

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST MICHAEL ON THE MOUNT
CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Bristol

LEA area: City of Bristol

Unique reference number: 109148

Headteacher: Ms Lucy Scott-Ashe

Lead inspector: Mr C R Phillips

Dates of inspection: 13th – 15th October 2003

Inspection number: 257866

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Type of school: | Primary |
| School category: | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils: | 4 - 11 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| Number on roll: | 202 |
| School address: | Park Lane Bristol |
| Postcode: | BS2 8BE |
| Telephone number: | (0117) 9030 434 |
| Fax number: | (0117) 9030 435 |
| Appropriate authority: | The governing body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Canon Shaun Darley |
| Date of previous inspection: | 22 nd June 1998 |

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a primary school of roughly average size, which occupies a restricted inner city site. It draws pupils from a wide area and a broad range of backgrounds. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is above the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, who have a range of learning and behavioural needs, is also above average. The pupils currently on roll represent a wide range of ethnic groups, and the school has a high proportion of pupils whose home language is not English, with nine in the early stages of language acquisition. Levels of attainment on entry are broadly in line with those expected nationally, but vary from year to year. The school faces particular difficulties because of the high numbers of pupils who join or leave in the course of their primary education. The school is part of an Education Action Zone, through which it receives considerable support, and it has recently achieved Investors in People status because of its approach to staff development.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team | | | Subject responsibilities |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|---|
| 15941 | Colin Phillips | Lead inspector | Science Geography History Religious education |
| 11104 | Michael Fleming | Lay inspector | |
| 10611 | Martin James | Team inspector | Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Music Physical education Special educational needs English as an additional language |
| 18340 | Madeline Phillips | Team inspector | English Art and design The Foundation Stage |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good** school, which celebrates the wide range of backgrounds from which pupils come, and is a harmonious community. It is very well led by the headteacher, who is supported by a strong staff team. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, and the standards pupils attain by the time they leave the school are beginning to improve, particularly in mathematics and science. Most pupils do well in terms of their individual abilities. The school deals very well with the constant arrival of new pupils. In spite of the constraints of its site, it offers a rich curriculum for all pupils and is fully inclusive. It provides **good value for money**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- There are clear signs of improvement in standards, but levels in English for the oldest pupils have not yet caught up with those in mathematics and science.
- The headteacher provides very clear leadership and is supported by a strong staff team.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, although stronger in the reception class and in Years 3 to 6.
- The school is fully inclusive and has a strong ethos of care, which encourages positive attitudes from most pupils and ensures that pupils of all ethnic groups get on well together.
- The school has developed an innovative and imaginative curriculum, with many opportunities to enrich the pupils' experience within and beyond the school day.
- Parents have a very positive view of the school.

The school **has improved significantly** since its previous inspection, although standards achieved in national tests by the oldest pupils have not reflected that sufficiently until recently. The school has addressed well the various issues identified previously.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

The pupils' **achievements are good** overall when compared with the levels at which they enter the school. This is particularly true when pupils are in the school throughout their primary education. However, the overall standards attained in the school are clearly affected by the high levels of pupil mobility and, for instance, the arrival of pupils shortly before national tests are taken. By the time children leave the reception class, most achieve the goals that are expected at this age in most areas of learning, but are below the level expected in the crucial area of communication, language and literacy. Standards by the time pupils are seven are broadly in line with the national average in reading, writing and science, and are above that level in mathematics. By the time they are 11, standards are in line with the average in science, below average in mathematics and well below average in English. Although performance in English has not kept pace, there has been significant recent improvement in mathematics and science.

National comparisons for 2003 were not available at the time of the inspection, so the table that follows is based on the results in national tests for the previous year. These results were lower than the school had hoped in English and mathematics, with results in English in 2002 very low when compared to similar schools. In science, however, the results showed major improvement. Results for 2003 indicate that the improvement in science has been maintained and that mathematics has also improved significantly. Overall results in both subjects were broadly in line with the expected average, but those in English were still clearly below that level. Girls continue to do better than boys in English at this age. Standards achieved at the age of seven in 2002 were above the national average in reading, in line with the average in writing and well above average in mathematics. Results in 2003 were lower than this, particularly in reading and writing, mainly because of disruption in staffing for the class concerned.

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

Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average; E - very low. Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

The pupils' personal qualities are **very good** overall, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Most pupils show **good** attitudes and behaviour, although a small minority have difficulty in controlling their reactions, and the number of exclusions is high. The pupils enjoy coming to school, but attendance continues to be below average, and a significant number of parents have difficulty in getting their children to school on time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. Teaching is **good** overall, but better at present for children in the Foundation Stage and for those in Years 3 to 6. As a result, pupils of all attainment levels and groups generally learn well.

The curriculum is lively and interesting, and makes very good use of the resources available in the community to enrich the pupils' learning. The school cares well for its pupils and has a very effective partnership with its parents.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The leadership of the headteacher is very good and that of other key staff is good. The school is well managed and has a clear sense of direction. The governing body supports the school well.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have a high opinion of the school and the job it is doing, speaking highly of the quality of the headteacher and the staff team. Pupils are also positive about school life, but, like their parents, some have a concern about bullying. The inspection team believes that the school deals well with the inappropriate behaviour of a minority of pupils.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards, particularly in English, by:
 1. continuing to address the priorities it has identified in developing a whole school approach to the improvement of writing, including spelling and the presentation of work; and
 2. ensuring the careful assessment and recording of pupils' progress in the foundation subjects, and the consistent use of marking to indicate how pupils can improve their work in all subjects.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure that all the required information is included in the governors' annual report to parents and the school prospectus.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Most pupils achieve well throughout the school. Standards in science by the time they leave the school are in line with the national average, but are below that level in mathematics and well below it in English. Standards in mathematics and science are improving, as are those for higher attaining pupils in English. Girls do better than boys in English by the end of their time in school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in speaking and listening are at least in line with those expected, but the pupils' overall performance in English is limited by the quality of their writing.
- Standards in mathematics are improving, and are above the level expected at the end of Year 2, but below average at present in Year 6.
- Standards in science have improved significantly and are at least in line with the national average.
- Standards achieved by the time children leave the reception class are in line with those expected for most areas of learning, but below that level in communication, language and literacy.
- Most pupils are doing well in terms of their own capabilities, although some older boys are currently under-performing in English.
- Pupils achieve well in creative subjects, and the quality of singing in the school is high.

Commentary

1. Since full national figures were not available at the time of the inspection, it is not possible to make an adequate comparison between the standards achieved in the school in the 2003 National Curriculum tests and assessments and those achieved nationally. The tables below and in Section A of this report are, therefore, based on the results of the previous year.

