

INSPECTION REPORT

ST NICOLAS CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Nuneaton

LEA area: Warwickshire

Unique reference number: 130975

Headteacher: Janet Eaton

Lead inspector: Brenda Iles

Dates of inspection: 21st – 23rd June 2004

Inspection Number: 257891

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	444
School address:	Windermere Avenue Nuneaton Warwickshire
Postcode:	CV11 6HJ
Telephone number:	024 7638 2583
Fax number:	
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr David Craddick

Date of previous inspection: 27th April 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This Church of England school is much bigger than most primary schools with 444 pupils on roll. Almost all pupils are of white ethnic origin, speaking English as their first language. A below average proportion of pupils (ten per cent) have identified special needs and a very small number have a statement for special educational needs. Attainment on entry is above average. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below average. The school has gained many awards including Activemark, Artsmark, Healthy Schools, Investors in People and a School Achievement Award in 1999/2000. Following the completion of local re-organization since the last report, the school now educates pupils aged 4-11 and offers community support for pupils out of hours. There are strong links with the local pre-school that shares the school site.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
12000	Brenda Iles	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage, Science, Art and design, History
9545	Kevin Greatorex	Lay inspector	
32304	Jane Banting	Team inspector	English as an additional language, Information and communication technology, Music.
21396	Andrew Cox	Team inspector	Mathematics, Geography, Physical education
31281	Marion Kellow	Team inspector	English, Design and technology, Personal, social and health education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The headteacher's strong inspirational leadership underpins the work of this **very good school**. The quality of education is very good and the school provides very good value for money. The ethos for learning is excellent, teaching is very good, pupils make consistently good progress and achieve highly. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are more able are supported and challenged very effectively.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The leadership of the headteacher is excellent
- The excellent ethos for learning and provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development reflect positive Christian values, strong relationships and high aspirations for success
- Standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average in Years 2 and 6
- Very good provision in the Foundation Stage underpins children's success as learners
- A broad range of teaching strategies supports learning very effectively
- Governors make an excellent contribution to shaping the school's future
- Parents make a very good contribution to their children's learning

The weaknesses identified in the last report have been addressed in full. The practice in the Foundation Stage is now a significant strength, standards in ICT are above average and the action taken to address gender differences in writing have been successful. The roles of subject leaders are well developed. A rigorous programme of self-evaluation and monitoring has secured an ongoing trend of improvement in standards and the quality of teaching. The school improvement plan accurately identifies priorities. There is no complacency.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	All schools			Similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	A	B	A	A
Mathematics	A	A	A*	A*
Science	B	A	A	A

Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average

A - indicates that the school's results are among the top five per cent nationally*

Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

In the Foundation Stage (FS), most children are likely to exceed well above the expectations for their age group in all the areas of learning. The children are taught very well and make very good progress. The evidence gathered by the inspection team and the last set of national test results agree that, by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards are well above average in mathematics, reading, writing and science. The proportions of pupils achieving the higher levels are also much higher than average. Pupils of different abilities are challenged very effectively. Standards in other subjects are all at least above average. In history, art and design, design and technology and personal, social and health education they are well above those usually seen in primary schools. Standards in information and

communication technology are above average. **Overall, pupils' achievements are very good.**

Pupils have very positive attitudes to school, attend regularly and punctually and are keen to learn. Behaviour is consistently very good. **The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.**

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is very good. Teaching is very good overall and never less than satisfactory. It is consistently very good in the reception classes. In Years 1 to 6 it is very good overall, with some features of excellence. Provision to support pupils with special educational needs is very good. Relationships are excellent. The current focus on promoting creativity across subjects is rightly concentrating on extending opportunities for independent investigation and problem solving in interesting and challenging ways.

The Foundation Stage curriculum is excellent and at other stages of learning the very good range and balance of provision provides interesting, interlinked experiences that engage and enthuse pupils. The strong links between literacy and numeracy and other subjects enable pupils to apply their learning and develop their own thoughts and ideas. The school's very good partnership with parents and strong links with the local community, for example the church, local schools, industry and community groups, support learning very well.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the school is very good. Management is very good. The headteacher has provided inspiration and direction for the school's work. The very good partnership with the deputy headteacher and senior staff reflect a strong, positive shared vision for the school's future. The issues identified in the last report are now strengths. The rigorous pace of development has ensured the school has maintained its strengths and built on them further. Subject leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of their subjects and how to lead improvements. There is a high level of commitment to achieve the highest standards and staff and governors work as a unified team. Governance is very good and all statutory requirements are met. Governors make excellent contributions to decision-making and systematically evaluate and review the school's work. There is a very good knowledge of the impact of initiatives on achievements. Day-to-day administration is very good. The monitoring and evaluation of standards are well structured and the information used to identify new projects. The progress of different groups of pupils is tracked meticulously and targets set to support specific learning needs. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage of learning are also excellent, supported effectively by senior staff.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Most parents are very pleased with the quality of education the school provides and the school has a high reputation in the community. Parents are very pleased with their children's progress and feel strongly that the school is well led. Reports give parents good information about their children's learning. Pupils enjoy school. They are enthusiastic, eager learners. While a small number of parents would like more opportunities to talk informally to staff, the evidence shows that the school makes every effort to support individual needs and circumstances.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The inspection confirms the school's self- evaluation judgements and agrees the main priority for further improvement already identified in the school plan is:

- To provide more opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge and skills creatively across the full range of curriculum subjects.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

A brisk rate of progress is sustained well throughout the school, enabling pupils to achieve highly in all stages. Standards in English, mathematics and science and a number of other subjects are well above average in Year 2 and Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The majority of children in the Foundation Stage reach standards well above the expectations of the early learning goals by the end of the Reception year
- Standards in English, mathematics and science have risen steadily over recent years and the performance of boys continues to improve
- Pupils' achievements in art and design, design and technology and history are very good
- Pupils who have special educational needs or are gifted and talented achieve very well

