

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST. NICHOLAS C OF E INFANT SCHOOL**

Wallingford

LEA area: Oxfordshire

Unique reference number: 123163

Headteacher: Mrs. F. Taylor

Lead inspector: Miss M. A. Warner

Dates of inspection: 20 – 22 October 2003

Inspection number: 257881

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	3 – 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	140
School address:	St. Nicholas Road, Wallingford, Oxfordshire.
Postcode:	OX10 8HX
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. T. Valentine
Date of previous inspection:	16 <sup>th</sup> . November 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Nicholas Church of England Infant School serves a large housing estate in the market town of Wallingford. A small number of pupils come from the nearby villages of Brightwell and Cholsey. There are 140 pupils on roll which is smaller than primary schools nationally. The majority of pupils are from white British backgrounds with a small minority from Caribbean or Asian backgrounds. Three per cent of pupils speak English as an additional language, but none is at an early stage of learning English. Four per cent of pupils have been identified as having special education needs which is well below average and one per cent has a formal statement of need which is broadly in line with the national average. The social economic context of the school is average and pupils' attainment on entry is below average. The school provides a very successful Family Learning Programme for the community and has taken part in many national and local educational initiatives particularly in the areas of assessment. The school has won National Primary Centre Awards in both 2000 and 2002.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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9736	J Brasier	Lay inspector	
22578	G Jones	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education Foundation stage
32377	D Courtney	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Special educational needs

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**St Nicholas' Church of England Infant School provides an effective education and good value for money.** Pupils' in Year 2 achieve well and reach average standards from below average standards on entry. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Overall leadership, governance and the management of the school are very good and the leadership of the headteacher is excellent. The thoroughness of assessment and the range of ways used to do this are excellent with the result that pupils know exactly how well they are doing and what they have to do to improve. Self-assessment by pupils as young as those in the nursery is outstanding.

#### The school's main strengths:

- Assessment and target setting are excellent.
- Daily planning and the management of mixed aged groups are very good.
- Teachers mark pupils' work very well.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Parents' and pupils' view of the school are very positive.
- Use of information and communication technology (ICT) is good in most subjects.
- Pupils' attitudes and relationships create a very positive atmosphere for teaching and learning.
- Pastoral care is very good.
- The curriculum is enriched by an excellent range of visits to places of interest and visitors to the school.
- Values Education is developed very well across the school and is supported particularly effectively by midday supervisors.

There have been considerable improvements since the last inspection. Standards have risen in science, geography, information and communication technology and physical education. Religious education, which was a key issue at the last inspection, has improved. There have also been improvements in the leadership and management of the school, pupils' attitudes, the quality of teaching, the care of pupils and the curriculum. Standards in mathematics are slightly lower than at the last inspection, linked to the changing intake and lower standards in literacy and mathematics now, when children start school.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
Reading	C	E	B	C
Writing	A	D	B	D
Mathematics	D	E	C	E

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average  
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

**The large majority of pupils achieve well** by the time they leave the school in Year 2. Standards in relation to the goals children are expected to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage are below what is expected of children of this age although these children have made good progress and achieve well. **The standards pupils reach are in line with the national averages overall**, by the end of Year 2. In 2003 pupils attained standards that were above the national average in reading and writing and in line with the national average in mathematics. Results were in line with similar schools in reading, below them in writing and well below them in mathematics.

**Pupils' personal qualities are very positive** and provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Pupils' attendance is above average and their attitudes and behaviour are very good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is good.** The quality of teaching and learning is good and assessment procedures are excellent. Relationships are very good throughout the school. The care, guidance and support of pupils are very good. The partnership between parents, the school and the community are very good, particularly the information provided for parents, the contribution the school makes to assisting parents to support their children's learning at home, and links with other schools and institutions.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The governance and overall leadership and management of the school are very good.**

Governors are very effective and take an active role in shaping the school's direction and monitoring the school's progress. They are very committed and have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent and together with key members of staff she ensures that the management of the school is very effective. Rigorous monitoring takes place and self-evaluation is embedded in the life of the school in all of its facets. As a result, pupils achieve well.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

**Parents have high opinions of the school** and there are many examples of very good collaboration between home and school. One area of concern to parents is in knowing what progress their children are making. The inspection team found that parents are provided with very good information both about the school and the children's progress. **Pupils have very positive views** of the school. They like being at school and consider that the best things are lunch times, playtimes and 'doing work'. They like the teachers and say that most pupils behave well.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The school has no significant weaknesses, but the following are areas for development:

- The teaching of writing skills for more able pupils.
- The use of information and communication technology to support mathematics.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Standards in relation to the goals children are expected to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage are below what is nationally expected. By the end of Year 2, the **standards pupils reach are in line with the national averages overall, and pupils' achieve well.** Pupils from English as an additional language achieve as well as their peers.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in speaking, listening, reading, singing and geography.
- Pupils are very competent in using information and communication technology.
- Standards are below average in mathematics.

#### Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.8 (14.7)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	15.2 (13.8)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.4 (15.5)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 42 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

1. Results in the 2003 national tests show that standards were above average in reading and writing and in line with the national average in mathematics. When compared with similar schools they were in line with them in reading, below in writing and well below in mathematics. This reflects the smaller number of pupils reaching the higher levels. The trend over the last four years has been below the national trend, reflecting the lower standards of pupils on entry than in previous years.
2. The majority of children achieve the national Early Learning Goals by the time they leave the reception class in their social, emotional and personal development, their knowledge and understanding of the world and in their physical development. Standards in literacy, numeracy and creative development are below average when they enter Year 1.
3. In English, the 2003 test results were well above the national average in reading and writing. The percentage reaching the higher level was in line with the national average in reading and below the national average in writing. When compared with similar schools, standards were in line with them in reading and below them in writing, overall, and below them in reading and well below them in writing at the higher level. Standards in the current Year 2 are above average in speaking, listening and in reading and average in writing. While there has been some improvement in writing, the more able pupils still need to be challenged more in their writing.
4. In mathematics, test results were in line with schools nationally, although well below similar schools. Pupils start school with standards in mathematics that are well below national expectations. The school has identified this as an area for attention and is running very successful family learning sessions in mathematics. One of these sessions was observed during the inspection. It was clear that parents and their children enjoyed and gained much



mathematical understanding from them. The sessions run for one afternoon a week for five consecutive weeks.