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| reading | 16.8 (15.8) | 15.8 (15.7) |
| writing | 14.1 (14.5) | 14.4 (14.3) |
| mathematics | 18.0 (19.1) | 16.5 (16.2) |

There were 25 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. The above figures indicate that pupils at the age of seven in 2002 were above the national average in reading, in line with the average in writing and well above average in mathematics. In science, teachers' assessments indicated that overall standards were in line with the average. However, in this subject, as in reading and mathematics, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher grade of Level 3 was well above average. No pupils attained that level in writing. Comparisons with similar schools show standards as well above average in reading and mathematics, and above average in writing. Results from the 2003 tests indicate standards that were lower than this, particularly in reading and writing, but the class concerned had faced considerable disruption during the preceding two years because of staffing changes and absence. In spite of these latest results, standards at this age in each of the subjects have improved since the last inspection, although only marginally so in writing. Inspection findings indicate standards in Year 2 are broadly in line with expectations in English and science, and above that level in mathematics, with better results expected in the higher grades in each of the subjects.

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| English | 24.7 (26.1) | 27.0 (27.0) |
| mathematics | 25.2 (25.2) | 26.7 (26.6) |
| science | 29.1 (26.1) | 28.3 (28.3) |

There were 27 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. These figures indicate standards that were broadly in line with the national average in science, but well below that level in English and mathematics. They also confirmed the significant decline there had been in standards in English and mathematics since the last inspection, but that a marked improvement in science results had changed the previous decline in that subject significantly. The 2003 results, although still pointing to problems with English, confirm the upward trend in science and point to a significant turn-round in mathematics. In English, there was improvement in the proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 5. However, all of these figures have to be viewed with caution because of the way they can be affected so significantly by a few pupils, who might, for instance, only have come to the school a short time before the tests or be in the early stages of language acquisition. Inspection findings are that standards in English are still well below average, particularly because of problems with writing. Standards in science are broadly in line with the average, but are below average in mathematics.
4. The improvements evident are related directly to the way in which the school has addressed through its development planning the priorities of raising standards in science, followed by mathematics, and currently writing. Effective co-ordination and extra support have been targeted clearly on science and mathematics. Previous disruption in the co-ordination of English has affected progress there, but appropriate management changes have been made to address this.
5. Children who enter the school in the reception class show levels of attainment broadly in line with national expectations. However, each year group represents a wide range of capabilities and there is considerable variation from year to year. By the time they leave the reception class, most are in line with the levels expected for most of the areas of learning, but a significant number are below the levels indicated by the early learning goals in some aspects of communication, language and literacy.
6. Although it is particularly difficult to set meaningful targets when there is such a high level of mobility, the school's own careful records show that pupils who are in the school throughout their primary school career do well in achieving those standards. Inspection evidence agrees with that available from the school's monitoring procedures. This shows that pupils of differing ethnic or other groups, and of all levels of capability, including those with special educational needs, are generally achieving well. The exception to this at present is in English, where the performance of older boys is clearly lower than that of girls, to a greater extent than the difference seen nationally. Although results like this can be affected significantly by the performance of two or three pupils, the school has rightly identified this as an area of concern and is seeking to address it. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and in religious education are in line with those expected. There are many opportunities for pupils to achieve well in other subjects, and the sampling of these during the inspection indicates standards that are broadly in line with expectations in most areas. The pupils do particularly well in creative subjects, such as art and music, which shows, for instance, in the quality of singing in assembly, in music lessons and in the school's excellent annual production.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Most pupils demonstrate positive attitudes in lessons and behave well. They develop good relationships with adults and their peers. The pupils' personal development is very good. Levels of attendance and punctuality are not as high as they should be.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils like their teachers and enjoy learning.
- Pupils are very keen to participate in activities outside lessons.
- Relationships throughout the school are good.
- Pupils' diverse backgrounds are recognised and celebrated.
- Attendance is below average, and a significant number of parents do not get their children to school on time.

Commentary

7. Relationships are good between boys and girls of all ages and backgrounds, and pupils relate well to teachers and other adults. The way in which pupils of different ethnic groups relate to each other is a notable strength of the school. The pupils work together well in lessons and play together well during break, although there is some boisterousness and ball games are sometimes over-enthusiastic. The behaviour of most pupils is good. Pupils report occasional instances of bullying, but that it is dealt with effectively by the school.
8. In lessons, pupils are usually eager to learn, and they absorb readily their teachers' enthusiasm for a subject. Pupils in Year 1, for instance, were captivated by a story of a lost toy, and allowed this interest to stimulate their composition of stories about loss. Such attitudes to work are promoted effectively during the reception year and develop well throughout during the rest of their time at school. Pupils play an active part in lessons and are very enthusiastic participants in the wide range of extra-curricular activities offered, from the very popular sewing club to musical performances and football.
9. Pupils carry out tasks responsibly around the school, such as the delivering of registers to the office and preparations for assembly, and many are keen to take on responsibility as members of the school council. They treat resources with care, and keep their school clean and tidy. More importantly, they treat other people with care and respect as a matter of normal practice. Some pupils are involved in providing more formal support for their peers, which is taken very seriously and is valued.
10. The school succeeds very well in promoting pupils' personal development, including those pupils whose self-esteem is under-developed at first. The provision the school makes for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. As a result, pupils' imaginations are stimulated by the wide range of activities offered, through which their respect for different cultures and faiths is encouraged. They develop a good sense of fairness and most understand well that their actions have consequences for themselves and for others.

Attendance

11. The school analyses attendance data carefully and has used its very good knowledge of pupils and their families to develop a good range of well-focused strategies for improving the level of attendance. There has been some success in this. Nevertheless, some parents fail to ensure that their children arrive in time for the start of the school day and the level of attendance remains stubbornly below the national average, particularly as a consequence of holidays taken in term-time.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

| Authorised absence | |
|--------------------|-----|
| School data | 6.2 |
| National data | 5.4 |

| Unauthorised absence | |
|----------------------|-----|
| School data | 0.1 |
| National data | 0.5 |

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

Exclusions

12. A few pupils present particularly challenging behaviour. The school has evolved well-considered anger management strategies, which help to improve their conduct and minimise the effect on others. These patterns of behaviour are reflected in the high, but reducing, number of exclusions. The exclusions are all on a temporary basis and often provide a useful cooling off period. Although the number of exclusions remains too high, particularly for boys from a mixed Caribbean background, the school's effective strategies have ensured a significant reduction in the number of exclusions over the last three years.

