

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MARY'S CE VA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Burkitt Road, Woodbridge, Suffolk

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124773

Headteacher: Mr Alister Gourlay

Lead inspector: Mrs Margaret Hulme

Dates of inspection: 13th – 16th October 2003

Inspection number: 257832

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	207
School address:	Burkitt Road Woodbridge Suffolk
Postcode:	IP12 4JJ
Telephone number:	(01394) 383649
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Anne Wright
Date of previous inspection:	15 th June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a smaller than average Church of England voluntary aided primary school that takes from a wider-ranging social area than usual because it is the only faith school in the area. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. There are 207 children on roll and most are of UK heritage and white. There are a few from other ethnic groups but none for whom English is an additional language. The proportion of those with special educational needs is lower than that nationally and includes one with a specific statement of need. Nine teachers of whom one is the headteacher and one is part time teach the children. When children start school their knowledge, skills and understanding are broadly similar to those found nationally but about a fifth have better language skills than expected for this age. In the last year about five per cent of children joined the school other than at the usual time and although the school often finds that such children are not as far on in their academic work the teachers try hard to help them catch up. The innovations being introduced to teaching and curriculum, which staff and governors consider important are proving to be instrumental in raising standards. The school works hard to maintain its high standards and has a well-deserved good reputation within the local community and with other schools. In 2002 the school received an Investors in People Award. Its strong Christian ethos, high level of pastoral care and whole school approach to its work are factors of which it is proud.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
3609	Margaret Hulme	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage curriculum Art and design Music
9327	Stuart Vincent	Lay inspector	
18344	David Earley	Team inspector	English ICT Geography Physical education English as an additional language
29995	Maureen Walker	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Design and technology History Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good** school with some very good features that is effective in providing well for its children. It is well regarded by the families and other local schools. Almost all pupils achieve well, relate very well to one another, are keen to learn and behave very well. Staff and governors support the headteacher's firm leadership effectively. The committed teaching supports children's learning very effectively and is driving up standards. This school with its strong, purposeful leadership, commitment to high standards and a high quality of education provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Children achieve well and reach high standards by the time they leave school.
- Teaching is supporting children's learning well and driving up standards.
- The very good leadership of the headteacher provides purposeful direction for the school's work but a few improvements to some subjects are required to improve the quality of education still further.
- The school is managed very well and governors influence its work and give effective support.
- There is a wonderfully caring and supportive ethos that provides a foundation for the very good provision for pupils' personal development. This results in very good attitudes and behaviour.
- The very effective partnership with parents and the community results in very good views of the school and makes a very positive contribution to children's learning.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS CHANGED SINCE THE PREVIOUS INSPECTION

Overall. The school has made **good** progress since the last inspection. All issues identified in the previous report have been tackled successfully. The strong Christian ethos provides a firm foundation for the children's attitudes and behaviour, which are now very good. There continues to be a strong sense of direction and purpose from which children are benefiting. Standards in English and information and communication technology have improved and are real strengths in the school. Children reach high standards in national tests by the time they leave school and the most recent results are higher still.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

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

Throughout the school achievement is **good** because the teaching is good. Foundation Stage children have settled into school well and are on course to attain the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the Reception Year. By Year 2, children achieved well in the national tests for reading and writing but the result for mathematics was not as good as the previous year. However, the problems are remedied and most recent results are much improved. By the time they leave school children reach high standards in national tests, which was reflected in their written work and in lessons. The disappointing comparison with those schools whose pupils attained similarly at the

end of Year 2 is attributable to the changes to the year group between Year 2 and Year 6 when some higher attaining children left and the percentage of children with learning difficulties increased. The most recent results show an improvement with many children attaining the higher level in all core subjects. Despite the high standards in English and information and communication technology, the skills in handwriting and use of sensors with computers lacks the attention they need. Children with learning difficulties achieve well and make good progress.

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **very good**. Almost all pupils are enthusiastic and benefit from teachers' high expectations. The orderly and harmonious community means that bullying is rare. Overall, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. An ethos has been created where values and beliefs are respected. Attendance is **very good**. The attendance rate is very high compared with other schools and there are no exclusions. Punctuality is **very good** and children come willingly to school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a **very good** education. Teaching is **good** throughout the school. The very good relationships and expectations that children will work hard and do their best encourage effective learning. The curriculum is **very good** reflecting the very relevant range of learning opportunities and ensuring all groups achieve success. A **very good** range of additional learning opportunities enriches the curriculum. Care, welfare and support are **very good**. The high levels of support impact on the good achievement. There are very good links with parents and an exceptionally high quality of information is provided for them.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **very good**. This **very good** leadership stems from a strong and purposeful headteacher with good challenge and support from governors who keep in close touch with school's work making an effective partnership. They are well organised and informed, take a keen interest in performance and meet their statutory requirements.

The **very good** management results from secure systems to ensure that financial and administrative work is efficiently carried out. Staff and resources are used effectively and decisions are made with improved standards in mind.

WHAT PARENTS AND PUPILS FEEL ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Parents: They have very positive views of the school and are very satisfied with the quality of education it provides and the standards their children achieve.

Pupils: They enjoy coming to school for the range of learning opportunities offered them. Self-esteem is high because they are listened to and contribute effectively to the school community.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

There is no significant area of weakness that merits an issue about major development to enable the school to move forward but there is some fine tuning to take place that would have an impact on children's achievements and extend the high quality of educational provision already offered. Some of this is already taking place but in addition the school should:

- Give greater emphasis in all subjects to children using handwriting skills effectively.
- In information and communication technology make more time to use such devices as sensors in measuring such aspects as temperature over time.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is mainly **good**. Pupils achieve well throughout the school. In English, the pupils reach well above average standards which is an improvement since the last inspection and in mathematics and science, standards are above average by the time children leave school. There is no significant difference in achievement between boys and girls. Those with learning difficulties make good progress towards the targets identified for them.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All children achieve well.
- Pupils reach high standards in the national tests by the time they leave school.
- Standards have been maintained or improved since the last inspection.
- The improved provision for the Foundation Stage ensures that children make a good start when they enter school and a significant proportion are likely to start their National Curriculum work early.

Commentary

Starting school

1. In recent years the overall profile has been found to be different to that at the last inspection and attainment on entry is now wider ranging. When children start school in the Reception class their knowledge, skills and understanding are broadly similar to one another although about a fifth have well developed language skills and about the same proportion are slower learners. Last year the Foundation Stage children made good progress and most reached the expected goals in all areas of learning with some starting their National Curriculum work early. This year the children are already well on the way to reaching the levels expected for their age and some will exceed them by the time they join the Year 1 class.

The school's results in national tests

2. The table below shows that in 2002 standards in the national tests in Year 2 were above average for reading and writing and below average for mathematics which was not as good as the previous year. When the mathematics results were analysed it was discovered that children were not doing as well in number as other aspects of the subject but that is being remedied effectively because this year standards improved in 2003 and there is every indication they will be well above average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.9 (17.9)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	15.0 (15.7)	14.4 (14.3)
mathematics	16.3 (17.0)	16.5 (16.2)

There were 30 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

All aspects of mathematics at Year 2 are now being monitored carefully so that any weakness can be picked up quickly.

