

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MATTHEW'S C OF E AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL

Chapel Allerton, Leeds

LEA area: Leeds

Unique reference number: 108047

Headteacher: Mr A Eastwood

Lead inspector: Mrs J Platt

Dates of inspection: 29th September – 1st October 2003

Inspection number: 257857

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 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	396
School address:	Wood Lane Chapel Allerton Leeds
Postcode:	LS7 3QF
Telephone number:	0113 2681489
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Reverend S Jarratt
Date of previous inspection:	27 April 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Matthew's is a voluntary aided Church of England primary school. It is a larger than average size school having 396 boys and girls on roll. Forty four per cent of pupils come from minority ethnic groups but most have spent all their life in England and no pupils need help because they are learning through English as an additional language. A very small number are refugees or Traveller children but they no longer move around the country. Seven per cent of pupils are identified as having special educational needs. Most of these have difficulties including speech and communication. Six pupils have a formal Statement of Special Educational Need. The percentage of pupils having a free school meal (11 per cent) is average. The area served by the school is similar to the national picture although pupils attend from a wide area. Most children start in the reception class with attainment in line with what is expected nationally. The school is involved in Excellence in Cities and has received two Achievement Awards (2001 and 2002) for improvement in national tests.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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9334	Mrs J Mynett	Lay inspector	
22740	Mrs M Leah	Team inspector	Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage
4926	Mrs T Aspin	Team inspector	Science Humanities
27777	Mr R Greenall	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Creative, aesthetic, practical and physical subjects 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. The overall quality of **teaching is good** and leads to effective learning. As a result, **achievement is good** and pupils leave school with standards above average in English, mathematics and science. **Leadership and management are good** and the school celebrates the diverse backgrounds of the pupils. **Value for money is good**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in Year 6 are above average in English and mathematics. In science, standards are above average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6. Overall achievement is good but higher attaining pupils are not always doing as well as they could in writing and mathematics.
- The very rich experiences planned for the children in the reception class enable them to get off to a flying start to their education.
- Standards in information and communication technology are good in Year 6. Teachers are growing in confidence teaching in the new computer suite but are not always making full use of the computers in their classrooms.
- Teaching and learning are good overall. In the best lessons teaching is imaginative and pupils are enthusiastic learners. In other lessons tasks are not always sufficiently challenging and activities fail to capture pupils' interest.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide good leadership. Governors and key staff provide effective support and all work as a team with a strong commitment to valuing pupils as individuals. This has led to a happy community where all work together harmoniously.
- Assessment information is used well to track pupils' progress and check on the school's performance in English and mathematics. Assessment systems are not as well established in other subjects and teachers are not sharing with pupils what they need to do to improve.
- Links with parents are very good. A small core of parents show excellent commitment to improving the school's grounds so that these are attractive and extend the curriculum.

Improvement since the last inspection in 1998 has been good and standards have risen. Under the effective leadership of the new headteacher the school's improvement plan has become a clearer, more comprehensive document. Assessment procedures are better although there is scope for further use to be made of assessment information. Training for lunchtime supervisors and additional resources have made lunchtimes safer and happier. Homework is now satisfactory.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	All schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	A*	A	C	B
Mathematics	B	B	D	D
Science	A	A	A	A

*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.*

Overall achievement is good. It is best in the reception class and Years 5 and 6 where tasks are more challenging. In other years the needs of the higher attaining pupils are not always being fully met and they could make faster progress. Current standards in Year 6 are higher than the test results shown in the grid. Achievement is good in English and mathematics and standards are above average. Standards in science continue to be well above average in Year 6 and achievement is very good. In Year 2 standards are above average in reading and this represents good achievement. Standards are average in writing and mathematics and achievement is satisfactory.

Children in the reception class are on target to exceed their expected goals by the end of the reception class. Throughout the school pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress.

Pupils' **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good**. The focus on raising self-esteem is evident in all activities. As a result, older pupils are confident and willingly accept responsibility to help others. Pupils have **very good attitudes** to their learning. **Behaviour is good** in lessons and around the school. **Attendance and punctuality are very good**.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good. Most of the very good teaching seen was in the reception class and Years 5 and 6. The rate of learning is faster in these classes. Lively introductions and challenging activities make lessons exciting and pupils are eager to improve. Although good teaching was seen in other years teaching is more variable and a very small amount of teaching seen was unsatisfactory. Pupils are not learning as well as they could in these lessons because teaching is less inspiring and the pace is slow. This especially affects the learning of the higher attaining pupils who are not always fully extending their knowledge and skills. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly but do not always make it clear to them how they can improve. A good feature in most lessons is the management of pupils so that most lessons take place in an orderly atmosphere. Teachers confidently use the computers in the information and communication technology suite but could make more use of the computers in class.

The curriculum is good. It includes a very good range of visits and clubs and many pupils develop a real enthusiasm for music. This is a **very caring school**. Pupils' opinions are sought and acted upon. The older pupils are more involved in their learning because they have individual literacy and numeracy targets. These are to be extended to other pupils. **Links with parents are very good.** The support from some parents is impressive and greatly enhances pupils' learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. Governance is good. The governing body is well organised and has a good picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. **The new headteacher and deputy headteacher have quickly gelled as a team and provide good leadership.** Standards are evaluated and the school's plan for future improvement tackles any identified weaknesses. **Management is good** and the focus on self-evaluation has developed the role of subject leaders so the school now has a shared vision and a commitment to improvement.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have positive views of the school and raised no significant concerns. Pupils enjoy school and are eager to play a full part in all it offers.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure that all teaching is of a good quality and lessons include enough variety and pace to capture the interest of all pupils.
- Raise the achievement of the higher attaining pupils especially in writing and mathematics. (This is done well in Years 5 and 6).
- Make better use of the computers in class so that pupils can extend their skills in all subjects.
- Develop the assessment systems in subjects other than English and mathematics and give pupils a clearer picture about how to improve.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Overall achievement is good. It accelerates as pupils move into Years 5 and 6 where teaching is more consistently challenging. Standards in Years 2 are average in writing and mathematics and above average in reading and science. Standards in Year 6 are above average in English and mathematics and well above average in science. Achievement is good in the Foundation Stage¹ and a review of last year's work shows many children exceeded the early learning goals² by the time they started in Year 1.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children get off to a flying start in the Foundation Stage.
- Reading is good throughout the school.
- Science is a significant strength in the school and standards are high.
- Standards are average in writing and mathematics in Year 2. Higher attaining pupils are not making enough progress and are underachieving. This is also evident in some lessons in Years 3 and 4.
- Standards in mathematics, English and information and communication technology are above average in Year 6.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

Commentary

1. Children had been in the reception class for a very short amount of time when the school was inspected. Based on a review of samples of work from last year children exceeded the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy; mathematical development and their knowledge and understanding of the world. Current standards show that as children start in the school attainment is similar to that expected for their age. Early indications are children benefit from very strong teaching and a rich curriculum and so are likely to make the same good progress as previous children. In their personal, social and emotional development children have already settled well and are making great strides forward in their skills of sharing and playing together co-operatively. Insufficient evidence is available to make a judgement on creative development. Children are reaching the level expected in their physical development.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores³ in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	17.6 (17.8)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	15.3 (15.8)	14.4 (14.3)
Mathematics	17.5 (16.4)	16.5 (16.2)

There were 54 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

² Early learning goals are the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They refer mainly to achievements children make in connection with the six areas of learning.