Commentary

1. Children in the Foundation Stage make very good progress and achieve very well in all the areas of learning. By the end of the Reception year, most have mastered the Early Learning Goals and are beginning to work at a more advanced level. Very good partnership with Year 1 staff ensures that these significant gains in learning are built upon when children transfer and learning continues to be related to first hand experiences.
2. The rate of progress through Years 1 and 2 is maintained across all ability groups, and pupils achieve very well. In ICT they achieve standards that are above average, which shows good progress since the last report. Results of national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2003 showed that standards were well above average in English, mathematics and science. Comparisons with similar schools shows that pupils attained average standards in writing and science, above average standards in reading and well above average standards in mathematics. The unconfirmed results from 2004 show that standards are similar. They have risen significantly in English and the action taken to support boys' performance in writing has been very successful. Inspection evidence shows no significant variation in performance between boys and girls across subjects.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.3 (19.2)	15.7 (15.9)
writing	15.6 (15.9)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	18.3 (19.3)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 59 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. The improvement in Year 6 test results has been greater than the national trend with the exception of a dip in English in 2002. Last year's test national results in English,

mathematics and science were well above the national average. In comparison to schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, results in English, mathematics and science were well above average. The value added comparisons based on pupils' prior attainment indicate significantly well above average gains in learning.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.8 (28.3)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	30.6 (29.3)	26.8 (26.7)
science	31.3 (30.3)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 59 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. Standards in the current Year 6 remain well above average but national test results are unlikely to be quite as high as last year due to a higher than usual proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the cohort. However, analysis of the work of these pupils indicates that they are achieving very well and have made significant progress over the last year.
5. The most rapid gains in learning and highest achievement are in English, where the school has most successfully targeted the area of boys' writing. Very effective tracking mechanisms ensure that pupils' progress is monitored throughout their time in the school. Strong links between subjects enhance standards, because pupils have opportunities to practise their English and mathematics skills in other lessons. This is a current focus for the school's work. More able pupils are well challenged and achieve very well.
6. ICT is used well to support learning across the curriculum and standards are above average in this area of the school's work. Standards in art and design and design and technology are well above average and support the presentation of learning in other subjects. Displays reflect the high standards being achieved. Pupils also achieve very well in personal, social and health education. There was insufficient evidence to judge standards in music, physical education and geography.
7. Inspection evidence shows rates of progress, while at least satisfactory, are not as rapid in some classes in Years 3 and 4. The school is aware of this issue, which is due to unavoidable temporary staffing arrangements to cover leave of absences. Induction, mentoring, coaching and support have supported teachers well to meet the school's expectations. Three years ago the local education authority reviewed the school. Their advice has been acted upon, resulting in the further improvement of standards, particularly for boys and more able pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, values and behaviour are very good. Pupils' personal development is excellent. Attendance and punctuality are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is outstanding and supports personal development very well
- Pupils throughout the school form excellent relationships with each other and with adults
- Pupils come happily to school. They are hardworking and very eager to learn

Commentary

8. The school has worked hard to improve the pupils' personal development since the last inspection with highly successful results. Provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is now excellent and this is one of the strengths of the school. The spirituality is firmly rooted in very strong Christian beliefs. From the earliest stages in the reception classes, pupils are encouraged to explore their feelings through literature and the creative arts. By Year 6, pupils explore the complex nature of relationships and feelings in English, as expressed by the author of a given text. Assemblies provide opportunities to reflect on spiritual and moral issues and to learn about the lives of people from different cultural backgrounds. The school has engaged the ideas of pupils and parents to develop an attractive garden for quiet contemplation and reflection. Pupils have a very clear understanding of right and wrong. They learn to collaborate with each other in lessons and enjoy teamwork in a range of activities including sports and the arts. The school council is very effective in representing the pupils' views and in acting on their ideas. Through their personal, social and health education lessons pupils learn life skills for dealing with a range of issues and situations they may encounter. In lessons, including art and music, pupils learn about the beliefs and cultures of others, which effectively promote tolerance and understanding.
9. Relationships have been maintained throughout the school since the last inspection and continue to be of very high quality. Exemplified by the warm and caring attitude of the headteacher and other staff, all pupils show mutual respect and trust. From the earliest time in reception, all pupils constantly demonstrate a willingness to help each other and share resources. They work co-operatively and collaboratively together at all times. Virtually all pupils are extremely articulate and mature. They show very high levels of confidence and self esteem.
10. Pupils' attitudes and values have improved since the last inspection and are now very good. As pupils enter the school they are immediately involved in activities. They understand the routines and quickly rise to the high expectations. From the earliest stages they come happily to school and are eager and ready to learn. They are prepared to work hard and participate fully in all activities. Pupils show good levels of independence and persevere well with their tasks. This early enthusiasm continues throughout the school.
11. Behaviour throughout the school has been maintained well since the last inspection and continues to be very good. Pupils rise to the challenging high expectations set by the school and as a result their behaviour is consistently very good. Pupils consistently achieve high levels of orderly behaviour. There have been no incidents of exclusion from the school in the recent past and, consequently, the usual table has not been included.
12. Attendance is very high in comparison with the national average. Pupils are punctual and many arrive early enabling the school to make a prompt and efficient start to the school day.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.4	School data	0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is very good and there are many significant strengths. Teaching and learning are very good. The school's curriculum is very good, enriched through an interesting range of extra-curricular activities. The standard of care for pupils is very high and links with parents and the community are very strong.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning range from excellent to satisfactory and are very good overall. Assessment is very good. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have a very good grasp of their subjects
- Relationships are excellent and strong home school partnerships support learning and teaching well
- Assessment is very good and all pupils are very well challenged
- Lessons are interesting and enjoyable and pupils are attentive, hardworking and productive
- The consistently very good teaching in the Foundation Stage underpins children's success as learners

Commentary

13. Excellent relationships underpin the quality of teaching and learning and help to create purposeful classrooms where pupils can concentrate and learn effectively. This ethos makes an excellent contribution to the pupils' personal, social, emotional and cultural development in lessons. Pupils' enthusiasm for school and thirst for learning contribute much to the harmony and sense of purpose experienced during the inspection. Very good use of homework and the strong home-school partnership has a significant impact on achievement. Teachers ensure pupils have equal opportunities, for example enabling all pupils to access computers to carry out research. This has resulted in good achievement in ICT for all pupils, including those who do not have a computer at home. Pupils and parents comments reflect respect for staff and agreement that they are taught very well. Teaching is structured to meet the needs of different groups and individuals

and staff use their very good subject knowledge to plan lessons which are interesting and stimulate a desire to learn in pupils.