5. Standards in science are in line with national expectations and in information and communication technology are above national expectations. Pupils achieve well in science and are very competent in information and communication technology. The humanities; geography, history and religious education, were only sampled during the inspection but standards are at least in line with what is expected nationally and are above expectations in geography, which is enlivened by practical activities and a very large number of visits. Two of the four creative arts subjects; design and technology and music, were also only sampled. Too little evidence was seen to form a judgement on standards in design and technology but pupils' singing was above average. There have been improvements in physical education and art and design since the last inspection. Standards are average and pupils achieve satisfactorily in physical education and well in art and design.
6. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well across the school, as do those from minority ethnic groups. All are supported well and make good progress. The school has a small number of pupils who are potentially talented. These pupils have been identified through baseline scores, end-of year-assessments, snapshot work and tracking sheets. Appropriate work is set for them in mathematics but more could be expected of them in English.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Overall, pupils' attitudes to learning and their relationships throughout the school are **very good**. Pupils' behaviour in class and around the school is very good and their personal development is very good. Attendance and punctuality are good. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good and for their cultural development it is good. Overall, pupils' attitudes, values and personal development have improved since the previous inspection.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' attitudes in classes and around the school are very good.
- There is a very good standard of behaviour in classes and around school.
- Attendance is strongly promoted.
- Pupils' relationships with each other and with adults are very good.
- The provision for spiritual development is very good.
- There is a need for improvements in the provision for cultural development to bring it up to the standard of the provision for spiritual, moral and social development.

### **Commentary**

7. Pupils' attitudes to their work, their very good behaviour and good attendance all have a very positive impact on their learning. They like coming to school, enjoy learning and are articulate in discussing their life at school. Pupils know and understand the well-established routines of the school. They work independently on tasks they are given and try to complete them in the set time. They are encouraged to help each other and to treat one another with respect. They are particularly good in class discussions at waiting to take their turn to speak or answer questions and do not do so until invited to by the teacher. They therefore listen to each other and to the teacher. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into the work of each class and are well provided for. They also have positive attitudes to school and to their learning.
8. The role models provided by all the staff in the school, together with consistent implementation of the behaviour policy and the Values Education programme, are significant contributory factors. The marbles system for rewarding good behaviour, good effort and

good work are enjoyed and valued by the pupils. Lunchtime staff are particularly involved in promoting the school's monthly values, for example 'respect' and are responsible for promoting a special table at dinner time for pupils who have excelled in this area the previous week.

9. Boys and girls mix together well and are totally inclusive in their attitudes towards one another. There are a number of pupils from ethnic minorities and some with special educational needs and they all work and play seamlessly alongside the other pupils. The relationships between pupils and between pupils and all staff are very good. The Values Education programme is having a very positive impact and has worked to bind staff and pupils together in a common purpose.
10. Pupils' spiritual development is now very good through the curriculum and excellent through collective worship. Assemblies provide a time of quiet and stillness, when pupils learn to wonder at God's created world and begin to understand that there is a time for everything. In lessons, pupils are also provided with regular opportunities to explore values and beliefs and the way in which they impact on peoples' lives. Provision for pupils' spiritual development has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Their cultural development is enhanced through subjects such as religious education, geography and art and design and through displays throughout the school. Examples of this were seen in displays on Chinese New Year, African art and photographs of a Muslim parent's visit to school to talk to the pupils about his beliefs. Visits outside the school, as well as visitors to the school, enhance the curriculum and widen pupils' experience.
11. Homes are telephoned on the first day of absence if no notification has been received. Each term all parents receive a smartly produced document that stresses the importance of good attendance.

**Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)**

Authorised absence	
School data	5.3
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.1
National data	0.5

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

**Ethnic background of pupils**

**Exclusions in the last school year**

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

No of pupils on roll
170
2
1
4
7

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0

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

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching and learning is good and assessment procedures are excellent. Relationships, the care of pupils and the partnership between parents, the school and the community are all very good.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good and the thoroughness and constructiveness of assessment procedures are excellent: as a result pupils understand how they can improve their work.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Assessment procedures permeate the school and are excellent.
- Teaching in the nursery is very good.
- Very good teaching was observed in mathematics, science, information and communication technology, geography and dance.
- Teaching methods are very effective with pupils interested in all that they do.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 26 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	7	10	7	0	0	0

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

### Commentary

12. In the nursery, teachers and other teaching assistants and nursery nurses have particularly good knowledge about work with children in the early years of education and the work is well planned and organised. The teaching of literacy and the promotion of children's physical development in the Foundation Stage are very good. In all other areas of learning the quality of teaching is good. The teaching of reception children with Year 1 pupils is successful, with teachers planning carefully for the two age groups. For example, during literacy hour they all join in the introduction and then reception aged children follow this with practical activities while Year 1 pupils carry out tasks appropriate or their age.
13. Throughout the school assessment is a strength. For example in the nursery, children are able to say why they think they only partly achieved some skills, such as writing and sounding out the letter 'h'. One child said her standard was 'amber' as she could write over the teacher's letter but found it difficult to say the sound 'h'.

### Example of outstanding practice

**The school's assessment procedures are excellent. They not only enable the staff to track pupils' progress but also ensure that pupils of all ages constantly evaluate their own work.**

Following a baseline assessment on entry, children with special educational needs are identified early. Targets are set for all children in their first few weeks at school. The whole school takes part in an assessment week each term, and results are recorded in each pupil's 'snap-shot' book. Targets are set and pupils analyse how they have met these targets when the next entry is made. In this way pupils enjoy seeing what progress they are making. Self-evaluation is well developed, with children as young as those in the nursery able to explain whether they understood a new concept 'well', 'a little bit' or 'not really' using the traffic light system: 'green – fully understand', amber – 'partly understand', and 'red – don't understand'. Older pupils, aware of their level of understanding, tell the teacher successfully which level of task they need and when they are ready to try a harder one. Peer assessment is also used very successfully and pupils constructively assess each other's work. As a result, pupils are very much more aware of their own needs and levels of ability than is seen in