3. In 2002 the standards in the Year 6 national tests were well above average for English and science and above average for mathematics as seen in the table below.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.2 (27.8)	27.0 (27.0)
mathematics	28.0 (28.7)	26.7 (26.6)
science	29.8 (29.4)	28.3 (28.3)

There were 30 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

This is a good result because by the time this year group reached Year 6 the make up of that year group had changed. Just a year before the national tests the school lost some of its higher attaining pupils and gained some that were very slow learners who found it difficult to reach the standards expected for their age. Therefore, by the time that year group took part in national tests there was a higher number than expected of children with special educational needs and it was evident that the results the school were hoping for were unlikely to be realised. Thus the comparison with similar schools, which relates to those pupils who attained similarly at Year 2, is disappointing because it appears that progress from Year 2 to Year 6 was only satisfactory which is not an accurate reflection of this school's work.

4. The trend over time shows standards that are in line with those nationally and in 2003 the statutory targets were just exceeded in English and met for mathematics. In 2003 the results in national tests were an improvement on the previous year and the school was particularly pleased with the results in science and the high proportion of children who reached high standards.

Inspection findings

The Foundation Stage

5. At the time of the inspection children in the Foundation Stage had been at school for just two weeks and were still attending part time. They have made a good start and are achieving well because the teaching is good and the teaching assistant supports children very effectively. There is every indication that most will reach the goals expected for their age by the end of the Reception Year in all areas of learning because of the good provision, which is better now than it was at the last inspection.

Years 1 and 2

6. Again children achieve well because of the good provision. Those with learning difficulties are particularly well supported by teaching assistants. Standards in English are well above average, which is an improvement since the last inspection. In English, children achieve well in all aspects of the subject except handwriting. Although they are taught the skills for handwriting well their achievement is only satisfactory because these skills are not emphasised in other subjects. However, particularly high standards were found in speaking and listening. In mathematics achievement has been better in some aspects such as using and applying skills to everyday tasks. Although achievement in number is satisfactory it is getting more attention because of what teachers found in their analysis of tests last year. In mathematics and science standards are average overall with a significant proportion doing better in science. Standards in information and communication technology are better than is expected for age. No lessons in other subjects were seen but the samples of work provided and discussions with children indicated that standards in other subjects were generally typical for age.

Years 3 to 6

7. Children achieve well in all year groups. All pupils are suitably challenged including those with learning difficulties. Standards in English are well above average, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Although children achieve well in English the same problem relating to handwriting exists as in Years 1 and 2. The particularly high standards in speaking and listening are a strength in this school because pupils know their contributions are valued and take every opportunity to take part in discussions, answer questions and state opinions. Standards in mathematics and science are above average with small groups of children in every class who do better. Of particular note were the discussions in science with Year 6 pupils whose knowledge and understanding of the subject indicated high standards even at such an early point in the school year. Standards in information and communication technology were better than expected for their age. Few lessons were seen in other subjects but evidence indicated that there are high standards in art and design and music.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance is **very good**. Children's attitudes and behaviour are **very good**. Pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The Christian ethos of the school forms a strong foundation for personal development.
- Children attend regularly and come to school willingly and punctually.
- Relationships are very good and children have very good attitudes to their work and the school.
- Behaviour is very good.

Commentary

8. This aspect is a significant strength as it was last time but there have been several improvements since the last inspection and attendance, behaviour and children's attitudes are all very good. As in the previous inspection, children are still very interested in the life and work of the school, which begins at the Foundation Stage. Reception pupils are well on course to achieve early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development by the end of the year. Children want to come to school because they enjoy the wide range of interesting and stimulating activities. This makes them want to learn and helps them to achieve well. The school and parents work very well together to encourage regular attendance and punctuality so that children make the best use of their time in school. The attendance rate is well above the national average and within the top ten per cent of schools across the country and there was no unauthorised absence.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.9	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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

9. The school has a very strong Christian ethos and this is a significant strength. It helps the school to promote high expectations of conduct, learning and care. Adults and children are highly respected and feel secure and welcome. Through the daily life of the school, in assemblies and in the personal, social and health education programme and in subjects such as history and geography, children learn to develop their spiritual awareness and to respect the

values and beliefs of others. They develop a deepening understanding of themselves and their lives and an appreciation of their own and others' cultural traditions. Children take part in church services. Teachers take advantage of opportunities to develop children's sense of wonder. For example, children in Year 3 could hardly contain their excitement and were filled with awe when the computer produced and printed their colourful repeat patterns.

10. Relationships are very good. Adults provide very good role models and value children's contributions to lessons and to the wider life of the school so that children are confident and have high self-esteem. This helps children to work confidently, to collaborate very well with one another and reach high standards in their work. They know how to live together as a harmonious community. Children have many opportunities to accept responsibility and take the initiative. The school is seriously considering the establishment of a school council following a suggestion from a child. Children are very keen to help those less fortunate than themselves because the school has a strong tradition of support for local and wider-ranging charities.
11. Most children behave very well in lessons and around school because there is a very clear and consistent approach to managing behaviour and because expectations are very high. Consequently, there have been very few pupils excluded over a considerable period of time. Records show that only two children have been excluded in over 20 years.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Asian
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
190	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0
2	0	0
12	0	0

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

12. Children have a very clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong. They learn to recognise the values of truth and honesty because they are treated fairly. This is developed as and when issues arise in school and as part of their personal development lessons. For example, children in Year 6 took part in a very well considered discussion on the nature of crime.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

This school does well for its children and provides a **very good** quality of education. Children achieve well because they are taught well in all classes. The range of learning opportunities is very relevant to the needs of the pupils and because staff know their children and their families well they provide just the right amount of support and guidance to ensure they achieve as well as they can. Parents are very interested in their children's education and are prepared to do as much as they can to support them making for an effective partnership that prepares children well for the next stage of education.

Teaching and learning

The **good** quality of teaching has been maintained since the last inspection and is still a strength of the school. Consequently the good teaching is producing good learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the school provides very good direction for teaching and learning.
- The very good teamwork provides a consistent approach to lessons.
- The very good relationships provide a firm foundation for learning.
- Teachers have high expectations of how children will behave.
- Very good efforts are made to see that all children are treated fairly and that all take part in the activities provided.
- Very well directed teaching assistants reinforce and support learning.
- The good knowledge of subjects and areas of learning results in the planning of activities that maintain children's interest.
- Teachers sometimes miss opportunities to reinforce basic skills such as handwriting.

Commentary

13. As the inspection took place early in the new school year teachers were still getting to know their new classes. Parents and children had very positive feelings about the teaching staff knowing that they help the children to learn effectively. The table below indicates the quality of teaching seen across the school.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 28 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	5 (18%)	20 (71%)	3 (11%)	0	0	0

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

14. The teaching is good because most pupils make good progress and achieve well. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach and plan carefully to meet the needs of individuals, fully prepared to change that planning so that all children can achieve success – thus tasks are well matched to capability. Teachers find imaginative ways to keep children interested which was evident in a Year 5 science lesson when the teacher used her specialist music knowledge in work related to sound. Children found the 'sound circus' very interesting, were highly motivated and really raring to get started. The lesson was incredibly well organised and although explanations were amusing and humorous they were also very precise. Such items as strings, bottle organ, twanging rulers, voice vibrations, cardboard trombones, travelling sounds and nasal noises were effective in sending the children straight into action. How to record results was dealt with in detail and there were constant reminders to remember previous work. Everyone had been very focused on the task, including those with learning difficulties and were well able to give explanations that included the use of correct vocabulary.
15. The very good relationships that teachers have established with children are a formidable force for learning because children are eager to please, prepared to work hard and make the efforts that result in high standards. For example, in an English lesson for Year 2 children they were learning the importance of writing instructions in the right sequence. Only when the teacher demonstrated what happens as she made a glitter card to their instructions did they understand why the sequence was so important. Although the task was challenging the effective relationships gave children the confidence to try and put it right because they knew that she would value what they had to say. Their attempts resulted in the use of more interesting words to replace the use of the word '*then*' with such examples as *meanwhile*, *eventually*, *finally*, *during*, *before* and *later*.
16. There is very effective teamwork between staff leading to learning that is reinforced and supported in just the right way that makes children go the extra step in improving their efforts because they know it is valued. Every day there was particularly good evidence of this in the Reception class. The teacher and her assistant use their knowledge of the areas of learning

effectively and both are very clear about how a task will be introduced, skills built on and encouragement given. Consequently children experience the same approach from both adults. For example, children were learning to write a simple sentence using rhyming words. When they moved into two groups each adult supported one of these groups. It was a very challenging activity but the groups were small and appropriate support provided. Considerable efforts were made by the older ones in the class to use letter sound knowledge and control pencils to attempt a short sentence. When they read what they had written they were encouraged to look around the room for clues as to how it could be better. With prompting they added a full stop and some commented about using a capital letter at the beginning.