14. In the Foundation Stage there is a very good understanding of early learning and the excellent balance of child and adult led activities supports children's development very effectively. Strong links with Year 1 teachers ensure very good continuity in learning from stage to stage.
15. In Years 1 to 6, class teachers and learning support staff work very effectively together. Subject knowledge is very good and staff strengths are deployed effectively to ensure that a very good range of teaching methods move learning on. The support for pupils with special educational needs is very effective. Well-focused individual education plans enable pupils to make the maximum progress and achieve very well. They frequently reach average standards as a result of the very effective provision.
16. The teaching of basic skills in English, mathematics and science is very good, and much emphasis is placed on supporting pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills. There are also good opportunities for pupils' to develop their thinking and to become independent learners. This aspect is a current school priority. Ways to increase creativity in learning are being trialled successfully in subjects such as history, art and design and design and technology. The next step is to extend these opportunities across all curriculum areas.
17. Staff have adapted the guidance in the national strategies for literacy and numeracy very well. A wide range of methods is used to capture the pupils' interest and most lessons are well structured to include opportunities for discussion, practising skills and reviewing what has been learned. The learning needs of boys are addressed through the use of literature that is of interest to them and encouragement for them to bring in articles they have studied at home. An example of links with numeracy was seen in a very good Year 3 science lesson. Pupils worked very enthusiastically outside, measuring how far they could throw a ball or jump. The thorough preparation for the activity led to a high level of accurate measuring and some quite complex ideas developed about the relationship between a person's height and their ability to jump further. This practical approach engaged pupils' interest and provided a meaningful context for learning.
18. There are high expectations for pupils to work hard and present their work neatly and accurately. Work on display, in books and around the school shows a very high level of presentation and care, and reflects the full ability range. In some lessons in Years 3 and 4, temporary teachers are not yet as confident to use the wider range of teaching strategies seen in very good lessons. The leadership team are providing very good support to address the professional development needs of temporary staff.
19. Support staff play a significant part in supporting learning at all stages. They are briefed very well and several have received substantial training. The staff make very good use of resources to support achievement, for example, in one ICT lesson pupils had the opportunity to work with a robotic turtle, a programmable car and large floor tiles to learn about the importance of sequencing instructions in the right order.
20. Assessment is very good in the core subjects and the outcomes are used very well to support learning. Very detailed tracking procedures ensure that the progress of all pupils is very carefully monitored. This allows prompt action to be taken if needed for any

individual or group, and enables support to be offered to staff and pupils to improve the situation. It also enables staff to ensure that more able pupils are consistently challenged in all lessons. Oral marking and evaluation is very good. There are occasions when written marking could be improved, still further by linking comments more specifically to learning intentions or personal targets, for example in mathematics. Assessment in the other subjects is good.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 76 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6 (13%)	19 (40%)	13 (28%)	9 (20%)	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 curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is excellent in the Foundation Stage and very good at other stages of learning. Opportunities for enrichment, including the provision of extra-curricular activities, are very good. The accommodation is good and the school is very well resourced.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The balance of child and adult led learning opportunities in the Foundation Stage is excellent
- In Years 1 to 6 there is a rich and varied range of experiences which enthuse pupils
- The opportunities for curricular enrichment through sports and the arts are very good
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good
- The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good

Commentary

21. The breadth of opportunities to support learning in the Foundation Stage is excellent. Interlinked learning experiences, connected to exciting activities, for example visits to the zoo and reading of stories, enable children to take part in role play, explore new ideas with adult support and on their own and to express their understanding. They have frequent opportunities to express themselves in their speech, writing, creative paintings, models and play. Their ideas are then used to extend activities to encourage further exploration and promote the joy of personal discovery. This has a very positive impact on children and they become challenged, inquisitive, enthusiastic learners.
22. There is a strong focus on pupils' personal, social and health education, and the school has been officially recognised as a 'Healthy School'. The science curriculum supports learning about sex and drugs, and local community health services also make a valuable contribution. By Year 2 pupils recognise the difference between healthy foods and those

that should be eaten sparingly. Year 6 pupils also show a mature understanding of the impact of exercise on personal well being.

23. There is a very clear and strong commitment to ensure all children are fully included in the life and work of the school. The more able pupils are regularly and successfully challenged, and pupils with special educational needs receive very effective and sensitive support, enabling them to take part productively in all activities. There are strong curricular links with the local secondary school. Liaison meetings for subject leaders and joint planning for Year 6 pupils, enables activities in several different subjects to challenge and engage interest, preparing pupils well for transfer. The completed tasks are valued and developed further after transfer. This provides continuity and a very positive start to pupils' secondary education.
24. The opportunities for pupils to apply and practise English skills across the curriculum are a strength of the school. There are also good links between mathematics and science, ICT, design and technology and history. The school is currently working to develop the creativity of pupils' responses in a wide range of different subjects. Work has started with a joint science and art project. As teachers learn from this project, they evaluate the success, adapt practice and plan to apply the approach across all subjects. The school's initiative to develop pupils' creative responses aims to enhance opportunities for them to drive their own learning, to increase the emphasis given to the foundation subjects and to further improve the rigour, breadth and depth of the curriculum provided for the older pupils. It also aims to raise expectations of pupils to use and apply skills and knowledge across all subjects, and increase the relevance and purpose of their studies.
25. The school provides a rich and varied curriculum. There are day and residential visits out of school, and a variety of enthusiasts and experts who come into the school on a regular basis. Wide-ranging opportunities are provided to support pupils' learning outside the school day. The quality and range of curricular experiences has been recognised in the awarding of a number of prestigious national awards – Artsmark Gold, Activemark and Healthy Schools.
26. There are sufficient teachers to deliver the curriculum. They are well qualified, suitably experienced and effectively deployed. They are supported very well by teaching assistants who are included in planning and support specific learning needs very well. The accommodation is of good quality and is very well maintained. It generally allows the curriculum to be taught effectively. However, the classrooms for Years 3 to 6 are a little cramped. While this does not have a substantial impact on the standards pupils achieve, the governors are currently negotiating plans to increase the size of some of the rooms and have set aside funds for this purpose. The accommodation for the Foundation Stage is very good. Attractive indoor and outdoor areas provide a safe and stimulating working environment for the children. The school's very good resources are used very effectively.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes very good care of children's personal needs and very effectively promotes pupils' welfare in a secure and caring environment. The school provides very good support and guidance for pupils. Pupils are fully involved in the work of the school