³ Average points scores provide schools with a single statistic to compare the overall grades attained by all of their pupils with the grades attained by pupils in another school as well as an average for all schools nationally. The levels pupils reach in the national tests in Years 2 and 6 are allocated points and these are totalled and divided by the number of pupils taking the tests to calculate the average points for the school.

2. The grid above shows that in 2002 pupils in Year 2 achieved very well compared with all schools and similar schools. Results in national tests in 2003 showed high standards in reading had been sustained but fewer pupils reached the expected level in writing. In mathematics, there was a significant drop in the number of pupils reaching above average levels. Current standards are similar to the 2003 test results. High standards have been sustained in reading and achievement is good. Many read correctly and can retell a story in great detail. Overall achievement in writing and mathematics is satisfactory with many reaching the level expected for their age. However, in the current Year 2 few are working at above average levels. This is linked to some lack of challenge and repetition of tasks that are not enabling these pupils to make as much progress as they should.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.5 (29.3)	27.0 (27.0)
Mathematics	26.4 (27.8)	26.7 (26.6)
Science	30.1 (30.1)	28.3 (28.3)

There were 58 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. These 2002 results show pupils in Year 6 achieved very well in science, reached the level expected in English but fell below both the national average in mathematics. In English and mathematics more attention was given to the lower attaining pupils and results were better in the 2003 tests. Overall standards are improving faster than the national trend and in 2001 and 2002 the school was awarded a national achievement award for improvement in test results. Current standards show that the school has built on this improvement. More pupils in Years 5 and 6 are now working at standards higher than those expected for their age. This is not always the case in English and mathematics in Years 3 and 4 where the lack of challenge identified in Years 1 and 2 is also evident. The rate of progress for the higher attaining pupils lifts as they move into Years 5 and 6. This is in response to the stimulating teaching which effectively challenges them and enables them to make good progress. In these years pupils also have individual literacy and numeracy targets and so are clearer about what they need to do to raise their standards. Reading is above average and pupils are discerning readers. Writing has improved because teachers are flexible with their approach to the literacy hour and make lessons more exciting. Similarly, in mathematics teachers in Years 5 and 6 are moving away from the structured school guidelines and giving pupils more opportunities to work at their own pace rather than repeating previously learnt skills. This is reaping benefits for the higher attaining pupils who are now able to progress to a level that matches their ability.
4. Science is a strength in the school and results in national tests and teacher assessments have been consistently high in Years 2 and 6. Pupils respond well to inspiring teaching and a rich curriculum and their enthusiasm for learning is a major factor in the high standards. Current standards remain above average in Year 2 and achievement is good. This is built on in the juniors and achievement is very good and standards in Year 6 are well above average and pupils have a wide breadth of scientific knowledge.
5. The improved resources have successfully raised standards in information and communication technology. Achievement of many is good and standards in Year 6 are above average. The exciting visits and focus on learning through enquiry has enabled the school to sustain the high standards in history and geography which were identified in the last inspection.
6. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because their needs are fully met. They have carefully, planned individual education plans and their work matches their identified needs. An analysis of results by gender and ethnicity shows no significant differences in the

achievement of different groups. However, the school is not complacent and keeps a watchful eye that the needs of all are met. For example, the learning mentor and the curriculum and parental support assistant check that pupils with a low self-esteem have additional contact to give their learning an additional boost when required. This is beneficial for all including the very few refugees and Traveller children.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to school are very good. Behaviour is good. Spiritual development is good and their moral, social and cultural development is very good. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' very good attitudes and good behaviour enables them to make good progress because they are highly motivated and very eager to learn.
 - The school provides valuable opportunities to help pupils develop their confidence, their ability to reflect and their willingness to take responsibility.
 - The very good provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development results in them valuing and respecting others and knowing right from wrong.
 - Pupils attend school very regularly and arrive on time.
7. Pupils and parents have very positive views about the school. Parents are particularly pleased by the way that the school encourages their children to become mature and responsible. They feel that teachers expect their children to work hard and achieve their best. Pupils are enthusiastic and spoke of their interest in lessons, their willingness to learn and keenness to participate in all the school offers. The behaviour of most pupils is good both in lessons and around the school. The school has an appropriate focus on promoting good behaviour and supporting those individuals who find difficulties in this area. In the majority of lessons pupils can learn without being disturbed by other pupils. Racial harmony is a strong feature of the school and there are few incidents of bullying and oppressive behaviour. When incidents do occur they are taken seriously and dealt with promptly and effectively. Pupils do not feel that bullying or racism is a problem in the school. There were no exclusions last year.
 8. The provision for pupils' spiritual moral, social and cultural development is well promoted across the curriculum and enables pupils to become well-rounded individuals during their time at school. Provision for spiritual development is good reflecting the school's Christian ethos. The school uses opportunities well to develop pupils' self knowledge and spiritual awareness and pupils show great respect for the values and beliefs of others.
 9. Moral development is very good. Pupils know right from wrong, have helped to devise their class rules and are fully aware of how their actions affect others. The good behaviour of pupils in and around the school is a result of their developing self-discipline.
 10. Social development is particularly well developed and results in constructive relationships being forged between both staff and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves. This promotes a good working environment and has a positive impact on achievement. Even the youngest children quickly learn to work and play well together. This was ably demonstrated during a 'parachute' lesson in the reception class. Children who had only been in school two days co-operated well as they lifted and moved the parachute around the hall. Pupils accept responsibility readily and complete any tasks they have been given conscientiously, especially the team captains as they work to establish the school council. Older pupils take particular pride in acting as role models for the younger pupils.
 11. The school very effectively promotes an awareness of their own and others' cultures. This is celebrated through displays around the school, and in art, dance and music and was particularly in evidence during the inspection. Older pupils had put together a great

celebration of rap music, song and dance carefully interwoven with readings of famous people in an assembly introducing black history month. This was well received by others with much spontaneous applause.

12. Pupils are happy to come to school and are eager to learn. Attendance is very good and most pupils arrive punctually in the morning.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	4.2
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.5
National data	0.5

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The overall quality of education is good. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. The school provides a good curriculum and learning is extended by a rich range of visits, visitors and clubs. This is a very caring school and parents and pupils are happy with the education provided.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good with some very good teaching seen mostly in the reception classes and in Years 5 and 6. Although good teaching was seen in most classes it was more variable with a very small amount of teaching seen being unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning in the reception classes are very good.
- The overall quality of teaching of English, mathematics and science is good.
- Teachers are supportive of pupils and encourage them to work hard and most pupils complete their tasks.
- In the best lessons teachers challenge pupils and include a variety of teaching methods to capture pupils' interest. In other lessons there is a higher focus on teaching than learning and tasks lack challenge and the slow pace fails to enthuse pupils.
- Relationships are good and teachers manage lessons well so that learning is not disturbed by poor behaviour.
- Support assistants make a positive contribution to lessons and offer effective help for pupils with special educational needs.
- Teachers mark pupils' work but do not always make it clear to pupils how to improve.
- Teachers do not make full use of the computers in class to make lessons more interesting and to extend pupils' skills.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 47 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	13 (28%)	17(36%)	14 (30%)	3 (7%)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)

