

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST. JOHN'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND (CONTROLLED)
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Wetley Rocks, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, ST9 0BN.

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124283

Headteacher: Geoff Hodgkiss

Lead inspector: Michael Miller

Dates of inspection: 21st to 24th June 2004

Inspection number: 257720

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils: 4 to 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 164

School address: Mill Lane
Wetley Rocks
Stoke-on-Trent
Staffordshire
Postcode: ST9 0BN

Telephone number: 01782-550309
Fax number: 01782-551537

Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: John Clarke

Date of previous inspection: 8th March 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St. John's Church of England Primary School is situated in the village of Wetley Rocks, in a semi-rural area of outstanding natural beauty, close to the Staffordshire moor-lands, to the east of Stoke-on-Trent. It is a voluntary controlled school for pupils aged 4 to 11 (reception to Year 6). It is smaller in size than most other primary schools. There are 164 pupils on roll, 78 girls and 86 boys. The school is slightly smaller than at the time of the previous inspection, and is currently fully subscribed. Most pupils live outside the catchment area, but within a three-mile radius, and travel to school by private car. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is average. The majority of pupils are from white ethnic backgrounds. The percentage of pupils from other ethnic groups is low, and there are currently no pupils whose mother tongue is not, or believed not to be, English. Employment rates in the area are average. At three per cent, the proportion of pupils registered for free school meals is well below average. Some 14 per cent of pupils are on the register of special educational needs, which is average. At two per cent, the proportion of pupils having full statements of special educational need is average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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16472	Catherine Stormonth	Lay inspector	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The overall effectiveness of St. John's Church of England primary school is **satisfactory**. Overall, it provides a satisfactory, but steadily improving, quality of education, and therefore gives **satisfactory** value for money. Nevertheless, it has some good and very good features, particularly relating to its ethos for learning and aspects of the pupils' personal development. The school's strengths outweigh its weaknesses, and it is well poised for further improvement.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The school's very good ethos for learning, and its good focus on the personal development of its pupils lead to the good quality of education provided in these areas.
- The use of assessment to set targets for improvement is underdeveloped across the school.
- The pupils' behaviour is good, and their attitudes to learning are very good.
- The school is at an early stage in its planning to meet the needs of gifted or talented pupils.
- There is excellent provision for the care, welfare and health and safety of the pupils.
- Whilst the qualifications and contribution made by learning support staff are good, they are insufficient to meet fully the needs of all groups of pupils with a special educational need.
- There are very good links with parents and the local community.
- Pupils attain standards above expectations throughout the school in art and design, and in music and religious education by Year 6.
- The quality of the school's environment is very good, and makes an important contribution in supporting the school's ethos for learning.

Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory overall. The required review of management roles has been undertaken, and systems for monitoring teaching and learning are now good overall. However, sharper systems for monitoring standards, by senior management and governors, are still in the process of development. There has been good improvement in the teaching of literacy, and objectives for learning are more clearly explained to the pupils. However, the use of assessment information to set more challenging targets for pupils is underdeveloped. Teachers' expectations of pupils, particularly higher attainers, are now satisfactory. However, the next stage, in providing even greater challenge for gifted or talented pupils, has still to be achieved.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Standards overall are **average** in reception and by Years 2 and 6, and pupils' achievement is **satisfactory**. Standards of literacy and numeracy are average throughout all year groups. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good, and that of those identified as gifted or talented, is satisfactory overall. There are currently no pupils for whom English is an additional language. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good, and their behaviour and personal development are **good** overall. Attendance is satisfactory and in line with the national average.

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

mathematics	A	C	C	C
science	B	C	C	C

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.

Children achieve satisfactorily overall in the reception class. By the end of the reception year, the children attain in line with the expected standards in all areas of their development, and are ready for the National Curriculum. In particular, the children’s physical development is good, and their personal, social and emotional development is very good.

By Year 2, standards are average in English, mathematics and science. Attainment is in line with expectations in other subjects, but is above in art and design, and in personal, social and health education. Achievement is satisfactory overall, but good in English, art and design, and in personal, social and health education.

By Year 6, standards are average in English, mathematics and science. Attainment is in line with expectations in other subjects, but is above in art and design, music, and above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus in religious education. Achievement is satisfactory overall, but good in English, art and design, music, religious education, and in personal, social and health education.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall quality of education provided by the school is **satisfactory**. This is because teaching, learning, assessment and the curriculum are all **satisfactory** overall. However, there is a good range of extra-curricular opportunities. Particularly good attention is paid to the personal development of the pupils. The school’s accommodation is very good, and resources for learning are good overall. Arrangements for the pupils’ care and welfare, health and safety are excellent. The links with parents and the local community are very good. Links with other schools are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher and other key staff provide **satisfactory** leadership overall. A number of relatively young teachers are still in the process of gaining the professional expertise to take on leading management roles. The governance of the school, and its overall management, are **satisfactory**. However, the governors’ annual report to parents does not contain all the required information. Whole school and subject planning is satisfactory. Financial management is good.

PARENTS’ AND PUPILS’ VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Overall, parents are well satisfied with the school’s provision for their children. This is because their children really enjoy school. Apart from some minor concerns about behaviour, which inspectors judged unfounded following discussions with pupils, parents feel their children get a fair deal at the school. Inspectors’ support this majority view. The pupils themselves praise the interesting lessons, caring and helpful teachers, school lunches, new school building and the happy atmosphere in a superb country location. Overall, pupils say they experience fun in learning.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- develop further the school's work on assessment, and ensure the more effective use of assessment information to set targets for raising standards and pupils' achievement;
- develop further the school's planning to meet the needs of gifted, talented, or gifted and talented pupils, in order to provide increased challenge through enhancement and enrichment work;
- ensure increased levels of support for all groups of pupils with a special educational need, particularly the older pupils in Years 3 to 6;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- ensure the governor's annual report contains all the required information for parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Overall, standards are **average**, and **in line with national expectations** throughout the school. Pupils' achievement is **satisfactory**, and they make satisfactory progress.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards attained in the Year 6 national tests by potentially higher attaining and gifted or talented pupils are not high enough.
- Pupils with special educational needs are supported well by staff and make good progress.
- Pupils attain standards above expectations throughout the school in art and design, and in music and religious education by Year 6.

Commentary

1. Children enter the school, in the reception class, with overall standards in line with expectations in all the areas of learning. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school and by Year 6, their standards in English language and literacy, and their competency in mathematics and in information and communication technology (ICT), are average. However, this does not tell the full story because up to a quarter of the school's pupils, including potential higher attainers, leave at the end of Year 4 to join nearby middle schools. This can affect the school's overall results in national tests at the end of Year 6. For example, in 2003, although results overall were average compared with all schools nationally, the value added¹ by the school between Years 2 and 6, for its remaining pupils, was well above average. The achievement of pupils who are gifted, talented, or gifted and talented is satisfactory overall. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good overall, and they make good progress because of the effective help and support they receive from teachers and learning support assistants.
2. Overall, since the previous inspection, the school's trend for improvement has been above that seen nationally for pupils by Year 2. Improvement has been in line with the national trend, over the past five years, for pupils by Year 6. The school sets itself realistic and achievable targets, and senior management and governors are becoming smarter in setting targets as the school's use of assessment information improves. At present, the school is largely meeting its targets for pupils gaining a Level² 4 or higher by Year 6, but falling short for pupils gaining a Level 5 or higher. Because of this shortfall, the school is taking action to develop further its curriculum to better meet the needs of its potentially gifted or talented pupils. Nevertheless, performance in science was particularly good in 2003, with all pupils gaining the expected Level 4 or above.
3. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls overall. However, taking average performance over the past three years, by Year 2, girls'

¹ Value added measures compare the relative progress made by pupils between two key stages with the relative progress made by pupils nationally between the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2) and the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6).