14. The overall quality of teaching is good in all subjects. Very good teaching was seen in a Year 2 dance lesson where pupils discussed and evaluated each other's work. They explained why they liked what they saw and the teacher's very good subject knowledge, together with a very good range of instruments to inspire pupils, enabled them to reach well above average standards in a dance about autumn. In a Year 1/2 mathematics lesson, assessment was used very effectively to ensure that all pupils could attempt work on number. Lower attainers worked with a learning support assistant finding the lowest number on a hundred square while a line of pupils holding given numerals positioned themselves correctly in numerical order. In this class, pupils then decided how confident they were in working out which numbers to put in a given space on a hundred square and chose an appropriate worksheet to work at on their own.
15. Very good teaching in geography resulted from the teacher's own very good knowledge and a large range of visual aids, which helped the pupils remember what they learned about St Lucia. They asked thoughtful questions and discussed geographical and cultural similarities and differences, such as whether children play football in St Lucia, and what the weather is like there compared with in England. The pupils' recent visit to the Botanical gardens in Oxford enabled them to experience what it feels like to be in tropical heat and they could imagine what it was like for people living in such countries.
16. Information and communication technology (ICT) is taught very well, with the class teacher teaching new skills to the whole class and a learning support assistant following it up by taking groups of pupils throughout the afternoon to practise those skills in the ICT suite. Very good science teaching was seen when pupils gained considerable knowledge and understanding about materials through systematic, step-by-step teaching. Scientific vocabulary was revised, and very good questioning was used to probe pupils' understanding.
17. Teachers plan very well for the mixed age groups and for pupils of different abilities. Lessons are imaginative and hold pupils' interest and attention and as a result their behaviour is always very good. Time is used very well and all pupils are included and supported well.

### **The curriculum**

The quality of the curriculum is very good and this is an improvement since the previous inspection when it was judged to be good. It complies with the legal requirements to teach the National Curriculum and religious education. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and it is also very good for pupils' personal and social development.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is very good support for the curriculum, in visits to places of interest and in the number and variety of visitors to the school.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The personal and social development of pupils is very good.
- The quality and range of accommodation is very good.
- Outside play areas are very well provided with quality activities for the pupils.
- Provision for the most able pupils, especially in Year 2, does not always fully match their ability.
- The school needs to ensure that all pupils receive their full entitlement to the curriculum.
- Further development of the Reception outdoor classroom is required to ensure that the Foundation Stage curriculum is fully delivered.

## Commentary

18. The curriculum is broad and balanced. Policies and schemes of work, to guide and direct the work of staff, are in place and these are managed and monitored by subject leaders. The school has addressed issues identified in the previous inspection and there is now a coherent overall structure to the curriculum. The school is working very hard to ensure that the curriculum is relevant to all pupils and this leads to good provision for children in the Foundation Stage and to very good provision for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and for pupils with special educational needs. At present pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into all school activities and are well supported by the policies and systems the school has in place. However, a few very able pupils need a more challenging curriculum in the subjects at which they excel.
19. The school uses the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's units of work as the basis for its subject plans and this ensures that statutory requirements are met. The school also provides suitable learning opportunities in personal, social and health education and citizenship. Learning is enriched by a very good range of visits to local places of interest, such as museums and botanical gardens, and also by very effective visits to the school by a variety of groups and individuals. Recently pupils have had the opportunity to experience rugby and cricket coaching, a visiting drama group, the Wild Waste Show – focusing on recycling – and working in the mobile Health Education Classroom. A group of missionaries has also visited and the school has had links with schools in The Gambia and Nepal.
20. The school is committed to the inclusion of all pupils in the learning opportunities provided and makes sure that all activities are open to pupils of either sex. One pupil with a statement of special educational need is particularly well provided for and is included in all activities. On the other hand, on some occasions, routines that class teachers have introduced, for example, in arrangements for pupils to read with reading volunteers, mean some pupils miss their entitlement to parts of the literacy strategy. Monitoring of provision has not picked up this slight anomaly. The support for pupils with special educational needs in the classroom and through withdrawal for individual and small group work is very good because it is provided by well qualified teachers and experienced support staff. The school pays for the services of a visiting special needs teacher and she shares the role of special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo) very effectively with the headteacher. This leads to the early identification of potential problems and appropriate support systems being put in place, resulting in pupils with special educational needs making very good progress during their time in the school.
21. The provision for personal development is very good. It is this provision that runs through the heart of all the school does and it is well developed through the Values Education programme. The result is very good behaviour and relationships. Staff are consistent role models in their relationships with each other and in the way they talk with and deal with pupils. Qualities of fairness, justice and a determination to celebrate the best in all are found in many areas of the school. Examples of this are the special celebration assemblies and the way members of the school council are responsible for nominating pupils for a Values Rosette. The overall result is a calm, secure environment in which staff and pupils feel valued.
22. The quantity and quality of learning resources are good overall and the school benefits from a very good range of accommodation. Displays in the hall, the classrooms and in the public areas are of good quality and ensure that accommodation provides a stimulating working environment for pupils. Classrooms are of a very good size and the space is well used. There are a number of extra rooms, which enable the school to provide for the withdrawal of small groups and specialist accommodation such as a computer suite and a library area. The school has a good amount of outdoor play area and a range of play equipment to make

the outside spaces interesting for pupils. The exception to this is the Reception classes' outdoor space which is not yet fully developed.

23. The school is spacious and maintained to a high standard. The school hall is exceptionally large and is put to very good use by the local partnership of schools as well as St Nicholas.

### **Care, guidance and support**

The school ensures that pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are very well provided for. It provides them with very good support, advice and guidance and involves them well in its work and development.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pastoral care is very good, based on trusting and caring relationships with teachers and teaching assistants.
- Health and safety are exceedingly well managed
- The principles of child protection are very well embedded in the life of the school.
- There are very good arrangements for the induction of pupils. Visits are made to their homes prior to their starting school.
- Pupils' academic progress is extremely well monitored
- There are some unfulfilled training needs regarding child protection, mainly concerning the dinner staff.