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

13. The grid above shows the majority of teaching seen was good and better. This is a similar picture to the teaching seen at the time of the last inspection. Although more teaching seen was very good, a small element of unsatisfactory teaching remains as do some concerns about strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour.
14. Improving the Foundation Stage has been a focus for the school and the re-organised classrooms have given more scope to teachers. As a result, most of the teaching seen was very good and the children are getting off to a flying start to their education. Teachers care for the children and listen and respect their ideas. Consequently, children are happy and grow in self-esteem. Careful observation of the children leads to activities being planned that match their needs and interests and children enjoy learning. Rhymes and games are used very effectively to teach early numeracy skills and letters so children quickly learn these important skills.
15. Most teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach. Teachers effectively promote literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. Reading is taught well throughout the school and teachers use questions effectively to check on pupils' understanding of the text they read. Writing is not taught as effectively in a few classes because teachers are relying too much on a commercial scheme. The use of photocopied worksheets which do not closely match pupils' interest or ability does not lead to effective learning. The teaching of mathematics is good. The opening to lessons is lively and pupils enjoy the mental calculation part of the lesson. Again the rigid following of the school's guidelines restricts some teachers from being inventive with their teaching. This leads to some pupils plodding through the recorded tasks rather than going at their own pace and making more decisions for their own learning. This improves in Years 5 and 6 where teachers follow the guidance less rigidly and higher attaining pupils start to learn at a faster rate. In these classes teachers present lessons in an accessible, exciting way, which immediately attracts and holds pupils' attention. A strength in the teaching of science is the focus on investigation which leads to pupils becoming enthusiastic scientists. Information and communication technology is taught well to the older pupils. However, teachers do not always make good use of the computers in class as a tool for learning.
16. A strength prevalent in most lessons across the school is the warm relationships and encouragement pupils receive. Support staff play a full part in this and successfully raise pupils' self-esteem and help them to complete their tasks. This also leads to a positive learning atmosphere being achieved in most lessons. It was only very occasionally that the management of behaviour was not sufficiently firm to ensure that pupils could learn effectively.
17. Teachers and support staff fully meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs. Work is closely matched to their individual needs and good teamwork keeps these pupils in view in lessons. Pupils with visual impairment have special equipment and are consulted to achieve favourable conditions for learning. Staff record the small steps of learning constantly and share their observations with the class teachers. They guide pupils tactfully through tasks but allow scope for independent learning when possible.
18. The main factor separating the satisfactory and the good and very good teaching is the challenge and variety of teaching methods used by teachers. In the best lessons teachers inspire the pupils to strive to reach higher levels and the pace of learning is brisk. This was most evident in Years 5 and 6 and achievement grows as pupils move into these years. For example, in Year 6 in literacy, pupils worked as a class using the overhead projector to follow texts, moved swiftly to groups with interesting resources to discuss and classify before returning to share their opinions. An effective lesson. In other classes, teachers' expectations are not always high enough of what pupils can achieve, especially the higher attaining pupils in writing and mathematics.

19. The overall use of assessment is satisfactory. Teachers mark pupils' work and a few include very useful comments which help pupils to improve. Other examples are too brief or too positive so that pupils have a false impression of their achievement. Teachers in Years 5 and 6 are leading the way in setting pupils' individual numeracy and literacy targets and encouraging pupils to accept some responsibility for the pace of their own learning. In subjects where assessment procedures are not firmly established it is difficult for teachers to plan lessons with an informed overview of current standards.
20. The last inspection identified a concern about homework. This is now satisfactory and pupils have a clear understanding about when it will be set. Tasks are given that extend learning in lessons.

The curriculum

The overall quality of the curriculum is good. For pupils in the Foundation Stage it is very good. A very good range of extra-curricular activities enriches the curriculum and visits to places of interest support learning very well. The quality and range of learning resources are good and accommodation is sufficient to support learning in all subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum provided for children in the Reception classes is rich and exciting.
- A very wide range of visits, visitors and clubs enrich the curriculum very well.
- Provision for special educational needs is good.
- The school is committed to educational inclusion and the celebration of pupils' own cultures and backgrounds.
- The strategies used for teaching literacy and numeracy lead to a lack of challenge for some pupils due to the rigid adherence to the scheme used.
- Although information and communication technology is used increasingly well, there are not enough planned opportunities to use the computers in the classrooms.

Commentary

21. In the Foundation Stage children are provided with a very good range of experiences and stimulating practical activities that meet the needs of young children well. A good balance between teacher directed activities and those children choose for themselves encourages independence. Planning is very good. All the required areas of learning are covered and an emphasis is rightly placed on the development of personal, social and communication skills to help children settle into school. Very good resources and accommodation, together with very good teamwork of all the staff involved support learning and achievement very well.
22. The curriculum for Years 1 to 6 is good and covers all the subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education and personal, social, health education and citizenship. Planning overall is satisfactory. Suitable provision is made for sex education and awareness of drug misuse that makes good use of external expertise. Commercial materials are used as a basis for teaching numeracy and as support materials for literacy. A few teachers follow these guidelines too rigidly and this leads to an overuse of worksheets in literacy which do not always challenge pupils. In numeracy, pupils of all abilities tend to complete the same task and there is limited scope for pupils to find and try out different ways of working. This hinders higher attaining pupils developing independent study skills. Information and communication technology is being used increasingly to support other subjects, for example research in geography. However, insufficient use is made of the resources available in classrooms and its use in all subjects is not securely embedded in the planning.
23. A very good range of extra-curricular activities is provided to enrich the curriculum. Parents appreciate this. The provision for musical activities outside normal lessons is very good and

is successful in raising the self-esteem of many pupils as they have frequent opportunities to perform in front of others. Opportunities for sport are also greater than normally found, and good use is made of local organisations, such as a tennis club, to extend pupils' experiences. In addition, there is a wide range of visits to places of interest connected with the pupils' studies and visitors to the school to provide first hand experiences in many subjects. This helps to raise standards of attainment in many subjects.

24. The school gives good attention to providing equal access to the curriculum for all pupils regardless of gender, race, creed or social background. The good number and experience of teachers and support staff play a significant role in enabling pupils to play a full and active part in school life. Pupils with special educational needs are spotted early and receive effective support from teachers and support staff. Those with a visual impairment are enabled to play a full part in lessons because staff enlarge texts and offer sensitive help. The small number of pupils identified as having social problems are well supported. The curriculum and parent support assistant provides a very good role model and makes an excellent contribution to meeting the needs of these pupils. This very successfully raises the self-esteem of ethnic minority pupils and promotes racial harmony. Pupils with overall lower attainment are challenged well in lessons but this is not always the case for academically gifted and higher attaining pupils who are not always set work that fully extends their learning. Opportunities are provided for talented pupils to participate in demanding extra-curricular activities. All pupils are valued for their contributions to the school.
25. Learning resources are good and are used effectively to give pupils practical experiences. The school compensates well for the lack of a field, and the large hard surfaced area means that there is sufficient space for physical education. Although not fully accessible to disabled pupils and adults the school is making every effort to meet the statutory requirements. The school grounds have several interesting features that contribute much to learning, for example a sensory garden designed by pupils and parents.