² The National Curriculum has been written on the basis that pupils, by the end of Key Stage 1, are expected to reach Level 2. If a pupil is attaining Level 3 then he or she is reaching standards above that expected for a child of his or her age. At Key Stage 2, the nationally expected level for pupils to reach by the end of Year 6 is Level 4. If a pupil is attaining Level 5 then he or she is reaching standards above that expected for a child of his or her age.

attainment is higher than that of boys in reading and mathematics. By Year 6, boys' performance is better than other boys in their age group, and girls' performance is average compared with other girls nationally.

Foundation Stage³ (Reception Year)

- Children achieve satisfactorily overall in the reception class. By the end of the reception year, the children satisfactorily attain the Early Learning Goals⁴ in all areas of their development, and are ready for the National Curriculum. Provision for personal, social and emotional development is very good. Achievement in communication language and literacy, mathematical development, and the children's knowledge and understanding of the world is satisfactory. Children's physical development is good. In the creative area of learning, achievement is satisfactory overall.

Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2)

- In the 2003 national tests and assessments for Year 2 pupils, attainment was average in writing, but above average in reading and mathematics when compared with all schools nationally. When compared with similar schools⁵, results were below average in reading and writing, and average in mathematics. As a result of the school's analysis of these results, it has identified the teaching of writing as an important area for development, and is working satisfactorily on strategies for improvement.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores⁶ in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.3 (16.2)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.9 (15.0)	14.6 (16.5)
mathematics	17.2 (17.2)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 24 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- In the work and lessons seen during the inspection, standards were average by Year 2 in English, mathematics and science. Attainment was in line with expectations in other subjects, but was above expectations in art and design, and in personal, social and health education. Achievement was satisfactory overall, but good in English, art and design, and in personal, social and health education.

Key Stage 2 (Years 3 to 6)

³ The foundation stage begins when children reach the age of three and finishes at the end of the reception class year. It is a distinct stage in preparing children for later schooling and is based on six areas of learning. These mainly refer to communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development, but also includes knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.

⁴ Early learning goals - these are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the foundation stage. They refer mainly to achievements children make in connection with the following six areas of learning: communication language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development. There are many goals for each area of learning, for example, in language and literacy pupils should be able to write their own name and other things such as labels and begin to write simple sentences.

⁵ Results are also compared with those obtained by pupils in similar schools; that is those with a similar uptake of free school meals.

⁶ The average points score provides schools with a single statistic to compare the overall grades attained by their pupils with the grades attained by pupils in another school. At Key Stages 1 and 2, the Level attained by each pupil, for example, in mathematics, is given a score. A Level 1 = 9 points, a Level 2 = 15 points and so on. Therefore the average points score in mathematics is worked out by adding up all of the points based on the Level attained by pupils and then dividing by the number of pupils who took the test. Therefore, a school whose average points score for mathematics in the end of Key Stage 1 tests is greater than 15.0 is one whose pupils are performing above that expected for their age. The average points score for Level 4, the nationally expected level for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2, is 27.

7. In the 2003 national tests and assessments for Year 6 pupils, attainment was average compared with all schools nationally in English, mathematics and science. Compared with similar schools, results were below average in English and mathematics, and well below average in science. However, when compared with their results at the end of Year 2, standards overall were average and, for the reasons outlined in paragraph 1 above, pupils' progress overall was good.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.4 (26.8)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	27.0 (27.0)	26.8 (26.7)
science	28.7 (28.2)	28.6 (28.3)

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

8. In the work and lessons seen during the inspection, standards were average by Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. Attainment was in line with expectations in other subjects, but was above expectations in art and design, music, and above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus in religious education. Achievement was satisfactory overall, but good in English, art and design, music, religious education, and in personal, social and health education.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance is **satisfactory** and punctuality is good. The ethos⁷ is very positive and the school aims are fully reflected in its work and practice. Attitudes to learning are **very good** and behaviour is **good**. Aspects of personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are also **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are very enthusiastic about all aspects of school life.
- Behaviour is usually good, both in lessons and around the school.
- The moral and social aspects of the pupils' development are very good.
- Some parents are not making sufficient effort to ensure their children attend school when so many pupils are taken on holiday.
- There are too few opportunities to develop pupils' appreciation of the richness and diversity of other cultures.

Commentary

9. The school promotes good attendance and punctuality and achieves attendance rates which are at the national average, and commendably minimal unauthorized absence. However, one-third of absence is attributable to the taking of holidays, despite the school's efforts to discourage this. Most pupils arrive at school on time and timekeeping during the school day is good. Pupils are developing effectively the important life skill of good timekeeping.

⁷ In this context 'ethos' refers to the characteristic spirit or attitudes of the school as a community.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%) 2003/04

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	5.5	School data:	0.1
National data:	5.4	National data:	0.4

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

- Pupils really enjoy school. They praised fun and interesting lessons, caring and helpful teachers, school lunches, the new school building and happy atmosphere in a superb country location. Pupils usually work hard, feel really pleased by their achievement and are proud of their work. A significant number of older pupils, in their questionnaire, felt less positive about school and this was investigated. Pupils were genuinely puzzled about this and could only suggest that others were being mischievous and thought it 'cool' to be negative without any real justification. Pupils who have special educational needs have a positive attitude to school and to learning. They have good attendance, and take part in all activities, both in school and outside the school day.
- Pupils are helpful, friendly and consistently behave well. Playtimes are lively and pupils amuse themselves well. Occasionally, there is rough horseplay amongst boys, but most of it is good-natured. Pupils show reverence during assemblies, especially during prayer. Bullying and other forms of harassment are rare and are simply not tolerated. When any pupil raises a behaviour concern, it is dealt with seriously and pupils are very pleased about this. There have been two recent exclusions, for extremely challenging behaviour, which were fully justified.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year (2002-03)

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	131	0	1
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1		
Mixed – White and Black African	1		

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

- Pupils' personal development is fostered well. This area has been maintained since the previous inspection. Spiritual development is good, especially when pupils explore and understand values, beliefs, feelings and emotions. Pupils express these elements well in religious education, assemblies, personal and social education, art and science and in their writing and poetry. Constant positive reinforcement of care for others, kindness, trust, bravery and a good work ethic, and high moral standards, are real strengths. All classes have their own set of rules, agreed with the pupils themselves, and which impact positively on behaviour. The youngest children achieve high standards in personal and social development. For all pupils, there are plenty of opportunities to lead assemblies and church services, take part in school productions, concerts, sports and dancing activities. Pupils are keen to take on responsibility when they get the chance and are maturing into very confident and sociable young people. Social awareness is promoted very well, especially when pupils raise money for good causes and learn about the evils of homelessness, selfishness and slavery. Pupils' appreciation of their own cultural

traditions is good and the rich history and geography of the Wetley Rocks area is a popular learning focus. However, pupils' understanding of other cultures is underdeveloped, particularly those found in the contemporary British society, and this is insufficiently planned for across the curriculum.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The overall quality of education provided by the school is **satisfactory**. This is because teaching, learning, assessment and the curriculum are all **satisfactory** overall. However, there is a **good** range of extra-curricular opportunities. Overall, arrangements for the pupils' care and welfare, health and safety are **excellent**. Links with parents and the local community are **very good**.

Teaching and learning

Teaching, learning and assessment are **satisfactory** overall throughout the school. Assessment is **good** in reception. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school creates an environment where pupils are interested in their work and want to learn.
- Assessment is not used effectively enough to analyse standards and progress, and to set pupils' targets for improvement.
- There is consistently good or better teaching and learning in English, in art and design subjects, and for pupils with special educational needs.
- The school places a good emphasis on the monitoring of teaching and learning.
- The planning of extension work for gifted or talented pupils is at an early stage of development.

