

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MICHAEL'S C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Winterbourne, Bristol

LEA area: South Gloucester

Unique reference number: 109225

Headteacher: Mr K G Carruthers

Lead inspector: David Westall

Dates of inspection: 1st – 3rd December 2003

Inspection number: 257869

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:	194
School address:	Linden Close Winterbourne Bristol
Postcode:	BS36 1LG
Telephone number:	(01454) 867105
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	The Rev Canon E I Bailey
Date of previous inspection:	22 nd June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

There are 194 pupils on roll, aged between four and 11 years, and they are taught in seven classes. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average but the percentage identified as having special educational needs is above the national average. Four pupils have statements of special educational need. Thirteen pupils are known to be from minority ethnic backgrounds but none are at an early stage of English language acquisition. A fall in the number of young children in the area means that the school has a contracting roll.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2414	David Westall	Lead inspector	Science, art and design, design and technology, music
1333	Elizabeth Forster	Lay inspector	
3856	Sandy Wellsted	Team inspector	English, history, religious education, special educational needs
19302	Chris Perrett	Team inspector	Foundation stage, mathematics, information and communication technology, geography, physical education, PSHE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school. It benefits from effective leadership and management from the headteacher and an able, highly committed staff and governing body. The quality of teaching is good and pupils do well, as a result. Pupils' personal as well as academic development is fostered effectively, and the school is a caring community where everyone matters. The school's strengths vastly outweigh weaknesses in pupils' achievements in a very few subjects, and it provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are listed below.

- Standards are above average, overall, in Years 2 and 6, and represent good achievement.
- The school is well led and managed by the headteacher, and benefits from an effective governing body.
- The quality of teaching is good, overall, including in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT).
- Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs and they progress well.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good, and the school provides well for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school is a caring community where pupils' welfare is a high priority.
- The school's partnership with parents is very good, and they hold the school in high regard.
- Standards are too low in art and design in Years 2 and 6, and in design and technology in Year 6.

Overall, the school has made sound progress since its positive inspection report in 1998. Good teaching is more common, and provision for pupils' social and cultural development has improved. The above average standards seen in the last inspection in English, mathematics and science have been maintained in Year 6. Pupils' investigation skills have improved in science and planning now ensures the systematic development of pupils' key skills in the vast majority of subjects. In addition, pupils now have more opportunities to develop their decision-making skills in lessons, and the work of subject co-ordinators is generally more effective.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Overall, standards are above the national average in Years 2 and 6, and represent good achievement.

The table below shows the results of the Year 6 standard assessment tests (SATs) in 2003 in English were well above the national average and were in line with the average results of similar schools. In mathematics, the results were in line with the national average and well below the results of similar schools; and in science, the results were above the national average and below the results of similar schools. School records show that variations in the results over recent years are due to differences in pupils' standards on entry. For example, the Year 6 classes in 2001 and 2003 included relatively high proportions of pupils with special educational needs.

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

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.

Inspection findings show that current standards are above average in Year 2 in speaking and listening and in reading, and are average in writing. In Year 6, standards are above average in all aspects of English and, in both Years 2 and 6, standards are also above average in mathematics

and science. Overall, the standards reached in these key subjects represent good achievement, given children's average starting points on entry to the school.

In ICT, standards are average in Years 2 and 6 but are rising due to improvements in resources and teachers' expertise. In Years 2 and 6, standards are average in history and are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus in religious education. In design and technology, standards are average in Year 2 but pupils underachieve in the older classes and standards are below average in Year 6. In art and design, pupils should do better, and standards are below average in Years 2 and 6. Across the school, pupils with special educational needs achieve well as a result of good support.

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good, and the school makes good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are very positive relationships between pupils and between adults and pupils. Pupils enjoy school, and the attendance rate is well above the national average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided is good. The quality of teaching is good, across the school. As a result, pupils make a good start in Reception and achieve well in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science in Years 1 to 6. In addition, effective teaching is now enabling pupils to make good progress in their learning in ICT. Time is used productively in lessons, and teachers provide pupils with well-informed guidance, which helps them to make good progress in their learning. The curriculum provides a broad range of worthwhile learning opportunities and there is good extra-curricular provision. The school takes careful account of the learning needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and the most capable, and generally provides well for them. The only exceptions are in art and design and design and technology, where weaknesses in teachers' knowledge and expertise mean pupils underachieve.

The care, guidance and support of pupils are good, and the school's partnership with parents is very strong. These factors all have beneficial effect on pupils' achievement at the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, the leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher has good leadership and management skills, and provides a clear sense of direction. His strong commitment, energy and clear thinking contribute significantly to the success of the school. Other key staff fulfil their roles effectively, including the deputy headteacher and the co-ordinators for English, mathematics, ICT and special educational needs. However, the leadership and management of art and design and design and technology are unsatisfactory. Governance is good. The governors are astute and well informed, and play a key role in shaping the school's work. Statutory requirements are fully met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Pupils' views of the school are positive and parents' views are very positive. In particular, parents value the approachability of staff, believe the teaching to be good and view the headteacher as a strength of the school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school needs to do are listed below:

- raise pupils' standards in design and technology in Year 6, and in art and design, across the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards are above average, overall. They represent good achievement, given pupils' average starting points on entry to the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in speaking and listening and reading in Year 2, and in English, overall, in Year 6.
- Standards are also above average in mathematics and science in Years 2 and 6.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.
- Standards are too low in art and design in Years 2 and 6, and in design and technology in Year 6.

Commentary

Standards on entry to the school

1. On entry to Reception, children's overall standards are average.

The school's results in national tests (SATs)

2. The table below shows that the results of the standard assessment tests (SATs) in Year 2 in 2003 were above the national average in reading and mathematics and were well above the national average in writing. These results were in line with the results of similar schools in reading and mathematics, and above the results of similar schools in writing. Over the last five years, school results in these subjects have been above or well above the national average. However, the trend in the school's Year 2 results is below the national trend. This is not due to any reduction in the school's effectiveness but results from a decline in pupils' standards on entry to the Reception class.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.9 (18.4)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	16.0 (15.0)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.9 (17.9)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 29 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the last reporting year.

3. The table below shows that the results of the SATs in 2003 in Year 6 in English were well above the national average and were in line with the average results of similar schools; in mathematics, the results were in line with the national average but were well below the results of similar schools; and in science, the results were above the national average but were below the results of similar schools. School records show that the Year 6 class in 2003 included a relatively high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and some pupils with behavioural difficulties. The school did well to substantially exceed its statutory target in relation to the results in English but did not reach its target in mathematics. Overall, the trend in the school's results in Year 6, over the last five years, is in line with the national trend.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.6 (28.8)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	27.0 (29.6)	26.8 (26.7)
science	29.6 (29.6)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 34 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Standards at the time of the last inspection

4. When the school was last inspected, in 1998, pupils' standards were above the national average in all aspects of English, in mathematics and in science in Years 2 and 6. Standards were average in other subjects.

Inspection findings

The Foundation Stage (The Reception class)

5. **Overall, children's achievement is good in Reception** and results from good teaching. As a result, the vast majority will reach the expected standards in all areas of learning by the end of the Reception period. The exception is in physical development, where their standards are above average.

Years 1 and 2

6. **Overall, pupils' achievement is good** in these year groups and results from good teaching. Inspection findings show that standards are above average in speaking and listening, reading, mathematics and science in Year 2. Standards are average in writing, design and technology and history but are below average in art and design due to teachers' low expectations. In information and communication technology (ICT), standards are average in Year 2 but are rising due to improvements in provision for the subject. In religious education, standards in Year 2 are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Insufficient evidence was available to make secure judgements about standards in other subjects. It is clear, however, that pupils' overall progress is good in Years 1 and 2.

