroom assistant providing valuable support for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils were at the beginning of a new programme of work and standards were at the expected level. School assessment shows standards in Year 6 are well above the expected level. This is due to the regular opportunities to develop swimming skills through the junior classes. Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to develop physical skills in other lessons. In Year 1, the teacher uses 'brain gyms'⁷ as a way of settling pupils into lessons. During these sessions, pupils develop a good sense of rhythm and co-ordination. Teachers also develop pupils' physical skills in music when pupils move in response to different rhythms and use their bodies to create different types of sounds.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

81. It was not possible to see any lessons devoted to this subject. However, the analysis of timetables shows that pupils regularly experience 'Circle Time'⁸. Teachers ensure that pupils follow a comprehensive programme of work based on healthy eating and drugs awareness within their science work. All staff provide very good role models for pupils' personal development. The residential visit for all Year 6 pupils provides a high quality opportunity for pupils to extend their independence skills away from home. The school has just set up a school council. Pupils are very proud to represent their class.

⁷ Brain gyms are exercises designed to calm pupils and to extend their thinking skills and levels of concentration. They comprise of simple physical exercises using opposite sides of the body.

⁸ Circle time is designed to allow pupils to take turns in discussing things of personal importance to them. Pupils sit in a circle to carry out these lessons.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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