Commentary

13. From the work and lessons seen during the inspection, teaching and learning are satisfactory in the reception class. Throughout Years 1 to 6, they are satisfactory in mathematics and science, but good in English. They are satisfactory in most other subjects. However, throughout the school, teaching and learning are good in design and technology, and in personal, social and health education. They are very good in art and design in all year groups. In addition, in Years 3 to 6, teaching and learning are good in music and religious education. In the very best lessons, there are important strengths which reflect good practice within the school across a range of subjects. These include:
- good planning to meet the needs of all groups of pupils in a class;
 - clear objectives for each lesson, which are effectively shared with the pupils so they know what they are aiming to learn;
 - the teachers' good subject knowledge and understanding, which commands the interest and respect of pupils;
 - the good use of questioning, to check pupils' understanding and previous learning;
 - well-focused challenge, which encourages pupils of all abilities to think for themselves;
 - a good pace to lessons, which maintains the concentration of pupils.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 38 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	9 (24%)	19 (50%)	10 (26%)	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.

14. Whilst teaching is satisfactory overall, it is often good, and sometimes very good, in all year groups. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen, and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers make particularly good use of the learning resources available to them. The school's management team have placed a good emphasis on the monitoring of teaching and learning to secure improvements. This has ensured the supportive professional development of the school's newly qualified and younger teaching staff. Consequently, teachers' planning is satisfactory and supports the sound expectations teachers have of their pupils. Because of this approach, there are growing strengths in the way pupils are encouraged to become involved in lessons, and become increasingly independent in their approach to learning. However, whilst teachers' planning for higher attaining pupils has improved satisfactorily since the previous inspection, planning for specifically gifted or talented pupils is at an early stage of development.

15. Clearly much hard work has been undertaken by all at the school, from governors to administrative staff, to ensure a very positive ethos for learning, which has resulted in the pupils' very good attitudes to learning, and is raising achievement. Teachers place a good insistence on high standards of behaviour, which results in good collaborative learning on the part of the pupils. There is sound co-operation between teachers and learning support assistants, who understand well the importance of ensuring the pupils in their charge are given good opportunity to play a full part in lessons. The teaching support provided in the reception class is very good.
16. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good within the classroom. Learning support assistants work closely with teachers, and give the pupils help which is of good quality. Pupils are given tasks which cover the same content as the rest of the class, but in a form which they can access more readily. Withdrawal is kept to a minimum, but is used effectively to support learning, or to meet specific needs, such as a physiotherapy programme. Teacher assessments and test results are used well to identify pupils with a special educational need, and very good records are used effectively to signal any area where there is concern.
17. Overall, assessment is satisfactory. On a day-to-day basis, assessment is used well in reception and satisfactorily throughout the rest of the school. In the best teaching, there are consistently good explanations and feedback to pupils, so they know how to improve. However, assessment records, particularly in the foundation subjects⁸, are not always as thorough or informative as they should be in order to help teachers plan and set sharper targets for individual pupils' improvement. In music, for example, there is a singular lack of such records. Equally, whilst English is developing well a collection of pupils' work as an example of the standards which should be achieved, and help teachers develop a common approach to marking and assessment, this is not the case in most other subjects. Overall, the actual use of assessment data and information by teachers is unsatisfactory, and at a relatively early stage of development. However, the deputy headteacher has recently been given oversight of the use of assessment, and this forms part of the school's current planning for improvement.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **satisfactory** overall. Pupils are encouraged and enabled to take part in a **good** range of additional activities outside the school day. The school's accommodation and resources for learning are **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The development of the school's curriculum is particularly good in reception.
- The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities, which are popular with the pupils.
- The school's provision for pupils who are gifted or talented is under-developed.
- The school is encouraging effectively its younger staff to take on roles related to curriculum management and development.
- The school's accommodation is very good, its resources overall good, and support well the pupils' learning.

⁸ The National Curriculum foundation subjects are: art; design and technology; geography; history; information and communication technology; modern foreign languages; music; physical education. In addition, religious education is taught to the requirements of a locally agreed syllabus.

- There are too few learning assistants to meet fully the needs of all groups of pupils requiring additional support.

Commentary

18. The school meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum, and those of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. As a Church of England school, the provision of a daily act of collective worship was the subject of a separate, diocesan inspection. The school's provision for the personal, social and health education of its pupils is good. The curriculum in reception is good, and very well supported by the accommodation and resources made available for that class. As at the previous inspection, the school continues to provide a curriculum which is designed to enable its pupils to make good progress overall. In this respect, the curriculum is well designed to enable pupils, including those with special educational needs, to play a full part in the school's life and work. Parents were pleased with the school's arrangements for new pupils joining the school, and there are sound and supportive arrangements within the school to enable pupils to progress successfully from one year group to another. The school has good arrangements to ensure the smooth transfer of pupils to secondary education.
19. The school has adopted a range of nationally recommended schemes of work for all its subjects, and is working satisfactorily to adapt these to the specific needs of its own pupils. The developing links between subjects, and the work of different year groups, are clearly to be seen in the good quality display work around the school. As a result of staffing changes, the school now has a relatively young staff. In some respects, because of this, curriculum development, whilst perfectly satisfactory, has not been as fast as anticipated by the school. However, the comparative inexperience of some teachers is more than compensated for by their enthusiasm and commitment, and because of this, the school is well poised for further improvement. Younger teachers are being well prepared to take on curriculum leadership and management roles. The school understands well where it needs to develop further its curriculum, for example, in the development of pupils' writing skills in the early years. The school is active in seeking and taking advice in such circumstances in order to improve the quality of education it provides for its pupils.
20. Since the previous inspection, the school has worked hard to ensure pupils have a greater opportunity to become more independent in their learning, and teachers' planning and approach now reflect this. The curriculum is now better designed to meet the needs of higher attaining pupils. However, the school has only recently started its planning to meet better the needs of gifted, talented, or gifted and talented pupils, in line with recent national initiatives. The school is in the process of identifying such pupils, but has yet to develop its curriculum planning in order to provide the extension and enhancement work necessary to challenge them further.
21. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall, and all such pupils receive the full National Curriculum. Pupils' individual education plans are used effectively to ensure pupils access successfully all subjects. For example, good assistance is given for tasks which pupils find difficult. There is very good liaison with secondary schools, and co-ordinators attend not only the final review in Year 6, but also when necessary the review in Year 5. Specific arrangements are made for pupils to visit

other schools, in order to make a smooth transition. There is also excellent liaison with other primary and special schools.

22. The school provides good opportunities to support pupils' learning and personal development outside normal lesson time. There is a good range of clubs, and other activities for pupils, and the majority take good advantage of what the school has to offer. Participation by pupils in the arts and sports activities is particularly good, and very well supported by the staff. The school is particularly successful in local and area sports competitions. The curriculum is further enriched by extra-curricular music tuition, and extension activities for older pupils, such as a French club.
23. The quality of the school's accommodation is very good. The new, attractive building provides facilities to fully meet the needs of the curriculum, the pupils and staff. There are sufficient offices and storage areas, and all are well planned to facilitate access. The interior of the building is kept to a very high standard of cleanliness, and is considerably enhanced by the wealth of displays of pupils' work. The outdoor areas are spacious, and the millennium garden provides interest and quieter areas. Pupils delight in showing it, particularly where they have painted pebbles to provide colour. Pupils appreciate the building and surroundings, and say that they are fortunate to look out onto such wonderful views, and not a sea of concrete. The accommodation allows all pupils who have special educational needs to access the school, with good facilities for pupils and visitors who may be in wheelchairs.
24. Staffing is good overall, and teachers are suitably qualified to teach the full range of the National Curriculum. The co-ordinator for special educational needs is very experienced, and committed to this area of education. The learning assistants are also well qualified, but there are too few to meet the needs of all these pupils in lessons where they need help in order to make good progress. Resources are sufficient to meet the needs of the curriculum, with the exception of books and computers. The books in the library are insufficient to extend pupils' experiences in reading, and there are too few books which challenge the more able readers in the upper years. There are sufficient resources to meet the needs of pupils who have special educational needs.