### **Commentary**

24. Pupils told inspectors how happy they are in the school and parents confirmed this. This is clearly a good foundation for their work in school. The headteacher and other teachers talk very caringly about pupils and the difficulties they might be facing and it is clear that child protection concerns are well embedded in their thinking. Health and safety records are impressively good. The caretaker takes a lively interest in keeping the buildings safe and there are comprehensive reports and procedures for safety on visits. Dinner staff take an interest in the children and look after them well. They are allocated to a class and collaborate well with class teachers. They award a merit certificate to one member of their class every week.
25. Parents told inspectors how pleased they are with the way their children have been introduced into the Nursery and Reception classes, and the way they had been kept informed. Teachers and teaching assistants know their children well and take a close interest in their personal development. Every Friday the headteacher examines four sets of books from each class. Thus in the course of a half term the attainment and progress of every pupil is assessed and the result discussed with both the children and their teacher. This is very good practice. Children have targets which are regularly reviewed.
26. Children say that they talk to staff about whole school issues, such as the rules applied to playground games. The school council is an active body and has meaningful discussions. Teachers are always prepared to listen to pupils' concerns at an appropriate time.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

Links with parents, the community and other educational institutions are **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are provided with very good information about the school and their children's progress.

- Parents respond by taking a great interest in the school, supporting both the school and their children's studies.
- There are very good transfer arrangements to the junior school.
- The headteacher takes a leading role in the partnership of local schools and the school benefits well from the activities that are arranged.
- There are very good links with the local community, particularly in the involvement in challenging competitions in science and citizenship.

## Commentary

27. Parents have high opinions of the school, with few disagreements in the answers to the questionnaire. An area of concern, raised by one parent in eight, concerns communication about the progress of their children. The inspection team finds that the school is very open to parents and provides much information on a routine basis. Working parents are always welcome to telephone if they have concerns.
28. The prospectus and governors' annual report are of high quality, providing good information in an attractive format. There is a meeting every term for parents to learn what their children will be studying. Twice a year there are meetings at which parents are told about the progress of their children. There are also interviews when base-line assessments are being made. School reports have good descriptions of what children have achieved or done and targets for development are included.
29. Parents are supportive in many ways, especially in raising funds through the Friends of St Nicholas. Parents join assemblies and help with lessons, such as woodwork and sewing. Parents are involved in a family learning workshop, in which parents have a lesson and then there is a joint lesson with their children. Parents are not consulted about wider issues such as policies, developments and the curriculum. Parents are invited to take part when individual education plans are being reviewed. There are two end-of- year newsletters, one written by the headteacher and the other written by the children. These are all examples of a very good collaboration.
30. The school uses the community to enhance the education it provides by inviting in the Fire Service, Police, the Mayor, missionaries from Africa, and the RAF to collect materials collected for disadvantaged children in Iraq. There are strong links with the local church. Six staff from a local company come in to school to hear children read, incidentally supplying some male role models for the children. Visiting artists and performers add spice to the school's fare and the involvement of the older children in competitive challenges provides splendid opportunities for them to develop confidence, speaking skills and a wider knowledge of the world.
31. The local partnership of schools brings pupils together for art, music and other activities for all to enjoy. For example, the massed choirs give an annual performance at St Nicholas and then the individual schools organise their own performances. The partnership encourages some good collaboration between teachers, for instance the special needs co-ordinators. There are good links with Oxford Brookes University on teacher training and work experience is provided for three secondary schools. The school works very closely with the local junior school, with three visits in the summer term prior to transfer. Teachers from the two schools have comprehensive discussions about the pupils and the curriculum. The two headteachers take assemblies in each other's schools.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **very good**, overall. The leadership of the headteacher is **excellent** and the leadership of other key staff, the management of the school and the governance of the school are all **very good**.





## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides very strong and purposeful leadership.
- The leadership of teaching and the curriculum by the headteacher is excellent.
- The management of the school is very good and reflects a school with ambition.
- The governors are very active in the school, understand its strengths and weaknesses and hold it to account.

## Commentary

32. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent and she is very well supported by key members of staff. Many of the school's initiatives are piloted by the headteacher who teaches part-time and has a clear vision for the school. The strategic planning reflects this vision. There are very effective teams which have developed an exciting and stimulating curriculum.
33. The management of the school is very good. The processes and use of assessment are outstanding features of the school. Self-evaluation is embedded in the life of the school in all of its facets and pupils are increasingly being involved in checking their own understanding through the recently introduced traffic light system. There are very effective systems in place for the rigorous monitoring of data related to pupils' progress. This provides the school with a clear picture of how well pupils' achieve, enabling the school to take action to support further improvement where appropriate. As a result, the well documented school improvement plan is not only a very useful tool for future development, but is regularly checked to ensure progress towards the listed targets.
34. Performance management of staff, including support staff, is well established and is effective in raising the quality of teaching. Very good systems are in place for ensuring that staff development issues not only coincide with personal professional needs but equally support the school general targets for improvement. Financial procedures are effective in helping the school achieve its educational priorities and the headteacher and governors understand well the principles of best value. Any balance carried forward in recent years has been used effectively to provide a very good staffing ratio and support staff, which in turn has helped support learning in the classroom. As a result, pupils achieve well.
35. The governance of the school is very good. The governors are very committed and have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They take an active role in shaping the school's direction and monitor the school's progress well by actively visiting classes, watching teachers at work and reviewing and self-evaluating the school's progress towards its targets. The large under-spend has been appropriately reduced with the employment of additional learning support assistants.

## Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	366,879
Total expenditure	379,724
Expenditure per pupil	2,732

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	73,677
Balance carried forward to the next	60,832

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

36. The provision made for the children in the nursery is very good. Provision for children in the classes with reception aged children is good. There is close liaison between the nursery and the reception class teachers and the level of assessment and tracking of children is very good. As a result, good support is given to children who have special educational needs or who show signs of weaknesses in particular aspects of the Foundation Stage curriculum. All six nationally agreed areas of learning are fully implemented and there have been considerable developments within the Foundation Stage since the last inspection. The quality of teaching is good overall, and very good in the nursery. As a result children achieve well in the Foundation Stage, with some achieving very well. The very good accommodation in the nursery is used to its best advantage. Outside accommodation is excellent for the nursery and satisfactory for the reception classes.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The organisation of the classrooms enables children to play together in a constructive way and access the full range of the curriculum.
- Children are confident in their classes and collaborate well with each other and have very good relationships with adults.
- They are fast becoming independent and achieve very well in this area of learning.