Years 3 to 6

7. **Overall, pupils' achievement is good** in these year groups and results from good teaching. Inspection findings broadly reflect the 2003 SATs results in English and science, and show that standards are above average in these subjects in Year 6. Inspection findings are more favourable than the 2003 SATs results in mathematics, and show that standards are above average in the subject in Year 6. Standards are average in Year 6 in history and are in line with expectations in religious education. In common with the situation in Year 2, standards in ICT are average but are well set to improve. Overall, pupils' progress is good in Years 3 to 6. However, in art and design and design and technology, pupils should do better, and standards are below average in these subjects in Year 6. Insufficient evidence was available to judge standards in other subjects. Overall, pupils use their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills well to help their learning across the curriculum.

The achievement of different groups

8. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans, as a result of the effective support they receive. The most capable pupils in the school are also catered for well with appropriately challenging tasks. There are no significant differences between the achievements of boys and girls, and the few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds do as well as their peers.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' behaviour, attitudes, values and other personal qualities are good. Attendance is very good. Good provision is made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships are very good.
- Pupils enjoy school, have positive attitudes and behave well.
- Good provision is made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The attendance rate is well above average.

Commentary

Attitudes and behaviour

9. Most pupils say they enjoy school, finding it a friendly place with interesting activities and helpful adults. In conversations with inspectors, they admit to individual preferences for subjects, and so popular are the sports clubs that most pupils would like even more. They apply themselves well in lessons, and they say they appreciate the help they are given by teachers who help them when they do not understand things and who show them how to improve. Because teachers take care to explain and review the learning objectives for lessons, pupils have realistic views of their own strengths and weaknesses as learners. Irrespective of ability, all do their best. Pupils with special educational needs approach each fresh challenge with a positive attitude and show great perseverance.
10. The school sets high expectations for behaviour. The school motto: 'Learn, Care, Enjoy' sets a positive tone for school life and for behaviour. All pupils are party to the few agreed rules that govern daily life, and, with rare exceptions, pupils abide by them. They believe that sanctions and rewards are distributed fairly, and they show a mature understanding of the very few pupils who sometimes find it difficult to manage their own behaviour. Pupils whose special needs are associated with emotional and behavioural difficulties make good progress towards their targets for behaviour. In and around the school, well established routines are followed and behaviour is orderly and calm. In the majority of lessons, no time is lost because pupils' good behaviour and willingness to learn mean that teachers can focus on teaching and learning. Pupils form very good relationships with adults and with their peers. They are caring and protective of those younger or more vulnerable than themselves, and they work together well when required to do so. There were four short-term exclusions in the year prior to inspection, but good behaviour remains the norm and incidents involving racial or other forms of harassment are very rare indeed.

Attendance

11. Attendance is very good and there was no unauthorised absence in the last reporting year. Punctuality is good. A common attendance policy for all local schools, sent to parents, has highlighted the importance of regular attendance and has had resulted in an improved rate at the school.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	4.1
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.4

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

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

12. Good provision is made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is an improvement since the last inspection when provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development was good but provision for their social and cultural development was satisfactory.
13. The very good relationships that exist at all levels underpin provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. In their daily interactions with pupils and through their teaching, all staff value each and every pupil. Whatever form they take, pupils' individual skills and talents are recognised, shared and celebrated. For example, a talented pianist is invited to play during assembly, others are commended for achievements in athletics, and every class has its own 'star of the week.' Such acts of recognition encourage pupils to know themselves and to develop self-confidence. At the same time, every effort is made to foster pupils' spiritual, moral and social development through reflection. In assemblies and in religious education, pupils are challenged to consider their own relationship with God, to decide where they stand in relation to the teachings of Jesus and to determine how they will interpret those teachings in their interactions with others. They are encouraged to reflect and to value the power of prayer. Strong ties with St Michael's Church, visits to other places of worship, visitors who talk to pupils about their own religions, and the study of religious principles in a number of world faiths all serve to enhance pupils' spiritual development.
14. Strong spiritual, moral and social themes are promoted in assemblies. In addition, school and class rules, and discussions in personal and social education lessons, serve to develop pupils' understanding of right and wrong and of moral issues. When studying issues such as recycling and 'fair trade', and when involved in raising funds for various charities, pupils are made aware of the decisions that need to be made if people are to fulfil their moral responsibilities by caring for others, protecting the vulnerable and caring for the environment.
15. Many other activities provide pupils with more direct opportunities for social development. For example, pupils in Year 6 accompany pupils from Year 1 on the way to church and also help them with reading. All pupils have opportunities to become involved in drama productions, and there are various clubs and sporting activities which offer older pupils the chance to interact with others and to develop the co-operative skills necessary for teamwork. During lessons, pupils of all ages are accustomed to working with a partner, and older pupils increasingly work in groups where tasks make demands on their collaborative skills. Pupils have sufficient opportunities to make decisions and to take responsibility for their own learning, which is an improvement since the last inspection. A residential camp attended by pupils in Year 6 offers good opportunities for pupils to develop independence and to learn to live with others.
16. Good provision is made for pupils' cultural development. In addition to the clubs and other cultural activities outlined above, all pupils visit places of interest linked to their studies. Pupils correspond with children living in a village in India; they learn about many different cultures through music, literature and religious education; and some pupils in the school are currently learning Italian through a scheme promoted by the Italian consulate.

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No. of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	180	4	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	3	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	3	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	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 is good. Pupils' attitudes and values are promoted effectively, and pupils learn to relate well to others. The quality of teaching is good and means pupils achieve well in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and are also making good progress in ICT. The curriculum provides a broad range of worthwhile learning opportunities and there are good opportunities for enrichment through extra-curricular provision. The school takes careful account of the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and the most capable, and generally provides well for them. The only exceptions are in art and design and design and technology, where weaknesses in teachers' knowledge and expertise mean pupils underachieve.

Teaching and learning

Overall, the teaching is good and pupils learn well. However, the teaching is not sufficiently effective in art and design and design and technology. Assessment procedures are good, overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good in English, mathematics, science and ICT. As a result, pupils make good progress in their learning in these key subjects.
- Pupils with special educational needs are taught well, including by teaching assistants.
- Teachers' expectations are too low in art and design across the school, and in design and technology in the older classes. As a result, pupils underachieve.
- Assessment procedures are good, overall.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 36 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	4 (11%)	22 (61%)	10 (28%)	0	0	0

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

- The table above shows the teaching observed during the inspection was never less than satisfactory, and was good or better in seven out of every ten lessons. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when about half of all lessons seen were good or better. Overall, the quality of teaching is good, across the school. However, the teaching is generally best in Years 3 to 6, and all of the very good lessons were taught in these year groups.
- Across the school, teaching is characterised by very good relationships between teachers and pupils. Pupils like and respect their teachers and it is obvious that these feelings are

reciprocated. Teachers' planning is thorough and they know exactly what they expect pupils to learn. Overall, teachers' knowledge about the subjects they teach is good, and this is particularly evident in English, mathematics, science and ICT. However, pupils' low standards in art and design and design and technology suggest teachers would benefit from in-service training to increase their knowledge and expertise in these subjects. The management of behaviour is good, resources are carefully prepared and teachers organise their lessons efficiently so that time is used well. Pupils respond positively to this good teaching. They demonstrate good attitudes to learning by listening attentively to their teachers and concentrating on their tasks.