Care, guidance and support

The care and welfare of pupils and the arrangements for health and safety are **excellent** overall. The school provides overall **satisfactory** support, advice and guidance for pupils based on the monitoring of their achievement. Pupils' views are valued and form part of school improvement, and their involvement in school life is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The care provided for pupils is a key strength of the school and this helps pupils achieve their best.
- The procedures to ensure pupils work in a healthy and safe environment are outstanding.
- Pupils confirmed strongly how much they valued the excellent working relationships they develop with all staff.
- Assessment information is not used sufficiently well to enable effective individual academic support and guidance.

Commentary

25. This aspect is even stronger than it was at the previous inspection. The school has a fully inclusive approach to helping others in a very supportive and caring community. Pupils feel they would always have someone to turn to if they were ever worried or troubled. Staff know their pupils very well and any issues or unhappiness are detected quickly. Those pupils are helped and supported and issues resolved to benefit learning and improve school life.
26. Year 6 pupils felt well prepared for their national tests and received good support and guidance in the preparations for them. However, other pupils have little awareness of their performance and were unsure about their learning targets. The use of assessment data is a weakness when staff do not use this information to guide pupils in order to raise standards. Pupils with special educational needs are monitored closely and receive the attention and support they need to make good progress. Overall, the care shown to pupils who have special educational needs is excellent. Every effort is made to ensure that all are fully integrated into school life. The care comes not only from staff, but also from pupils, who look after those who find movement difficult.
27. The arrangements for child protection and for children in public care are very good and all the requirements are fully met. Pupils with a range of medical needs are catered for very well. When pupils are ill or injured, they receive a high level of care and attention. All the risk assessments and routine checking systems for health and safety throughout the school are thorough and are exemplary practice. The security arrangements are also good.
28. The arrangements for the induction of pupils when they start school are good. Individual arrangements are made to ensure all settle quickly and happily. Staff inspire children to really enjoy learning and the routines of each day. Mid-term arrivals are also well catered for, and such pupils are assigned 'buddies' who help the newcomers master school routines and establish friendships. The school council was formed recently and pupils are excited about its potential to involve them in school improvement. They feel they have a voice in school and are keen to improve aspects, such as behaviour and litter. As the result of a school council initiative, a 'bully box'⁹ has already been established.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The links with parents are **very good** and the school is popular and held in very high regard. Links with the local community are also **very good**, and the links with other schools are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a very strong partnership with parents, who are welcomed warmly into school as an important part of the school 'family' community.
- The school works very closely with parents to support learning, ensures pupil happiness, and deals with any issues in a very effective way.
- The school is very much at the heart of a close-knit rural community.
- School reports seldom indicate weaknesses and targets are too general.

Commentary

⁹ This is a 'letterbox' in the school where pupils may post any written comments or concerns they may have concerning bullying or any other matters. They may do this anonymously if they wish.

29. This aspect has improved since the previous inspection. Parental support for pupils' learning and for the wide range of school activities is very good. Parents feel a very strong sense of partnership based on very good two-way communications and mutual trust. All parents who responded to the questionnaire, and the many spoken to during the inspection, felt great confidence in the school across most aspects. However, parents were concerned about behaviour, but when investigated, behaviour was found to be good with some occasional boisterousness.
30. The school is very approachable and the open door policy works really well. Parents find this very reassuring. The informal daily and Friday weekly opportunities to see staff are used well to resolve any ongoing concerns. Formal consultation arrangements are very good and most parents attend. The interim report is a useful snapshot of progress but annual school reports, although satisfactory overall, have weaknesses. There is insufficient individual reporting of weaknesses, and advice for improvement is not precise enough to be useful. The quality of other information, like newsletters, letters and topic fact sheets, is good. The parents' association is very active in providing for a busy social calendar and very useful funds. Parents' views are regularly surveyed formally and informally and form an important part of continuous school improvement and parents appreciate this aspect. The parents of pupils who have special educational needs are very supportive of their children. All attend the annual reviews, and know they can meet the co-ordinator whenever they have a concern.
31. Links with the local community are very good. There are particularly strong links for music, sports, personal, social and health education and dance with local groups. There are links with the local church and the village through religious education, art, geography and history. The local vicar is a regular and welcome visitor and she helps to enrich pupils' personal development. The school has a reputation for its expertise in maypole dancing and plays up to six local gigs each year, and the choir entertains local senior citizens. Local police, school nurse and fire service also help to enhance learning.
32. Links with the feeder pre-school groups are good to provide for a happy and effective transfer to the main reception class. One pupil is dual registered with a local special school and the links are good to support effectively the pupil concerned. There are also good links with the receiving high school and pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education. The industry and taster days, and bridging work in science and mathematics, are helpful in this regard. Links with local colleges and schools are good and provide work experience for students, resulting in many mutual learning benefits.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher and other key staff provide **satisfactory** leadership. The governance of the school and its overall management are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Senior management, governors and staff work well together as a team.
- There is a strong commitment to the personal development of the pupils, as well as improving academic success.
- The monitoring and evaluation of performance and assessment information is not sharp enough.
- The overall leadership and management of special educational needs are excellent.
- There is effective financial management of the school, and its resources are used well.
- The governor's annual report does not contain all the required information for parents.

Commentary

33. The governing body, together with the school's senior management team, work together well to shape the direction of the school. They understand well the importance of creating an environment within the school where not only learning, but also the personal development of the pupils can flourish. In this, they have been successful. Governors are becoming increasingly active and involved in the life and work of the school. They are supportive through their monitoring role, and understand the school well. The school's leadership provides a good role model for both staff and pupils. This has been important in helping to bring together a relatively young staff, and ensure the proper development of their professional expertise. The school's programmes for the professional development and the induction of new staff are good. Consequently, the staff all work well and co-operatively together as an effective team. In this, the school has created a firm platform upon which to build further success.
34. There are, therefore, a number of good elements to the leadership of the school. However, at present it is slightly stretched, due to long-term staff absence. Furthermore, a number of senior staff are having to take on additional leadership roles, whilst younger staff are trained to take on co-ordinator responsibilities. The school plans to resolve this position by the autumn term 2004. Nevertheless, the overall co-ordination of the curriculum and its development is satisfactory. However, there have been implications for the leadership and management of the school. For example, whilst there has been a good focus on the monitoring of teaching and learning, particularly that of the younger staff, there has been less emphasis on the monitoring of standards. The school's proposals to improve the quality and use of assessment information have also been delayed. Consequently, there are currently some unsatisfactory elements in the overall monitoring, evaluation and review of performance information by senior management and governors.
35. The high quality of leadership and management of special educational needs results from the team who support these pupils, who show great commitment towards them. There is a very clear rationale to the allocation of assistants, well designed to meet the specific needs of individual pupils with a statement of special educational need. Furthermore, learning assistants also provide specific support for younger pupils, for example, in spelling. The co-ordinator is fully aware there are insufficient learning assistants to meet the needs of older pupils. She also recognises that a regular meeting with the learning assistants would benefit all involved. The governor responsible for special educational needs is kept fully informed about this aspect of the school's life and work. However, although the school has no pupils for whom English is an additional language, or refugees, it currently lacks contingency plans for such pupils.
36. The headteacher and governing body ensure the school satisfactorily meets its statutory requirements. However, there are some elements of the governors' annual report to parents which are missing or require clarification in order to fully meet requirements. Overall, there has been sound improvement since the previous inspection in the leadership and management of the school. In particular, the headteacher is now freed from unnecessary administration, as criticised in the previous report, in order to fulfil better his leadership role.