17. The teaching of basic skills is good overall, particularly at the Foundation Stage and Year 1 children make good progress with reading and writing. However, throughout the school there is a weakness relating to handwriting. Although these skills are taught well and children rapidly learn to form letters correctly and later to join them up, teachers often miss opportunities to reinforce these skills in other subjects which means that written work appears poorly presented in other subjects although the content is good.
18. The strong sense of partnership results in effective support for those with learning difficulties and makes a significant contribution to their achievement. The very well prepared teaching assistants co-operate well with teachers in keeping track of children's progress.
19. Considerable work is completed during lessons and often at a fast pace because teachers have high expectations of how pupils should behave and manage children very well. In a Year 6 information and communication lesson the work related to creating a web site had to draw on an event from learning in history. Because the teacher managed children well and created a good working atmosphere, half the class were able to work with the teaching assistant, co-operating with one another to achieve all the tasks. Most pupils found the task quite difficult but persevered and made good progress. They understood the nature and use of a web site. The tasks were extended for higher attainers, who added a page and wrote a newspaper article describing the outbreak of the Second World War. Slower learners had much attention from the teaching assistant, which allowed them to achieve success too.
20. This good management of children results in the school being a harmonious community where behaviour is very good and there is an acceptance of social responsibility. Children take pride in finished work and are keen to explain how they achieved it. The younger ones show respect for older ones and understand the need for rules, for example, they look up to the table leaders who help them at lunchtimes and look forward to visiting the Year 6 class for an assembly session.

The curriculum

Provision is **very good**. All children have many stimulating learning opportunities that are both wide-ranging and very pertinent to their needs. All statutory requirements are met.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Children's personal development is promoted very well.
- A very well considered and thoughtfully planned primary curriculum with many innovations.
- So many experiences that enrich children's interest and enjoyment in their learning.
- Good provision is made for children with learning difficulties.

Commentary

21. The strong emphasis on promoting children's personal development is very evident throughout the school reflecting the children's very respectful relationships with each other and with the adults with whom they work. Children of all ages and abilities work well together, are confident and well behaved in lessons and enthusiastic about their learning. Specific programmes for

older children include one about sex and relationships, together with a teaching programme alerting them to the dangers of drug misuse. They are thoroughly yet sensitively planned building very successfully on work developed in other subjects.

22. For those children with learning difficulties, well planned appropriate activities, clearly defined individual small steps towards their own targets and the very able and conscientious support they receive in their learning contribute effectively to the generally good progress they make.
23. Establishing strong links between different subjects makes learning more relevant and interesting. When designing and making their revolving advertisements, the Year 6 pupils not only use their persuasive writing skills, but also their scientific knowledge of circuits and motors and gears to change the rate of revolution of their displays. Computer skills are developed and used to enhance learning in many subjects, for example, in Year 4 the use of flash animations helps children to record and explain negative numbers on a thermometer. By staff reconsidering how reading is planned, each day has successfully enhanced group-reading times throughout the school. A new practically based programme of work in science adds not only to understanding but also to enjoyment in learning.
24. Innovations in teaching stimulate children's interest in their learning and are beginning to develop an understanding of their own thinking skills. Displaying their own work about the Second World War as creatively as they can, including puzzles and posters, really inspires others to want to read and find out more and reflects the great enthusiasm Year 6 have for their current study in history. Introducing the very successful Maths Games Library through open afternoons for parents and children alike offers wide opportunities to practise numeracy skills at home through a fun activity. On numerous occasions the curriculum is enriched and extended, whether by cultural visits to places of interest, residential activities, using the expertise of visitors both artistic and sporting, or experiencing themed weeks with a sporting, musical or scientific focus. All such activities are used extremely effectively to enhance the curriculum for all groups of children. The school makes exceedingly valuable use of many local sites including the nearby Suffolk Wildlife Trust. At lunchtimes and after school a broad range of sporting clubs, musical and arts activities is well attended currently by Years 3 to 6. Good learning resources and accommodation and the impressive outside space all make a significant contribution to the quality of education provided.

Care, guidance and support

There is **very good** provision to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. A **very good** range of support, advice and guidance is provided for children based on the monitoring of their achievements and personal development. Involvement in seeking, valuing and acting on pupils' views is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good arrangements for health and safety, child protection and general welfare.
- Support and guidance for pupils' personal development.
- Teachers know the children and their families very well and use this information effectively to provide appropriate advice and support.
- The school values the views of its pupils.

Commentary

25. The school takes very good care of its pupils and they themselves confirm this in their own questionnaires. They speak highly of the help given to them by all staff. They are well supported at all times and helped to develop to their best, so that they are confident and assured young people by the time they leave the school.

26. All the necessary arrangements for health and safety are very well organised. Responsibilities are defined and include the governors, who make regular site inspections. All the necessary provisions for fire drills, medicine, curricular safety, equipment and visits are meticulously arranged. Procedures for child protection follow the local guidelines and are led by the headteacher. Pastoral support is the first item on the agenda of every staff meeting and during 'FFM' – first five minutes, all staff share any concerns they have about the welfare of any child.
27. Pupils say they are confident that adults will help them if they are worried about anything at school. This stems from the very positive relationships at all levels. They also say that they are expected to work hard, but that their teachers help them to improve and show them how to make their work better. As children join the school they are very well supported and helped to settle into the routines of school life. As they progress, their work, behaviour, attendance and personal development are all closely monitored and they are given personal targets to help them make progress. Children who have special educational needs are supported effectively and sensitively. In discussion with groups of pupils, they all show a good understanding of their learning. They understand how well they are doing, what grades they are achieving, as well as the things they need to do better. When they prepare for national tests, pupils' capabilities are understood well by teachers and they are given every assistance to do their best. Pupils are very well prepared to move on to the high school, by the time they are at the end of Year 6.
28. Pupils' questionnaires show that they are very sure that teachers treat them fairly and they are always ready to listen to their ideas. They are very confident that they can talk to adults directly about any matter, at any time. Again, this stems from the pupils' confidence and their very positive relationships with adults. More formally, as part of their personal and social curriculum, pupils in Year 5 are asked to write to the headteacher and governors about their views of school life. They must put forward a rational argument for their views and for anything they wish to improve. All these letters are answered and many of the suggestions they make come to fruition. A school council, as an additional forum for pupils' views, is being considered.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents and the community are **very good**, effectively contributing to the curriculum and how well children achieve. The links with other schools and early years providers are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Exceptionally good and thorough information about the school and children's standards and progress.
- The very good involvement of parents in the life of the school.
- Very effective work with other schools and the community.