19. In the Reception class, the teacher and the teaching assistant form an effective team. The teacher is knowledgeable about the needs of young children and the requirements of the curriculum for this age group. Planning is well structured and clear, and ensures there is an appropriate balance between teacher-directed and child-initiated activities. The teacher and teaching assistant create a caring atmosphere where children quickly feel secure. They have high expectations for children's behaviour and achievement, present good role models through their positive attitudes and take particular care, when speaking, to help children to develop their vocabulary and to use language for thinking. In summary, good teaching means children make good overall progress in their learning in Reception.
20. In Years 1 to 6, the teaching is good, overall, in English, and includes some very good practice. No time is wasted in English lessons, and most teachers are particularly swift to identify pupils who need additional help and to provide well-informed guidance. In mathematics, good teaching enables pupils to progress well in their learning, across the school. All teachers are effective in helping pupils to develop their mental calculation skills, and they provide well-judged opportunities for problem solving. In Years 5 and 6, teachers explain different calculation strategies particularly well when using digital projectors.
21. In science, the teaching is good and means pupils do well. Scientific vocabulary is introduced and reinforced effectively, and teachers make skilful use of questions to probe pupils' understanding. In one very good lesson, in Year 5, the teaching motivated pupils so strongly that many were working at the edge of their capabilities when collaborating within small, focused teams to plan and conduct scientific enquiries. In ICT, pupils also benefit from good teaching. Teachers' expertise has increased considerably since the last inspection and they are making effective use of improved resources for the subject. As a result, pupils are now making good progress in ICT, and standards are rising.
22. Insufficient lessons were observed to make secure overall judgements about the quality of teaching in other subjects. A careful scrutiny of pupils' completed work shows the teaching enables pupils to make satisfactory progress in history and religious education. However, it also clearly demonstrates that the teaching results in their slow progress in art and design, across the school, and in design and technology in the older classes. Evidence suggests that teachers' expectations are not high enough in these subjects, and that they would benefit from in-service training to increase their knowledge and expertise.
23. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well. The school is quick to identify pupils who need additional adult support or specific intervention programmes, and teachers take care to plan tasks which match their learning requirements. The school benefits from well-qualified, conscientious and talented teaching assistants who are well briefed by teachers and provide effective support for pupils with special educational needs. Those with special needs of a physical, social, emotional or behavioural kind are catered for effectively so they can play a full part in the life of the school. As a result of good overall provision, pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Indeed, the school takes careful account of the needs and learning styles of all pupils, including the most capable.

Assessing pupils' progress

24. Assessment procedures are good, overall, and are particularly effective in English, mathematics and information and communication technology. In the Reception class, assessment is used well to identify children's early learning needs. These assessments are then used effectively to inform the teachers' planning. Pupils in the rest of the school are tested frequently in English and mathematics and at the end of units of work in other subjects. The statutory test results are very thoroughly analysed so that staff have a clear picture of pupils' attainment. Tracking systems are used well to ensure that pupils reach their predicted targets. Assessment in ICT is thorough, and pupils are clear about what they have to do to improve. Staff give pupils good verbal feedback on their work and this is consistent with their skilful assessments of pupils' achievements and needs during lessons. However, sometimes marking does not show how they can improve their work.

The curriculum

Curricular provision is good, and there is good enrichment through extra-curricular opportunities. Overall, the school accommodation is satisfactory and there are sufficient learning resources.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A broad range of worthwhile learning opportunities are provided which help pupils to do well.
- Provision is enriched by a good range of extra-curricular opportunities.
- Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs.
- Weaknesses in provision for art and design and design and technology result in below average standards.

Commentary

25. The curriculum is broad, relevant and well planned. All of the areas of learning for Reception children are covered thoroughly and the curriculum fully meets statutory requirements in Years 1 to 6. A broad range of worthwhile learning opportunities is provided, and these help pupils to achieve well in English, mathematics, science and ICT. The curriculum ensures a smooth transition for children in the Reception classes to the requirements of the National Curriculum, and prepares pupils well for their secondary education. The breadth of the curriculum is enhanced by effective provision for pupils' personal, social and health education, which includes sex education and raising pupils' awareness of the dangers of drug misuse. Planning for this has improved since the last inspection, and there are plans to develop this further through a programme of 'life skills' to enable pupils to deal with real-life emergencies and prepare them for adult life. The personal education of pupils in Year 6 is also enhanced through an opportunity to attend a residential camp. In addition, some innovative initiatives have been put in place within the last two years to enhance learning opportunities for the pupils. These include a 'Learning through innovation' project which is having a particularly beneficial effect in Year 5, where pupils are taking responsibility for their learning very well. The curriculum is also broadened with the addition of Italian lessons for pupils in Years 3 to 6. Planning now caters well for the systematic development of pupils' key skills in most subjects, which is an improvement since the last inspection. The exceptions are in art and design and design and technology, where provision is unsatisfactory.
26. The curriculum is continually examined and improved with the aim of raising standards. For example, the mathematics curriculum has been altered in the light of a detailed analysis of test results, which indicated that pupils were not being given enough time to solve problems. Also, this analytical approach has also led to teachers placing a stronger emphasis on developing pupils' writing skills, and has resulted in improved standards in Year 6. There is a strong emphasis on the use of ICT across the curriculum, and this is reflected in pupils' work, including in English and mathematics.

27. Pupils with special educational needs have access to the same good curriculum as their peers. Where appropriate, outside specialists and agencies are involved in drawing up special programmes of work or advising staff about suitable teaching approaches. Every effort is made to ensure that pupils withdrawn from class for short periods of intensive support do not regularly miss parts of lessons in any one subject.
28. The school is a very caring school and provides a fully inclusive curriculum. All pupils are given equal access to the statutory curriculum and all other activities provided. Work is well planned to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and the most capable.
29. Provision for extra-curricular activities is good. A range of sporting, musical and academic activities is offered and support for these is good. The school takes part in competitive sporting fixtures between neighbouring schools, and offers coaching by outside agencies such as rugby, cricket and tennis clubs. The curriculum is further enhanced by a good range of visits and visitors to the school.
30. The accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall. Classrooms are generally of satisfactory size, but the cloakroom areas in the mobile classrooms are too cramped. The area for hanging coats is very limited so that pupils have to share pegs and many coats are inevitably on the floor. This sometimes impedes pupils' exit from the building. The toilets in the temporary accommodation, although regularly cleaned, suffer from too many pupils using the facilities. The library is situated in a corner of the main building and is small with no facilities for pupils to work there. The outside play area for the Reception children has been improved since the last inspection, and is good. There is a very good partnership between the school and the local cricket club to enhance the quality of the school field. By next summer, the field will provide a much-improved resource for play and sporting activities for all pupils.
31. Staff are deployed well and teachers have the expertise to cover most aspects of the curriculum well. However, some need to improve their knowledge in art and design and design and technology. Classroom assistants are well trained, work in close partnership with the teachers, and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning.

Care, guidance and support

The school caters well for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. The support provided for pupils is good, and the school involves pupils well in its work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is a caring community.
- The school provides very good pastoral care, founded on very positive relationships between adults and pupils.
- Child protection and health and safety procedures are good.