37. The financial affairs of the school are managed and controlled well. Governors are kept fully informed of the financial situation of the school on a regular basis. The school takes any necessary action relating to recommendations from its auditors' reports. The principles of best value are well applied and resources are effectively used to support the pupils' learning. The school has a relatively large balance currently carried forward from the previous financial year. This is an example of the school's prudent planning. Funding has been reserved, not only to finance planned improvements to the school's ICT resources, but also to provide a reserve to support the new headteacher who has been appointed from the start of 2005.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	432,504
Total expenditure	391,814
Expenditure per pupil	2,389

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	27,876
Balance carried forward to the next	68,566

38. Because of the commitment of the school's leadership, it is well poised for improvement. Overall, the current effectiveness of the school is satisfactory. This is because achievement is satisfactory and attainment in line with expectations. Teaching, learning, assessment, the school's curriculum, and its leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Consequently, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils' personal, social and emotional development is very good.
- There are good facilities for outdoor learning.
- The curriculum is well planned and stimulating.
- There is a very good contribution from support staff.
- Leadership of the Foundation Stage, whilst satisfactory, is still in the process of development.

Commentary

39. Children enter the single reception class from a variety of learning backgrounds, including nursery classes and playgroups. They bring a wide range of experiences and are achieving at an average level on entry. Their skills in speaking and listening and in physical development are good. They make sound progress during the year so the majority of children are attaining the expected standards expected of them by the time they enter Year 1. Few children are working at lower levels and some are already capable of National Curriculum related work by the end of the summer term.
40. All teaching is satisfactory and shows a number of strengths. Good planning for a varied curriculum ensures all the areas of learning are effectively covered, and children have access to a good range of stimulating experiences. There is good assessment practice, using the Foundation Stage Profile, to record observations and comments on progress throughout the year. These are used well to adjust planning to children's needs. Resources are organized well, including the attractive outside area. Good teamwork between the teaching and support staff contributes well to consistent and secure experiences for the children. Lack of experience in teaching has resulted in insufficient planning for higher achievement and insufficient demands being made on the potentially higher attaining children. Nevertheless, children are happy and well motivated. They bring very good attitudes to their learning, and enter into activities with an enthusiasm which is balanced by care and consideration for each other.
41. The day-to-day activity of the reception class is managed well and there are sound links with the children's previous learning, ensuring smooth transition into the school. Positive links are also made with the Year 1 class. The reception teacher is new to the school and in the early stages of her teaching career. Because of this, she is still developing the professional expertise to take a stronger lead in moving this area forward. Consequently, leadership of this stage of learning, whilst satisfactory overall, is not established completely, or linked fully to the overall strategic development of the school.
42. Provision for **personal, social and emotional development is very good**. This area of learning takes a high profile in the reception class and children achieve very well. This is due to the high quality of working relationships and a well planned and ordered environment in which children settle quickly and feel secure. Children are encouraged to

take responsibility for their equipment, to share and to take turns sensibly, and they are now confident in tackling new activities. Behaviour is very good. Staff are skilled in knowing how young children learn effectively and they plan a good range of activities which lead to sustained interest and concentration from the children and a strong desire to learn.

43. Achievement in **communication language and literacy is satisfactory**. There is a good combination of activities which are led and directed by an adult, such as word building sessions, and free-choice activities, such as role-play and writing activities. Speaking and listening skills are well developed and the staff are effective in the way in which they make good use of incidental opportunities for extending the children's vocabulary. By the end of the reception year, children have a satisfactory understanding of books, and understand that writing carries meaning. They enjoy stories and are encouraged to write in a variety of contexts.
44. **Mathematical development is satisfactory**. By the end of the reception year, most children have reached the expected standards which are appropriate for their age. They have a sound understanding of numbers up to ten and of simple shapes. Some children recognize and count up to and beyond twenty with good levels of confidence and accuracy. Mathematical skills are successfully extended across the areas of learning so that children count the legs of mini-beasts and discuss the relative sizes of living creatures. Most children are recording simple addition and subtraction calculations and are helped well by staff to explain their mathematical ideas carefully and accurately. The good provision for sand and water play enables children to explore concepts through first hand experience.
45. The **children's knowledge and understanding of the world is satisfactory** by the time they transfer to Year 1. Teaching is planned well to allow children to learn through structured play activities and practical experience. Imaginative play areas are changed during the year to keep interest levels high. A visit to a local outdoor centre provides good stimulation and creative ideas about mini-beasts which can be followed up in the school's millennium garden. Children use magnifying glasses competently to explore the characteristics of creatures they find, satisfactorily record their findings, and make effective use of clipboards. Computers are used regularly and children move the mouse confidently to make pictures and patterns. The children are enthusiastic learners who show an interest in all their activities.
46. **Children's physical development is good**. They have access to a large and stimulating outdoor environment where they can move freely and use a good variety of outdoor equipment. Almost all children are strong, healthy and confident in their outdoor play. They handle equipment well and are expected to use pencils, brushes, scissors and other tools with care and common sense. Most manipulate small objects well, such as building bricks. On occasion, children go to the hall to use larger gymnastic equipment and they very much enjoy climbing, rolling and balancing as they improve their skills. They speak with enthusiasm of their physical play and demonstrate a good degree of confidence. They are knowledgeable about the need for healthy eating *to make your muscles grow* and understand the need for clear rules on safety.
47. **In the creative area of learning, achievement is satisfactory** overall. Staff plan a wide range of activities and with focused teaching and support, almost all children reach the expected standards by the end of the reception year. They model with dough, paint

and use found materials satisfactorily. The bright displays on the classroom walls show how much their work is valued and provides a good model for their finished products. They sing songs together regularly, and are building up a good repertoire of familiar music and rhymes. They very much enjoy playing basic percussion instruments, and are able to use them sensibly and listen well to others.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management are good, and there is a good awareness of what needs to be improved.
- Assessment is used well to monitor progress, and remedial action taken where necessary.
- There are inadequate resources in the library to meet the needs of pupils.
- There are too few books to challenge older pupils who are the able readers.
- The very good pupil designed literacy targets in Year 6 are not used in other years.

Commentary

48. Standards of attainment in Year 2 are average overall. However, this appears to represent a slight decline from the 2003 national tests results, which were above average for reading and average for writing. This is because there are now more pupils in that year who have special educational needs and who attain below expectations, although there are more pupils who attain above expectations. Nevertheless, the majority of pupils achieve well. However, in some classes, where there is no support in literacy lessons, some of the least able struggle to complete tasks. Standards seen in Year 6 are average, as were the national test results in 2003, but more pupils attain well than in 2003. This is because there has been an improvement in the number of pupils who attain the higher grades in Years 2 and 6 since the time of the previous inspection.
49. Standards in speaking and listening are above average, and there are good opportunities for the development of these skills in class discussion times. For example, a class discussed the importance of teamwork and how it could be achieved, preparatory to group work in design and technology. In lessons, teachers encourage discussion, for example, about a poem in Year 6, or in Year 1 about what hamsters eat. Pupils' listening skills are above average. This was seen when pupils followed exactly a teacher's instructions about making papier mâché.
50. Throughout the school, pupils enjoy fiction and non-fiction books, and are intent on learning and understanding new and difficult words, such as 'epiphytes' (a plant such as a moss) in Year 4. The teaching of reading is good, with every opportunity to reinforce what has been learned. The group reading sessions are monitored carefully, pupils change books regularly, and reading diaries are kept up-to-date in all years. The many parents who hear their children read regularly contribute considerably to pupils' progress and enjoyment of books. However, there are too few books in the library for it to be a place for pupils to browse. Although there are books of a good level of challenge for Year 6 for group reading, the selection of books to read for pleasure is limited in number, and was

damned by pupils as being too easy and uninspiring. Year 6 pupils discuss books with understanding, and give reasoned arguments for those which they enjoy.