Ethnic background of pupils

| Categories used in the Annual School Census |
|---|
| White – British |
| White – Irish |
| White – any other White background |
| Mixed – White and Black Caribbean |
| Mixed – White and Black African |
| Mixed – White and Asian |
| Mixed – any other mixed background |
| Asian or Asian British – Indian |
| Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi |
| Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background |
| Black or Black British – Caribbean |
| Black or Black British – African |
| Black or Black British – any other Black background |
| Chinese |

Exclusions in the last school year

| No of pupils on roll | Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 95 | 5 | 0 |
| 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 6 | 0 | 0 |
| 33 | 24 | 0 |
| 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 5 | 0 | 0 |
| 3 | 0 | 0 |
| 13 | 0 | 0 |
| 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 7 | 0 | 0 |
| 19 | 0 | 0 |
| 14 | 0 | 0 |
| 3 | 4 | 0 |
| 1 | 0 | 0 |

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. Teaching and learning are good, and the school makes very good use of the community to support a stimulating curriculum. It cares well for pupils and has established a good partnership with parents.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good** overall, which is an improvement since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good overall, although stronger in reception and Years 3 to 6.
- Very good relationships are established between teachers and pupils.
- The teachers are very well supported by the classroom assistants and other adults.
- Teachers ensure that pupils of all attainment levels and groups are fully involved in all learning experiences and achieve well.
- Pupils are encouraged to show independence and take responsibility in their learning.
- Approaches to assessment in the Foundation Stage and in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science have developed well, but further development is needed in the other subjects.
- The use of pupils' self-assessment is increasing, but the quality of marking is not consistently good.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 29 lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very poor |
|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|----------------|--------|-----------|
| 0 (0%) | 8 (28%) | 16 (55%) | 5 (17%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) |

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

13. These figures are very pleasing, and emphasise clearly the marked improvement that has taken place in teaching since the last inspection, when a significant number of lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory. They also confirm the parents' opinion that teaching is good, as well as the positive views the pupils have of their teachers.
14. The emphasis placed on a very well thought out programme of staff development is having a direct influence on standards and achievement. Staff development is linked directly to the school's priorities, including the improvement of teaching and learning. As a result of the training received, the teachers are enabling the pupils to develop the necessary thinking skills and concentration. From their time in the reception class, pupils are taught how to be increasingly independent in their learning. This is reinforced in each class and by Year 6 almost all are becoming self-motivated and gaining in maturity.
15. Following considerable disruption in the staffing of Years 1 and 2 for the last two years, all classes are now in a more stable situation. The reception class and Years 3 to 6 benefit from more experienced teachers, who have been in the school for longer, and the more recently appointed teachers in Years 1 and 2 are beginning to establish the necessary routines and relationships for their classes to learn well. The overall standard of teaching in the school is good. This is because the teachers in all classes work hard to meet the needs of each pupil, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. There are very good relationships between adults and children in each class, helping to ensure generally high self-esteem and good achievement. All of the teachers organise lessons well and use interesting approaches that encourage the pupils to try hard and do well. At times, the younger pupils are not sure what is expected of them, because explanations are unclear. Sometimes, teachers do not intervene enough to check learning or to move it on, particularly when the pupils are working in groups or individually. The older pupils are developing their skills particularly well because teachers emphasise these specifically during lessons. Opportunities for the careful review of work at the end of lessons in order to reinforce learning are not always used to full advantage.
16. The other adults who work in each class support individuals and groups of pupils successfully. They work closely with teachers and use their time most effectively in building the pupils' literacy, numeracy and other skills. The classroom assistants use work that is carefully matched to the needs of different groups of pupils. They use discussion and

questioning well and provide pupils with ways of working that ensure they are successful in their learning and retain a willingness to learn. They are particularly successful at building good relationships with those pupils who need extra support because of learning or behaviour difficulties.

17. Good arrangements are in place for assessment in the reception class and in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science throughout the school. It has been identified as an area for some further development in all other subjects. The school is continuing to develop many ways of tracking and recording the progress pupils make, in order to provide a clear picture of how well individuals and groups of pupils are doing, and to ensure that work is planned so that each pupil makes maximum progress. The quality of marking varies between classes. Although positive, it is not always linked to specific criteria that will give pupils a clear idea about how they are getting on, and only occasionally points to ways in which they might improve their work. However, particularly good examples are to be found in the reception class, and in Years 1 and 6. There is much progress towards the pupils' self-assessment of their work. The use of specific and worthwhile targets that are understood by the pupils is having a positive impact on how well they achieve.

The curriculum

The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **very good**, and the provision for pupils in Years 1 to 6 is **good**. Extra-curricular provision is **very good**, and the overall quality of the accommodation and learning resources is **satisfactory**. Provision has improved very significantly since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision for children in the reception class is very good.
- The innovative and imaginative 'St Michael's Curriculum' is good.
- Insufficient use is made of opportunities for the development of literacy across the curriculum.
- The provision made for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The curriculum is enriched by a very good range of extra-curricular activities and educational visits.
- Staff and pupils alike cope well with the limitations imposed by the school's accommodation.

Commentary

18. The curriculum for children in reception is very good. It is stimulating and is planned carefully to meet the needs of all of the children. The curriculum in the rest of the school is also planned well. The 'St Michael's Curriculum', which has been developed with the close support of the Education Action Zone (EAZ), leads to a rich, varied, exciting and relevant provision for all pupils. It has been devised as a result of considerable thought and commitment by the teachers, and includes innovative approaches to learning. Cross-curricular links are developed wherever possible, and the extensive heritage and other resources available in the city of Bristol are used very well to bring the various themes and topics alive. The planning for this curriculum ensures that subject-specific skills are developed consistently, but more could be done to develop pupils' writing skills across all subjects.
19. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Clear procedures are in place and they follow closely the Code of Practice on the identification and assessment of pupils. The Code has been implemented very carefully and effectively. Individual education plans are provided for pupils, and these are of good quality. Considerable care is taken to ensure that the work provided for these pupils is matched closely to their needs. These pupils are involved in the full range of school activities. In the same way, the needs of those pupils

for whom English is an additional language are met well through specific support, and they are also involved fully in the life of the school.

20. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities, including art, chess, choir, sewing, football and netball. The school welcomes many visitors, including members of the different faith communities, a dentist, scientists and story-tellers, as well as drama and music groups. A wide range of educational visits is arranged to places such as Caerleon, Weston-super-Mare, a variety of religious buildings and many of Bristol's landmarks. Two very rewarding residential visits take place for older pupils. These activities make a very significant contribution to pupils' personal and social development, as well as to their learning in various subjects.
21. The school is built on a very limited and cramped site, which could have serious implications for the quality of the curriculum provided for pupils. It says a great deal for the skills, organisation and commitment of the staff that this is not the case. All classroom activities are able to take place appropriately, and, although the school has no computer suite or library at present, the classroom facilities are used well to compensate for this. Facilities for physical education are extremely limited, but again the staff manage to overcome this to provide an appropriate range of activities for the pupils. Storage is in short supply, but staff use the space available well, to ensure that everything looks neat and tidy. At the same time, the resources, which have improved since the time of the previous inspection, are readily available to staff and, where appropriate, pupils. Thoughtful and attractive displays of pupils' work enhance the appearance of the learning environment greatly.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils are happy and confident at school. They are given good guidance and support. The caring ethos helps them to flourish, and they know their views are valued. The school takes good care to ensure pupils' health and safety.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff know the pupils well and understand their needs.
- New pupils are introduced to the school very effectively.
- The support pupils receive in lessons is good.