Commentary

32. St Michael's is rightly proud of the pastoral care that it provides for all pupils and this emphasis on care is practised and promoted consistently by adults and pupils alike. The headteacher and his deputy make every effort to get to know the pupils and their families so that their circumstances and needs are quickly identified. Discreet strategies are used to ensure that all adults can identify particular pupils who might need special support so that a watching brief is kept and sensitive support can be given. Particular care is taken to ensure that medical or physical needs are met so that these pupils can play their full part in all aspects of school life. Pupils who are particularly nervous about the transfer to secondary school are readily identified by staff and they benefit from having extra familiarisation which

helps build their confidence to cope with the change. Because pupils feel valued, they quickly learn to trust adults in the school and this gives them the confidence to share concerns or worries. Consequently, when issues such as bullying or fairness are raised, they are listened to and, where necessary, action is taken; this makes for an environment that pupils feel is caring, friendly and non-threatening.

33. The school promotes clear expectations about standards of behaviour and pupils devise their own classroom rules to meet these standards. Teachers make perceptive comments about pupils' personal development in annual reports and give helpful related targets – for example, identifying the need for some pupils to improve their concentration spans or to make more contributions to class discussions. Pupils also have regular opportunities to talk about their feelings and are asked from time to time for their views on plans for improving the school facilities. Feedback from pupils after residential trips is valued and carefully considered to help plan improvements for the following year.
34. All adults have a good awareness of child protection issues, and appropriate procedures are used for reporting and recording concerns. The school is mindful of issues relating to health and safety and regular safety inspections, combined with risk assessments, are carried out diligently.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Good overall. The school's partnership with parents is very good. Links with other schools are good and those with the community are sound.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents hold the school in very high regard.
- They are provided with a very good range of information from the school.
- Close links with the secondary school provide curriculum enrichment.

Commentary

35. The headteacher and deputy consider it a priority to get to know parents and their children well as this enables them to encourage them to feel part of the school community. Their daily presence on the playground before and after school, talking informally to parents and children, is valued by parents and plays a significant part in building up their trust in the school. Parents feel that all staff are approachable and are confident that the care and respect which they receive is similarly accorded to their children. They are unanimous in their praise of the leadership and management of the school, believe the teaching is good and have no areas of concern or discontent. The confidence they have in the school has a beneficial impact on their children, who develop positive attitudes towards the opportunities provided. Parents support the school in a variety of ways, including by raising funds through the parents' association.
36. The school communicates well with parents. It provides clear and friendly documentation about its work and encourages parents to share in its celebrations and events. Information about what is to be taught in each year group is sent home each half term and the school organises a variety of workshops to help explain more about aspects of the curriculum. Helpful leaflets are given to parents about how they can support their children's learning at home, covering reading, mathematics and science. Parents are keen to take up termly opportunities to discuss their children's progress with teachers when targets for improvement are shared. Annual written reports give sound indications of attainment and progress, and also contain perceptive comments about pupils' personal development.
37. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept fully informed about their children's progress from the time the needs are first identified. With rare exceptions, parents support

the school's endeavours by attending reviews of their child's progress and by becoming involved with their child in the setting of new targets.

38. Parents' views are sought from time to time, including through questionnaires to those whose children are moving on to secondary education. Staff are ready to listen to suggestions or concerns; and the headteacher always responds to parents' worries about incidents relating to their children, indicating what action, if any, has been taken. This good practice further reinforces the school's caring attitudes and, consequently, issues never escalate into complaints.
39. The school has close links with the neighbouring secondary school and takes full advantage of the good range of opportunities offered for curriculum enrichment. The oldest pupils have the chance to use the science and technology facilities, and challenges in mathematics help stretch the more able pupils. Transition units in English and mathematics are used effectively to ensure continuity of learning, and good arrangements ensure a smooth transition for pupils with special educational needs to the local secondary school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is well led and managed by the headteacher, who provides a clear sense of direction. The leadership and management skills of other key staff are good, overall, and the school benefits from an effective governing body.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has good leadership and management skills.
- The co-ordinators for English, mathematics, ICT and special educational needs all fulfil their roles well.
- The governors are well informed and play a key role in shaping the school's work.
- The leadership and management of provision for art and design and design and technology are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

Leadership

40. **The headteacher is providing good leadership**, as he was when the school was last inspected. He has high expectations for pupils' academic and personal development, and communicates these well so that the school has a clear sense of direction. His strong commitment, energy and clear thinking contribute significantly to the success of the school. He leads by example and provides a positive role model through his tenacious work to secure school improvement. The headteacher knows the staff well and works effectively with them, recognising and praising their achievements and providing good advice and support when these are required. Teamwork is promoted strongly, and staff develop their skills and shared understandings, not only from guidance from the headteacher and senior staff, but also from the expertise and insights of teaching assistants. It is clear that the staff enjoy working together at St Michael's School. They appreciate the hard work of their colleagues and know their own efforts will be recognised. The headteacher is firmly committed to running an equitable and inclusive school where each individual matters, and this is evident in the care which is taken to support staff and all pupils. The headteacher is held in high regard by staff, governors and pupils and parents. For example, all parents who returned questionnaires felt the school was well led and managed, and this was also reflected in the positive remarks made about the headteacher's good interpersonal skills during the pre-inspection parents' meeting.
41. The headteacher has worked effectively with governors and staff to create a school improvement plan which reflects and promotes the school's ambitions and goals. He has

ensured that all staff are aware of the current priorities in the plan and know how they can contribute to the planned improvements. The plan is well organised, and individual initiatives provide detailed information, including success criteria. All co-ordinators have action plans for their subjects, which is an improvement since the last inspection.

42. The professional relationship between the headteacher and the deputy headteacher is strong. They work well together on strategic planning as well as the day-to-day management of the school. The deputy headteacher provides a good role model for staff through her conscientious approach to all aspects of her work. Her leadership and management of provision for pupils with special educational needs are both efficient and thoughtful. She spares no effort to secure appropriate provision for each pupil and has established very constructive relationships with all relevant outside agencies and specialists.
43. The co-ordinators for English, mathematics and ICT are also fulfilling their roles particularly well. In these subjects, the co-ordinators are making an important contribution to pupils' learning, across the school, and are providing effective leadership for their colleagues. Overall, subject co-ordinators are fulfilling their roles more effectively than at the time of the last inspection. However, leadership is not sufficiently effective in art and design and design and technology.

Management

44. **Overall, the management of the school is good.** The headteacher analyses the results of statutory and non-statutory testing rigorously and ensures that staff are well aware of areas for improvement as well as good achievement. He checks teachers' planning, examines examples of pupils' completed work and very regularly observes in classrooms. As a consequence, he is well aware of the strengths and areas for improvement in the school, and provides staff with well focused feedback which benefits their professional development. The management of special educational needs, English, mathematics and ICT is good, and reflects the well established monitoring and evaluation work of the co-ordinators. However, in art and design and design and technology, co-ordinators do not have sufficiently clear pictures of how well pupils are doing and are consequently in weak positions to target areas for improvement.
45. The school's policy for the performance management of staff is being implemented effectively. Teachers' targets properly reflect both whole school priorities and individual needs; and all staff, including teaching assistants, have ample opportunities to benefit from training courses. Provision for the induction of recently qualified staff is good, and reflects the caring and supportive ethos of the school.
46. Financial planning is sound. The school improvement plan is properly costed, the annual budget is debated rigorously at governors' meetings and the principles of best value are soundly applied. Significant carry forward funds have been deliberately accumulated in order to maintain staffing levels in the current educational year, in the context of a falling school roll. The headteacher and governors appropriately recognise that most of this balance will be used up this year, and they have sensible plans to reduce expenditure in the next financial year.