#### **Commentary**

37. Children achieve very well in this area of learning as they move through the nursery into reception. The teacher and her assistants have established a good routine and have created a stimulating environment for the children. A good number of children get very close to achieving the learning goals in this area of learning before they go into reception classes, where they settle quickly to routines. Here they are managed well and good teaching builds on the socialising atmosphere of the nursery. Because of the regular good teaching, children respond well in class during question and answer sessions. They mix well together and get on well with slightly older children in Year 1 with whom they share the class.

### **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Lessons are well planned and literacy skills are taught well.
- Teachers manage children well and available time is used to good effect.
- Teaching assistants are used very well to support learning.
- Children are interested in reading and show a great interest in books.
- Most children can write their names and are beginning to form their letters well.
- Children are given good opportunities to talk to their teachers and assistants.

## Commentary

38. Children enter the nursery with below average communication and language skills. Teachers help them to achieve well by the end of the Foundation Stage, although a small minority of children will not have achieved the national Early Learning Goals for this area of learning before going into Year 1.
39. Their good achievement is largely the result of good and some very good teaching of early literacy skills. Teachers' knowledge and skills in literacy and the support they receive from assistant teachers, enables children to make good progress. From the earliest opportunity, children can 'write' out their ideas. They often discuss these with their teachers who in the reception classes, will write them down for children to copy. Letter formation is taught from the nursery and children can soon sound and name a selection of letters. Children are keen to speak, although some have basic speech difficulties resulting from weak hearing. Children frequently talk to each other when given opportunities and teachers and their helpers encourage conversation whenever possible.
40. In the nursery, children are happy to sit in a book corner looking at books. They understand how to turn pages and realise that words convey the meaning of the story. In the reception classes children make good progress in their reading, partly through the use of their growing phonic skills.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- All children know and count numbers to ten with many counting to twenty.
- Children enjoy counting songs and games and staff make good use of them to consolidate learning.
- Teaching and learning about space, shape and measuring is carried out effectively.
- A lack of a specific scheme of work directly related to the needs of children in the Foundation Stage does not allow them to make the progress they might.

## Commentary

41. Children have the opportunity, through good teaching, to learn basic number skills in the nursery. They use a wide variety of counting games, threading tasks and puzzles in order to improve their knowledge and understanding. Children achieve well through these good opportunities. Many, but not all will achieve the expected standards in this aspect of work by Year 1. They count numbers out loud and can tell the teacher missing numbers or the next number when counting forwards and backwards to ten. Counting games and rhymes are used effectively through the Foundation Stage, in order to consolidate counting skills.
42. Children make better progress in recognising shapes. As a result of using many good resources and stimulating games, children have good knowledge of two-dimensional shapes and, soon after joining the reception classes, they can talk about circles, squares and triangles.
43. Currently, the work planned for children in the reception classes is taken from Year 1 work and altered to support learning of younger children. This is not specific enough for their needs. At the same time, the use of games to support numeracy skills is not yet sufficient to support counting, place recognition and sequencing in the reception classes. There is also some inconsistency in the use of the early parts of the numeracy lessons in which oral mathematics skills might be improved.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children have a good understanding of information and communication technology and what it can do.
- During lessons they find out about living things and accurately identify features of them.
- They investigate objects and materials by using their senses.
- The large secure outside area allows children from the nursery to explore safely out of doors.
- The smaller and less attractive area outside the reception classes does not offer such good facilities, but this has been identified by the school and the friends of the school have agreed to support its development financially.

### **Commentary**

44. Good teaching in this area of learning means that children have a growing understanding of their world and achieve very well. This is especially true of work carried out in the outside environment of the school and within their work with computers. They use a program for drawing a diagram of their bedrooms, with the more able children putting furniture into the picture. The majority of children are likely to achieve the expected standards by the end of the Foundation Stage. Children are seen planting bulbs and following instructions carefully. They have walked around the school and taken photographs of their favourite plants, placing the photographs on a map of the school. Older reception children have looked at the life cycle of a butterfly. A display of baby pictures has been used effectively to help children understand recent changes in their growth and to allow them to fix their lives into a time frame.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a very good range of outside play equipment for children in the nursery.
- Children show good awareness of space around them and experiment well with small games apparatus.
- The teaching of physical education in the reception classes is good and supports children's physical development well.
- The outside area for the reception classes is small, but to some extent this disadvantage is overcome by physical education lessons in the hall.

### **Commentary**

45. The outside area for the nursery class is very well equipped, large and an exciting place for children to develop physically. A wide range of wheeled and other play equipment encourages them to move freely, climb and play with large equipment. As a result, children here show a good awareness of their own space and that of others and achieve well. They take care as they are moving around and share the equipment well. Reception class children experiment with ball games and learn appropriate skills of control and sending the ball with both hands and feet. The teaching in this area of learning is good and sometimes very good. As a result pupils make good progress and achieve well. The outside area for play for reception age children is small. This is in some part ameliorated by the additional physical education lessons which make up for this minor deficiency. In classes, children have good access to a range of games and activities, which allow them to develop fine control with their fingers as

they thread counting beads, use the computer mouse and handle small and large paint brushes. Overall, they are on course to attain the nationally expected standards by the time they start in Year 1, in this area of learning.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Organisation of classrooms encourages creativity through a range of activities.
- Singing is enjoyed by all children and they sing well.
- Elements of nature are used to support children's art work and their spiritual development well.