Commentary

22. Arrangements for the induction of new pupils are very good. The young children who enter the reception class soon learn to trust and to like the adults they meet. They are led effectively to understand what is expected of them and what is not allowed. Good relationships develop between pupils and teachers, boosting pupils' confidence. This feeling of security allows pupils to explore the new experiences teachers present to them. There is a very good induction programme for pupils who join the school during the year and part of the way through their primary education. These pupils are welcomed to the school and are encouraged to have a positive view of the opportunities it offers them, whatever their previous experience has been. As well as the support that pupils receive from adults, they participate in effective peer support schemes, such as peer mediation.
23. A comprehensive and accurate understanding of pupils' academic and personal progress is built up, starting during pupils' earliest days in school. This allows teachers to set suitable work in lessons and to know whether each pupil's work and personal development are advancing at a suitable rate. It also enables them to help pupils monitor their own progress. Teaching assistants work well with teachers to provide good support for pupils in lessons, enabling all pupils to play a full part and to achieve well.
24. Pupils value the opportunities provided for them to take an active part in decisions about the school by participating in the school council. They appreciate being consulted and welcome

being asked to think carefully about issues and to make suggestions. They take the business of getting elected very seriously.

25. There are effective systems for recording and attending to health and safety issues such as accidents and fire evacuation practices. The school has appropriate procedures for ensuring child protection and for dealing with first aid or medication when required.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has good links with its parents. Parents are very supportive of the school and value the care it takes of their children. There are good relationships with other schools. Pupils benefit from the very good links that have been established with the wider community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents express very positive views of the school and their children's experience of it.
- The school benefits from good support by the local Education Action Zone.

Commentary

26. The school is successful in encouraging parents to become involved in the education of their children. Parents think very highly of most aspects of the school's work and report that their children are happy there. They appreciate the quality of teaching, the support that pupils receive, and the way the school helps pupils to mature. A minority express concerns about bullying, but inspection evidence shows that the school has strategies that work well to deal with inappropriate behaviour.
27. Parents are generally well informed about their children and what happens in school. Evening meetings about the curriculum are well attended. Newsletters, the school prospectus and the governors' annual report communicate information about school events effectively and encourage parents to share the school's ethos, although not all the information which the school should publish is included.
28. When pupils are in the reception class, their parents receive reports that inform them in great detail about their children's progress. Older pupils receive satisfactory reports that discuss their achievements in English in some detail. However, these reports often convey limited information about what pupils have learnt in other subjects and lack guidance about what pupils should do to improve. Nevertheless, parents are comfortable approaching the school if they have problems or requests for further information; these are usually dealt with to their satisfaction. Parents of pupils with special educational needs or who speak English as an additional language benefit from good systems to inform them of their children's progress and to involve them in helping with their children's education.
29. There is an active parent teacher association. The school takes full advantage of features of the wider community, including visitors who speak or lead activities, and visits to places of worship, museums, a farm or a residential visit to an outdoor centre.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The leadership of the headteacher is very good and that of other key staff is good. Management is good overall. The governance of the school is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides a very clear lead.
- The staff work very well together as a team.

- The school's planning for development is of high quality.
- The governors are fully committed to the school.
- The high levels of mobility and the poor behaviour of a few pupils present considerable difficulties as the school tries to raise standards, but it deals well with these.

Commentary

30. The fact that there is such a strong sense of community in the school is no accident. It is the result of good management, staff commitment and the quality of relationships that have been established in a school that has faced many changes. The tone for this is set by the headteacher, who provides firm but understanding leadership and helps to ensure the ethos of care that is based on the beliefs and principles that are at the heart of the school. Parents are very clear that it is her leadership that has been the single key factor in the improvement that has taken place since the last inspection. She has a clear vision for the school, yet a style of management that encourages all members of the school community to know that they have an important contribution to make in the direction it takes. The school is, therefore, very well led, has a clear educational direction and is thoroughly inclusive in its provision for all pupils.
31. Since the last inspection, the school has faced much disruption in its staffing, which has, for instance, had a significant but short-term effect on the experience of younger pupils. However, the school is now looking forward to a period of more stability. The changes in staffing have brought together a group of teachers, classroom assistants and other support staff who have bonded well into a strong team, which is how parents see them. They are fully committed to providing a rich experience for all the pupils in their care, and the innovative and exciting curriculum that has been developed is indicative of the quality of their thinking and commitment. The role of the subject co-ordinators has developed well since the last inspection, and other key management roles are carried out effectively.
32. This is a self-evaluating school. This is typified by the school's development plan, which is a practical and exemplary document, focused clearly on the raising of standards. It provides specific detail about the agreed priorities, with indications of costing and clear criteria by which success can be measured. It is proving very effective in helping the school to meet its goals. Responsibility for the approval of the plan lies clearly with the governing body, and governors and staff are involved well in monitoring its progress and in its subsequent evaluation. There is an appropriate system of consultation during the preparation of the plan.
33. The headteacher and staff are supported well by all members of the governing body, who are firmly committed to the continuing development of the school. They are well informed about school life, the standards being achieved and the progress made by pupils, although they have only recently begun to take a fuller part in the analysis and understanding of the performance data available to the school. They discharge their duties effectively through a system of committees. Several governors have regular contact with the daily life of the school.
34. As it strives to raise standards, the school faces many of the difficulties that are common to inner city schools. For instance, it has a high turnover of pupils, with many arriving at or leaving the school in the course of their primary education. It draws pupils from a wide area and a wide range of backgrounds, and a significant number come with needs that require additional support, such as an inability to control anger. This is reflected in the high number of short-term exclusions involving a small number of boys. Because of the quality of its management, the school tackles these problems head on. For example, it has devised a very effective programme for the induction of all new pupils who come to the school. It has also developed a consistent approach to anger management, which is enabling pupils to cope more with their feelings and is leading to a reduction in the number of exclusions. Support from the local education authority has varied, but the school is helped considerably by the support provided through the Education Action Zone.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

| Income and expenditure (£) | | Balances (£) | |
|----------------------------|---------|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Total income | 471,302 | Balance from previous year | 20,427 |
| Total expenditure | 446,786 | Balance carried forward to the next | 24,515 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2,212 | | |