Aids and barriers to raising achievement

47. Effective leadership and management, together with good teaching, are the key reasons why pupils achieve well at this school. The only significant barriers to achievement are teachers' expectations and knowledge in art and design and design and technology.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	547,934
Total expenditure	500,600
Expenditure per pupil	2,430

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	40,534
Balance carried forward to the next	47,334

Governance

48. **The governance of the school is good.** The governors are highly committed and make a valuable contribution to the leadership and management of the school. The results of statutory testing are debated thoroughly, and governors help to guide the school's work through strategic planning which takes careful account of the school's policies and aims. The governors with specific responsibility for literacy and numeracy are well informed about provision in these subjects through discussions with the co-ordinators, analysis of test results and through observing lessons. As a consequence, they are able to provide valuable feedback to their fellow governors. The governor with responsibility for special educational needs has only recently taken on the role but is building on the conscientious work of her predecessor and has made a good start. The chair of governors maintains regular contact with the school, studies documentation with great care and ensures that governors' meetings are well focused. The governors are astute, have a good grasp of the school's most significant strengths and areas for development, and are able to ask informed and challenging questions. As a result, while being highly supportive, they act as critical friends to the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection when governors were less effective at holding the school to account. Statutory requirements are fully met.

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

FOUNDATION STAGE (The Reception class)

49. There is good provision for children in Reception, and they are consequently well prepared for Year 1. Children enter school in the September before they are five, and an effective induction programme results in them settling quickly into school life. Children enter school with a range of capabilities but, overall, their standards are broadly average for their ages. The majority of children have attended some form of pre-school provision. All children achieve well because the teaching is good, and the curriculum is appropriately planned to provide a wide range of interesting and relevant activities, which are well matched to their needs. The teacher and the teaching assistant set very good role models for the children and manage them effectively. They work as a cohesive team, carefully monitoring all children's progress. The accommodation inside is satisfactory, and outside the new secure play area is a significant improvement on the situation at the time of the last inspection. The children now have continuous access to an outside area, which has a positive impact on learning. The majority will achieve the expected standards in all the areas of learning at the end of the Reception period, except physical development, where indications are that here they will attain above average standards.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for children's personal, social and emotional development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Supportive relationships help children settle confidently into school life, and to achieve well.
- Children are given good opportunities to work and play independently and collaboratively.

Commentary

50. The personal, social and emotional development of children in the Reception class is good, and almost all are in line to attain the expected standards for their age by the time they enter Year 1. With very occasional exceptions, they acknowledge, and abide by, the boundaries set by staff. They know what is expected of them, and they respond well to clearly established routines, such as self-registration, early morning activities involving free choice and, when necessary, tidying things away before the next activity. Most children sit quietly, listening with concentration when adults read stories to them. Most are also learning to take turns, raising their hands when they wish to answer questions, and waiting patiently for their turn, for example, when using apparatus in physical education. A few children still find waiting difficult. For example, they call out answers without waiting to be asked. There are also a very few children who do not feel confident enough to answer questions when working in large groups and who sometimes remain silent.
51. Carefully planned activities encourage children towards independence. This is an improvement since the last inspection when children needed more opportunities to develop independence and decision-making skills. For example, children are encouraged to take the register back to the office; to choose books to look at in the reading corner and to share them with others; to select their own methods for travelling across large apparatus in a physical education lesson; to share a computer with a friend; or, to work in a group, led by the teaching assistant, in order to re-enact the story of Little Red Riding Hood. With only very occasional exceptions, the children are beginning to flourish in such circumstances. Their behaviour is good, they show interest in all activities, and they are able to work sensibly, whether or not they are directly supervised.

52. The teacher and the teaching assistant form an effective team. They are consistent in their expectations, present good role models through their positive attitudes, clearly value the children, and give them every encouragement to succeed. They take evident pride in the children's developing skills, recording achievements of a personal and social nature just as rigorously as those of a more 'academic' kind. It is for these reasons that they are able to build effectively on the skills children bring with them from home, and it is also why the children make good progress in these aspects of their development.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A strong emphasis is given to the development of children's communication, language and literacy skills, and children progress well as a result of effective teaching.

Commentary

53. Early indications suggest that the majority of children will meet the expected standard in communication, language and literacy by the end of the Reception period. Good relationships and a positive atmosphere in the Reception class mean that the children are developing confidence and are willing to talk and share ideas. While most children engage happily in sociable conversation, few have a very wide vocabulary, and most reply to probing questions about their learning with short sentences, phrases or, sometimes, single words. Nevertheless, they are beginning to use spoken language, not simply to talk about the real world around them, but also to explore abstract ideas and imaginary worlds. For example, while listening to the story of *'Little Red Riding Hood'*, most children are able to give simple answers to questions about the characters and the events. Some children also comment spontaneously on particular ideas or details that have caught their interest. In role-play, children show understanding of the story well when they 'act out' the events in the playground. Most children demonstrate the ability to sustain listening during assemblies, and their ability to listen to others is also developing appropriately during classroom activities. However, there are several children who have not yet fully understood the conventions of turn-taking and who sometimes call out rather than waiting for a signal to speak.
54. All children enjoy stories and most understand, at a simple level, how books 'work'. They know, for example, that the front cover usually tells us about what will 'happen' inside the story, that pages are turned to follow a story from front to back of the book, that print and illustrations both 'tell' a story, and that print is conventionally followed from left to right. Most children can join in when the teacher reads refrains in a well-known story, and higher attaining children can already read their own names and some familiar words. Evidence from work seen shows that all children in the Reception class are given a very secure foundation in the early skills associated with reading and writing, and that they have plenty of opportunities to develop those skills through lessons and through structured play activities. The teaching in this key area of learning is good.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

The provision for mathematical development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and children are able to learn through practical activities and to achieve well.

Commentary

55. Teaching and learning are good. The teacher plans a range of interesting activities to promote mathematical understanding. Already children are developing an understanding of numbers to ten with several high-attaining children able to order and match numbers accurately. Activities are appropriately practical so that children learn through direct experience. For example, good use was made of role-play in the 'café' when children used appropriate coins to buy meals, and when they made 'journeys' on a bus. During these sessions, there were also good opportunities for development of children's personal skills, as they learn to consider others while they play co-operatively. These practical activities prepare the way well for future learning, and are very appropriate for this stage of development, ensuring that children sustain interest and do not become bored. By the end of Reception, the vast majority of children will attain the expected levels in their mathematical development.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision for the development of children's knowledge and understanding of the world is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good range of opportunities is provided to develop this aspect of children's learning.

Commentary

56. Effective teaching means that children's knowledge and understanding of the world develop well, and the vast majority will reach the expected standard at the end of the Reception period. In a good lesson observed during the inspection, children used torches to develop their understanding about light and shadows. Skilful questioning from the teacher helped them to investigate the relationships between the shadows, the objects and the light sources. In earlier work, they have discussed and drawn the differences between themselves and their classmates – noticing differences, for example, in eye and hair colour – and have also watched the development of plants. They have looked closely at ducklings which were brought to school and learned to hold the creatures gently and to speak quietly so they were not frightened. Children are taken on regular walks in the locality when staff encourage them not only to appreciate the wonder of the natural world but to notice key elements in the built environment. Children have enjoyed making gingerbread men, and have noticed the changes which occur when materials are mixed and baked. They have regular access to computers and are making good progress in developing their early skills. Children have learned to use digital cameras, and are progressing well in the development of their awareness of time and place.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for physical development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching is good and a wide range of learning opportunities is provided.