### **Commentary**

46. The bright and stimulating environment in classrooms, including the nursery, encourages creativity. Although not all are expected to achieve all the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage, teaching is good and the children achieve well. There is usually a wide range of activities available to children in order to meet their creative needs. In the nursery, for example, an assistant teacher is at hand alongside the daily creative activity, so that close support can be given to children as they paint or draw. Work on display in the Foundation Stage shows children have created an autumn collage, making use of leaves and plants and celebrating the beauty of nature. Pencil and pastel drawings by children in the reception class show their ability to blend colours to achieve different textures of the fruit they draw. Some nursery children were seen painting rainbows independently, learning how paint can be put onto paper and being aware that paint runs down the easel. Children across the Foundation Stage love singing. They are seen singing nursery rhymes, counting songs and learning new songs. They learn "Curly whirly tail", sitting quietly on the floor, picking up both words and tune quickly.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The standard of speaking and listening is very good.
- Most pupils achieve well, from a low attainment base on entry.
- Teaching in most lessons is good.
- The standard of reading of the more able pupils is very good.
- The subject is very well led and managed by the subject leader.
- The more able pupils need greater challenge in writing.

#### Commentary

47. The 2003 test results, overall, were well above the national average in reading and writing. The percentage reaching the higher level was in line with the national average in reading and below the national average in writing. Standards in the current Year 2 are above average in speaking, listening and in reading and average in writing. Teaching overall is good, ranging from good to satisfactory, resulting in a good range of learning experiences for pupils. Achievement is good overall, as pupils enter school with below average levels of attainment. Standards have declined since the last inspection but the intake of the school has begun to change over the same period, with standards on entry below average in language development where as they were just above the national average by the time they entered the reception class at the last inspection. Improvement, overall, in English since the last inspection has been satisfactory.
48. Most teachers use a very good range of questions during lessons, including questions requiring pupils to come up with the correct answer, and some probing questions that require them to think and explain or give their opinions. This is very effective in leading and developing pupils' understanding and learning. During question and answer sessions, pupils are required to listen and consider what is being said before they respond and give their own answers. Pupils have a very good variety of opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills, such as when they work in pairs or groups and when they report back at the end of lessons. They are also provided with opportunities to speak to the rest of the school in assemblies and the school council provides an excellent forum for a very high level of speaking and listening for one group of pupils. Teachers encourage pupils to respond in complete sentences and this contributes to their language development.
49. Attainment in reading is good overall and many pupils are beginning to read fluently, taking note of punctuation. Pupils' knowledge of sounds, letters and simple word building is developed well in Year 1 and this is enhanced by very good opportunities in Year 2 where pupils sequence events accurately when reading instructions. There are a number of high attaining pupils who are very confident and read with great fluency, expression and intonation. Pupils understand and are able to explain what author and illustrator are and the more able are beginning to develop preferred authors and types of books. Effective, planned opportunities to teach reading in groups, and pupils reading regularly in class and to adults, increase pupils' progress throughout the school. However, the school needs to ensure that pupils withdrawn from part of the literacy lessons to read to adults in a one- to- one situation are not being deprived of vital teaching in their class. All pupils have regular access to the school library, and to a range of books in each class library, in addition to reading schemes and group readers. However, there is a limited range of non-fiction books at a simple level.

50. Attainment in writing is average overall in Year 2, but below expectations for the more able pupils. Pupils are presented with regular opportunities to develop writing and the subject leader has created a very good range of opportunities for writing for a real purpose. For example, when groups go on visits, or when the school has had a visitor, pupils are encouraged to write to them to express their thanks and give their views on what they have experienced. Pupils are introduced to the need for planning their writing and are aware of such elements as setting, characters and main events. Most pupils are able to write pieces that convey meaning and are able to develop sequences of ideas, using capital letters and full stops appropriately. The number of pupils reaching the higher levels of attainment is currently below average compared with similar schools.
51. Teaching is good and this presents most pupils with a good range of learning experiences. Teachers have a secure understanding of the National Literacy Strategy, as it evident from their planning. Some other features of the good teaching are the sharing of learning intentions with pupils, good use of strategies such as guided writing and reading, a brisk pace and a good knowledge of the subject. Teaching could be improved further if teachers had higher expectations of the quality and quantity of pupils' work and it was sufficiently challenging for the more able pupils in each class.
52. The leadership of English is very good and this has meant that a great deal of work has been undertaken since the last inspection. It also ensures that achievement in English is good overall as pupils enter school with below average attainment. However, the subject can be improved further by ensuring that there is a clear and progressive development of writing skills throughout the school and that all pupils have access to a range of non-fiction books that is suitable to their age and experience.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

53. Pupils' language and literacy skills are used to support work in all areas of the curriculum. Their well developed speaking and listening skills allow them to participate in class and group discussions and this is having a positive impact on the Values Education and pupils' personal development. There are very good opportunities for writing and pupils are beginning to adopt suitable styles for various purposes. Reading is used widely for enjoyment and fact-finding, including researching topics through ICT. However, this could be improved further by giving pupils access to a more suitable range of non-fiction books.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Work in shape, space and measuring is good.
- The teaching of mathematics is good.
- Most pupils achieve well in mathematics, with the majority reaching average standards.
- The school has not focused sharply enough on raising standards of pupils with lower than average ability across the school.
- The school does not provide pupils with enough opportunities to explore number work using a wide range of aids to learning.

### **Commentary**

54. Although a lower than average number of pupils in Year 2 reaches the standard expected of them for their age, they still show good achievement, bearing in mind that they come in to school with below average mathematical understanding. This year's results show that just over three quarters of pupils reached the expected level 2. This was well below the national

average. However, for many pupils this showed good achievement. A third of pupils reached the level above that expected nationally; this was very good achievement. These results are slightly lower than those noted at the last inspection.

55. The progress pupils' make and the levels they achieve are both testament to the good teaching seen in the school. This, together with pupils' good and sometimes very good attitudes to the subject, gives good support to the progress they make. Achievement is particularly good in the area of shape, space and measurement. This is primarily because teachers are at pains to provide pupils with a wide range of interesting and useful aids to learning. As a result pupils can handle and arrange shapes, feel their corners and sides and gain a very concrete understanding of how to describe the shapes and their properties.
56. Not yet as effective, is the use of equally interesting and helpful games and aids to learning, in the area of number work. Pupils are sometimes taken too quickly on to concepts about which they have had insufficient practical experiences. As a result, learning is not as effective as it could be.
57. The school recognises that in the recent past, it has necessarily had to focus much of its time on improving pupils' literacy skills and has done this effectively. It is now an appropriate time to turn its resources and its efforts for improvement to numeracy.
58. Although this area is highlighted in the most recent school improvement plan, its targets are too limited. It focuses on Year 1, and does not focus sufficiently on the lack of effective core material in classes with Reception children. There are insufficient learning aids for number work and an inconsistent use of the early part of numeracy lessons to help pupils experiment with mental abilities. Currently assistant teachers are deployed far more in literacy than in numeracy lessons.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

59. Mathematics is used satisfactorily across the curriculum. It is used well in subjects such as science and geography where graphs are used to illustrate findings and is used a little in history as pupils' see timelines illustrating the chronology of their topics.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The teaching and learning in science are good and pupils achieve well.
- Standards reached in science, by the oldest pupils, are good.
- The school is beginning to develop good strategies for investigative work in science.
- Not enough use is made of ICT within the subject on a day-to-day basis.