Care, guidance and support

St Matthew's is a very caring school. Systems to ensure pupils' health, safety and welfare are very effective and pupils are well supported during their time at school. Procedures to monitor and support pupils' personal and academic development are better developed in some areas than others. Pupils feel it is a very safe and secure school and report that they are well consulted and their views taken into consideration.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Procedures to support pupils' personal development and monitor their progress are good and help promote good achievement.
- The learning mentor and the curriculum and parental support assistant are very effective in supporting underachieving pupils and some from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Procedures to introduce children to the school and support for new pupils are very well developed and enable them to settle into school quickly.
- Pupils think the school supports and consults them effectively and feel that the school council will give them more of a voice.

Commentary

26. This is a very caring school with teachers and support staff providing a supportive environment for pupils. The overall provision for pupils' health, welfare and safety is very good. Arrangements for child protection and procedures relating to health and safety are securely in place with risk assessments regularly undertaken. Children are well looked after by adults, with brothers and sisters and older pupils also offering support for them during

lunch and break times. The procedures to welcome new pupils into the school are well thought out and effectively implemented. Children in the reception classes settle happily because of the kind and caring way they are introduced to their teacher and classmates.

27. Procedures to monitor and support pupils' personal and academic development and progress are good. Individual targets are set in English and mathematics for the older pupils' which helps them to be aware of how they are doing. This contributes to their learning and promotes good achievement. However, this good practice has not yet been introduced into other years. The school has good systems in place offering support and guidance for those pupils with special educational needs. The input of the curriculum and parental support assistant and the learning mentor is very good with sensitive and focused support being provided for some ethnic minority pupils and those who are not achieving as well as they could. This assistance is making a significant contribution to their personal and academic development by helping to raise their confidence and self-esteem. Parents spoke very positively about the school and feel it treats pupils fairly. They highlight the treatment of different ethnic groups as a particular strength, with the school celebrating different cultures and the children very accepting of diversity.
28. Pupils are very happy and feel it is a very safe and secure school. They feel they are well consulted with their views taken into consideration. Pupils are currently involved in decision-making through the team captains, but think the proposed school council will enable them to learn more about representing the interests of other pupils. Pupils are confident that they can turn to a member of staff if they have any concerns and that issues will be dealt with swiftly.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership with parents, the local community and church is very good and continues to be one of the major strengths of the school. Links with other schools and colleges are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has developed a strong supportive parent body and actively consults with them.
- Parents generally have very positive views about the school.
- There are very good links with the church and local community.
- Parents offer valuable support to the school through the School Grounds Project group and the Parent Teacher Association.

Commentary

29. The school's close liaison with parents keeps them fully informed and provides them with many opportunities to become involved in their child's education. This is having a positive effect on pupils' learning and their levels of achievement. Parents expressed a high level of satisfaction about the work of the school. They particularly like the recent improvements and feel the school is well led and managed. They find the headteacher and staff very approachable and feel they are listened to, '*Things happen if you ask*', and any concerns are '*Acted on*'. The school actively consults with parents via informal discussions and written questionnaires and most recently involved them in decisions about the school 'travel plan' which overcomes parking difficulties as pupils are met as a group and led to the school. The homework diary provides a very good contact between home and school, and curriculum information is shared with parents each term so they can help their children at home. Parents are kept fully informed about the progress of their child through regular consultation and review meetings. The annual report to parents clearly identifies what their child has covered and how well they are doing, identifying targets for improvement.

30. Links with the local community are very good. Local groups use the school's premises in the evenings and members of the community support the school. Pupils take part in many local events and have very close contact with St Matthew's church. Parents offer a great deal of support both helping out in the classroom and around school. The Parent Teacher Association is run by an enthusiastic group of parents who organise a large number of social and fund raising activities each year, which raise substantial funds for the school. Links with other schools are good.

Example of outstanding practice

Over the last four years a small core of parents have organised the School Grounds Project and worked together to improve the school environment.

Inspired by a desire to improve the surroundings a few parents have shared their considerable expertise to enhance the school grounds. Right from the start the determination was to involve everyone and so consultation was widespread. The grounds now make lunchtimes fun as pupils scoot through the living willow tunnels following the exciting adventure trails. Close links are made with the curriculum with mosaic artwork and a wild garden for mini-beasts. Colour and a range of aromatic plants heighten senses. All are involved in fund raising and on action days a large number of helpers turn out to do the necessary manual work. This is very much a community project clearly illustrated when pupils planted a daffodil bulb to brighten their school in the spring.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. Governance is good. Leadership from the newly appointed headteacher, deputy headteacher and key staff is good. The school is well managed and staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Governors are well organised and have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are effective leaders with a focus on consulting with colleagues so that all feel a part of the school's self-evaluation and able to contribute to the school's development.
- Good use is made of assessment information to evaluate the school's performance. Teaching is monitored and a teaching and learning policy is to be introduced.
- Performance management is firmly established and the headteacher encourages staff to enhance their skills.
- The management of English, mathematics and science and the Foundation Stage is good with clear action plans to raise standards. Other subjects are managed satisfactorily but the focus on raising standards is not always clear.
- The management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Financial management is good and a very close check is kept on spending.

Commentary

31. **Governance of the school is good** and governors are well informed about what is happening in school. Every governor is linked to a class and stays with these pupils as they move through school. As a result, governors not only have good links with a group but also an overview of the pupils' experiences as they move from class to class. Governors' meetings are well organised and include regular reviews of the school's development plans as well as an analysis of the school's performance in national tests. This information enables governors to make informed contributions to the future development of the school. They challenge decisions or seek more information if unclear about a topic. For example, in their determination to provide for pupils of all ethnicity governors reviewed the race equality policy to ensure race equality was explicit in all subjects. They have sought reasons for any lower results in national tests when first impressions suggested this was linked to

underachievement of one ethnic group. By analysing the progress of individual pupils with the headteacher, the governors were reassured this was not the case. They check carefully that the school fulfils its statutory duties especially in providing equal access for pupils of different abilities and ethnicity.

32. **The headteacher provides good leadership for the school.** On his appointment, an audit was carried out to find out the main areas for development. Some changes were wisely put on hold until the deputy headteacher was appointed so that a team approach to decisions could be ensured. They now work together well as a team and provide good role models for others; the headteacher being supportive to the development needs of all and the deputy headteacher by sharing her enthusiasm for mathematics as well as being a very good teacher in Year 5. An important development has been the clarification and extension of the role of the subject leader. This has improved teamwork and promoted a drive to raise standards. Leaders now audit their subjects and feed their ideas into the school's development plan. Leaders of English, mathematics and science have the benefit of a wealth of assessment information to guide their action plans. Other action plans are not always focusing clearly on how standards can be improved. Nevertheless, most subject leaders have checked that the new planning guidelines are helping teachers and are spotting where additional resources are needed. The management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Records are well kept and procedures follow the recommendations of the Code of Practice⁴ and support is effective.
33. **Strategic planning is good.** The school improvement plan was a weakness at the last inspection. The headteacher has remedied this and the current plan is a clearly set out document which identifies success criteria and resource implications. The headteacher has also tackled weaknesses in monitoring pupils' progress. This is now done systematically in English, mathematics and science and, as the system becomes established, teachers in Year 6 will have a full picture of pupils' achievements from entry to school to Year 6. In the interim, the headteacher carries out a detailed analysis of test results. Any gender or ethnicity differences are followed up and weaknesses discussed. If needed, action becomes a priority in the school's improvement plan. This has had a positive effect on raising standards especially in Year 6.
34. The headteacher carries out observations of lessons as part of performance management. The headteacher now has an informed picture of teachers' strengths and weaknesses and is aware that the next step is to put in place a more formal teaching and learning policy to raise the consistency of teaching across the school and rectify some of the weaknesses identified during the inspection.
35. **Management is good.** With the stronger roles of subject leaders and analysis of performance by the headteacher and governors the school is well on the road of self-evaluation. Collaboration and a team approach to decisions are now an established part of the management of the school. The headteacher intends to follow the local authority's guidelines on self-evaluation to provide a more structured framework to the good practice already in place. Performance management is now firmly established in the school and targets are linked to the school's needs as well as personal development. The headteacher is now ready to introduce a system for support staff to provide more career structure and training to meet their needs.