51. Good strategies have been introduced which support groups in gaining competence in spelling. Writing for all purposes is taught well. Although pupils write at length in English, opportunities for work involving longer, more extended writing are infrequent in other subjects, and often hindered by an over-reliance on worksheets. Handwriting is taught well, but there are many pupils in Year 6 who choose not to write in a joined-up style, which affects the presentation of their work, and the speed at which they write. The standards in descriptive writing are particularly good in Year 6, when pupils describe characters in imaginative terms and with well-structured sentences. ICT is used well, for example, to create posters that extol the merits of a new chocolate bar.
52. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, and has improved since the previous inspection. This is because teachers plan well, and use time effectively. They question carefully to determine understanding, and take care to include all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Classes are managed well, and pupils are encouraged to be independent, which allows teachers to work with groups in turn. However, there are too few learning assistants, which results in insufficient progress by some pupils with special educational needs. In a very good lesson, learning was made fun, as games were played with words, and the theme related to pets which they owned or knew. This motivated the pupils to try hard and they therefore learned well. In another very good poetry lesson, it was the high level of challenge which motivated pupils to concentrate, think about and discuss the poem. In each, the lesson was suited to the age and ability of the pupils and they made good progress in their learning. Teachers mark thoroughly and with care, and provide targets which enable pupils to improve. A very good feature of Year 6 is the literacy targets written by the pupils, and checked by the teacher. This was seen only in that year, but is not a feature in other years.
53. Leadership and management are good. This is because the co-ordinator has evaluated assessment data, and introduced remedial programmes, and this has had a positive impact on the overall quality of teaching and learning. Furthermore, the importance of pupils reading daily to an adult is recognised, but where this is not done at home, Year 6 pupils take on this role. Overall, there is a clear recognition of areas for development and further improvement, but as yet, the gifted or talented are not recognised nor are their specific needs met.

Literacy across the curriculum

54. The use of literacy skills is unsatisfactory overall. There are good opportunities for pupils to use their speaking and listening skills. However, there are very few opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills, particularly in the writing of longer, or more detailed pieces of work. Nevertheless, examples were seen in religious education, and when pupils wrote about visits to places, such as the local museum. However, the over reliance on work sheets, particularly in history and geography, does not allow these skills to be reinforced well enough.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is well planned and organised.
- Assessment is not used well enough to raise standards.
- There is insufficient challenge for pupils capable of high attainment.

Commentary

55. In the 2003 national tests, standards were above average in Year 2, and average in Year 6. In their class work, pupils currently attain average standards overall throughout the school. Overall, achievement is satisfactory across all year groups. Where pupils are working at levels below average, they are supported well and planning is well focused on their individual needs, including those with special educational needs. Where pupils are capable of attaining the higher levels, particularly in Year 6, there is less awareness of their needs and these pupils do not make enough progress. However, recent targeted intervention in the form of additional classes to help boost learning has been a positive strategy in remedying this. The majority of pupils make satisfactory progress through the school and their achievement is sound.
56. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with a number of strengths, and there is no unsatisfactory teaching. There is good planning to cover all areas of the curriculum, including the use and application of mathematics. Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and this leads to well-structured lessons and interesting tasks. Lessons have good pace and the activities are varied to ensure all pupils have work suited to their abilities and aptitudes. However, assessment strategies are not always used well enough to identify needs and set group or individual targets. Furthermore, the use of questioning to probe, clarify and extend mathematical thinking is underdeveloped, and there are too few open-ended or investigational tasks for those capable of higher attainment.
57. Pupils bring good attitudes to their learning. They behave very well in lessons and show delight and enjoyment in the activities presented. This is because teachers are skilled at creating good working relationships, and making the learning of mathematics fun. Pupils work together very well, and even the youngest organize themselves without fuss. This ensures time is not wasted and motivation is high.
58. The leadership and management of mathematics are satisfactory. Overall, improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. The curriculum is well organized and resourced. The relatively inexperienced teaching staff have been supported well, and clear guidance is available, resulting in a consistent and confident approach to the subject. Monitoring of lessons and of pupils' work has been carried out and satisfactory feedback has been given to staff. However, whilst focusing well on the quality of provision, monitoring has been less rigorous in highlighting achievement and the raising of standards. The assessment of mathematics is unsatisfactory. Marking is consistent but is not focused on the learning objectives and frequently does not indicate points for improvement. Pupils do not have personal targets and are unaware of the standards for which they are aiming. The use of assessment data to identify underachievement and lack of progress is underdeveloped. The school does not analyse well enough the data it has in order to identify the most productive lines of development. Because of this, the school does not have an astute enough understanding of its current strengths and weaknesses in mathematics.

Numeracy across the curriculum

59. There is good use of numeracy skills across the curriculum. The school has a clear policy to promote the use of these skills and there is ample evidence that pupils have good opportunities to practise skills in context. In geography, work on a traffic survey shows competent use of pictograms. Imaginative writing about 'Marvellous Medicines' uses a range of measures of weight and volume and good use of the language of maths. There is a good emphasis on the skills of problem solving and investigating patterns in science, and ICT is used well to present graphs and tables as well as studying symmetry.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- An interesting and stimulating curriculum is provided in the subject.
- The pupils have very positive attitudes towards their work.
- Too few pupils attain the higher levels by the end of Year 6.
- The assessment of pupils' attainment and progress is not rigorous enough.

Commentary

60. Standards of attainment were average in national tests in 2003. Pupils are currently attaining average standards in their day-to-day lessons. Overall, achievement is satisfactory throughout the school. Very few pupils are working below average levels because they are supported well in their learning. However, some pupils who are capable of attaining higher levels in Year 6 are not sufficiently well challenged, and planning for pupils who may be gifted or talented is underdeveloped.
61. Learning is satisfactory. Pupils are keen to work well. Their good attitude towards science can be seen in their enthusiastic approach to lessons and in the quality of the responses they make in class. They enter eagerly into practical and investigational activities, such as considering the best conditions for growing cress or examining the habitats of mini-beasts in the school garden. They are happy to make predictions and sum up their conclusions orally, or in graphs and tables. The lovely outside environment of the school provides a rich and motivational resource for learning at this time of the year.
62. Overall, teaching is satisfactory with good features. Teachers are knowledgeable about the subject and plan well to provide a wide range of interesting experiences. There is no unsatisfactory teaching, and some which is good. Teachers are supported well by an enthusiastic subject leader, and teach with confidence. However, they do not always make sufficient demands to challenge those pupils capable of the highest attainment. Investigational work is planned and presented well but is not always open ended enough to allow these pupils scope to make greater progress. Questioning is used to help pupils clarify their thoughts and to understand their errors, but is not often used to probe the deepest understanding or extend pupils' reasoning and deduction.
63. Working relationships between teachers and pupils are very good and lead directly to the positive attitudes towards the subject. Teachers value pupils' responses and give them good opportunities to work independently, in pairs and in small groups. Pupils are

developing good skills of collaboration, listening to each other and sharing ideas well. They show good skills of independence and self-reliance in their work, and this is an improvement since the previous inspection.

64. The assessment of science is unsatisfactory overall. This is because there is neither a clear system for identifying under-achievement or lack of progress, nor use of this information to plan future learning experiences. Although teachers are conscientious in ensuring pupils cover the work set, there is little tracking of progress over time which could lead to higher expectations. The school has identified, as a priority this year, the need to develop short-term assessment tasks and analyse the outcomes, but these are not consistently in place across the school.
65. The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. Resources for science are well managed and there is sound guidance available for teachers. However, the quality of teaching and learning is not monitored and the satisfactory leadership of the subject, although keen, lacks experience. The school has maintained the standards seen at the previous inspection, and improvement has been satisfactory overall. However, assessment practice and the strategies for monitoring teaching and learning are underdeveloped.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attitudes towards ICT, and their interest in the subject, are good.
- The use of assessment for recording pupils' progress and helping to set targets for improvement is under-developed.
- Planning to meet the needs of gifted or talented pupils is not fully in place.
- The school's network resources have improved significantly, but are still insufficient for whole class use.
- The range of work in pupils' folders does not represent the full scope of work currently being taught throughout the school.