35. The quality of financial planning is good. The school manages its budget well, and spending is related clearly to the raising of educational standards. Careful records of expenditure are maintained. The minor issues raised at the time of the last audit have been addressed. The governors and headteacher monitor the school's financial position carefully, and are supported well by the school administrators. They are well aware of the need to ensure best value and to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of spending decisions. As a result of careful management, the school has been able to appoint two part-time teachers to support the release of subject co-ordinators for their monitoring role and provide cover for absent staff, as well as to appoint a second administrator.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The Foundation Stage is one of the strengths of the school and is led and managed very well. It provides very well for each child. Learning is fun. The children enter the reception class with attainment that is broadly average for many, though it varies year by year, and includes a very wide range of abilities and needs. The teachers have the full confidence of parents and build on the good work done at home. They make the classroom an exciting, happy and secure place for children, and their parents, so the children settle quickly. The progress of all groups of pupils is good, as are their attitudes. They show constant enthusiasm and enjoyment and are eager to follow the rules set so positively for the class. The children know what is expected of them and respond well. They achieve well because the teaching, in each area of learning, is always of high quality and because they like and respect those who teach them. The teacher and nursery nurse are a very strong team, and they harness the children's natural curiosity and eagerness well. The way they note the learning that takes place when children work is impressive. They monitor closely the progress made over time, as they speak or when they listen, for instance, and ensure that suitable activities take place to develop the children's skills best. The wide curriculum is stimulating and challenging, but is also structured carefully to meet the needs of each child. There is a joy in teaching and a delight in learning.

Since the previous inspection, the children's introduction to school has improved, as has what is taught. Facilities and resources for play outdoors have been improved, with a welcoming play area that has been created using the skills and time of parents.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **very good** and is at the heart of teaching and learning in the reception class.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teacher and nursery nurse have a very good knowledge and understanding of how young children learn and of the curriculum necessary for them to achieve well.
- Both work together in a way that ensures high standards and expectations for all children.
- The parents are relaxed, happy and confident to work with the school, and the children know this.
- The children achieve well because they enjoy what they are doing, are fully involved in it and are trusted to be independent.
- Teaching, and consequently what children learn, is of consistently high quality.
- Because of this, most children meet the goals for early learning before they enter Year 1, and some do so before that.

Commentary

36. The teacher and nursery nurse show value to each child, as to their parents and carers. Because of this, the children learn to value one another. The classroom environment is friendly and full of fun, within a structure that is explained and shown to the children. The expectations of all the adults are realistically high. The fact that these are usually achieved is because the adults know each child well, are sensitive to their needs and consistent in the way they treat them. The adults enjoy the day in the classroom as much as the children and their approach to keeping rules in class is pleasant. For instance, when being asked to tidy up a busy classroom, they did so readily, but not sufficiently, and on being reminded with appropriately humorous remarks, completed the task eagerly and successfully the second time! The children concentrate and become confident quickly because of carefully planned and stimulating activities, with support when needed, and much praise. The children show responsibility for themselves, others, and their environment because the teachers encourage

and expect this. In only the second full week of term, the usual instructions for sitting on the carpet are given. Only moments later all is quiet and the circle complete. Many examples were seen of children working well quite independently. There is a happy buzz of conversation in the mornings when parents and carers bring their children into the classroom. Parents know they are welcome, and chat easily to the teacher and nursery nurse, often sitting with their children as they help them.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **very good** because it is seen to be of crucial importance for the children.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The staff plan for and take every opportunity to encourage the children to communicate, by speaking, writing, and showing an interest in stories and books.
- They provide very good role models for language.
- The children reach the level expected in speaking and listening by the time they reach Year 1 and some are above that level.
- The teachers encourage parents and older children in Year 3 to help the children with their reading.
- The children achieve well but the reading and writing skills of a significant number are less than those expected by the time they leave the reception class.

Commentary

37. The teacher and nursery nurse are clear and specific when they speak and are expressive when reading stories, for instance. The nursery nurse uses her language skills carefully and sensitively to speak to children in their home language where possible and to develop their knowledge and use of English. This encourages both confidence and self-esteem in the parents and consequently their children. The seating at tables of children who speak more easily with those who often speak less, is effective in improving speaking and listening. Children learn to speak, and sometimes listen, when playing at being the three bears or Goldilocks, using an appropriately loud, gruff voice, or a tiny, squeaky one. Most children are confident and use their language well in imaginary situations and in recounting interesting events, which many do excitedly. By Year 1, they generally know all their sounds and half are able to have a go at writing words they may not know and to read simple sentences confidently. All can write their own name. The careful and regular practise of letter shapes with one or two children at a time, early each morning, is an important factor in their success. Story telling is a valued time, greatly enjoyed by the children, who listen well and take part enthusiastically. They take opportunities regularly to share books in class with adults and other children. They particularly enjoy Year 3 pupils reading with them and the times when parents are invited to join them in reading. The interest shown by their parents and carers is an important factor in how well they do.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The adults are skilled and knowledgeable, and use many different ways of looking at number and other concepts, including the use of ICT.
- The adults question carefully and encourage the children to explain their thinking, giving them time to do so.

- They repeat activities in a different way in order to consolidate learning and to check understanding.
- The careful and specific use of mathematical language is taught through a variety of interesting activities.
- Teaching is precise and suited to each child, and learning is checked, recorded and monitored.

Commentary

38. Teaching and learning are very good, so the children achieve well. The standards of most are at about the level expected when they reach Year 1, although many are only just beginning to think how they can solve simple problems using toys or shapes. The teacher and nursery nurse encourage learning through very carefully planned activities, such as the ordering of pictures of the three bears. They know exactly what learning is intended and look for this. They ensure that each child answers their careful questions about comparative size. The children have opportunities to talk to an adult about their work, sometimes in home language. They reinforce their learning during this follow-up activity, when they stick paper bears into their books in the correct order. The adults note carefully the learning that has taken place, recording in their books whether the task was supported by an adult or completed independently by the child. The use of ICT is excellent in reinforcing the language for size and position and in helping the children to match the right bear to the correctly sized bed. It helps children to be specific. For instance, one child tells another to 'move the brown bear up', then to 'put him in the little bed' on the class whiteboard.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well and their attainment is at the expected level by the time they reach Year 1.
- The adults build up this knowledge by first hand experience.
- The activities stimulate the children to show curiosity and to ask questions.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- The school uses the community very well.

Commentary

39. There are many interesting activities to help the children to gain good scientific ideas, an understanding of the past and of their place in the world. The children place pins on a map to show where their families come from and discuss photographs of them. Parents help their children to understand the past by bringing old objects into school. Visits to the nearby docks and a journey on a boat bring the world, past and present, alive. The children's understanding of different cultures and beliefs is enriched as they learn more about the community of which they are a part.