#### **Commentary**

60. In the most recent national teacher assessments for science, almost every pupil reached the nationally expected standard for their age. This shows good achievement for most pupils and very good achievement for some who arrived at St. Nicholas school with below average levels of understanding of the world around them. This is a similar situation to that which applied at the last inspection.
61. The progress which pupils have made over their time at the school has been largely due to consistently good teaching and learning. Teachers are knowledgeable about the subject and



consistently focus on the vocabulary of science, as noted in a Year 2 lesson on materials. Teachers make their lessons interesting, making especially good use of the schools' local environment and, as a result, pupils respond well, show great interest in the subject and persevere with their work until it is completed.

62. The school rightly focuses much of its work on the investigative element of science, giving pupils a wide range of experiences. This is illustrated well through the annual science challenge in which pupils from the wider group of schools complete investigations and share their results at a local laboratory. However, links with investigative work and other elements of the wider science curriculum are not always clearly noted in teachers' planning, where different elements of the work tend to be separated. Teachers make good use of pupils' literacy skills, especially in Years 1 and 2, as they write about their investigations.
63. The leadership and management of the subject are good, although the percentage of pupils reaching standards above those expected for their age is not yet high enough. This in part is due to the lack of tasks specifically set for the most able pupils and limited use of day-to-day information and communication technology to provide extension activities linked directly with the subject matter being taught. The knowledgeable science co-ordinator has already noted these deficiencies and is creating an action plan to address them.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The resources now available for the subject are good.
- The strong leadership of the subject leader has led to very good improvement and ICT being well used to support learning across most of the curriculum.
- The teaching assistant is making a very valuable contribution to the delivery of ICT.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic and have very positive attitudes to ICT.
- There is a need to extend pupils' knowledge, understanding and use of ICT equipment, including digital cameras and data handling equipment.
- The school needs to continue to improve the ratio of computers to pupils.

### **Commentary**

64. Standards in Year 2 are above average. Teaching in the subject is very good and this leads to very good learning by pupils. Leadership of ICT is very good and this has led to very good improvement since the last inspection.
65. The school has worked hard to improve the provision of ICT since the last inspection. There has been a major investment directed towards the improvement of the subject to provide good quality resources and to raise standards. There is now a well-equipped ICT suite with six computers and an interactive white board. Additionally, there are five laptops and other computers in classrooms.
66. The high investment and good quality leadership provided by the subject leader have resulted in improved standards. From an early age most pupils show they are confident using the mouse to log on to their computers, access programs, amend and improve their work and save it and print it out. Older pupils are making books and beginning to import pictures to use in their work as well as communicating with pupils in other schools through e-mails.
67. Teaching and learning of the skills and use of ICT are very good. They are delivered with the support of a very skilled teaching assistant, working under the direction of the subject leader and class teachers. She has a very clear understanding of the focus of each session and is supported by a clear policy, scheme of work and much-improved resources. This has led to

ICT being used effectively to support teaching and learning across most of the curriculum. Examples of this include work on food from around the world in geography in Year 1. Pupils in Year 2 made graphs of their favourite foods and animals and produced a very good display, using a digital camera, following a harvest assembly.

68. The school is well placed to improve standards further and there is a commitment to do so. An increase in the ratio of computers to pupils and a development of the use of other ICT equipment will help to continue the drive to raise standards even higher. The very positive attitude of pupils to ICT and the very good relations between them and staff ensures that ICT sessions are well used and staff are able to concentrate on teaching without having to deal with inappropriate interruptions.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

69. Information and communication technology is well used to support learning in many areas of the curriculum in all age groups and there is good evidence of this around the school. Teachers have recently begun to use it in their own work with the introduction of the interactive whiteboard and laptop computers, but there is still some way to go before it is fully established as a valuable resource to aid teachers in their work. This has been identified in teachers' performance management objectives.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Geography and history**

70. Geography and history were only sampled during the inspection, with one lesson observed in each subject. Evidence was also gathered through looking at pupils' work from both this year and from last year's Year 2 class. The humanities co-ordinators was interviewed and her file studied. She monitors the subjects through looking at displays and pupils' work and half-termly staff meetings. Concise assessment records are kept. The subjects are well co-ordinated and good progress has been made since the last inspection. The main area for development lies in history, where a sense of chronology is not apparent in the way the subject is taught through unrelated topics. Good links are made, however, with other subjects. Information and communication technology is used successfully in literacy hours and in geography; for example, when making plans and maps of the area. There are also links with religious education when the local area is studied and pupils visit the local church, drawing a plan of their route. The local area and places further afield are used extensively to promote a sense of place. A nature trail is followed in the school grounds and pupils visit the local shops and town of Wallingford. They experience a river trip and learn about canal and river boats. They visit museums and the Botanical Gardens in Oxford and their understanding of rain forests is promoted by this latter visit, which is linked to their work on the Gambia. In a very good lesson pupils also learned about different climates and places when studying St Lucia: the teacher was able to speak from her first hand experience of a visit there. Missionaries from Africa also bring geography to life and develop pupils' understanding of different cultures. All aspects of geography are covered well and the work in pupils' books shows a very good understanding and coverage of the subject. Teaching and learning are judged to be good overall and sometimes very good. There is very good provision with the results that standards are above average and pupils' achievement is very good.
71. Visits are also used well to promote pupils' understanding of history, with visits to the Ashmolean museum, a bicycle museum and an open-air museum to look at houses through the ages. Pupils' work shows that they have knowledge of different people and events such as Guy Fawkes, the Great Fire of London and the Victorians and they develop a sense of old and new and how people lived in the past. Provision is good but not enough was seen to judge standards or pupils' achievement.

## Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**, which is an improvement since the last inspection when it was a weakness.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Role play is used very well in lessons.
- Pupils become confused between religions when they are taught together.

### Commentary

72. Standards in religious education are average overall. Pupils' books show a good range of work on Christianity and Judaism. For example, they have learned about Holy Books, festivals such as Harvest Festival and Sukkoth and Christmas and Rosh Hashanah. However, because religious education is taught as topics pupils sometimes become confused between religions. Pupils' work shows that they have a good knowledge of Holy Week and Easter and write that 'Jesus' mum was sad,' and 'Jesus died on the cross to save our sins.' The pupils have learned about Old Testament stories such as the crossing of the Red Sea and parables such as the Prodigal Son. Pupils also learn about famous people such as Mother Theresa. Work of pupils of different abilities is matched well to their needs with the most able writing at come lengths and those with special educational needs being supported by their teacher's writing. Standards of work range from well above average to below average.
73. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to excellent; overall it is good. As a result pupils learn well and gain a good degree of knowledge and understanding. Teachers mark pupils' work particularly well showing them how they can improve their work. In lessons role-play is used very well to help pupils remember what they are taught and to empathise with others.
74. The school now follows its own scheme of work based on the locally Agreed Syllabus, national guidance and a commercial handbook. The scheme of work, which covers a two-year cycle, shows that Christianity, Judaism and Islam are taught. Pupils' books show a good understanding of Christianity and a satisfactory knowledge of Judaism but as yet little on Islam. The leadership and management of the subject are good.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

### Art and design

Provision for two-dimensional art is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have good opportunities to explore a good range of two dimensional art and use a good range of media with which to draw and paint.
- There is good development of pupils' skills of observation from the earliest years.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and pupils achieve well.
- The use of artists-in-residence enhance the overall work in the subject.
- The provision for three-dimensional art is not as well developed.

### Commentary

75. The quality of teaching and learning is good and pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. Teachers plan their lessons well and use resources

effectively. Standards in two dimensional work at least match those expected of their age by the end of Year 2. The development of this area of work in the subject has been good since the last inspection. There is some particularly good work in the area of studying famous artists. Work in the style of Mondrian and Van Gogh is well displayed and shows a good understanding of the artists' styles and use of paint.

76. Good teaching encourages pupils to use their skills of observation well in lessons. Year 1 pupils draw fruit and vegetables, while other pupils use a range of media such as paint, pastels and charcoal to create their pictures. As a result, pupils make good progress in understanding shape, texture and colour and make very good efforts to reproduce colours of fruit in connection with their work on the Caribbean in Year 1.
77. Over the recent past the school has made very good use of artists in residence. Artists have visited the school and have often spent time with all pupils helping them gain an insight into the work of an artist while at the same time learning new skills. This has helped them to achieve well.
78. Although pupils have had experience of collage work and of printing, there is insufficient evidence around the school of three-dimensional work of the same quality and quantity as two-dimensional work. There was no evidence of work in clay or other malleable substances as it is difficult to store but pots, tiles and faces have been made in the past. Work in creating a tapestry for the Coronation Day children's party is of high quality.

### **Design and technology**

79. Design and technology was only sampled and there is insufficient evidence to make a secure statement about the adequacy of provision. This is similar to the previous inspection. However, the small displays of work around the school, for example in designing and making a bag for an apple, show that the work is being carried out. Planning shows that a range of topics are covered and that pupils have experiences of designing, making and evaluating their finished products.
80. Pupils were seen cutting up fruit in order to make a fruit salad in food technology, having designed the dish making use of typical Caribbean fruits in connection with their topic on St Lucia.

### **Music**

81. Music was only sampled during the inspection. Assemblies and two singing lessons showed that singing is taught well. Documentation illustrates that other aspects of the music curriculum are satisfactorily planned for. Pupils in three different year groups were observed learning new songs in preparation for Christmas. They quickly learned the new tunes and were keen to repeat phrases sung by the teachers. They learned 'A shiny bell' and 'Curly whirly tail'. Older pupils could follow the words as the teacher pointed to them, so giving them good opportunities to practise their reading skills. Lessons are well managed and teachers prepare for them well and are enthusiastic about music. As a result, pupils are well motivated, enjoy the experiences and achieve well. Pupils sing well as a result of good teaching. This was similar to the provision at the last inspection.

### **Physical education**

Provision for physical education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching of physical education is good overall with examples of very good teaching.

- As a result of good teaching pupils achieve well.
- On occasions, the large apparatus is set out without careful enough consideration of the lesson's learning objectives.

### **Commentary**

82. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, with some examples of very good teaching. As a result, standards are in line with those expected and pupils achieve well. Teachers' subject knowledge, their management of the class, their understanding of the health and safety implications of their work and the pace of lessons are all significant factors in helping pupils make progress in their work.
83. In a very good gymnastics lesson in the mixed Reception and Year 1 class, the class teacher helped pupils understand how to lift and move apparatus carefully. She continued with a vigorous warm up after which pupils were asked to check their heart beats in order to see the connection between exercise and healthy hearts. The class teacher demonstrated activities to good effect and gave continuous support and coaching to individuals in order that they might all make progress. As a result, all pupils achieved well with some achieving very well.
84. In a good lesson seen on ball skills, the teacher worked alongside the pupils coaching them effectively and offering them a range of activities, which promoted the development of skills. Again, in a very good dance lesson for Year 1 and Year 2 pupils, their work on autumn leaves twisting and turning in the breeze showed very good achievement. Clear links were made with their work in environmental science. The excellent behaviour of pupils was a significant factor in the progress they made during the lesson.
85. As even the youngest pupils are taught to move equipment carefully and safely it is surprising that equipment is set out by the oldest pupils for several classes to use. As a result, not all pupils have opportunities for moving equipment, but more importantly, on occasions the equipment set out for one class is not appropriate for the learning objectives of the next lesson.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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