⁴ Code of Practice – this gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities, duties and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help and support to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001.

36. Financial management is good. Governors are very aware of the limitations of the budget and with the help of the skilful administrative staff keep a close watch on spending. Major decisions about the future have been taken after considerable debate to ensure the needs of the pupils are not being jeopardised. Good attention is given to the deployment of staff. Governors and the headteacher are very clear that the role of learning mentor and the curriculum and parental support assistant provide good value for money as they promote inclusion by raising the self-esteem of many in the school. Good attention is given to other aspects of value for money and funds are spent wisely in the best interest of the pupils.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	737,530
Total expenditure	725,538
Expenditure per pupil	1,862

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	6,170
Balance carried forward to the next	11,190

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

37. **The quality of education in the Foundation Stage is very good.** Since the previous inspection, good improvements have been made in the quality of teaching and in the curriculum. The wide range of activities based on interesting practical experiences meets the children's needs effectively. There is a good balance between teacher directed tasks and well planned opportunities to learn through play. Good leadership and management, based on secure knowledge and understanding of this stage of education, provides clear direction for the work of the team. Thorough assessment systems are used efficiently to evaluate and monitor children's progress and to plan the next steps in learning. Children with special educational needs are identified early. They receive well-directed support and make good progress.
38. At the time of the inspection, very close to the beginning of the school year, children had only been in school for a few days. Their attainment is average for their age. They are already making rapid progress. Given the very good teaching and rich curriculum, it is likely that they will achieve well. Samples of work from last year's reception classes indicate that children achieve well over the Foundation Stage and many exceeded the early learning goals when they started in Year 1.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Close home/school links are securely established.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Relationships are very good.
- There are very good opportunities for children to be independent and to take responsibility.
- Games in physical education lessons foster personal and social development very well.

Commentary

39. Children achieve well and settle quickly into the reception class. The vast majority is on target to achieve the early learning goals with a significant number exceeding them by the time they start in Year 1. The school establishes very good links with families through home visits, and careful induction procedures. As a result, parents feel welcome and valued, and children are enthusiastic to come to school. All staff are consistent in treating children and their ideas with respect. They provide encouragement which builds up the children's self esteem so that they try hard with their work. Rules and routines are efficiently established so that children know what is expected and quickly learn how to behave. Particularly good use is made of enjoyable ring and parachute games. Through these activities, children are making very good progress in learning to co-operate, take turns and share with others. The well-organised classrooms and shared area promote independence very successfully. Children select activities for themselves and are increasingly independent especially in developing their own ideas and sustaining concentration on their tasks.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good.
- There is a good emphasis on speaking and listening skills.
- Teaching of letters and their sounds leads to very good progress in reading.
- Assessment is used effectively to plan new work.
- Children's writing indicates some over-reliance on asking for staff to provide the spellings of words rather than trying for themselves.

Commentary

40. Children achieve well. The vast majority is on target to achieve the early learning goals with a significant number exceeding them by the time they start in Year 1. Teachers use their very good knowledge and understanding to plan short, sharp literacy sessions which are very effective in promoting learning. They communicate their high expectations clearly, so that children concentrate and work hard. Very good attention is given to the development of speaking and listening skills. As a result, children listen with interest to well-chosen stories and show good recall to describe characters and events. They make sound links between the story character and their own experience of starting school. Teachers' skilful questions prompt children to extend their vocabularies successfully to describe their own feelings as 'nervous' or 'excited'. Observations of children at work are carefully collected to monitor progress in the development of skills. This evidence is used to plan work accurately to meet individual and group needs. As a result, children learn very well. Samples of the work of children in last year's reception class show that they made very good progress in learning letters and their sounds. They used these skills very effectively in their reading but did not apply them sufficiently in their writing because they relied too heavily on finding the correct spelling for words in word books and this prevented some 'having a go' at new words.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good. Teachers employ a variety of strategies that lead to effective learning.
- A good range of practical activities support children's understanding.
- Children achieve well in learning about pattern.
- Occasionally tasks are not challenging enough.

Commentary

41. Achievement is good. Children are likely to reach the early learning goals with a significant number exceeding them by the time they start in Year 1. A good variety of practical sorting and matching activities promote mathematical development effectively. When joining enthusiastically in number rhymes, children recite numbers to five or ten in correct order. However, they need help to count objects accurately. They follow the teacher's clear demonstration to count the right number of fingers to represent the *green bottles on the wall*. Teachers successfully take incidental opportunities throughout the day to promote mathematical concepts. For instance, when pupils join the group they follow instructions to sit

in front of or behind... with accuracy. Children correctly sort articles into sets by colour and successfully complete repeated patterns using two criteria. Occasionally, children spend too much time on uninteresting colouring-in activities which do not promote mathematical development well.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good.
- Teaching assistants make a very good contribution to children's learning.
- Practical first-hand experiences support children's understanding very well.

Commentary

42. The rich curriculum enables children to achieve well and most are on course to meet the early learning goals by the time they start in Year 1. Children use their senses carefully to explore the differences between wet and dry sand and draw sensible conclusions from their investigations. Adults ask questions skilfully to help children make sense of what they see and feel. Children operate simple equipment like cassette recorders adeptly and confidently control objects on the computer screen. Programs effectively reinforce children's learning about colour and pattern. Teaching assistants are particularly well informed. They provide sensitive support for small groups and individuals.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Daily access to the new well-organised outdoor area supports physical development very effectively.
- Teaching is good.
- This area makes a very good contribution to children's personal and social development.

Commentary

43. Children achieve well and are likely to reach the early learning goals by the time they start in Year 1. Teachers manage children well and give clear instruction and demonstrations. Children make good progress in developing skills of control and co-ordination. They co-operate effectively as a class to control the large parachute, following instructions accurately to lift and shake it with different levels of intensity. Children achieve well in developing their fine motor skills through manipulating construction toys and handling tools like paintbrushes and scissors.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Commentary

44. No specific lessons were seen during the inspection. Consequently, a secure judgement on provision in this area is not possible. Incidental activities indicate that children explore a range of creative media and engage happily with each other in imaginative play in the home corners.

SUBJECTS IN THE INFANTS AND JUNIORS

ENGLISH

The overall provision for English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good in reading throughout the school and standards are above average.
- Standards in writing in Year 6 are above average and these pupils make good progress.
- Teaching is good in Years 5 and 6 but in other years is not always challenging the higher attaining pupils and they could reach higher standards especially in writing.
- Management is good and an effective plan to raise standards further is in place.
- Assessment is used well to track pupils' progress and check on the school's overall performance.
- In Years 5 and 6 pupils know how to improve because teachers set individual targets. This is not the case in other years and pupils are unclear how to improve their work.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
- Computers in class are not used sufficiently to extend learning.