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school involves pupils highly effectively in its work and development
- The headteacher and staff provide very good role models and high quality support and guidance
- Induction and transition procedures are very effective
- Staff ensure that the school is a healthy, safe and secure environment for the pupils

Commentary

27. Processes for seeking pupils' views are highly effective. Pupils are confident to express their thoughts because they know that they will be valued and taken seriously. Through the school council and the systems of consultation much has been achieved, including the provision of large quantities of equipment. The appointment of peer mediators, trained to support minor playground squabbles, has further improved the quality of relationships and mutual respect. The recent consultations between the governing body and the pupils to canvass their views on the qualities essential in the appointment of the new headteacher, following the imminent retirement of the current headteacher, demonstrate well the extent to which the pupils are involved in decision making that influences the school's future.
28. High quality induction procedures enable the children to feel secure and comfortable from the moment that they first start school in reception. The information provided by the school enables parents to be reassured and in turn to reassure their children. The pre-school pupils on the school site are given many opportunities to become familiar with the school's practices. This enables them to be well prepared for the transition to the reception class. Partnership is very good.
29. The school continues to provide very good quality support and guidance and very effectively promotes the welfare of pupils. Staff know children extremely well and are well equipped to offer support when it is needed. All staff counsel pupils very well, offering high quality support to those most in need. This stems from the very good, trusting relationships and leadership demonstrated by the headteacher and staff. Pupils confirm that they know whom to approach if they have a problem.
30. Child Protection procedures are fully understood by all staff. They understand the need for vigilance and the steps to take if suspicions are aroused. All staff are safety conscious and watch for the safety and security of the children at all times.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has very good links with parents, the community and other schools

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very supportive of the school and their children's education
- Visits and visitors are very regularly used to enrich the curricular provision
- The school provides very good quality information to parents

Commentary

31. The partnership with parents has been well maintained since the last inspection and continues to have a very positive effect on the children's learning and personal development. The regular use of questionnaires enables parents to express their views about the school's work. Virtually all parents responding to the inspection questionnaire and those attending the meeting were very supportive of the school. They believe it has many, significant strengths.
32. A few parents expressed the view that the school does not take enough account of their concerns and are unsure about how to approach the school with questions or complaints. Inspection findings show there are many methods and opportunities provided by the school for approaches to be made by parents. Inspectors came across many examples of the school handling parental concerns very sympathetically and amicably.
33. Parents are strongly encouraged to become involved in the life of the school and a high proportion responds extremely positively. They are a considerable help in the classroom, around the school and on school trips and visits. The St. Nicolas School Association continues to thrive and is extremely supportive, organising many fundraising and social events. The school values highly the efforts made by all parents and members of the community that enhance children's learning and development.
34. The school continues to enjoy very strong partnerships with a wide range of groups in the community. Links with St Nicolas' church are particularly effective. As reported following the previous inspection, contacts and initiatives with other schools and colleges continue to be strong and plentiful. They add considerably to the pupils' understanding of the wider world around them.
35. Information to parents continues to be of high quality. The information pack for new starters and the school brochure give much good information to parents, enabling them to support their children's learning at home. In addition, regular newsletters and curriculum meetings are arranged to enable parents to be aware of teaching approaches and areas of study. Formal consultation evenings are arranged each term to review children's progress. Reports to parents give much very good quality information about their children's progress and achievements. They also contain clear, measurable targets for improvement.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher is excellent. Governors and senior staff give very good support. Management is also very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The inspiration and excellent clarity of vision of the headteacher and governors drive a dynamic pace of improvement
- Strong, effective partnerships enable staff, governors and the community to work together as a committed team

- Subject leaders are empowered and support staff to achieve high standards in teaching and learning
- The leadership of the Foundation Stage is excellent and enables children to have a very positive start to their education
- Rigorous monitoring and evaluation ensure a clear understanding of the school's strengths and aspects for further improvements

Commentary

36. The headteacher's leadership is inspirational. She is strongly committed to the school and community and strives to achieve the highest standards possible and effective pastoral care. The excellent ethos for learning is underpinned by strong and positive Christian values and provides a very secure environment in which pupils and staff flourish. The enthusiasm to embrace new initiatives and to celebrate success is evident in the awards the school has achieved and the quality of work of all groups of pupils. There is no complacency, just a strong drive to move forward and seek continuous improvement. Governors make an excellent contribution to the strategic vision of the school. They provide very good support and fulfil their duties very successfully. They have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and have been fully involved in negotiating the areas prioritised for development in the school plan. Governors have a clear understanding of the qualities they are seeking in appointing a new headteacher following the retirement of the current headteacher at the end of term.
37. The collegiate leadership style is very effective. An example is the way in which governors and staff consult with pupils and the community regularly. They act upon their views and engage the community by drawing upon their strengths to support improvement. The development of the reflective garden, led by the deputy headteacher, is just one example of this successful partnership.
38. The excellent leadership and management of the Foundation Stage is supported very well by senior staff and leads to sustained very good practice. The prioritisation of this stage of learning has underpinned developments across year groups and in other subjects. This enables pupils to experience a high level of continuity and avoid unnecessary disruptions at points of transfer.
39. The management of the school is also very good. There is a very effective programme for performance management and staff training. This includes all staff and leads to a thorough understanding of roles and responsibilities. Subject leaders monitor teaching and learning and promote staff development through their feedback. Induction mentors support new staff well to ensure the minimum of disruption, for example, during maternity leaves. The caretaker ensures the environment is spotlessly clean, office staff ensure day-to-day routines run smoothly and there is a culture of working together to support community learning.
40. Very good financial management enables the school to achieve the agreed educational priorities in the school plan. This document is very familiar to staff and governors and is widely quoted. Spending is monitored regularly, and the principles of best value are applied rigorously. The bursar provides information of good quality to the headteacher