Commentary

57. Teaching and learning are good and a wide range of interesting activities are planned to challenge the children. Children have physical education lessons in the hall, where they learn to move with increasing control and become aware of the space around them. They explore

different ways of travelling across the floor and over apparatus. Both the adults take a very active part in lessons, setting good role models for performance. There are good opportunities in lessons to enhance children's personal development alongside their physical skills, as they learn to take turns, obey commands promptly, and put away the large apparatus, working well in co-operative groups. Good use is made of the outside area, where children ride wheeled toys. There are also many opportunities for children to manipulate a range of tools, including brushes, pencils and glue sticks, which they do with dexterity. By the end of the year, indications are that the majority of children will exceed the expected goals for this area of learning.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for children's creative development is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are making good progress in developing their musical skills.

Commentary

58. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in relation to the promotion of children's creative development. Children make sound progress when experimenting with paint, and have created bold abstract pictures with vibrant colours. During a lesson observed during the inspection, children demonstrated satisfactory standards when painting trees to illustrate the story of Red Riding Hood but would have benefited from looking at the trees in the school grounds to inform their work. In the same session, groups of children were supported well by the teaching assistant when they experimented with musical instruments to create some of the sounds they associated with the story of Little Red Riding Hood. They have learned a good range of songs, and are making good progress in singing. Children co-operate amicably with their classmates when engaged in role-play, and the staff sometimes enrich the experience by joining in the play and asking questions which develop children's learning. Overall, most children are on course to meet the expected standards in their creative development by the end of the Reception period. Some demonstrate good standards in music but there is limited evidence of above average work in children's drawing and painting.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

The quality of provision in English is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching is good, overall, and is often very good.
- Standards are above average in speaking and listening and in reading in Year 2, and above average in all aspects of English in Year 6.
- Pupils of all abilities make good progress and achieve well.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The leadership and management of English are effective.
- The school does not do enough to promote pupils' personal reading.

Commentary

59. In Year 2, standards are above average in speaking and listening and in reading, but are broadly average in writing. The results of the standard assessment tests (SATs) in Year 2 in 2003 were above the national average in reading and were in line with the average results of

similar schools. In writing, the results were well above the national average and were above the results of similar schools. Inspection findings, therefore, reflect the 2003 SATs results in relation to reading but are not as favourable as the results in writing. Nevertheless, current standards in Year 2 represent good achievement, overall.

60. In Year 6, standards are above average in speaking and listening, reading and writing. In the national tests for pupils aged 11 in 2003, the school's English results were well above the national average and in line with the average results of similar schools. Almost all pupils attained the expected standard for their age, and over a third of the year group exceeded that standard. Current standards represent good progress and achievement by pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs. The few pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds do as well as their peers, and there is no significant difference in the achievement of girls and boys. When the school was last inspected, standards were above average, overall, in Years 2 and 6.
61. Pupils in all year groups listen well and are confident enough to join in discussions led by their teachers. By Year 6, almost all play a constructive role in group work, contributing ideas sensibly and listening to others, for example, when engaged in research in history. They express their ideas clearly, and they are accustomed to addressing larger audiences, for example, when required to represent their groups and present ideas to the whole class.
62. In reading, most pupils have a good grasp of phonics and have mastered a suitable range of other skills to help them work out the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases by the end of Year 2. By Year 6, most pupils are able to read and understand fiction and non-fiction texts appropriate for their age. They know the key features of different kinds of writing and recognise the various techniques used by authors to engage their readers. Most pupils are skilled at reading information texts from different sources, such as books, CD-ROMs and the Internet. Some pupils enjoy reading and read avidly for pleasure. Sadly, many do not or, when they do read, choose books that are far too easy. The school does not do enough to promote pupils' wider, personal reading for pleasure and for information. To this end, it needs to review and up-date both library resources and classroom book collections and ensure that all pupils are presented with suitably interesting and challenging reading.
63. Their secure grounding in phonics stands pupils in good stead when they come to write. It means that they are able to build unfamiliar words and are soon able to communicate their thoughts in writing, even though some spellings may be plausible rather than accurate. As they develop the craft of writing, pupils benefit from what they learn through reading and through effective teaching about language, grammar, organisation, structure and punctuation. There are examples of exceptionally good written work by the most able writers in most year groups. Standards of handwriting, presentation and spelling are universally above average.
64. Teaching is good overall, and very good teaching is often evident. Teachers know what pupils need to learn, show them how to improve, and maintain high expectations of all, irrespective of ability. No time is wasted in lessons, and few opportunities for pupils to learn are missed. Well-planned lessons focus on particular skills, but other weaknesses that emerge in the process are dealt with, and pupils are made aware of their own powers and responsibilities as learners. Most teachers are particularly good at assessing pupils' responses immediately and giving helpful feedback or presenting further challenges. Standardised assessments are used well to identify pupils who need additional help from time to time and various intervention programmes are used to boost the performance of these pupils. Teaching assistants play an important and effective role in this process and also in supporting pupils with special educational needs.
65. The co-ordinator was absent during the inspection. Nevertheless, evidence of good leadership and management can be seen clearly in the effective practices, good teaching and, not least, the good achievement by pupils.

Language across the curriculum

66. Overall, pupils use their language and literacy skills well in other subjects. All teachers make sure their pupils know, and understand, the specialist vocabulary needed to work effectively in other subjects. When recording their work in science, pupils are reminded of their writing targets, and a current focus on speaking and listening has led to exciting and productive group work in science and history. Pupils of all ages apply their language and literacy skills well when using ICT, for example, to draft, edit and publish their writing.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for the subject is good and pupils' standards are above average, as a result.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, leading to above average standards.
- Leadership of the subject is good.
- Assessment procedures are effective.

Commentary

67. National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 have varied from year to year and dipped last year, although standards at the end of Year 2 have remained consistently above or well above average. Current inspection evidence indicates that standards in Years 2 and 6 are once again above national expectations, as they were at the time of the last inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are achieving well in relation to their starting points on entry to Year 1. The numeracy strategy is securely embedded into current practice, assessment procedures have improved since the last inspection, and there is now a thorough analysis of test results. The curriculum has been adjusted so that more emphasis has been placed on problem-solving, which was perceived as a relative weakness in the last inspection, and this is having a positive impact on the way pupils apply their knowledge and understanding.
68. The quality of the teaching is good. Planning is well matched to all pupils' abilities so that they all achieve well. Time is generally well used so that there is a good balance of teacher talk and pupil activity, and the pace of lessons is brisk. Good explanations are given so that pupils are very clear about what they are to learn. Explanations of new concepts are particularly clear in Years 5 and 6, where teachers have access to digital projectors, and are able to use these well to demonstrate different methods very effectively. In Year 2, the teacher uses mathematical language well so that all pupils become familiar with specific mathematical vocabulary early in their school career. All teachers emphasise the need to develop a range of different mental methods to aid calculations, and importance is placed on the learning of tables. These result in pupils' mental facilities developing well.
69. Mathematics is well managed by the co-ordinator, and a rigorous analysis of test results provides a very clear picture of standards throughout the school. The curriculum is adjusted in the light of analysis to address weaknesses. Assessment procedures are good, overall, and are well established. Group targets are used well to help pupils to improve. Pupils' individual progress is carefully monitored to check that they are reaching predicted outcomes. There is no significant difference between the standards being currently achieved by boys and girls, and the few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are doing as well as their peers. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and the most able pupils are given work which is sufficiently challenging. Information and communication technology is used effectively to support work in mathematics. For example, pupils in Year 5 use spreadsheets to aid their calculations.

Mathematics across the curriculum

70. Pupils' mathematical development is generally promoted well across the curriculum. For example, in science, pupils use charts, graphs and tables to present their results, and, in geography, they learn to use scales to measure distances on maps.

SCIENCE

The quality of provision is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and standards are above average
- Science teaching is good.