Commentary

66. Standards are in line with expectations by the end of Years 2 and 6. Overall, levels of attainment have been maintained since the previous inspection, and improvement has been satisfactory. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in all year groups. However, standards are gradually rising as a result of improvements in the school's resources for ICT. Nevertheless, although part of the school library has fairly recently been converted into an effective ICT suite, there are still too few computers for whole class teaching. The school recognises further development of its network resources is required, and the provision of interactive whiteboards forms part of its development planning for the subject.
67. Some particularly useful work was seen in Year 2, where the sound development of word-processing and text formatting work, using poetry, was being used well to support the development of literacy skills. Whilst pupils were sometimes a little slow in their use of a keyboard, they persevered and achieved well in the use of the program's menu commands and options. Good progress was the result of good attitudes to learning,

which is a feature of the pupils' approach to ICT in all year groups. By Year 6, pupils show expected levels of familiarity with a variety of computer programs. They apply their skills and knowledge satisfactorily in a variety of situations.

68. The teaching of ICT is satisfactory in all year groups. Teachers have all undertaken relevant training in the use of ICT to support pupils' learning, and are satisfactorily starting to explore the possibilities offered by the school's new resources. All pupils have regular weekly access to the ICT suite, and this experience enhances well their learning. Learning overall is satisfactory across all year groups. The school has adopted nationally recommended schemes of work for the subject, and is starting to adapt these satisfactorily to meet the specific needs of its own pupils. Nevertheless, whilst planning and challenge for higher attaining pupils has improved, extension and enhancement work for gifted or talented pupils is at an early stage of development. However, although teachers' planning shows a satisfactory coverage of the National Curriculum for ICT, the work in pupils' folders is sometimes a little thin. There is an insufficient balance between the work kept by pupils on disk and the examples printed out to provide them with a suitable record of their attainment and achievement. Nevertheless, discussion with pupils confirms the work is being undertaken, and they are making satisfactory progress.
69. The leadership and management of ICT are satisfactory overall. A new co-ordinator has been appointed from the start of the next academic year, and the subject is currently being managed, on a temporary basis. A recognised key area for development is the provision of a common approach to the recording of pupils' attainment in ICT. This is because this information is not currently being used well enough to monitor pupils' progress, or to set more specific targets for improvement.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

70. ICT is used satisfactorily throughout the school to enhance the display of pupils' work, and in this way, pupils' efforts are valued well. Where ICT is used to support other subjects, this is undertaken effectively. For example, groups of children in reception are active in discussing what will happen when they program a robot to move in particular directions, and evaluate well the success of their efforts. By Year 6, the use of ICT is well integrated into English and literacy work, because of the well balanced and focused demands made on the pupils by teachers and learning support assistants alike. Good work is to be seen in Years 4 and 5, where science work on habitats makes good use of CD-Rom resources in the pupils' research on mini-beasts. Overall, good use is starting to be made of digital cameras by teachers, not only to record work but also to enhance pupils' self-esteem and interest through photographs of learning in action. Good work was seen from Year 6 pupils in computer club, where they were designing posters and programmes for the forthcoming school production. This work also made a good contribution to the pupils' cultural and social development in their co-operation on the project.

HUMANITIES

History and geography are taught, along with science, within topics. No history lessons were seen during the inspection, but geography was sampled.

Commentary: Geography

71. Two lessons were sampled, one each in Years 1 and 2. Standards were in line with expectations. Teaching, learning and pupils' achievement, and their attitudes, were all good. Work seen supports well the pupils' study of different locations, comparing the human and physical features of different places. Consequently, pupils understand well the contrasting features they might see at a seaside resort, as compared with Wetley Rocks. By Year 2, pupils make good attempts at locating Stoke-on-Trent on a map of Britain, and successfully name and locate the countries of the United Kingdom. Their learning is supported well through teaching which focuses well on questions to check and assess the pupils' understanding. In this, the teaching focused well on the objectives for the lesson. Teachers value and build well on the pupils' own contributions and observations, and this enhances the pupils' achievements.
72. Although no lessons were seen in Years 3 to 6, the work in pupils' books shows standards in line with expectations. For example, satisfactory work on India shows pupils understand the key physical features of the country, and includes sound work on population studies. Work on river systems shows a satisfactory understanding of specialist, geographical vocabulary. However, by Year 6, staffing difficulties, and the use of supply teachers, has meant marking of pupils' work has been inconsistent in quality and frequency. This has resulted in a lack of advice for pupils as to how to improve.

Commentary: History

73. History was only sampled through an analysis of pupils' books and display work. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress in the subject. Standards meet expectations by Years 2 and 6 and achievement is satisfactory. Pupils' work, and teachers' planning show satisfactory coverage of the National Curriculum. However, much of the work is based around the completion of worksheets, with satisfactory summaries of learning, but little individual, extended work. Nevertheless, by Year 6, there is some above average work on Greece, by higher attaining pupils, in their more extended writing, comparing Athenians and Spartans. Pupils express their answers in their own ways, and are encouraged to be independent in this. Nonetheless, marking is mainly ticks with encouraging comments, but lacking written correction for improvement.

Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good improvement in the raising of standards to above expectations by the end of Year 6.
- Assessment information is not being used smartly enough to help set targets for improvement.
- The results of good discussion work in lessons are insufficiently well recorded by pupils.
- The work in pupils' folders does not fully represent the scope of the work undertaken by them.
- There are insufficient opportunities for extended writing to support literacy development and give greater challenge to higher attaining pupils.

Commentary

74. Pupils' attainment is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus by the end of Year 2, and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils make good progress overall by Year 6, where standards are above expectations and achievement is good. Overall, there has been good improvement since the previous inspection.
75. Through their work and display in Years 1 and 2, pupils show a sound knowledge of Christianity, but work is more limited on other religions, such as Sikhism. However, there is overall satisfactory coverage of the required syllabus for the subject. In a good Year 1 lesson, pupils extended well their knowledge of the Bible story of Noah's Ark to the concept of 'faithfulness' and the importance of living together as a family. This made a particularly good contribution to their spiritual and social development. Literacy was supported well through the pupils' own explanations of terms, such as 'kind', being described as 'helpful' or 'everybody loves you'. Learning was supported effectively through this approach, which enabled well the pupils to explain some difficult concepts for themselves. The willingness of pupils to become involved in the lesson was typical of the good approach and attitudes towards the subject seen across the school.
76. By Year 6, discussion with pupils shows an overall good understanding of different faiths and beliefs. In a good Year 6 lesson introducing Divali, pupils showed openness in discussion, and a good appreciation of each other's views and opinions. This is often very productive in the development of their understanding about religions, as well as what they can learn from them. However, there is little evidence in their folders of a record of such discussions, particularly relating to what they themselves have contributed to the debates, or what they have learned from others. Nevertheless, their work is mainly well presented and illustrated with useful summaries of key facts, for example, relating to the Five Pillars of Islam.
77. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall by Year 2, and good by Year 6. The teaching makes a particularly good contribution to the development of pupils' spiritual understanding, for example, through some very good Year 6 work considering Jesus' anger, sadness and calmness during the last week of his life. Such feelings were well linked, in the pupils' summary writing, to the concept of consideration for others. This was challenging of the pupils to explore the meaning of their own emotions. However, apart from some work on 'Personal Journeys', opportunities are missed to support further literacy development through more extended writing in the subject, particularly for higher attaining and gifted or talented pupils.
78. The leadership and management of the subject are good, and well focused on improvement. However, a key area for further development is the monitoring of marking. Teachers give suitable praise for effort, but assessment of pupils' work often lacks sufficient points related to improvement. The use of assessment information to monitor progress, to set targets for improvement, and to reinforce the levels of challenge offered to pupils is not effective enough.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are high by the end of Years 2 and 6.
- The very good leadership and management have led to a whole school enthusiasm for the subject.
- The art experiences both in and out of school add considerably to pupils' knowledge and understanding of the subject.
- Assessment is not undertaken, so is not used to assist pupils to make progress.
- Sketchbooks specifically for art are not in use.