and governors. The chair of finance is particularly well informed and meets very regularly with the headteacher and governors.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	829,714
Total expenditure	843,597
Expenditure per pupil	1823.55

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	56,018
Balance carried forward to the next	32,840

41. The majority of the issues raised in the recent auditor's report have already been resolved. The school currently has a significant financial surplus, but this has been earmarked for improvements to the building, which will allow more space in some of the classrooms. Leadership and management have continued to improve since the last inspection.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

42. The leadership of the Foundation Stage is excellent. The headteacher, senior management team and Foundation Stage coordinator are a very effective team who have prioritised the development of provision as the platform for children's learning. Very good progress has been made since the last report when provision was unsatisfactory. It is now a significant strength of the school and a model worth sharing beyond the locality. The majority of children are likely to achieve well above the expectations of the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1.
43. The coordinator and staff team work with sustained commitment and continuity to provide a very secure environment for learning. Interactions with children are consistently positive and encouraging and a strength of the provision. Induction procedures are of high quality and ensure children and their parents are well prepared for school. Partnership arrangements with the pre- school on site are very effective and support a seamless transition to the reception classes. Similarly, very good induction procedures for staff enable all adults to understand the expectations to be made of them. Parents see this stage of learning as a strength of the school. They recognise their children make very rapid progress and delight in going to school. The curriculum is excellent. Sessions are planned creatively to provide exciting opportunities for role-play and investigation across the areas of learning and in both the indoor and outdoor environments. There is a very good balance of adult direction and opportunities for children to develop their own ideas. The very good quality of teaching enables all children to achieve very well. The needs of individual children and groups are identified and supported very effectively at an early stage. Resources are very good and the classrooms and shared spaces provide a bright, lively learning environment. Improvements to the accommodation support daily routines and the development of independence well.
44. Assessment and recording procedures are detailed and thorough, linking children's achievements to the Early Learning Goals (the national targets for learning in the different areas of learning). Children's successes are celebrated in lessons, at play, through photographs, records of achievement and reports. Children regularly take books home and solve questions, which are shared with their families.
45. There is a very good understanding of how young children learn. The ethos is caring and vibrant and expectations are high. Staff ensure children are challenged to achieve their best at all times and the links between learning and play are seamless. Children become so engrossed in their work they often do not recognise the difference between lessons and playtimes. There is a very clear vision and enthusiasm to continue to develop the provision further.

Personal, social and emotional development

Provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and children achieve very well

- Classroom routines are very well established and the children are confident, enthusiastic learners
- Personal, social and emotional development underpins the approach to learning and is skilfully integrated in all activities

Commentary

46. Children enter the Reception class with skills in personal and social development that are broadly average. They are extended through a wide range of activities that develop social skills through role-play and opportunities to share and work in pairs and groups. Children achieve very well. They follow classroom routines, listen carefully to instructions, respect adults and their friends, share toys and take responsibility, for example, caring for plants and tidying up. They enjoy excellent relationships with adults and each other. Children love coming to school and enthusiastically talk about their achievements. Their successes and targets are shared with parents regularly and this partnership supports development well. They have a very positive start to learning.

Communication, language and literacy

Provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good and a wide range of experiences and activities challenge all children to achieve very well
- Children make very good progress and become very good communicators
- Children enjoy books and most write letters, words and simple sentences independently by the end of the reception year

Commentary

47. Children's achievements are above average at the start of the reception year. Strong emphasis is placed on developing communication skills. Children listen carefully and speak clearly. They are eager to listen to each other and to contribute to discussions. They talk about their favourite rhymes and stories and attempt to write independently. The very good teaching of letter formation and phonics supports confidence to write unaided. The most able write simple sequences of sentences with good accuracy. Staff very skilfully pose questions to extend children's ideas and support their role-play through active participation. Many imaginative role-play opportunities engage children's interest and sustain high levels of motivation, for example Mrs. Wobble's café. They use new words accurately because staff repeat instructions and reinforce new vocabulary to ensure understanding. Displays support teaching and learning and encourage children to link together the spoken and written word. Children have many opportunities to listen to stories and develop a love of books. They know the pictures and words tell the story and are proud of the books they create together. Very good attention is paid to holding pencils and forming letters correctly.

Mathematical development

Provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and children make very good progress.
- A broad range of teacher directed and play based activities enable children to learn through exciting practical tasks
- There are very good links between mathematical development and the other areas of learning

Commentary

48. Children enter the Reception class with good mathematical skills for their age group. Through consistent very good teaching they make rapid progress. Many play based activities encourage decision making, for example when children decide how many moves forward or backwards to move their robot. They work with numbers up to and beyond 20 and are able to add and subtract mentally and record their calculations. They recognise and write numbers accurately, and skilful questioning supports self-correction and independent discovery. All ideas and responses are valued so children are confident to try out ideas. They enthusiastically explore shapes, count footsteps on their learning journeys and work with money in Mrs.Wobble's Corner café. They recite number rhymes, which reinforce sequences well, and refer to displays, which help them to order correctly and count on or back from a number. Mathematical vocabulary is introduced and reinforced through very good modelling by staff. All expect children to use new words and they quickly develop a broad repertoire of mathematical language. For example, they have secure understanding of the names of shapes, size and positional vocabulary. Children enjoy comparing the rate of growth of seeds, deciding who is shorter or taller and describing patterns they have created in their art work.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

Provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of activities to support learning is exciting and imaginative
- Teaching is consistently very good
- Very good use is made of the outside environment and visitors

Commentary

49. Most children enter the Reception class with a good general knowledge of the world around them. A wide range of experiences extends their understanding, for example, the study of plants and insects, weather changes and opportunities to talk about special occasions and celebrations. They make very good use of computers, manipulate the robot and program it to reach a specific location with good accuracy. The staff celebrate individual achievements through regular praise and encouraging children to share their discoveries. Pupils appreciate the success of their friends and work collaboratively together. Children with special educational needs receive very good support and are fully included in all activities. Good use is made of community visitors to help children understand the roles of others. Both indoor and outdoor play activities are structured to support children's learning styles and the achievement of specific learning objectives in both locations. Through stories such as 'Handa's Surprise' they learn about types of

fruits and life in different countries. They then have opportunities to taste new fruits and to express their own ideas. Children explore how things work through constructing models and working with materials such as cardboard, paper and clay. There are very good links with literacy, numeracy, personal and social development and knowledge and understanding.

Physical development

Provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good
- Exciting play opportunities enable children to explore and develop their physical capabilities

Commentary

50. Children enter school with the physical development expected for their age range. Through careful planning and partnership with parents, staff encourage independence and expect children to dress and undress independently and manage fastenings. Classroom responsibilities are well defined and by the end of their reception year children clear away themselves and set up areas for the next group of children to enjoy. The time given to develop independence and cooperation enables children to become responsible decision makers. In their outdoor play they plan routes, practise balances and enjoy playing with small apparatus. They are well coordinated, run and skip happily and are confident to try new movements on their own. They manipulate scissors and pencils well, taking great care when cutting out or forming letters and numbers on whiteboards. They eagerly describe how they have created pictures using a range of materials that have been cut, torn or scrunched to form a creature. The outdoor play areas are used very effectively and support physical development very well. Children climb confidently, and develop sequences of movements as they play *Follow my leader*. Access to construction materials and ICT equipment also help children to develop good control over finger and hand movements.

Creative development

Provision for creative development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are many exciting role play opportunities to support learning
- Staff encourage collaboration and teaching is very good

Commentary

51. Creative activities are linked to the other areas of learning to ensure children understand the purpose of their work. They have opportunities to work with clay, make models, paint, draw, create collage pictures and to enjoy stories, music and construction activities. They benefit from this rich repertoire and express themselves competently in a range of

ways. Displays are vibrant and celebrate successes. Observational drawing and painting is of high quality and shows how staff have drawn children's attention to fine detail. They are supported to create designs, make plans and explain how their constructions work. In the sand play, children described how to make cakes for their café, mixing, stirring and creating a range of foods. Visits to places of interest such as the zoo lead to high quality pictures and descriptions of animals and their environments. Role-play areas and quiet reflective areas also provide opportunities for children to act out personal experiences.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

English

Provision for English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been excellent improvement since the last inspection particularly in standards of writing of the most able pupils.
- Standards achieved in speaking and listening, reading and writing are well above average
- The progress and achievement of pupils with special educational needs is very good
- The development of literacy in other subjects is very good

Commentary

52. English is a strength of the school. Pupils enter Year 1 achieving very well for children of their age. Very good progress is sustained and supports very good achievement. There is very good support for pupils with special needs and they achieve very well. More able pupils are given challenging work and this has helped them to achieve much higher than average standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing. Initiatives to further develop speaking and listening and writing have had a very positive impact on standards. For example, the attention given to developing boys' writing has raised their level of interest, enjoyment and achievement. This is because they are encouraged to work from texts and articles that they find interesting and enjoyable. The school has very good systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress.
53. Pupils enjoy reading. The youngest pupils are taught phonics and the majority are able to read simple texts when they enter Year 1. Seven-year olds have very good reading and writing skills; they read simple texts fluently and have a very good understanding of grammar, punctuation and spelling. The schools *Reading Challenge* programme is very successfully encouraging pupils to read for pleasure. By the time pupils are in Year 6 they are confident to use a wide range of reading material including the Intranet. Pupils infer meaning from texts and offer their own views. For example, pupils in Year 5 used sentences and phrases from their books to justify their views on how a farmer dealt with foot and mouth disease. Year 2 pupils write clearly and imaginatively. They write sequences of sentences that are ordered logically, and more able pupils structure paragraphs. By the end of Year 6 pupils writing is varied and interesting, conveying meaning clearly. Pupils have a well-developed sense of audience, using creative and more formal styles appropriately. Pupils use a wide range of interesting and imaginative vocabulary and spelling is usually accurate. Writing is well organised into paragraphs

which are punctuated correctly. Handwriting is joined, clear and fluent and overall the presentation of work is very good.

54. Teaching and learning are very good. During the inspection teaching ranged from satisfactory to excellent. Most lessons seen were very good or good. It is evident from the high standards of work on display and very good work in books that pupils are very well taught. Where teaching is very good and excellent there is pace and challenge in the work and pupils are expected to apply their skills independently. There is skilful questioning and pupils' answers are modelled and extended. Teachers use a very good range of strategies and methods to help pupils, including whole class, group and paired work. In these lessons speaking and listening, reading and writing are closely linked. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and receive much support from subject leaders, senior management and guidance through the schools systems and plans. Teaching assistants give very good support. They have a clear understanding of what needs to be taught and their role in developing skills. The school's partnership with the local high school in developing cross phase work has had a positive impact on both writing and speaking and listening. The school's initiatives to develop speaking and listening through drama has improved confidence and has had a positive impact on writing. This is evident in Year 6 where pupils writing shows great empathy with characters they have studied, such as Macbeth. Pupils are taught to use their skills for research well. They have a good range of resources in school and are encouraged to look farther afield through well-structured homework activities. Pupils work hard and productively. In lessons pupils are very well behaved, concentrate and are well motivated. In all classes the excellent relationships and mutual respect for others create positive conditions for learning.
55. The subject leadership of literacy is very good. In the past year, due to the absence of the subject leader, another teacher has held the post with support from senior management. This temporary arrangement has worked very well and the school has continued to make further improvements.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

56. The use of language and literacy to support other subjects is a strength of the school. There are examples of the very good use of language and literacy across subjects, for example in the inclusion of speaking and listening as a central part of lessons. In design and technology and science, pupils record their observations and evaluative comments using technical vocabulary effectively. In history, geography and ICT, pupils develop their reading and writing skills through the Intranet and the use of ICT programmes. In personal, social and health education and assemblies pupils discuss difficult issues and show sensitive understanding of other beliefs and values.