Commentary

45. Effective leadership and management have led to good improvement since the last inspection. This is more noticeable in reading which has been a focus for improvement and this has reaped benefits. The newly refurbished library and improved quality of books has raised the status of reading. Teachers are following national guidance to teach letters and sounds through practical activities and this is working well. As a result, pupils use this knowledge successfully and in Year 2 many read confidently. However, few as yet have a real enthusiasm for books and many cling to their school reading books as their favourite story. The school has adapted the literacy lessons so that in some lessons the focus is on reading and in others writing. This enables teachers and support staff to give more attention to small groups for reading. However, the tasks set for the groups working unsupervised are not always sufficiently extending learning and this leads to some marking of time for higher attaining pupils. Teaching in Years 5 and 6 is more challenging and achievement increases. Many pupils in Year 6 enjoy reading and have favourite authors. They benefit from the interesting texts used as a focus in literacy lessons which make learning more relevant to their interests. Higher attaining pupils are able to read between the lines and spot how the author is weaving a mystery into a story.
46. Writing is satisfactory in Years 2 and many are able to express their ideas in writing. They understand that writing instructions is different to writing a story. Most pupils are working at the level expected for their age but there is little evidence of pupils exceeding this level. A review of pupils' work showed an overuse of photocopied work sheets which were not extending learning especially for the higher attaining pupils. A good lesson was taught in a Year 2 class which made learning interesting for pupils but in other lessons in the infants this variety of techniques and enthusiasm was less evident. Tasks seen were not sufficiently challenging to extend the skills achieved in the Foundation Stage. This lack of challenge for the higher attaining pupils is also evident in Years 3 and 4 and some slow pace and lack of variety fails to encourage effective learning. This improves in Year 5 and 6 with the higher expectations of the teachers and many pupils make great strides forward in their writing in these classes. Pupils in Year 6 organise their writing in paragraphs and are giving thought to making their vocabulary more imaginative. They write in a range of modes for a variety of purposes. Most present their work neatly and punctuation and spelling are generally correct.

47. A strength in teaching is the use of drama and role-play. As a result, many pupils exceed the level expected for their age in speaking and listening. They are confident speaking in front of an audience. Older pupils recognise that language changes in different situations. Most pupils listen attentively but in the infants a few pupils do not always listen with sufficient care and call out in discussions rather than waiting for their turn.
48. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the effective help they receive from teachers and support staff. Tasks set match the targets in their individual education plans. Texts are enlarged and additional resources available to enable the pupils with visual impairment to remain in class playing a full and active role in lessons.
49. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in the infants. Overall, teaching is good in the juniors but varies with the best teaching being in Years 5 and 6. In the best lessons teachers are more flexible in their planning and focus more on the interest of the pupils. Group discussion, sharing ideas and exciting tasks lead to pupils' concentrating and much new learning takes place. When teaching is less effective too much time is spent listening to the teacher and the emphasis is on question and answers which fail to capture pupils' interest and many start to lose concentration. Teachers manage the pupils well so that pupils learn in a calm atmosphere. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly but comments do not always make it clear to pupils how to improve. Pupils are better informed in Years 5 and 6 because they have individual literacy targets and discussions with pupils show an understanding of the next steps needed to improve. This good practice is not evident in other classes and the school is reviewing how this innovation can be successfully extended.
50. Leadership is good. The analysis of test results is carried out thoroughly to spot any trends and also to identify pupils who need extra help. The school implemented the national literacy support groups last year which helped these pupils to catch up with others. The co-ordinator's report for the current year correctly identifies the need to make more use of information and communication technology to enhance learning. Teachers are not always making enough use of the computers in their classrooms to enable pupils to practise their computer skills. The action plan identifies writing as a focus and identifies a change needed in planning and practice but does not go the next step to show proposed action.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

51. Language and literacy are used effectively to support work in other subjects. For instance, in information and communication technology pupils search for information and then select relevant parts of the text for their history and geography topics. Teachers particularly focus on improving writing in science and pupils write up their investigations using lists, labelled diagrams and instructions.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 6 are above average and rising.
- In the junior classes, good and often very good teaching enables most pupils to achieve well.
- The new co-ordinator is working well to identify weaknesses and lead improvements.
- Attitudes are good and pupils support each other's learning well.
- Too few pupils are working at above average levels of attainment in Years 1 and 2.
- Teachers do not use assessment information and marking consistently to help pupils to do better.

Commentary

52. Attainment in Year 6 is above average and maintains the rising trend since the below average test results in 2002. Pupils of differing attainments achieve well and more pupils are exceeding the standard expected for their age. A significant number of pupils are readily carrying out calculations at above average levels and apply their skills to other situations. Other pupils are working confidently at the level expected for their age. After some variations in previous years, boys and girls are doing equally well, as are groups of different ethnicity. Similar patterns are seen in Years 3 to 5, although at times the higher attaining pupils do not achieve as well as other pupils. In Years 1 and 2, this pattern is more pronounced, and it shows in the falling numbers who are working at the higher than expected level for their age. Overall, attainment is average in Year 2, and achievement satisfactory. Consistent emphasis throughout the school on coherent, step-by-step progress in numeracy ensures that all pupils learn secure understandings and skills across the range of oral and written methods of calculation.
53. The planning guidelines used across the school continuously promote and reinforce numeracy skills. This is its strength. It is less effective in other areas of mathematics, such as shape and measurement. At times, its detailed guidance and textbook tasks encourage rigid adherence, constant repetition and a 'one-level-suits-all' approach. The structure includes evenly paced demonstrations, easier starting points and careful checking and reinforcement of learning. Pupils who have special educational needs and the lower attaining pupils especially benefit from this approach because all teachers keep their needs constantly in view. They make good progress because support staff help these pupils to follow and contribute to the lesson, and to cope with difficulties that arise. However, this uniform approach does not benefit the higher attaining pupils. It slows down their progress when, even in otherwise good lessons, all pupils are asked to do the same textbook task in the same way. This does not challenge pupils to acquire a new skill at their best rate of learning, or to explore different learning styles so as to achieve greater independence in using their skills. The weakness relates to widespread inconsistency in the way teachers use assessment information to track progress and to plan work that matches pupils' different needs. Work in pupils' books shows similar inconsistency in teachers' marking. Some teachers merely tick completed work. Where written comments are added, they seldom help pupils to be aware of the progress they have made and can go on to make next.
54. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. The chief strengths of the very good lessons are:
- very focused, brisk and active "oral maths" sessions that engage and challenge all pupils whilst maintaining an element of fun;
 - expert appreciation of the different methods and resources that will lead to the best learning;
 - effective use of pupils' answers, mixed with precisely expressed praise, so that pupils know exactly what learning they have achieved;
 - insistent demand for correct mathematical vocabulary, explanations and methods;
 - well-planned use of support for pupils who find mathematics difficult.
55. Even in these lessons, however, there are small instances of tasks that do not stretch the more capable pupils, and of further work that is simply more of the same. Computers are not always used to support learning in class. In lessons across the school, and in work in pupils' books, there are too many occasions when, irrespective of attainment, all pupils start tasks at the same level of difficulty. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 shows the most imaginative and effective uses of the whole-school scheme because teachers confidently adapt it to meet the needs of the pupils. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 ranges from good to unsatisfactory, and some lessons lack sharpness and variety.