Commentary

71. Standards in science are above average in Years 2 and 6, as they were at the time of the last inspection. These standards represent good achievement and all pupils, including the most capable and those with special educational needs, are doing well. There is no significant difference between the standards achieved by boys and girls and the few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds do as well as their peers.
72. Inspection findings are more favourable than the statutory teacher assessments in Year 2, in 2003, which were below the national average in relation to the percentage of pupils reaching or exceeding the expected standard. Year 2 pupils can create charts to record variations between classmates, including their height, weight and hair colour – and can explain clearly what they have discovered. They confidently make simple electrical circuits, can explain why circuits work or do not work, and can show their circuits in clear diagrams. These pupils also have a good understanding of the need for a balanced diet and for regular exercise.
73. In Year 6, current standards broadly reflect the school's SATs results in 2002 and 2003. Despite the results being above the national average in 2003, a few pupils did not do as well as they should have in the tests, and the results were below those of similar schools. However, there is no evidence of this being repeated in 2004, and all pupils are doing well in the current Year 6 class. During the inspection, Year 6 pupils achieved well when conducting experiments to discover factors which affect the rate at which a solid dissolves. They have a good understanding of the principle of fair-testing, know why it is important to repeat measurements and can show their findings clearly in line graphs. Discussions with Year 6 pupils show that they recognise there are many very small organisms which can cause illness, and that these organisms grow like other organisms. They have made careful observations of changes which occur and understand how micro organisms can move from one food source to another.
74. The quality of science teaching is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection when it was mainly satisfactory but included some good practice. Teachers' planning is effective and opportunities have been increased, since the last inspection, for pupils to develop their investigation skills. All teachers are clear about what pupils are expected to learn, and they ensure that pupils are also aware of these expectations. Teachers make well informed assessments of pupils' needs in their planning and during lessons. Scientific vocabulary is introduced and reinforced across the school, and good use is made of questions to probe pupils' understanding. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in science lessons, and teachers also make sure that the highest attaining pupils are given work which matches their learning needs. Effective use is often made of pupils' misconceptions as teaching points in science lessons, within the positive and supportive atmosphere which is created.

75. In a particularly effective lesson observed in Year 5, the teaching motivated pupils so strongly that many were working at the edge of their capabilities. In this lesson, pupils worked in small groups to plan and conduct investigations to test the sound insulation properties of different materials. Each group had a team leader; a secretary, who recorded the agreed plans, observations and findings; a time and resources manager, who made sure all resources were available and that no time was wasted; a reporter, who was responsible for feeding back the group's findings to the rest of the class; and a quality checker who helped with the evaluation of the work. All took their responsibilities very seriously indeed and worked together effectively as a focused team. Very clear guidance and support from the teacher meant that pupils were taking responsibility for their learning, and were achieving very well.
76. Pupils' skills in English are promoted well through science. Pupils are expected to use the correct scientific vocabulary, and teachers draw pupils' attention to their writing targets when they are recording in science. Pupils' mathematical development also benefits from work in science, particularly through pupils' careful measurements and the presentation of results in tables and graphs. Pupils' ICT skills are soundly promoted in science.
77. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has been in post for just over a year and is very enthusiastic about the subject. She has collected useful information through discussions with a broad cross-section of pupils about their science work and attitudes to the subject, has led a staff training day on science and organised a 'science week', when all pupils worked on interesting investigation activities. She has also produced a useful booklet for parents which explains what pupils are taught in science and how parents can support learning at home. The co-ordinator appropriately recognises that she does not always analyse the information collected through monitoring with enough rigour and that she has observed insufficient science teaching in the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision for information and communication technology is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is strong leadership and management of the subject.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff are well trained and have good subject expertise.
- Although standards are average, they are rising, and pupils have achieved well from a low base.
- Accommodation and resources are very good.

Commentary

78. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are in line with national expectations in all strands of the subject. The last report praised the pupils' word-processing skills, but found the other strands were not well developed. Since the last inspection, national funding has meant that the resources for the subject have been greatly improved and staff confidence and expertise has developed through training. The acquisition of laptops and digital projectors, and the establishment of a network throughout the school allowing Internet access and whole-class teaching, mean that pupils' skills support their work across the curriculum and most pupils are confident users of computers. The school is justly proud of the distance pupils have travelled in a relatively short time. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well, and no difference between the attainment of boys and girls was observed during the inspection. As a consequence, although standards are currently average, they are well set to rise.
79. The quality of teaching is good overall, and this is particularly marked in Years 4 to 6. As a result, pupils are progressing well in their learning in the subject. In the lessons seen, teachers demonstrated good subject knowledge when providing clear explanations and

demonstrations using the digital projector. Good use of questioning maximised pupil input, and a brisk pace to the learning meant that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieved well. Year 6 pupils quickly and accurately created a flow chart to control a set of traffic lights, working co-operatively in pairs, and learning from the mistakes made. In this way, pupils' independence and personal and social skills were developed effectively alongside their ICT skills. Cross-curricular links are used well in lessons, making pupils realise the usefulness of ICT. For example, in a Year 4 lesson, a painting by Degas was obtained from the Internet and was successfully used as a stimulus for pupils' writing. In a Year 3 lesson, a music package was used well to enable pupils to compose their own electronic music. In all lessons, pupils' good attitudes have a very positive impact on their learning. In a couple of lessons in the younger classes, pupils who grasped skills quickly needed more opportunities to extend their knowledge and understanding. However, this is not a common weakness.

80. The subject has been a recent focus for development and has a high profile in the school. The co-ordinator has worked very hard to raise the quality of teaching by leading by example, and has instigated training for all staff. She has very good expertise and demonstrates effective leadership in the subject. Planning is good, and ensures that skills are progressively developed. The co-ordinator has a very clear vision for the future development of the subject, and this is evident in her detailed action plan. Rigorous assessment procedures are used throughout the school. These are securely linked with National Curriculum requirements, so that teachers have a clear picture of the standards pupils have attained. Pupils are also very aware of what they have to do to improve. The school has not as yet a website, but there are plans for older pupils to develop and design one.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

81. Overall, good use is made of ICT to support learning across the curriculum. In classes where teachers have laptops and digital projectors, they use them well to give clear, exciting and interesting introductions to lessons. This was particularly evident in mathematics when the teacher used a 'power-point' presentation very successfully to introduce a session on co-ordinates in four quadrants. The quality of this introduction meant the pupils were well motivated to learn, and explanations were crystal clear, enabling pupils to thoroughly understand the new mathematical concepts being taught. Pupils use their information and communication technology skills well to edit text connected to their English work, use spreadsheets to support their work in mathematics, and use the internet and CD-ROMs for research in history and geography.

HUMANITIES

GEOGRAPHY

82. **It is not possible to make an overall judgement about the quality of provision in geography.** Too little evidence of work was seen during the inspection to make judgements about standards, teaching or learning.

HISTORY

The quality of provision in history is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- ICT is used well to support work in history.