Commentary

29. Almost every family returned an inspection questionnaire giving their views and this itself indicates the very strong relationship between school and home. Parents are very well informed about their children's progress and school life. They play their part fully. Links with partner schools and with community groups, greatly extend learning opportunities for pupils.
30. The range and quality of information in the pupils' reports is exceptional. Work done in each subject or area of learning is described, together with the pupil's progress, strengths and areas for development. There is a clear summary of personal progress. Also included are the pupils' standardised scores for reading and mathematics, compared with overall class scores and national averages. These go back over previous years in school. At the end of Year 6, the completed national test papers are included for parents. This range of information, backed up by reports of each pupil's personal targets, information about the curriculum, plus an

opportunity to meet class teachers formally every term, means that parents are extremely well informed.

31. Parents are very active in the work of the school and give their children every encouragement. A 100 per cent rate of attendance at consultation meetings each term is the norm. Parents approve of and support the work their children do at home. Social events, often organised through the Parent Teacher Association are very well supported and raise substantial funds, directly for the benefit of pupils. School events, such as sports day, fairs and concerts are always very busy. Some parents help in the school, in class, with visits and with extra-curricular activities. All have the opportunity to contribute to management decisions in the school, as their views are sought about current issues. For example, school policies are circulated in draft form to some parents to seek their views. The school has a very strong commitment to communicating with parents and this is an important factor in achieving this very high level of support from parents.
32. The school has very effective links with its partner schools. The work with the local high school is particularly beneficial and stems from the shared vision of both headteachers. Pupils visit the high school regularly for social events; there are special lessons and 'booster sessions' in mathematics and information and communication technology but with an emphasis on fun, for example, 'Marvellous Maths' for Year 3 and a 'Maths Quiz' for Year 6. Equipment is often shared; there are links for drama, music and athletics. The school works closely with its primary partners where there are joint events for sports, dance, music and a joint geography project.
33. The school is well regarded within the local community. A number of organisations, for example, the Woodbridge Orchestra, are based in the school. There are strong links with the local church and local residents are invited to school events. There are many sporting links for rugby, golf, netball and tennis where pupils benefit from facilities or coaching. The local Suffolk Heritage is also used and promoted well. The uniqueness of the immediate coastline, the sites of the local Suffolk Wildlife Trust and the National Trust site at Sutton Hoo are visited and used very effectively to make learning more interesting and exciting.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **very good** reflecting the drive towards children achieving as well as they can by making the best use of the resources available. The **very good** leadership is purposeful and has effective support from key staff in providing direction for raising achievement. All staff play a part in the **very good** management of the school and recognise the importance of evaluating what needs to be done and then improving performance. The governance is **good** reflecting the way that the governing body helps to shape the vision and the direction of the school

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The strong and caring leadership provides effective guidance for the work of the school.
- The very effective teamwork ensures a consistent approach to teaching and high expectations of what children can achieve.
- The very good relationship between staff and pupils that strongly motivate children to work as hard as they can.
- There is good management of special educational needs.
- The administration staff provide a very significant contribution to the smooth running of the school.

Commentary

Leadership

34. The headteacher has been at the school for several years and he has maintained his vision, sense of purpose and high aspirations very well. There have been some changes of staff in that time but they remain a united and supportive group who put the children first and are totally committed to making the best provision they can for the all round development of the children. This determination for all children to do well is underpinned by a focus on raising standards.
35. The headteacher is a firm and caring leader who has an active presence around the school. He has a good level of professional knowledge and expertise and sets a good example to others through his own teaching skills. He is a good facilitator and works hard to meet staff needs. The performance of teachers is reviewed and the headteacher evaluates systematically the effectiveness of teaching providing feedback and support. These strategies have worked well because their strength lies in honest and open relationships that have resulted in staff valuing one another and feeling valued themselves. There is a very good partnership with staff in leading the school. A shared common purpose exists where everyone is encouraged to make effective contributions to the school's values and targets.
36. The strong Christian ethos is the foundation on which this very inclusive school builds an emphasis on making sure that children and staff know they are valued. The headteacher and governors are keen to ensure that everyone in the school has the same hopes and aspirations and that its aims and values permeate school life. There is considerable importance attached to the need to develop everyone's self-esteem, resulting in children who feel comfortable about coming to school and staff who are introduced quickly and professionally to school routines.
37. Every care is taken to meet children's individual needs, particularly those with learning difficulties. The leadership of special educational needs is being undertaken by the headteacher at present until a new appointment is made and provision is good. There are clear procedures to ensure this aspect runs smoothly and effectively. Children have just the right amount of support and encouragement to make them persevere and make good efforts to achieve well. Close working with other teachers, support staff, governors and outside specialist agencies ensures the specific needs of all children are met.

Management

38. The management of the school is very good. Effective procedures are in place to enable the school to run smoothly on a daily basis. The management team meets regularly to evaluate how well the school is doing so that they can put forward appropriate plans for the future.
39. The very experienced secretary is extremely efficient and provides very effective administration and financial support. She is very welcoming to staff, pupils, parents and visitors and makes a significant contribution to the life of the school.
40. There is high priority on appointing staff, developing their skills and deploying them to the best effect. When new appointments are made the expertise of new members is shared to the benefit of all children. For example, the Year 3 teacher is a leading teacher in the county for mathematics, the Year 1 teacher is a leading literacy teacher and the deputy headteacher has improved the science teaching and consequently standards in this subject. Another teacher has brought music expertise and since it is not this school's policy to have a specialist teaching all classes she has set about empowering others to feel more secure in their teaching.
41. The headteacher and governors have managed the staffing of the school very well and all staff made a point of letting inspectors know how much they enjoyed working at St Mary's.

Recruitment is not a problem and staff turnover is low because there is an open style of management. Staff consider that they are always moving forward, that challenge is important and complacency dangerous. The recent award of *Investors in People* recognised the very good teamwork that ensures a consistent approach to teaching and high expectations of what children can achieve.

42. The school's approaches to financial and resource management help it to achieve its educational priorities. The funds available are used sensibly. A recent financial audit was good with only minor matters noted. There is a tight budget as can be seen from the table below and governors are rigorous in examining the budget to see if any savings can be made.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	494,065.00	Balance from previous year	NIL
Total expenditure	494,748.00	Balance carried forward to the next	-683.00
Expenditure per pupil	2,355.94		

43. The balances are very low with a 0.13 per cent overspend that has already been adjusted and governors know there is no threat to future years.
44. Getting the best value for the children, so that they can achieve as well as possible is important to the school's management and its use of resources. Although best value principles are generally applied well and consultation with parents is established there are still no formal systems in place for consulting children but this is being discussed at present with an intention to introduce a school council soon. The school is seen as strongly led and managed very well with many improvements since the last inspection. Responses to parental questionnaires showed that a high percentage (94 per cent) strongly agreed that the school is led and managed well. Children expressed real care for the school and are proud to represent it. At present the school offers good value for money.