40. A specialist EAZ teacher provides invaluable support to the class. With the co-operation of the knowledgeable class teacher and nursery nurse, he has tailored a computer program to the needs of the children. The children develop the exciting skills of moving the characters of Goldilocks and different-sized bears on the interactive whiteboard to place them in their matching beds. They have to put in much effort, but persevere, and are successful in controlling the bear's movement.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

It is clear from the work seen and from the teacher's plans that provision in creative development is very good. The children use well the regular and varied opportunities for art and design work, to

design and make, play in role and to experience dance and music. A specialist music teacher has very good knowledge and understanding. Work seen was good, but no judgement can be made about standards, teaching or learning.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

It was not possible to make an overall judgement about standards, but from observation of play outside and from the school's photographs of children at play, it is clear that the school provides very well for play opportunities both indoors and outdoors. There are many stimulating opportunities for the children's physical development, such as the use of a parachute, and their manipulative skills are developed well through cutting, sticking and gluing activities. A significant number do not find it easy to hold and use a pencil, crayon, scissors or other tool with control when they first enter the school.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory** and is improving.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The co-ordination of English has been disjointed, but is now more effective.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good overall.
- Standards of speaking and listening are at the expected level.
- Standards in writing are low, but are showing signs of improvement, as are the pupils' attitudes.
- Standards in reading are higher than in writing, although still below average overall.
- Older boys do not achieve at the same level as girls in English.

Commentary

41. The school puts emphasis on developing skills in speaking and listening in lessons and throughout the school. Standards are in line with those expected and for a significant number are above that level at seven and 11. Almost all Year 2 pupils are confident to take part in group and class discussions, in which they listen and respond to the ideas of others. By the end of Year 6, most pupils are clear in describing events and giving their opinions. They pose useful questions in science, for instance, when discussing how they might set up their investigation. Some pupils develop their ideas particularly well. There are numerous other opportunities at the school to develop similar skills. For instance, the members of the school council, representative of most year groups, sustain impressive discussions.
42. The standards of work, particularly in writing, are improving on those at 11 and seven last year. This is because of better provision throughout the school and a more settled staff in the younger classes. The pupils are beginning to achieve well overall in their writing. Most want to write and the extra time created in workshop situations has helped greatly in this, with more time for them to talk to the teacher when they write. They are being given more structure to support them as they learn, for instance, with their spelling. By Year 6, most pupils use a neat, joined, fluent style of handwriting in all their work. But, in some classes, although handwriting practise shows neat, tidy and joined writing, much other written work does not. A third of Year 2 pupils already use varied and interesting words when writing poetry, such as 'see darkness creep'. Most are beginning to use punctuation and to spell words recognisably themselves in their lengthier writing. In Year 6, most pupils use good character description and can set out and report facts clearly. They can use words such as 'although', to connect sentences. A few sustain and develop their ideas thoughtfully and write impressively, often in complex sentences, as when they use persuasive language when writing a manifesto for possible election to the school council.

43. The pupils achieve well in reading. Standards by the end of the present Year 2 are likely to be broadly in line with those expected, with some pupils attaining the higher grades. About a third of the Year 2 pupils are already fairly fluent and expressive readers, and some discuss the text. At an early stage in the year, most are beginning to be fluent and are prepared to try difficult words, but they have to work hard to understand what they read. Some need support from teachers and assistants in order to concentrate. The present Year 6 pupils are below the level expected, although several should reach the higher grade. Many understand the ideas and characters in their books. A few refer to facts and state opinions. The others do so with support. The performance of a few older boys is significantly lower than that of girls, but the school has identified this as a concern and is trying to address it through, for instance, attractive non-fiction books and the general use of ICT for research. Boys were seen interpreting non-fiction and computer text eagerly and at several different levels. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the skilled support from classroom assistants, who structure the work well and spend time discussing story and characters. The teaching and assessment of guided reading throughout the school has improved and standards in reading at both key stages are better than those for writing. Book resources in classrooms have improved but there is no library in school to assist the development of research skills in subjects such as geography and history.
44. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall in Years 1 and 2, with some good elements, and is good in Key Stage 2. All of the teachers are enthusiastic and work hard to interest and motivate their pupils, some of whom, particularly in the older classes, find it difficult to write. They match the work well to the needs of individual pupils so that those with particular needs, or with English as an additional language, achieve well. A significant number of the oldest pupils find it difficult to spell correctly and to use punctuation at the same time as choosing the best words and phrases. The school has introduced a new spelling structure to help the pupils' confidence to try less familiar words and not lose the flow in their writing. More time is now spent practising handwriting skills, but, although some work shows the effect of this, much does not yet do so and presentation lacks care. Teaching is purposeful and imaginative, and the pupils' skills and self-esteem as writers are increasing in the writing workshops, which staff and pupils enjoy. Those pupils who were formerly less interested are now better motivated. All staff use resources effectively to support learning, as when the pupils use their own whiteboards in Years 4 and 5 to check what they have learned. The use of puppets in Year 2 helps the pupils with placing parts of the story in order, and reinforces the use of speech marks. The teachers do not always intervene sufficiently, to point out good work or to check on learning, particularly when the younger children work in groups. Sometimes, what younger and older pupils have learned in the first part of a lesson is not summed up sufficiently by a quick visual or other reminder, so that they remember it to use in work in the later part of the lesson. The marking of pupils' work is improving and there are some good examples of written comments to show the pupils how they can improve their work. This is not yet consistent in all classes.
45. The school has been without a permanent co-ordinator for English until recently and this has hindered progress, as has disruption in staffing. Leadership and management are now good and the joint co-ordinators are having a positive effect on the subject. Progress is monitored more effectively and results are being analysed to greater effect. Several very useful initiatives have been introduced recently, and can be beginning to have a positive impact on learning. These include the improved assessment of work, including marking and the use of targets.
46. Improvements in English since the previous inspection are numerous. These include the quality of teaching, all of which was judged to be at least satisfactory. As a result, the quality of learning and of what children achieve have also improved.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

47. Pupils write for a variety of purposes and for different audiences, but, as at the time of the last inspection, do not use their writing skills sufficiently in subjects such as science, design and technology, geography and history. The use of ICT in English is developing satisfactorily.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved significantly since the time of the previous inspection in Years 1 and 2 and are now above average, but, in spite of recent improvement, are below average in Year 6.
- Older pupils are less confident in tackling problem solving activities.
- The overall quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Most pupils show good attitudes towards the subject, but the standard of presentation varies considerably between pupils.