Commentary

79. Standards seen by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are above national expectations, and have improved since the previous inspection. In all years, pupils use a wide variety of media. These include drawing, painting, three-dimensional work including the use of clay, collage with a variety of materials, and the use of wire as a base for sculptures. At the end of Years 2 and 6, standards of painting and drawing are high. Pupils' shading of shapes shows a good understanding of its use in order to create the appearance of depth. Their large paintings of leaves show a confidence in their ability to create bold compositions, and the use of colour and texture enhances these well. All groups of pupils achieve well, including those with special educational needs.
80. Teaching and learning are very good overall. For example, in one very good lesson, the use of thorough and careful demonstrations by the teacher resulted in high standards of drawing by the pupils. The use of natural objects, which the pupils had collected, resulted in a determination by the pupils to draw to the highest standards possible. In addition, the wealth and quality of art displayed in the school is the result of the very good teaching.
81. Leadership and management are very good. Although in post for a only short time, the co-ordinator has enabled pupils to gain good knowledge of various media by providing suitable resources. This provision has improved since the previous inspection. The co-ordinator has a very clear vision of how art is to be developed, through the compilation of a portfolio of work to demonstrate standards and achievements. In addition, the use of art professionals in the school, and the use of the local museum for art workshops have widened the pupils' experiences. Although in the development planning, assessment is not part of the teaching process, and this is unsatisfactory. The use of art sketchbooks by pupils is also part of future planning, being seen as essential to allow pupils to develop skills, ideas and individuality. The art club is very well attended, which shows the enthusiasm of pupils for this subject.

Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good leadership and management result in an enthusiasm for the subject by pupils.
- Formal assessment is not undertaken, and is therefore not used to monitor pupils' progress.

Commentary

82. Standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 meet national expectations. Pupils satisfactorily create designs, often from shared ideas, which they develop through sketches to show an understanding of the purpose of their design. They gain sound experiences in the use of a variety of materials, such as wood, fabric and food, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils' projects show careful and accurate measuring and cutting, such as seen in their model furniture. They recognise that alternative ideas have to be considered. This was seen when groups collectively planned moving toys. Pupils achieve satisfactorily, including those with special educational needs, with the good support of the teachers and assistants.
83. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Teachers plan carefully and use resources effectively. Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace so that much is achieved. Demonstrations are clear, so pupils are confident to tackle new methods of making. Care is taken to see that pupils finish their projects, which gives them pride in the making. Pupils are excited when tackling new projects, and they delight in showing and using what they have made. For example, circuits were used to make buzzers sound, and lights flash on imaginatively made faces, and these are used during wet playtimes for pupils to enjoy.
84. Leadership and management are good. Care has been taken to ensure teachers have the resources to complete projects, and the scheme of work covers all elements of the National Curriculum. To enable pupils to experience the use of food technology, pupils go to the local secondary school. Formal assessment is not integral to the teaching process. However, planning is in place to collect examples of work, which can be used by all staff, in order to form the basis of this necessary process.

Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good specialist teaching in Years 3 to 6 enables pupils to achieve well.
- Monitoring and assessment records are insufficient to ensure the school properly checks pupils' progress.
- The school lacks a sufficient record of pupils' work in books or through taped performances.
- The school's work in music is supported well through extra-curricular instrumental teaching.

Commentary

85. During the inspection, no music lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2. There was no sample work provided, and a discussion with the co-ordinator shows there is no work for the subject recorded in pupils' books, or maintained through taped recordings of individual or class performances. This is unsatisfactory, although teachers' planning does show overall satisfactory coverage of the national curriculum for the subject.
86. There is good provision in Years 3 to 6 by specialist teachers who visit the school regularly each week. Teaching and learning are good in these year groups. Standards by Year 6 are above expectations and pupils' achievement is good. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. This is because the specialist teaching has significantly increased the pupils' opportunities to develop their individual skills in music. In this respect, leadership of the subject has been good. However, leadership is satisfactory overall because it has not ensured proper records of pupils' work, and there is limited monitoring of progress, particularly with the younger pupils. Similarly, management is satisfactory overall because, whilst opportunities for pupils to make music are mainly good, assessment systems are weak and unsatisfactory. The evidence from lesson observations shows teachers are making satisfactory judgements relating to pupils' standards and progress in the subject. However, the school does not have the records necessary to substantiate either these judgements, or the reports provided for parents.
87. Singing in assemblies, by all year groups from reception to Year 6, is above average. Pupils sing well in unison, in tune, and join in well. This reflects the good attitudes all groups of pupils have towards music. They respond well to the words of a hymn, in addition to showing a good sense of rhythm and beat. In this, pupils show a good appreciation of the nature of the music.
88. In Years 3 and 4, the teaching is very successful and challenging in the development of pupils' ability to create and reproduce rhythms through clapping sequences. Key rhythmic skills are developing well, through copying the teacher, each other, recorded music and through improvisation. Consequently, by the end of one lesson, the pupils' appreciation of ostinato (a persistent phrase repeated throughout a piece) was secure and enabled them to put this new learning into practice in the successful singing of a round. By Years 5 and 6, the teacher's very good subject knowledge helps set high expectations of the pupils, and to set suitably challenging tasks. In continuing composition work, using the pentatonic scale (a scale consisting of five notes), the pupils' ability to organise themselves and

collaborate in groups was impressive. The pupils worked hard to complete their compositions in groups of four, using pitched instruments.

89. The school's overall provision for music is supported well through extra-curricular music teaching. Good woodwind teaching was seen and a rehearsal by pupils playing brass instruments confirmed above average standards and the good enrichment opportunities available for pupils.

Physical education

Commentary

90. Physical education was sampled. Overall, provision is satisfactory with a well-planned curriculum, which is enriched by additional activities outside school hours. Facilities are good with excellent outdoor space, an attractive hall and opportunities for visits to the swimming baths for the older pupils. In addition, older pupils are given the chance to take part in an outdoor and adventurous residential experience at a local centre. Such activities are an important and positive feature of the curriculum.
91. Only two lessons could be seen during the inspection, one each in Years 4 and 6. The good attitudes of the pupils and their obvious enjoyment and motivation demonstrate they are taught well, and learn and achieve well. Lessons in class time are supplemented by involvement in competitions and fixtures with other schools. For example, the school has been particularly successful in a local rounders competition. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities for pupils to enjoy, such as gymnastics, netball, football, cross-country running and maypole dancing. Photographs record the good participation in these events, and trophies show the school is successful in reaching good standards.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship is taught through the school's personal, social and health education course. The school's work in these areas was sampled.

Commentary

92. The school has a clear policy for the teaching of personal, social and health education, which includes aspects of citizenship. It is linked closely with the ethos of the school and reflects well the strong values held by the school community. Provision is good and helps to further well pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.
93. Many classes use a discussion period called 'Circle Time'¹⁰ to successfully explore issues connected with feelings and emotions. These are often linked to assembly themes, as in the discussion of friendship in one younger class and a role-play on forgiveness with older pupils. A school council meets regularly, and is beginning to give pupils from all classes some whole school responsibility, for example, the encouragement of positive playground behaviour and activities.
94. Sex education is satisfactorily covered through National Curriculum topics and there is a supplementary programme in Year 6 with input from the school nurse. Pupils have developed a good awareness of aspects of healthy living. This is achieved through the regular physical education sessions, out of school activities and visits, and the caring approach of dinner supervisors who work well with pupils to encourage healthy choices at lunchtime.

¹⁰ During Circle Time pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. Respect for other pupils' views will occur at all times and therefore pupils feel confident that they can talk with ease and free from any form of interference or interruption from other children.

95. The everyday teaching in the school pays very good attention to the development of self-esteem, self-value and confidence on the part of the pupils. Qualities of independence and positive collaboration are well supported.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	1
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
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	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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