Governance

45. The governing body does a good job in fulfilling its responsibilities in ensuring the school runs efficiently for the benefit of the children. The governors are a diverse set of people with a desire to work as a corporate body and are well led by a dedicated, well-informed and very experienced leader. Governors hold more meetings a term than is required and set up working parties for discussion and consultation. Their meetings are lively and everyone is involved. The chair of the governing body is a regular visitor and keeps up to date on what is happening. Other governors make visits and everyone aims to spend at least one full day in school every year. Their reports clearly identify strengths and where further development is needed. Governors are keen to have involvement in shaping the vision and direction of the school in consultation with the headteacher and staff and gather first hand evidence of the school's performance. Individual governors have links to the curriculum, for example, one governor teaches a recorder group. Training opportunities are used well and governors choose from an extensive list, with most attending at least one day, thus all opportunities are covered. Subject co-ordinators find interesting ways of helping governors understand the needs of the children. For example governors were the class for a literacy lesson and experienced at first hand what takes place for children. An effective relationship has been established that makes it easy for the subject co-ordinator to talk about concerns as well as successes and where they need help.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good** reflecting the improvements since the last inspection. Children are prepared well for transfer to Year 1. When they enter school most are not five and have attended some form of pre-school provision, for example, the school takes children from 13 different nurseries. At the time of inspection they were attending part time and great care had been taken with the organisation to ensure that each child had the same amount of time during the week. There were sessions when all 29 children were present and sometimes numbers were lower and sessions had as few as 11 children.

All the children achieve well because the teaching is good. The curriculum is planned effectively to provide a wide range of activities that are relevant to these children and matched appropriately to their needs. Although some activities are adult directed there is a good balance between these and those that children initiate and work at independently. The teacher and her assistant are both very skilled and work particularly effectively as a team with a totally consistent approach to the children. Both adults take responsibility for observing how well they are doing and in keeping tabs on their progress know exactly what should be planned for the next lesson. They provide a good example to the children and insist on high standards of behaviour to which the children respond well. The accommodation has improved since the last inspection, particularly outdoors – thus provision for the physical development area of learning is now good. The separate, secure area has adequate storage for large toys and, unlike at the last inspection, the range of climbing and balancing equipment now gives children every opportunity to extend their skills.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because staff set high expectations and the teaching is good.
- Very good relationships are being established which make the children feel secure and happy.
- No opportunity is missed to reinforce the learning that will ensure most children reach the expected goals by the end of the Reception Year and some will exceed them.

Commentary

46. When starting school there are a few children who are still finding it hard to meet the expectations of staff but even at such an early stage in the term most are familiar with routines and understand what is acceptable behaviour so that they are part of a harmonious class group and can begin to play a fuller part within the whole school community. They settle readily to the tasks and behave sensibly. The very good teamwork of the adults gives children many opportunities to learn about co-operation, perseverance and a calm approach to their work. In one session outdoors children were challenged to use wheeled toys to steer round obstacles and in order to succeed they had to enlist the help of others thus developing their co-operative skills.
47. Both adults provide lots of encouragement because they want children to feel confident to try new things and make good efforts. There is great determination to overcome any difficulty experienced and they take pride in what they achieve. This is because the adults are establishing very good relationships with the children who are eager to please them. They are learning to take turns and share equipment and many offer help to others at such times as when changing their clothing or putting away toys. Occasionally a child may not conform or try

to dominate others and this is dealt with firmly but fairly - thus all learn to appreciate the needs of others. Both adults take every opportunity to reinforce the knowledge, skills and understanding that children need to reach the expected goals in this area of learning. Already the good progress is evident, the trusting relationships help children succeed and they show respect for one another and are forming good attitudes to their work and the wider school community.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good overall.
- The basic skills are taught thoroughly.
- No opportunity is missed to extend the children's use of language.
- The emphasis on communication is reflected in the print rich environment of the classroom.

Commentary

48. Although early in the term most children are on course to reach the expectations for this area of learning. Because there is an emphasis on activities that involve children in talking and listening they make good progress and achieve well. Practical experiences such as games that help children learn their letter sounds or using headphones and tapes to listen to a story, together with discussion times and responses to questions make children eager to use the skills they are acquiring. About one fifth of the class have very well developed skills and others learn from listening to them and their teachers. When groups are small and adults are able to spend more time helping individuals the children make rapid progress. This was evident in a session where children were learning to write. The very clear explanations from the adult together with just the right amount of encouragement helped children correctly form a letter 'd' and this was improved as they watched the adult demonstrate her skills and then made further attempts and added the tail ready for joined writing. They are quickly gaining control of writing tools and already make good attempts to write their own name on paper. No opportunity is missed to stimulate children's use of language and they enjoy learning new words, for example, speaking clearly to explain the meaning of 'author' and 'illustrator'. The teaching assistant very skilfully questions children about the construction they are making and eyes light up as they give full reign to their imaginations describing the story behind what they have made. The very good relationships give them confidence to join in discussion and adults give an emphasis to everyone listening carefully so they will know how to respond. The expressions on the faces of adults give children a clear message that their efforts are valued.
49. Care is taken to make the class a stimulating place to learn where the importance of the printed word is given particular emphasis. The whole class sharing a range of texts extends an enjoyment of books and most handle them carefully and want to learn how to read. They enjoy many games that are helping them acquire the skills for reading and such skills are reinforced when they practise using the computer. The samples of written work from the last year indicate that almost all children reach the expected standards for this age and some exceed them and begin their National Curriculum work early.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good** reflecting the teaching and high levels of support.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because teaching is good and provides children with a wide range of practical activities to support their learning.
- Children benefit from opportunities to work in small groups because they make faster progress.
- The numerically rich environment extends children's understanding.

Commentary

50. Although early in the term most children are on course to reach the expected goals for this area of learning. At the time of inspection children were working at a level that was appropriate for their age but about one fifth of the class were doing better. For example, many children counted to ten and put those numbers in the right order but others could go as far as 20 and were beginning to go beyond. Since it was early in the term no written work was being undertaken yet but the samples from the previous year showed that children had made good progress and a significant proportion had begun their National Curriculum work early.
51. The teaching and learning are good. Sessions are planned that give children a range of opportunities for counting, matching and sequencing. Activities are chosen to extend children's mathematical understanding. Teachers use every opportunity to reinforce counting skills as a fast oral activity, during registration, in rhymes and songs or ordering numbers on a washing line. Mathematical vocabulary is everywhere and the classroom provides a numerically rich environment. This is well used by children who explain where they can seek help if the teacher is busy. The occasional opportunities that exists at present for a small group of ten children to have the support of two adults provides a wonderful opportunity for very good achievement. For example, children were introduced to the *Bus Stop* game that necessitated the recognition of numerals and quantity, knowledge of vocabulary relating to addition and subtraction and an understanding of how to solve problems. By the end of the game some children could clearly explain the function of the two dice, made good attempts to add two numbers together and attempted to solve such problems as *'if three passengers have to get off the bus and we only have two left what should we do'*? Their calculation skills moved on rapidly because the adults who worked with them provided support and had the time to give the individual attention needed. There has been much interest in the shapes they see around them and practical opportunities to work with a range of materials have extended their knowledge and understanding of simple two-dimensional shapes and enabled them to use appropriate vocabulary when describing everyday objects.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A range of interesting activities and effective questioning extends knowledge and understanding of the world around them.
- The organisation of time to learn new skills in information and communication technology sometimes limits the progress of faster learners.