Mathematics

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils attain well above average standards
- Teaching and learning are very good, especially in Year 5
- Pupils' attitudes to the subject are very good

- The improvement since the last inspection is very good

Commentary

57. National test results show standards are well above average throughout the school. The work seen during the inspection confirms that standards continue to be well above average in number, space, shape and measures and data handling. Pupils' abilities to use and apply their mathematics are above average and they achieve well. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. They are supported well by teaching assistants, and make very good progress. There are no significant differences between the achievement of boys and girls.
58. Teachers are well organised, always ensuring that the children are clear about their learning objectives. They use a wide range of strategies to ensure that all pupils are fully engaged in lessons. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, and plan challenging lessons for them. Lessons are briskly paced, and good use is made of ICT for demonstration and for children to practise skills. Lessons always include opportunities for developing mental mathematics, using challenging questions that children respond to with confidence and accuracy. Pupils concentrate well, settle quickly to their tasks and work productively. They listen carefully to each other and support the development of ideas well. The very good teaching they receive and their own very good attitudes to work enable them to acquire new knowledge and skills very quickly.
59. The teaching seen in Year 5 was a strength. In these very good lessons the tasks set for pupils included puzzles and more opportunities to investigate problems. This approach motivated the pupils excellently; they used a range of creative strategies to solve problems and collaborated very well. The teachers used excellent questioning skills to probe pupils' developing understanding and to diagnose misconceptions. They skilfully helped the pupils to analyse where they had gone wrong and to self correct. Tasks were constructed to ensure pupils had to reason at a high level and justify their thinking. They responded very well to this, and demonstrated very high standards of using and applying mathematics. There is scope to extend this very good approach across year groups.
60. The very good leadership and management of the subject by the co-ordinators and senior staff have led to good improvement since the last inspection. Standards have risen significantly and the quality of teaching is much improved. The next step is for teachers to widen the range of creative opportunities for pupils to explore strategies for problem solving independently and to ensure written marking indicates how pupils could improve even further and encourages self-evaluation.

Mathematics across the curriculum

61. Pupils have regular and well-planned opportunities to use, consolidate and extend their mathematical skills in a range of other subjects. Examples were seen of map work and data handling in geography, measurement of length and angle in ICT and design and technology, and of graph work in science. In addition, the best mathematics lessons provided wonderful opportunities for pupils to develop precision in their use of spoken English.

Science

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The standards pupils achieve by the end of Years 2 and 6 are well above average
- Teaching is very good
- Pupils have very good knowledge and understanding of scientific vocabulary and investigative processes
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to design their own investigations and research

Commentary

62. Many more pupils than average achieve the higher levels, illustrating the very good improvement since the last report. Teachers plan work that provides challenge for more able pupils and meets the needs of those with special educational needs. All pupils are fully included in lessons and make very good progress. The issues of underachievement have been addressed well. Taking account of the lessons seen, discussions with pupils and the work sampling, teaching is very good. In a small number of satisfactory lessons in Years 3 to 6, the needs of large classes were difficult to meet in the small classrooms and the range of teaching strategies used by temporary teachers were not as creative as those seen in very good and excellent lessons. In an excellent lesson seen in Year 2, the teacher's strong subject expertise, knowledge of pupils and use of practical problem solving strategies enabled pupils to give reasons for their predictions when investigating the relationship between the size of feet and hand spans.
63. The science curriculum is linked very well to literacy, numeracy, history and the arts. Planning clearly identifies learning objectives and the expectations for achievement of different groups of pupils. Pupils have many opportunities to select a range of ways to present their work and apply their basic skills in meaningful contexts. There are some very good examples of investigative research where pupils devise their own strategies to solve problems, for example through work completed on force and gravity on a science day. There is scope to extend this work further to provide more opportunities for pupils to create their own problem solving strategies and place less focus on teacher directed investigations. Pupils have well developed reasoning and research skills and enjoy the challenge of collaborating and searching for information to investigate a hypothesis and interpret sources of data.
64. Pupils have very positive attitudes to science and many describe it as a favourite subject. Very good links are made with personal, social and health education. Pupils have a mature understanding of the dangers of the abuse of medicines, drugs and alcohol, and of the impact of abuse on society. They are proud of the school's 'Healthy School' award and know the importance of a healthy diet and exercise. Debate and drama are used well and this has a positive impact on pupils' personal, social, spiritual, moral and cultural development.
65. Pupils use scientific vocabulary competently. Year 5 pupils talk about photosynthesis, pollination and fertilisation naming the parts of plants and describing their functions accurately. The use of drama to support understanding adds fun to learning. Pupils enjoy these creative opportunities and refer to them enthusiastically when answering

questions. Links with mathematics and ICT are evident in research and the use of programs to present and interpret data.

66. The subject is very well led and managed. The coordinator supports staff development, leads training and has opportunities to monitor and evaluate the quality of lessons and pupils' work. Regular assessments are analysed and the information is used to support future planning. Test results are analysed in detail and differences in the performance of cohorts are explained fully. Very good links with governors enable them to understand variations in the rates of progress of different groups of pupils from stage to stage and to evaluate the effectiveness of provision. There is a clear overview of how the subject can be improved further.