Commentary

48. By the end of Year 2, pupils are very confident in handling numbers. They have a clear understanding of addition and subtraction, and many know the multiplication facts relating to 2 and 10. They have a good grasp of shape and space, identifying halves and quarters successfully, and most can name a range of two and three-dimensional shapes. Higher attainers identify lines of symmetry. Many measure successfully using standard units. By Year 6, a number of pupils undertake work in all four aspects of number confidently. However, some are less confident in recalling individual times-tables facts, and, as a result, are less sure when carrying out appropriate multiplication and division exercises. Most pupils have a sound understanding of fractions, and they find equivalent fractions readily. Some pupils have difficulties in tackling problem solving activities because of limitations in their understanding of mathematical language. In particular, they often find it difficult to identify the correct form of computation required to answer a problem.
49. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good, and it is much improved. Lessons are planned carefully, based on the pattern of the National Numeracy framework. In particular, teachers make very careful allowance for the provision of problem solving activities, being aware that this is an area of weakness for many pupils. Although targets are not yet provided, teachers are generally careful to ensure that all pupils receive work that is suited to their particular needs in lessons. This makes sure that pupils with learning difficulties and those with English as an additional language achieve well, as do other pupils. The school has very significant changes in its pupil numbers, but evidence shows that, based on their prior attainment, pupils who remain in the school are achieving well. Most teachers make good use of mental activities at the beginning of lessons, and they are also aware of the need to continue to extend pupils' mathematical vocabulary. Teachers have good subject knowledge, pupils are kept busy and suitable help is provided both by teachers and classroom assistants. As a result, pupils generally make good gains in their overall mathematical ability.
50. Pupils throughout the school clearly enjoy the work, the mental activities in particular. Most settle to their written tasks with interest and enthusiasm, work well with other pupils, when required, and make suitable efforts to accomplish their tasks. A small number are sometimes slow to settle, but most pupils are well behaved and this enables them to concentrate well and make suitable progress. A number of pupils take care with the appearance of their books, and take pride in them. However, others are less careful about how they present their work. Teachers rarely draw attention to this in their marking.
51. The co-ordinator has played a significant role in raising standards, and her leadership is good. She monitors the work being tackled regularly, and a close eye has been kept on the

standards being achieved and the overall provision being made. The co-ordinator is fully aware of pupils' current performance, and is also putting in place strategies to tackle the weaknesses in problem solving activities in particular. The co-ordinator has also helped to ensure that pupils' mathematical skills are used and developed in the range of curriculum subjects. The subject has improved well since the previous inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

52. The basic skills of numeracy are taught well in mathematics lessons. These skills are developed further in other subjects, such as science, geography, design and technology, and information and communication technology.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are at least in line with the national average, and have improved significantly since the last inspection.
- The investigative element of the subject is developing very well throughout the school.
- There is a strong sense of staff commitment to the subject's development, and its status in the school has risen considerably.

Commentary

53. The story of science in the school is one of significant improvement. It is not possible at present to compare fully with national standards the results attained by Year 6 pupils in 2003. However, they are similar to those of the previous year, which were broadly in line with the national average and above average for similar schools. This picture is likely to be confirmed by the oldest pupils now in the school. The teachers' assessments of the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 have maintained an upward trend overall, and are usually now at least in line with those seen nationally. Boys and girls in both key stages achieve similar results. The proportion of higher attaining pupils is broadly in line with the national average for older pupils and above that level for the younger ones. These standards point to the major improvement in the subject that has taken place since the last inspection, when performance was judged to be significantly below the level expected.
54. The improvement is most marked in the pupils' understanding of the investigative element of the subject, which was a particular weakness before. Pupils throughout the school are taught how to set up and conduct investigations that will help them not only to learn about materials or forces, for instance, but also about what it means to be a scientist. So, as pupils in Year 6 begin to think about how plants grow and to plan their own investigation, they show good awareness of how to pose questions that can be investigated and of how they can ensure their testing is fair. As they go through the school, pupils develop a sound understanding of the other elements of the science curriculum. Pupils in Year 2, for example, showed developing awareness of the importance of safety with medicines and pupils in Year 5 showed good levels of knowledge of the key features of the sun, moon and stars.
55. Several factors have contributed to the improvement. The curriculum is well planned, has clear links to other subjects, uses topics that are relevant to the pupils and is based on practical activities. As a result, the pupils are well motivated and pupils of all attainment levels and groups do well according to their own capabilities. For instance, pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is a second language receive well-targeted support to enable them to play a full part in all learning activities and to make good progress. The teaching of science is good and sometimes very good, although stronger in Years 3 to 6

than in Years 1 and 2. The teachers show good knowledge and understanding of the subject, which is again a major improvement since the previous inspection. The key to all of this is the strong commitment of the staff to making the subject work. They are prompted by an effective co-ordinator, with the support of external advisers, and make very good use of resources, such as interested parents and a local exploratory centre. This commitment has helped to give the subject a much higher profile in the school, which is typified by the exciting and interesting science weeks that are held for the whole school. Assessment procedures are good, although more development is planned. The marking of work is regular, but lacks consistency, and opportunities are sometimes missed to show pupils how they can progress in their learning. A useful framework for the writing up of investigations has been developed, but the subject could make a fuller contribution to the school's intentions to raise standards in writing. Similarly, although some use is made of information and communication technology, the full potential of this resource is not yet being exploited. These areas for further development have already been identified by the co-ordinator.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are broadly as expected by Year 2 and Year 6, and pupils' achievement is good.
- There has been very significant improvement since the time of the previous inspection.
- Good use is made of ICT in a number of other subjects of the curriculum, but not all subjects are yet making full use of it.
- The pupils' attitudes are good.
- The support provided by the Education Action Zone (EAZ) has contributed well to the school's current provision.
- There are currently no formal assessment procedures in place.

Commentary

56. Pupils show satisfactory skills in all aspects of ICT. They are able to produce appropriate text on a variety of topics, and they vary both size and font to suit their needs. Artwork is produced confidently, using the work of famous artists as inspiration. Relevant modelling activities are undertaken, and, whilst younger pupils follow instructions effectively in adventure games, older pupils produce useful spreadsheets relating to shopping activities. Pupils generally have a secure understanding of control technology, and the oldest pupils in the school develop a range of skills further in producing multi-media presentations on Bristol.
57. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers' subject knowledge is good, and much improved, and they provide a suitable array of resources for pupils to use. They provide clear advice and demonstration for pupils, and keep them busy throughout ICT sessions. Good use is made of the EAZ teacher and learning support assistants to support and help pupils. This enables all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and English as an additional language, to achieve well.
58. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good. When using computers, they listen carefully to the instructions being given, and show good concentration when working with equipment. They work well alone, and with partners when required to do so, taking turns readily and helping each other. They behave well and are very keen to accomplish whatever task is set them. They handle all forms of equipment with great care. Pupils' attitudes contribute well towards the good progress they are all now making.
59. The co-ordinator has only recently taken charge of the subject, but is keen and enthusiastic, as well as being a good practitioner. As yet, she has had little opportunity to support her

colleagues, but has begun to assemble examples of pupils' work, to illustrate the standards being achieved. She is working well alongside the EAZ teacher to ensure the continuing development of the subject. She has identified the need for the introduction of assessment procedures as the next step in this. At this early stage, her leadership is satisfactory.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

60. Teachers are increasingly confident in their use of ICT, and they make good use of it in their teaching of a number of subjects, such as mathematics and art and design. Less use is currently made in some other subjects, such as science and religious education.