Commentary

52. Children achieve well and almost all are on course to reach the expected standards in this area of learning by the end of the Reception Year. Teaching and learning is good. The range of activities is planned to extend their understanding and stimulate their curiosity so that they explore, experiment and ask questions. For example, children were engaged in an activity with a science focus outdoors. At first they played a game of skittles using a variety of balls and gradually they realised that balls were of different sizes and made of different materials. The skittles were empty plastic bottles and children had to determine which type of ball would knock down most skittles and why. In discussion just one child understood that if the bottles were filled and heavier the task would be harder. After filling the bottles they were amazed at

their weight as they tried to move them from one spot to another. They were totally engrossed in trying to succeed at the task and much discussion ensued with many questions asked as they sought reasons why things happened in the way they did. The good teaching was characterised by questioning that made children think hard and consequently learning was good. Children use such technology as listening centres or computers. Each week an experienced and knowledgeable assistant takes the children in small groups to use the computers in the suite and learn new skills. When learning to create pictures they were confidently selecting tools from the icons such as a thick or thin pencil. Some children had good control of the mouse because they have computers at home. There was sufficient challenge to keep them working and one group clearly were able to go further but the constraints of time, because the assistant had to offer this opportunity to as many children as possible, meant that they had to stop. They design and make models with construction and explain what they have done, for example, *David's machine cleans swimming pools and grass*. Children are beginning to develop geographical skills and record the weather but other activities related to the development of historical skills are planned for later in the term.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The outdoor sessions are particularly good with rigorous planning for all physical skills.
- Children experience a range of activities that inspire them to make good efforts.

Commentary

53. There have been considerable improvements to this area of learning since the last inspection when the development of some skills was reported as unsatisfactory. This is not the case now and the improved provision and increased opportunities show that children are achieving well and already there are indications that in some aspects, about 25 per cent will exceed the standards expected by the end of the Reception Year. Almost all are on course to reach the expected goals.
54. Teaching and learning are good. There is very good planning that provides children with a range of activities that they enjoy and are prepared to make good efforts to succeed. Children loved the challenges that adults provided secure in the knowledge that support was available if needed. Some sat in large spinning tops and had to work out how to make them move while staying inside them, while others showed great concentration when trying to balance on stilts to which strings were attached to assist their movement. Both tasks were thought to be easy until tried and necessitated much ingenuity and use of physical skills. The greatest excitement and adventure came from a session planned to use their physical skills to the utmost. Following warm up activities of jogging, shaking and stretching they were ready to move to the climbing apparatus. Children were very adventurous, making very good efforts and challenging themselves to go further. The legs of some children were only just long enough to attempt some tasks but they would not give up and took such pride in demonstrating their success. A high level of interest was maintained throughout this session and both adults worked well in ensuring that both boys and girls took part and had the full range of opportunities.
55. Indoors children handle a range of objects satisfactorily and are gaining better control of such tools as pencils, brushes, crayons, puzzles and small construction apparatus. Their enjoyment of play dough and clay is strengthening their fine physical skills and helping to improve such tasks as writing and painting.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

56. No teaching was seen and it was not possible to make an overall judgement about provision or standards. However, the work on display indicates that standards are at least what are

expected for children of this age and some samples were better such as the work entitled 'what is special about your friend?' Children paint, draw, use malleable material such as clay, sing and use percussion instruments. In one session the use of a role play was observed to develop children's imagination when they re-enacted familiar events and small world toys stimulated stories inspired by what they had seen or heard about, such as the adventures of Harry Potter from the well known book.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The standards reached by Year 2 and Year 6 are well above average.
- The quality of teaching, which is good overall and sometimes very good.
- Leadership and management are very effective.
- Assessment is used effectively to keep tabs on children's progress.
- The use of speaking and listening, reading and writing skills in other subjects is good.
- Handwriting skills are well taught but there is too little emphasis on using these skills effectively in other subjects.

Commentary

57. Standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing are well above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection. Most children make good progress and achieve well, except in handwriting, where progress and achievement are only satisfactory overall.
58. A significant factor in the very high standards is the quality of teaching, which is good overall and often very good. Because relationships are very good, the children are confident to answer questions and participate in discussions. They know that their efforts are valued, which helps all children to extend their speaking and listening skills. This is an important reason why most children speak articulately and listen carefully. The very high standards in speaking and listening provide very secure foundations for work in English and contribute significantly to the very high standards in English overall. Teachers ensure that skills in speaking and listening help to improve standards in writing. For example, in Year 3, following a discussion about play scripts, children produced a very wide range of alternatives for the word, 'said' and made the writing more interesting.
59. Because teachers have a good understanding of how to teach basic skills and assess and record progress thoroughly most children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. By the end of Year 2 most pupils readily use a range of ways when meeting new and unfamiliar words in their reading. By the end of Year 6 most children know how to make use of the well-organised and resourced library in their research and are skilled at locating information on the Internet and in books. Because reading is highly valued in school and children are provided with a wide range of books most children enjoy reading and reach high standards. In Year 6 a pupil commented on an author, "*She always has this magic power to intrigue me.*" Children explain articulately their preferences for some authors over others and it was clear the school had many avid readers.
60. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and commitment, which helps to create a very positive ethos of hard work and independence. Teachers plan work that is suited to the differing capability of pupils so that all are challenged at their own level. For example, in Year 6 more able children worked independently to analyse journalistic styles of writing using

newspapers. In Year 5, the children who are slower learners and well supported by the teaching assistant make good progress in their work on the style and content of contrasting poems. Children of all capabilities make good progress because the school makes effective use of the National Literacy Strategy to ensure that they build securely on previous work. The quality of assessment has improved since the last inspection. The marking of work has improved since the last inspection. Teachers now mark work regularly and provide comments, which are supportive and helpful so that children know how to improve. This is enhanced by the effective use made of assessments in order to set targets for improvement. However, teachers do not sufficiently ensure that children use their handwriting skills in independent writing and this often detracts from the presentation of their work.

61. Leadership and management are very good. The co-ordinator, who is a leading literacy teacher in the county, has a very good understanding of the subject and works hard to support colleagues in raising standards. She carefully checks teaching and learning in order to make improvements. The co-ordinator manages the assessment procedures thoroughly in order that planning and target setting are directed towards further improvement.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

62. Children are provided with a wide range of opportunities to use their literacy skills in other subjects of the curriculum, such as, history, geography and information and communication technology. Generally this results in them seeing a relevance to their work and this helps to raise standards. However, although teachers encourage the children to use speaking and listening, reading and writing skills well in other subjects there is sometimes too little emphasis on presentation. This is because children are not always encouraged to use handwriting skills effectively.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **good**. This reflects the good teaching and standards that children reach by the time they leave school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' performance in mathematics by the end of Year 6 is good and children reach above average standards.
- Strong teaching, which on many occasions exemplifies the very best practice in teaching this subject and is encouraging children to think logically and reason mathematically.
- Initiatives that deepen children's mathematical experiences are good.
- Extremely effective leadership by the co-ordinator.

Commentary

63. The findings of this inspection show that standards by Year 2 are average overall and the secure foundations at this stage are built on as children move through the school so that by the end of Year 6 all pupils achieve well, make good progress and reach above average standards which is reflected in national test results and written work. This is similar to the last inspection although the attainment on entry now is lower than it was then.
64. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. This strong teaching ensures that children, whatever their mathematical capabilities, mostly learn and achieve well in lessons with many doing better by Year 6. Teachers have good expectations of how well children can do and plan interesting activities, appropriate for the stage of learning, that almost always challenge all children's thinking and understanding of their work. The beginning of all lessons fires children's enthusiasm for numeracy and involves everyone immediately, frequently making effective use of past learning. In a Year 4 lesson everyone is keen to draw and the phrase, "*My shape has six sides and is an irregular polygon*" is used, as specific words, used before, are redefined.