Commentary

83. Only one lesson was observed, in Year 6. Nevertheless, the scrutiny of pupils' work, displays around the school and discussions with the co-ordinator and with pupils all strongly indicate substantial improvement in pupils' learning since the last inspection. At that time, although there was a strong emphasis on the development of pupils' historical knowledge, little attention was paid to the development of other key historical skills. Pupils' standards are average in Years 2 and 6 and represent satisfactory achievement.
84. As they move up through the school, pupils acquire a developing sense of chronology and a suitable repertoire of dates and of historical terms in connection with their various studies. Even in Year 2, pupils consider cause and effect in relation to a study of The Great Fire of London. In Year 3, pupils pose historical questions before finding out about the history of Ancient Egypt, while pupils in Year 4 learn about change over time and draw striking comparisons between life under food rationing during the Second World War and the abundance and choices of food today. In Year 5, pupils appreciate the reasons for global exploration in Tudor times.
85. In the lesson observed, pupils in Year 6 attained average standards for their age when they used a wide variety of secondary sources, including books, CD-ROMs and the Internet to find out about schoolrooms in Victorian times. They used ICT successfully to develop the skills of historical enquiry. Higher attaining pupils also identified cause and effect, for example, when deducing and explaining why all children did not go to school in those days. Overall, the lesson was well taught. However, although pupils were invited to pose their own historical questions at the start of the lesson, it was questions posed by the teacher that guided their research.
86. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The history co-ordinator keeps soundly informed about provision through discussions with her colleagues and by examining pupils' work. She readily provides advice to her colleagues, and has formulated a sound action plan for the subject. The recent introduction of the computer program 'Curriculum Complete' means that key historical skills are now incorporated in planning by all teachers and that assessments can be made of pupils' individual attainment in history.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The quality of provision is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Religious education makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Commentary

87. Standards are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus in Years 2 and 6, as they were when the school was last inspected. These standards represent satisfactory achievement. Insufficient evidence was available to judge the overall quality of teaching in the subject. The only lesson seen, in Year 6, was taught satisfactorily. Evidence from the range of pupils' work examined and from displays around the school shows that appropriate time and emphasis are given to religious education, and that it makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are not only taught about religion, but are also encouraged to reflect upon what is to be learned from religion.
88. Pupils *learn to*:
- value the security and inner strength that come from 'belonging', whether in a family, a school or a religious community;
 - appreciate the strong contribution made by the teachings of Jesus Christ to their own moral values, good behaviour and understanding of citizenship;

- understand how religious leaders and other influential figures have been motivated by their faith to help others;
- recognise the value of prayer and reflection as aids to self-knowledge;
- understand important similarities in the values communicated through major religions such as Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Hinduism; and
- respect the practices and traditions of faiths other than their own.

89. Pupils *learn about*:

- the stories, rituals, traditions and festivals of Christianity and other major world religions;
- the meanings of prayers and other sacred texts, symbols and artefacts that have significance for followers of different faiths; and
- the key features of churches and other places of worship.

90. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has examined samples of pupils' work in religious education, and supports her colleagues with planning and ideas for lessons. She is building up a collection of suitable resources and is currently seeking to extend the programme of visits to different places of worship in the local area. Displays of work completed in connection with visits to St Michael's church and a visit by a Jewish friend of the school testify to the good contribution already made by visits and visitors to pupils' knowledge and understanding. The use of CD-ROMs and of 'virtual visits' to places of worship via the Internet also serves to enrich the curriculum.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

ART AND DESIGN

The quality of provision in art and design is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils underachieve in the subject, and standards are too low.
- Teachers' expectations are too low.
- The leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

91. Standards are too low, across the school. They have declined since the last inspection, when they were average.

92. Pupils' underachievement is clearly evident from a careful examination of their completed work. For example, the drawing skills of Year 2 pupils are below average, and they make very limited gains when using coloured pencils to extend a computer generated landscape picture. In Year 3, pupils' drawings of fruit and vegetables show they need to look more carefully and to record more detail, while Year 4 pupils underachieve when evaluating the designs of different chairs. In Year 5, pupils' very simple string prints, and their interpretations of the seasons made with fabrics and paint, show standards which are usually demonstrated by younger pupils. In Year 6, completed work shows that pupils' painting skills are underdeveloped.

93. Only one art and design lesson was seen during the inspection, so it is not possible to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching in the subject. However, evidence from pupils' completed work clearly shows the teaching does not enable pupils to make adequate progress, and that teachers' expectations are too low. In the single lesson seen, in Year 6, the teaching was broadly satisfactory but pupils needed more informed guidance to help them to develop their skills. Evidence suggests that teachers would benefit from well-focused in-service training to increase their knowledge in art and design.

94. Across the school, pupils' key skills in the subject are not developed systematically and there is limited evidence of them learning about art and design through discussions about the work of famous artists. Assessment is making little contribution to pupils' achievement.
95. The leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory, and monitoring procedures are underdeveloped. As a consequence, the school does not have a sufficiently clear picture of how well pupils are doing, and is in a weak position to identify areas for improvement.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

The quality of provision in design and technology is unsatisfactory overall. While it is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, it is unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils underachieve in the older classes, and standards are too low.
- Teachers' expectations are too low, especially in Years 5 and 6.
- The leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

96. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' achievement is satisfactory in design and technology. Standards are average in Year 2, as they were when the school was last inspected. In Year 1, pupils achieve satisfactory standards for their ages when making moving pictures which incorporate simple levers, while Year 2 pupils have drawn sound designs for wheeled vehicles. Year 2 pupils have assembled ready cut pieces of wood to make chassis frames for their vehicles, and have appropriately strengthened the corner joints with triangles of card. Their models demonstrate satisfactory making skills.
97. In Years 3 to 6, pupils' progress is too spasmodic, and this is evident in pupils' work in Years 5 and 6, which is below average. Standards have declined since the last inspection when they were average in Year 6. In Year 3, pupils' books suggest they have made satisfactory progress when evaluating the appeal of a range of different sandwiches, while Year 4 pupils have achieved sound standards when designing and making torches. In Year 5, however, pupils' designs for model musical instruments lack sufficient precision, and their completed models, made from card, string and recycled materials, are poorly made and demonstrate underachievement. In Year 6, pupils' designs for model iron age shelters are unsatisfactory, and photographs of the completed model shelters confirm that their making skills require improvement.
98. Only one lesson was observed, so it is not possible to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching in the subject. However, evidence from pupils' completed work shows the teaching enables pupils to make satisfactory progress in the subject in Years 1 and 2. The lesson seen, in Year 1, was taught well by the design and technology co-ordinator, who has good expertise. Evidence from pupils' completed work in the older classes shows the teaching does not enable pupils to make sufficient progress in developing either their designing or their making skills. Assessment is making little contribution to pupils' achievement. It is clear that teachers' expectations are often too low, and some would benefit from well-focused training to increase their knowledge and skills in the subject.
99. The leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator has collected some examples of pupils' completed work in design and technology but has not analysed these with enough rigour. As a consequence, she does not have a sufficiently clear picture of how well pupils are doing and is in a weak position to target areas for improvement.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

100. **Insufficient evidence was available to make an overall judgement about provision** since no physical education lessons were observed.

MUSIC

101. **Due to timetabling arrangements, insufficient evidence was available to make an overall judgement about provision in music.** However, pupils' singing in assemblies is good. They sing with clear diction and good control of pitch and dynamics.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

102. **Insufficient evidence was available to make an overall judgement about provision.** No lessons were seen, and it is not possible to judge pupils' standards or achievements. However, discussions with staff and an analysis of planning shows there is a strong emphasis on pupils' personal, social and health education. Personal, social and health education lessons are a regular part of the weekly timetable, and discussions are used to address social issues. Sex education is taught to older pupils as part of the programme. The dangers of drug misuse are explained and discussed as part of the science curriculum. The school is about to establish a new programme of life skills throughout Years 3 to 6, where pupils will learn how to care for themselves and others in life threatening situations. The school's good provision for moral and social education plays a significant part in promoting pupils' knowledge and understanding of how to become good and helpful citizens.

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	4
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	2
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
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	4
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).