HUMANITIES

Religious education was inspected individually and is reported below. One lesson was seen in geography, linked to a recent residential visit. One was also seen in history, considering the story of the first pilot to break the sound barrier, one of the scientific breakthroughs that feature in the St Michael's Curriculum. Both lessons were taught well and pupils achieved well because the work was relevant and interesting, confirming the judgement gained from a sample of pupils' work.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards throughout the school are at least in line with those expected.
- Pupils are given many opportunities for first-hand experience of aspects of religion, as part of a well-planned programme of learning.
- They are encouraged continually to relate what they are learning to their own experience.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good, but more could be done to record the progress pupils make.

Commentary

61. By the end of Years 2 and 6, the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the subject are at least at the level required by the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. This means that most are developing a useful understanding of the religious traditions of Christianity and the other main religions in this country, are beginning to appreciate what it means to take a religion seriously and are making an increasingly thoughtful response to the ideas and practices they are encountering. Pupils of all attainment levels achieve well.
62. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is good. The pupils are introduced to topics in interesting and lively ways. The pupils themselves come from a wide range of religious and non-religious backgrounds, and are encouraged to share their own experiences, as when Jewish pupils took part in an assembly about Shabbat and Hindu pupils talked about what they knew about the sacred thread ceremony. This sort of sharing helps pupils of all ages to develop awareness of and respect for each other's views and opinions, and is handled by the teachers with sensitivity and care. The pupils are also given many other opportunities to experience directly aspects of the religions they study. For instance, the school makes very good use of nearby places of worship, such as a church, a mosque, a synagogue and a gurdwara. It also makes very good use of human resources, such as a member of staff who shares willingly her own experience of Hinduism. The vivid enactment of a puja ceremony brought alive to pupils in Year 2 the sights, sounds and smells of the occasion, and pupils in all year groups are introduced carefully to key artefacts of the religions they are learning about.

63. The key to the success of the subject in this school is the way in which pupils are encouraged in all the topics they study to see the relevance of what they are learning to their own feelings and experiences. For instance, pupils in Year 6 are encouraged to understand the Hindu concept of life as a journey by preparing a map of their own lives so far. Similarly, Year 3 pupils explore their own ideas about special meals as they consider practices in a Christian family. It is possible for this to happen because teachers are confident in their knowledge of the subject, know their pupils well and are sensitive to their needs. As a result, the subject makes a strong contribution to the pupils' personal development. The teachers are supported by a well-planned scheme of work, which is related clearly to the new St Michael's Curriculum, and by a knowledgeable and effective co-ordinator. The pupils are encouraged to identify how well they are getting on, but at present there is limited recording of the progress they make.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

During the inspection, only one lesson was seen in design and technology (DT), one was seen in physical education and no lessons were seen in art and design. In the lesson in DT in Year 4, pupils planned and made gliders successfully, and evidence was available to show that younger pupils produce an appropriate range of items such as salads, sandwiches and puppets. In the lesson seen in physical education, pupils carried out a range of gymnastic movements successfully. All pupils in Years 3 to 6 attend swimming during the year, and by the end of Year 6, about 95 per cent of pupils can swim 25 metres. Although no lessons were seen in art and design, evidence was available to show that pupils produce a wide range of work and achieve well in the subject. Pupils in Year 6, for instance, use a mix of media to make their own creative compositions based on their knowledge and understanding of the work of Picasso and Magritte. The school places considerable emphasis on the creative subjects, and they are clearly one of its strengths. Many opportunities are provided for all pupils to achieve well.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils' skills in singing throughout the school are higher than expected, and pupils are achieving well.
- The standard of teaching and learning is good, but few assessment procedures are currently in place.
- Pupils enjoy their music making, and their attitudes are very good.
- The role played by the co-ordinator is very good.

Commentary

64. Pupils show at least satisfactory skills in all aspects of music. They listen carefully to a range of music, and use suitable musical terminology to describe what they hear. They play instruments with appropriate skill, and work readily with others to develop short compositions, which they practise and then play for other pupils. Pupils show particular aptitude for singing, and they produce standards of performance that are higher than expected. They show good control over rhythm and pitch, and are careful with their diction. When they sing in parts, older pupils show a clear awareness of how the parts fit together, and they finish together confidently. The standard of singing in the annual end-of-year musical production is impressive, and is highly regarded by parents.
65. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are well-planned and brisk in pace, with a very suitable range of resources being provided for pupils to use. Pupils are kept busy throughout, and this clearly benefits the learning they make. Teachers' subject

knowledge is good, with clear instruction and demonstration being provided. This effective involvement of teachers enables pupils to make good gains in their musical knowledge, understanding and skills. As well as joining in themselves, teachers also make effective use of pupils to demonstrate different aspects of work to other members of the class, and this encourages all pupils to maintain their interest. Teachers are at pains to involve all pupils throughout, and those with English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties take a full and active part.

66. Pupils join in the activities with enthusiasm and commitment, showing appropriate creative effort where required. Overall, their attitudes are very good. They enjoy their music, singing well, playing instruments confidently and working happily with other pupils. They are keen to listen to music, and many are able to offer opinions about what they hear. Pupils are particularly appreciative of the work of other pupils, and they applaud their performances readily.
67. The co-ordinator is a very enthusiastic and skilful musician, and her leadership role is very well developed. She supports both colleagues and pupils with her example, and has contributed very significantly to the enjoyment of the subject that is apparent throughout the school. She is fully aware of the need to introduce assessment procedures, to ensure the continuing quest for high standards.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

The provision made for these areas is very well co-ordinated, and there is clear evidence elsewhere in this report that the school provides many opportunities for pupils to develop positive and responsible attitudes. One science lesson was also sampled, as it provided a very effective consideration of the story of Charles Drew, the blood bank pioneer, and provoked a thoughtful discussion by Year 6 pupils about racism.

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 | 2 |
| Value for money provided by the school | 3 |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| Overall standards achieved | 5 |
| Pupils' achievement | 3 |

| | |
|---|----------|
| Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities | 2 |
| Attendance | 5 |
| Attitudes | 3 |
| 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 | 4 |
| Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety | 3 |
| 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 | 3 |
| The quality of the school's links with the community | 2 |
| The school's links with other schools and colleges | 3 |

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

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