With great enjoyment Year 2 practise addition to ten through a game. In response to the question, *“Did half the class score more than half marks?”* which was posed to Year 6, pupils really had to consider how their mental test scores can best be shown on a graph to answer the question. The teacher's very skilled questioning provided an understanding of class intervals because pupils were enthused by actually grouping themselves and then added a very visual method of presenting their results to their already considerable knowledge of graphs. Building on their previous good understanding of two-dimensional shapes the children in Year 3 are keen to learn more. In response to the teacher's imaginative use of “Danny Duck's” beak open at 90 degrees that confirmed their understanding of right angles, they show how well they can recognise different numbers of right angles within the shapes. This worked well because the teacher used many superb approaches to develop their understanding and encouraged them to share their explanations.

65. The subject is led very effectively. The co-ordinator, who is exceedingly knowledgeable about her subject, has a great influence on the teaching of mathematics. She makes very detailed analyses of the results of national and the school's own tests which enable her to pinpoint areas of learning that are less secure in Years 3 to 6. This information is discussed and shared with all teachers, weakness is remedied and action is taken to improve children's performance. The development of this analysis has been extended to the infant classes because in last year's national tests at Year 2 it was found that many children were achieving better in other aspects of mathematics than in number. Now the younger children's attainment in number is being looked at closely in the same way as that for older pupils. In the most recent national tests this year all children have achieved well and reached the level expected for their age in number.
66. Mathematics initiatives are many and they are evaluated to ensure the best outcomes are achieved. There is a well-supported mathematics games library and a mathematics book library is well in preparation. Such initiatives widen the learning opportunities for children and their families to share and enjoy different numeracy activities at home. The close links with the local high school are very beneficial to the children, whether through activities for the most able young mathematicians or when, for example, Year 3 enjoy exploring mathematics through a history lesson at the secondary school. Many wide-ranging computer based activities also support learning effectively.

Mathematics across the curriculum

67. When it is appropriate mathematical skills are well used within the work of other subjects, for example, in science specific measurements of time, length or mass help children to draw conclusions about their investigations. In Year 4, measuring the force they must apply to move shoes with different soles means reading the gradations of the Newton meter very accurately.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good teaching encourages all children to want to know more about science. The effective questioning particularly challenges children's understanding.
- There is a wide range of practical experiences that develop children's knowledge and investigative skills and inspire enjoyment of science.
- The many connections that are developing between science and other subjects are good.
- There is very strong and enthusiastic leadership by the subject co-ordinator.

Commentary

68. All children achieve well and make good progress. By the end of Year 2, all children reach the standard expected for their age with a significant number again doing better in many aspects. By Year 6, pupils reach above average standards with over half achieving the higher levels in the national tests. Although pupils' performance is similar to that of the last inspection children are making better progress because more children are reaching higher standards even though they have less skills when starting school now than they did then.
69. The good teaching results in successful learning because the very purposeful practical activities are so thoroughly prepared. In lessons science is fun and children respond very well to their teachers' high expectations of their involvement in their learning. The classroom buzzes with interest as Year 5 pupils investigate sounds and are highly motivated to discover, for example, the difference between pitch and volume and how sounds can be changed. Teachers follow a well-planned and regularly reviewed programme of work and build consistently on what children know, encouraging young enquiring minds who want to explain the discoveries they make. Decorating metal rings, by using magnets to attract different materials, captures the imagination of the children in Year 1 and new challenges are set as they predict what might happen each time. Using good enquiry skills to investigate which shoes give the best grip, the Year 4 class use their knowledge of materials effectively in predictions. They keep test conditions constant and confidently base their answers on their own findings. Responding to the teacher's skilful questioning they refocus on their predictions considering how the heaviness of different shoes could influence their results.
70. Children's learning in many aspects of science is developed effectively within other subjects and very careful consideration is given as to how this may best be achieved. In a personal, social and health education lesson, Year 2 children enjoy identifying sealed bags of everyday ingredients such as flour and sugar. They recognise that medicines may appear similar and understand the importance of keeping all medicines in safe places. Year 4 children make close links with design and technology when they use their knowledge of electrical circuits and switches to design and make torches. Numeracy and computer skills are used well to develop knowledge of simple circuits in Year 2 and extend investigations into fuses in Year 5. However, sensor equipment, used in information and communication technology, is not used sufficiently to widen the range of ways data may be collected or presented.
71. The subject is led and managed very well. The co-ordinator has a full commitment to the subject and supports the teaching of science extremely competently, working hard to raise its profile successfully with both children and parents. A very significant introduction to the new programme of work has been made. Areas for development have been prioritised by the co-ordinator, such as monitoring the impact of the new work on children's achievement by Year 2. She has a very secure understanding of how to improve standards yet further.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved considerably and are now better than expected for age by Year 2 and Year 6.
- The quality of teaching in junior classes is good.
- There is very good leadership of the subject.
- The work of the teaching assistant is effective in supporting children and improving standards.
- The use of ICT in other subjects is good.
- There is not enough time allocated for children to use sensors linked to computers.

Commentary

72. It was not possible to see any lessons in Years 1 and 2 during the inspection so there is no overall judgement on the quality of teaching. However, children's work, teachers' planning and

discussions with teachers and children indicate that achievement is good and standards are better than usually expected for age by Year 2 and Year 6. The quality of teaching in the junior classes is good and driving up standards. There are considerable improvements to resources and teachers' skills and confidence since the previous inspection and these are significant factors in the improved standards and achievement.

73. Because teachers have a good command of the subject, children in Years 1 and 2 become familiar with the computer keyboard and make good progress in extending their skills. Progress is maintained as children move through the school so that by Year 6 most children use computers well to create websites, produce multimedia presentations and design spreadsheets.
74. A significant factor in the improved standards since the previous inspection has been the very good leadership and management of the subject. The co-ordinator checks teaching and learning thoroughly and has a clear understanding of how the subject needs to improve in order to raise standards. He has worked hard to improve resources since the previous inspection and establish the computer suite so that children have regular access to computers both in the suite and in classes. Equally important is the positive impact of the quality of teaching. Teachers have been very well trained so that their knowledge and confidence have increased. The school makes very effective use of the skills and knowledge of a teaching assistant with particular responsibility for supporting work in ICT. Her work fully complements that of teachers in promoting the good progress and achievement made by most pupils, including those with special educational needs. For example, the teaching assistant supported children in Year 3 to create and print designs in their artwork. In Year 2 children were helped to use commands to form rectangular shapes.
75. Because the computer suite cannot accommodate all children at once the school has carefully organised lessons so that tasks complement work in other subjects and all children have regular access. For example, in Year 6, the class was divided and while some children produced well-designed websites about the Second World War in the ICT suite, as part of their work in history, the rest of the class learned about rationing during the war in the classroom. Later groups changed so everyone had the same experiences. When children share access to computers they generally collaborate well because relationships are very good. Teachers' planning has improved since the last inspection and now children are given work, more suited to their capability. Now the higher attaining children are provided with extension activities and those of lower capability work closely with the teaching assistant. In this way all are challenged to extend their skills and achieve success. Despite the many successes there is a weakness in the subject of which the school is aware. There is not enough time allocated for children to use sensors linked to computers, for example, to measure changes over time, such as temperature fluctuations, in scientific work.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

76. The school makes good use of ICT in other subjects so that children extend both their ICT skills and their understanding of other subjects. For example, children researched work in geography about St Lucia and produced factual writing in English. They increased their understanding of electrical circuits when working on a scientific program and produced line graphs and pie charts when using data in mathematics. Children used simulation programs to increase their understanding of life in Victorian times and used computers to compose music.