56. The subject is well led and managed and has led to good improvement since the last inspection. Assessment information is being used effectively to track pupils' overall progress and this information is transferred to the next class so teachers have an informed picture of pupils' current levels. In Years 5 and 6, teachers set pupils' individual targets so that they are clear about the next steps they need to take to improve. This is not yet in place in other classes. The co-ordinator has carried out a searching and far-reaching review of the use and impact of the scheme of work. This has provided a strong basis for identifying the right priorities and planning the actions for improvement.

Mathematics across the curriculum

57. Teachers make inconsistent use of pupils' mathematical skills to support their learning in other subjects. Skills in data handling and measuring are used very well in science to enable pupils to gather, record, organise and interpret information from their experiments. This work also significantly extends their mathematical skills because teachers insist on higher levels of accuracy in work in science than is always the case in mathematics. In geography, pupils learn to use scale and measure distances, whilst work in information and communication technology extends pupils' understanding and use of graphs, tables and databases. Pupils' recorded work in design and technology, however, shows many missed opportunities to use and develop mathematical skills, for example in measuring different materials accurately; in estimating quantities needed for a design, or in making shapes fit together exactly.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in Year 2 and well above in Year 6, and pupils have a good breadth of subject knowledge.
 - Achievement is good in the infants and very good in the juniors.
 - Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.
 - Numeracy skills are both developed very well through science and used to support learning.
 - Assessment procedures, including marking are inconsistent and not used sufficiently to improve standards further.
58. Pupils in Year 2 regardless of their overall attainment, have a good factual knowledge about properties of materials and physical processes. A recent visit to a science exhibition has given them a very good understanding of how the human body works. By Year 6 all pupils, including those with special educational needs, have a very good breadth of knowledge, although they sometimes find it hard to remember the scientific terms despite the emphasis placed on vocabulary by teachers. They understand how to test fairly, predict outcomes, record their findings carefully and make secure judgements based on their experimental results.
59. Data handling and measuring skills feature in many experiments. From Year 1 pupils learn how to record information in different ways, including carefully labelled tables. By Year 6 pupils use a range of measuring instruments accurately. Pupils frequently use line or block graphs in their work to represent their recorded data and understand the importance of labelling axes and writing headings. Graphs are drawn carefully and accurately and interpreted well. Also information and communication technology skills are used effectively to record and present data. Even for those with overall lower attainment, the mathematical content used to support learning in science is often at a higher level than that expected for their age. Writing skills are used satisfactorily to support learning.

60. No teaching was seen in Years 1 and 2 due to timetable restraints. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good and leads to effective learning. Lessons are well prepared and so run smoothly. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are able to convey this to pupils clearly and effectively. Question and answer techniques are used well to draw information from pupils and stimulate them so that they are keen to take part in the lesson. The good quantity of resources available support learning well. No activities were seen where pupils designed and carried out their own experiments but pupils in Year 6 were able to describe experiments where they have used good scientific procedures clearly.
61. Good leadership and management have led to good improvement in standards and teaching since the previous inspection. Currently more needs to be done to check provision in all classes and the use of assessment to improve standards further. Assessment procedures are in place that could be used to track progress from year to year, but not all records are completed. These records and marking of pupils' work are not used consistently to plan further work matched to all pupils' individual needs.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision In information and communication technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's good investment in training and resources is paying off and standards in Year 6 are above average.
- The co-ordinator leads and supports improvement effectively, particularly in teachers' use of the new computer suite.
- Teachers do not make enough use of computers in classrooms.
- Assessment does not yet consistently enable teachers to plan for pupils' different needs.

Commentary

62. Pupils in Year 2 reach the standards expected for their age. Their achievement is satisfactory. Many know how to control items on the screen and understand how to use a simple database. In Year 6, pupils are achieving well and their attainment is higher than expected for their age. Many have computers at home and confidently combine colours, pictures, title and text to create a basic multi-media presentation. In reality the school has done better than maintain the standards reported by the previous inspection. The period since then has seen much rapid and challenging change in information and communication technology nationally, and expectations are significantly higher now.
63. The school has responded well to the challenge. It now has a computerised classroom in constant use, a smaller suite in the library, and a computer in each classroom and shared area. All are linked to a central server and to the Internet. Access to the Internet is rigorously protected. The range of software meets the demands of the good scheme of work and increasingly supports work in all subjects.
64. The good work of the co-ordinator enables the school to keep pace with changing demands and to raise standards. Colleagues are well supported and the co-ordinator has good subject knowledge which is helping teacher to overcome any lack of confidence or skill in using the new computer suite. A very good current initiative is introducing a system of accurate and regular assessment. This is a necessary development to enable teachers to record, plan and track each pupil's progress through the year, and also to enable the school to monitor overall performance in the subject. The school's five-year plan for improving the subject is far-sighted, systematic and comprehensive.

65. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In the five lessons seen, teaching varied from very good to unsatisfactory. Two factors in particular contribute to this inconsistency. Firstly, a number of teachers still lack confidence in their ability to use the computerised classroom. For instance, some are insecure in using the master computer to enable each pupil to see a new procedure demonstrated on screen. Teachers of Years 1 and 2, who have only recently begun to teach their classes in the suite, are probably least secure overall, though other teachers share the difficulty. Good levels of teamwork and determination, together with the ready support of the co-ordinator, are steadily resolving the problem. The overall effectiveness of work with older juniors enables them to achieve better than average standards, even though the suite has only supported their learning for a year.
66. The second factor is the inadequacy of assessment information to guide planning in a situation where, because many pupils use computers at home, the range of prior attainment is wider than in other subjects. In the better lessons, teachers' subject knowledge enabled them to introduce the new learning very clearly and to see how well each pupil could grasp and use it. As a result, pupils received the extra challenge or support they needed and were able to maintain a good rate of learning. In other lessons, teachers' less secure subject knowledge limited their awareness of pupils' learning and of what extra challenge or support they needed. This seriously slowed progress, as the more capable pupils had no further tasks to extend their learning, whilst other pupils waited to be helped over a difficulty.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

67. Almost every unit of work in the suite links new skills with learning in another subject and this makes learning more relevant to pupils. In Year 6, for example, information and communication technology units strongly support learning in mathematics, humanities, English and design and technology. Pupils work to a good standard in programming commands to make the lights in a model house switch on and off in a controlled sequence. They search the Internet to find information to support their learning in history and geography. Good use is made of the computers in the library, and of the strong expertise of a teaching assistant, to enable groups of infant pupils to develop basic skills in using the mouse and keyboard, and in saving and printing their work, which usually involves literacy or numeracy. The after school computer club extends these opportunities for pupils in Year 3.
68. However, whilst all this good work improves the quality of learning across the curriculum, computers in classrooms and shared areas remain idle. As a result, pupils constantly lose opportunities to use computers to support their work in the immediate lesson, or to help them overcome their learning difficulties. The use of computers in classes is not yet firmly embedded in teachers' daily plans and there is a lack of clear guidance to help teachers make maximum use of these resources.

HUMANITIES

It was not possible to see any history lessons during the inspection. One lesson of geography was seen in each of Years 1,3 and 5. Comments are based on the lessons seen, on the examination of pupils' previous work and on discussions with pupils and subject managers.