HUMANITIES

Religious education was not inspected because this is a Church of England aided school. No lessons were seen in geography or history so no judgements are made about provision.

Geography

77. Samples of work show that standards are typical for age at both Year 2 and by Year 6. The school ensures that children's work meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Children develop sound mapping skills because effective use is made of the locality, but the school has identified the need to provide further practical work in order to improve provision. This is an area already planned for as part of the school's further development.

History

78. Although no history lessons were seen, displays of work and discussions with teachers and children indicate that exciting learning is taking place. Questioning is at the heart of history and discovering the answers is the key to children developing an understanding of the past. When studying how the school had changed the Year 5 pupils used their own experience of a school day which led them to find out what life was like for children in Victorian times. When using the exhibits in their own very extensive "Toy Museum" the younger children discover how many playthings are different now but that bears remain forever popular. In previous work, infant children had sought information from their grandparents to discover more about their early lives. When Year 6 children thoughtfully discussed the dilemmas faced by families when food rationing was introduced and shared their own reactions on seeing exactly how little food was allowed, they used their knowledge effectively to inspire others to find out more about the Second World War.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

79. No lessons were observed in design and technology, music or physical education so no judgements are made about provision. Discussions took place with the respective co-ordinators for design and technology, music and physical education about progress and changes since the last inspection. Two lessons were seen in art and design at Years 4 and 6. Samples of work were on display and additional examples in sketchbooks. Samples of written work were provided for music and there were brief discussions with pupils attending orchestra. Tapes of children involved in composing and videos of performance involving music were listened to and observed.

Art and design

Provision for art and design is **good** reflecting the good teaching and the high standards children reach by the time they leave school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils become completely engrossed in their activities because they are shown techniques that enable them to be successful.
- The very good relationships established between teachers and children give them confidence to try something new.
- Children appreciate the efforts of others and learn how to improve their own work.

Commentary

80. Standards have improved since the last inspection when they were found to be satisfactory. Now they are better than is usually expected for age by Year 6. In the two lessons seen in Year 6 and Year 4 the good teaching inspired and challenged children to do their best and the particularly good efforts they made resulted in work of high quality. In the Year 4 class this particularly relied on co-operative working and a willingness on the part of each individual to make good creative efforts in the group.

81. In the Year 6 class pupils were engrossed in a selection of activities and proudly explained how their knowledge of techniques and their determination to master them produced such good results. One pupil articulately described what inspired his wood weaving and how he decided to put the combination of colours together. There was appreciation of the efforts of others and they expressed frankly their response to, for example, batik, which they thought would be easy until they tried to do it themselves. Only then did they appreciate the time and practice needed if they were to produce a work of beauty. In the Year 4 class there was great enthusiasm when children realised that the work they were to do was related to earlier studies of Kandinsky. Now they were to build on what had already been learned and use concentric circles to design and produce a banner. These were displayed around the school the next day and became the subject of much discussion with other children looking closely at the techniques that were used.
82. The good teaching of the two lessons seen is contributing effectively to the good achievement and high standards. This is because teaching is accurate and knowledge is secure. Lessons are planned to be interesting and children understand the tasks they have to do. Most importantly the constructive relationships make pupils feel confident to try new techniques, secure in the knowledge that teachers understand that they may not achieve their aims immediately and that practice is an important part of learning. This combined with a skilful use of teaching assistants who have the expertise to support pupils very effectively produces the efforts that result in high standards. The good leadership of the subject ensures that teachers are supported through an effective scheme of work, a wide range of resources and appropriate advice when needed.

Design and technology

83. An enthusiastic and experienced co-ordinator manages the subject well providing well-informed guidance for her colleagues. A very comprehensive whole school programme of work is clearly planned developing a wide range of techniques and skills through relevant and interesting design activities. Making links with other subjects is now an important consideration such as in Year 4 when designing torches needs science understanding of circuits and switches to guarantee success. Food hygiene and safe working with tools are given high priority in learning. Making biscuits in Year 5 combines numeracy, literacy and computer skills to design, bake and market the product with the consumer in mind. Having investigated the school's outdoor play area, the Year 2 children constructed items for a playground using their own designs. When reviewing their work, their final detailed plan must be clear enough for a friend to follow which provides the ultimate evaluation of the success of their designs.

Music

84. The present co-ordinator is a specialist who finds the subject exciting and enjoys the responsibility for helping other colleagues improve their knowledge and understanding of the subject and consequently the teaching. There are indications that standards have been maintained since the last inspection and Year 6 pupils reach high standards in composing and performance. A range of additional learning opportunities enhances the subject. For example, there are six recorder groups, a choir, orchestra and instrumental tuition in violin, cello, flute and brass. Children are enthusiastic learners as seen at lunchtime when the co-ordinator was introducing them to the ways that information and communication technology can extend their skills and understanding. Assemblies are effective ways for the children to demonstrate their musical skills through singing and instrumental playing. Such opportunities contribute very positively to pupils' spiritual development.

Physical Education

85. Although no lessons were seen the evidence from discussions with teachers and children and scrutiny of photographs and planning indicate that provision is effective in extending skills and knowledge. A particular strength is the wide range of sporting activities available in school, including rugby, football, golf, netball, cricket, rounders and tennis. Children are provided with

coaching by experienced coaches. The school has strong links with local sporting clubs and other schools so that children have additional opportunities to extend their skills.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education

Only one lesson was seen in this area of the school's work but discussions with children and teachers, together with a well-planned programme of work indicates that the school plans effectively for this aspect and provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good relationships give children confidence to discuss aspects of their personal life.
- Older pupils enjoy opportunities for responsibility and younger ones benefit from how well they are carried out.
- Good preparation is being made for studying citizenship at secondary school.
- The good leadership of this aspect is resulting in some innovative working.

Commentary

86. The school sees children's personal development as an important part of its work. The Christian ethos, which is such an important part of this faith school, provides a very firm foundation for the provision made and the development of extremely respectful relationships between the children and the adults who work in the school. Because these relationships are so good children have trust in teachers and feel confident to take part in discussions, ask questions about matters they have not fully understood and give an opinion when requested. The programme of activities included sex education for older children. Other aspects of this programme make children very aware of the need to develop a healthy life style, the importance of diet and exercise, what the subject of drugs really includes and the dangers of drug misuse and what they can do to keep safe. As a preparation for studying citizenship at secondary school there are sessions where children are beginning to have a greater awareness of the responsibilities for living with others in socially acceptable ways.
87. In the one lesson seen at Year 6 the teaching was good and children discussed rules and laws building on previous work about how laws are passed through Parliament. The teacher's good knowledge led to some challenging questions such as, *What is crime?* and *Who is responsible for enforcing the law?* Higher attaining children were very capable of defining such terms as *illegal* and *vandalism* giving full rein to their very well developed speaking skills.
88. Discussions with older children made clear that children's views about being part of a school community are sought, for example, they gave examples of things that had changed and talked about the letters they write to the headteacher and governors about where improvements can be made. They have a good understanding that decisions must be made in the interests of both adults and pupils but a minority view is not overlooked and can be a force for good. They particularly enjoy opportunities to take responsibility and younger children commented on how well they are cared for at lunchtimes and spoke with respect of their *table leaders* in Year 6.
89. There is good leadership of this aspect of the school's work by a co-ordinator who has undertaken additional training to extend her knowledge and skills. At the time of inspection governors were being introduced to how teachers can extend children's thinking skills and improve the ways that children co-operate together and become more independent in their learning.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3

Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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