Geography and history

Provision in geography and history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of attainment are above average in Years 2 and 6 and achievement is good.
- Visits to places of interest, visitors and first hand experiences make very good contributions to the pupils' good achievements.
- Assessment procedures are not fully established and marking of work is not used sufficiently to help pupils improve further.

Commentary

69. Standards in history and geography are directly influenced by pupils' visits to interactive museums, contrasting geographical regions and from a variety of visitors. This was very evident in discussions with Year 2 pupils. They vividly remember a visit from an actor in role as 'Guy Fawkes', who told them imaginatively about what Guy Fawkes actually did, although the written work does not consistently support a picture of their above average standards. The written work of pupils in Year 6 and discussions with them show that they have a good understanding of the skills required in each subject. For example, in history pupils draw inferences using a wide range of sources and in geography they understand how to use maps and plans of different types and with different scales to predict how peoples' lives are affected in the regions examined. Project work in history for older pupils provides challenge for those with all levels of attainment, and gives them many opportunities to use their literacy and numeracy skills. Geography and history are linked together well in local studies to make good use of time.
70. Although pupils attain above average standards overall, marking is inconsistent across the school and provides insufficient help for pupils to improve their work further. Leadership and management of both subjects are satisfactory, with some good features. In geography, for example there is concise and well-planned scheme to help teachers plan how to develop geography skills. In both subjects, information and communication technology is used regularly to support learning, but there is no clear guidance on what programs or web-sites are most suitable in each topic so that maximum use can be made of computers in classrooms. There are few opportunities to check teaching, due to school priorities in other subjects. Not enough is done to check standards throughout the school to give subject leaders a clear awareness of how to develop the subject further. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory.

Religious education

Religious education is the subject of a separate inspection.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

No lessons were observed in design and technology, and only one or two lessons in each of art and design, music and physical education. Whilst the lessons were of satisfactory quality, they are not an adequate basis for judging the quality of teaching and learning in these subjects. Overall leadership and management of these subjects are satisfactory. Satisfactory schemes of work guide planning for progress in the required elements of all four subjects. In art and design, music and physical education, however, assessment is at an early stage of development and does not yet fully inform planning or enable the school to monitor and improve performance.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve good standards in observational drawing.
- The range of activities contributes significantly to pupils' cultural development.

Commentary

71. Pupils' work shows that most achieve satisfactorily and reach the level expected for their age. In the lesson seen, the quality of teaching and learning was satisfactory.
72. High standards in observational drawing have been maintained since the previous inspection. This is particularly evident in the work of pupils in Year 2 and Year 5. In Year 2, pupils make careful drawings of stones, shells and bark, and use shading well to achieve effects of light and dark. In Year 5, pupils explore spatial relationships between objects of different size, colour and texture. Their sketches in pencil, pastel or paint show command of different media, and of relevant techniques to create light and shade.
73. Art makes a very good contribution to pupils' cultural development. An exciting range of activities strongly enriches the curriculum. These include: working with an artist in residence to design a mural; weaving workshops; a Community Carnival topic, and a whole-school project to create a large mosaic sculpture.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have good opportunities to explore a range of tools, materials and techniques for making quality products.
- Work in planning and designing is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

74. Evidence of pupils' work indicates that standards are average and pupils achieve satisfactorily. Examples, such as the wheeled vehicles made by Year 2, and the musical instruments produced in Year 6, reflect a good range of opportunities to consider different types and designs, and to use different tools, materials, techniques and finishes. Links with art and design, science and history are often strong. In contrast, pupils' preparatory work on paper is slapdash and superficial. It does not show what they learn by examining relevant products, or that they develop their ideas carefully in detailed plans and accurate designs. Opportunities are missed to apply mathematical skills to measure dimensions and quantities, and to develop writing skills by recording their ideas.

MUSIC

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good opportunities for instrumental work lead to high achievement for many pupils.
- Pupils have good opportunities to perform in a variety of settings.
- Standards in singing are good throughout the school.

Commentary

75. Standards, as observed in two class lessons, are average, and most pupils achieve satisfactorily. However, the achievement of the many junior pupils who receive instrumental tuition is high and significantly enriches the life of the school. Well over 100 pupils receive weekly lessons from seven visiting specialists in a wide range of instruments, including steel pans, drums, woodwind, brass and strings. As well as developing their talents, these pupils share their enthusiasm and skills when playing at school functions and regularly in assembly. This strongly promotes interest in and enjoyment of music throughout the school, and sets an example for younger pupils to follow. A range of activities outside the school day provides good opportunities for the orchestra, the choir, and the music and recorder groups to perform for others in school, in the local community and in the city. The good quality of singing in assembly shows that, since the last inspection, standards have been maintained in the infants and raised in the juniors.
76. Lack of evidence rules out an overall judgement on the quality of teaching and learning. In both lessons observed, teachers used their good subject knowledge to promote skills. In one lesson, ineffective management of the class slowed the pace of learning.

Physical education

Insufficient evidence was available to make an overall judgement on provision.

Commentary

77. In the lesson seen teaching and learning were satisfactory and pupils worked at the level expected for their age. In games, pupils understand the need to follow simple rules and abide by them with a sense of fairness. They practise skills but it is not always made clear to them how to improve. Provision for games is a strength, particularly in activities outside the school day. Popular clubs for football, basketball and tennis provide very good opportunities for girls and boys to develop their individual and team skills, and to do well in inter-school challenge competitions. The school also offers coaching in tag rugby, top sports and athletics. Pupils have every opportunity to recognise and develop their talents, and to be ready to take advantage of the range of opportunities available to them when they transfer to their secondary schools.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education

Provision is **good**. Two lessons were seen and evidence is supported by discussions with older pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject has been a recent focus for development and new planning guidelines put in place
- Older pupils have a lesson allocated to personal, social and health education and younger pupils take part in Circle Time.⁵

⁵ During Circle Time pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. It is agreed by all pupils that no interruptions should occur and only one person at a time will speak. Respect for other pupils' views will occur at all times and therefore pupils feel confident that they can talk with ease and free from any form of interference of interruption from other children.

- The school gives good attention to race equality and focuses on recognising the importance of the individual.
- The school council is a new idea in the school to increase the opportunities pupils have to represent the views of others.

Commentary

78. Although insufficient evidence is available to make an overall judgement on teaching and learning it is clear that staff throughout the school provide good role models for pupils. The ethos of the school celebrates the diversity of cultures in the school and this is supported by the very effective work of the learning mentor and the curriculum and parent support worker. In the good lesson seen in Year 5 pupils learnt that they have responsibilities as they discussed conservation and its implications for their futures. In a Circle Time lesson in Year 3 very caring relationships and sensitive questioning very effectively led pupils on to share their concerns about bullying and to grow in confidence about dealing with any problems.
79. Management has effectively formalised the school's approach to teaching this subject. Teachers now have detailed guidelines and examples of lessons to help them cover the subject in more depth. This new information was supported with staff training to ensure all felt secure teaching the new topics. Evaluation has been based on observations of lessons and shows teachers and pupils appreciate the lessons and grow in the ability to listen and empathise with others. The curriculum is enriched by visiting workshops which focus on bullying, healthy lifestyles, smoking, legal and illegal drugs and informed decision-making.
80. Pupils elect house captains and these pupils have had the opportunity to carry out additional responsibilities in the school. This is now being extended to a school council and pupils are preparing to elect their representatives. This will further extend pupils' opportunities to develop their ideas of citizenship.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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