Information and communication technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- ICT contributes well to the work in other subjects
- The subject leader has a good overview of strengths and areas for further development

Commentary

67. By the end of Year 2 and 6 standards are above those expected and pupils make good progress in developing a wide range of skills, knowledge and understanding. They can access the Internet to research topics, use databases to display results from field trips and use control technology well. Word processing skills are above average and work is improved using the spell checker.
68. Pupils are enthusiastic and work hard in lessons. They have a clear understanding of what they have achieved and know how to improve. Pupils know that computers can be used for a wide range of tasks, for example to control the sequence of traffic lights. They competently use spreadsheets and data handling programmes and are gaining expertise in using mini digital cameras to enhance their work. Branching databases are used effectively in other subjects to display information. Pupils used these particularly well to present work about the wives of Henry VIII in a History project.
69. Teaching and learning are good overall and sometimes very good, with features of excellence. Staff have good subject knowledge and support pupils well when glitches occur with the software. Explanations are clear and pupils know what to do. Occasionally some pupils are over confident, do not listen carefully enough and are unable to complete their task independently. Teachers allow the pupils to take risks and make mistakes. This enables them to try out new ideas and support is always available to help them get back on track if they have become confused. Lessons are well planned to provide the right level of challenge for each ability group and the effective use of learning support staff enhances learning. Questions are framed effectively to check on pupils' understanding and staff encourage pupils to use the correct terminology at all times. The after school computer club enables pupils to explore or catch up on homework, particularly if they don't have computers at home, and pupils with special educational needs sometimes use school equipment at home to support their learning.

70. The quality of leadership is good. The coordinator has a very good understanding of ICT. Unusually, the school was accredited to deliver its own ICT training under a recent government initiative, and this has been of great benefit. The coordinator is involved with projects outside the school and is constantly looking for ways to improve provision. The ratio of pupils to computers, which was judged to be unsatisfactory in the last inspection, has improved and is now satisfactory. Developments planned over the next two years, in line with budget plans, are likely to lead to a good level of resources in both software and hardware. There has been a significant improvement in this area of the school's work since the last inspection.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

71. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' work in other subjects. The resources and guidance from subject leaders ensures that pupils access a wide range of resources to develop their learning in other subjects, especially when word processing in English, creating graphs and charts in mathematics and science and researching using the Internet in other subjects.

HUMANITIES

72. Insufficient evidence was available to make an overall judgement on the provision of **geography**. Three parts of lessons were seen, two in Year 2 and one in Year 6. Work in pupils' books was also examined, and discussions were held with pupils and staff. Standards in Year 2 are above the expectations of the National Curriculum. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about standards in Year 6.
73. In the parts of lessons seen in Year 2 pupils worked quietly and productively, and showed a keen interest in their work on their local environment and studies of countries such as Kenya. They made good use of their speaking and listening skills to clarify their thinking. In the one lesson seen in Year 6 teaching was at least satisfactory. Attitudes are very positive across age groups and the pupils are keen to learn more. Teachers are knowledgeable and enable pupils to work at a fast pace which sustains their enthusiasm and interest. The work is well structured and interesting and pupils look forward to their field trips, which support study units well. While statutory requirements are met, the work in the oldest pupils' books indicates that there are not enough opportunities for them to carry out geographical enquiry and independent research from a range of resources. The school plan rightly prioritises raising the profile of geography higher through developing links between subjects to make teaching and learning more exciting. There are very good examples of the success of this project evident in history and the arts. The coordinator and senior staff work in close partnership to steer the development of the humanities. There is a clear vision for the future development of geography as it becomes a priority subject.

History

Provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good history teaching and learning enables pupils to achieve very well

- The curriculum is of very good quality
- There are very good links with subjects such as English, religious education and art and design
- Parents support their children's learning very well

Commentary

74. Three lessons were seen in Years 3 to 6. Judgements have been made based on the analysis of work, displays and discussions with pupils and staff. The curriculum is innovative and creatively links history to work in English, mathematics and the arts. The school enhances pupils' learning through residential visits, study days based on historical periods such as the Victorians and exciting research projects which encourage a home school learning partnership. This enables pupils to use their initiative and creativity. The Year 2 projects on the life of Lowry are a very good example of the success of this initiative. Projects completed by older pupils in Year 6 are of very high quality. They reflect mature attitudes. Exciting writing draws the reader into the focus of the research. Pupils are proud of their work and are keen to talk about displays that explain their learning, for example, Year 2 pupils enthusiastically describe the social conditions and events leading up to and following Great Fire of London.
75. Pupils achieve well above average standards in Year 2 and 6 and have a love of learning about the past and its influence on their lives. In the small number of lessons seen in Years 3, 5 and 6 the teaching was very good overall, with features of excellence. The teachers' use of drama to enable pupils to act out the impact of poverty and racism on immigrants in the 1950's created thoughtful empathy, acted out with a mature sense of responsibility. Pupils recognised the impact of racism on self-esteem and showed understanding of how to avoid conflict and learn from other cultures. Similarly pupils put themselves in the position of a child saved by Dr. Barnardo and explored differences between the opportunities to gain an education and make personal choices then and now. History makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils draw upon their knowledge of world religions and recognise the influences of diversity on social change.
76. Exciting links between history, literacy, numeracy and the arts enable pupils to apply their basic skills through creative interlinked study. The coordination of this approach, supported by the headteacher and senior management team, is very good. Resources to support learning are very good and include strong links with community members who make valuable contributions to the delivery of the curriculum.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

77. There was insufficient evidence to make judgements about provision or standards in music and physical education. Inspectors saw samples of pupils' work, displays, photographs and curriculum planning and held discussions with staff and pupils. Teachers' planning meets the national requirements and there are good links made across subjects and with literacy and numeracy. Pupils have positive attitudes to music and physical education and teachers have a good level of subject knowledge. They make learning exciting and provide a variety of activities during and beyond school hours.

78. In the very small number of **physical education** lessons observed pupils worked hard and enjoyed their activities. Teachers ensured pupils were active and provided opportunities for them to make up their own responses to a task when practising for sports day. Pupils behaved well, and worked hard to improve their skills. Unfortunately, the size of the hall restricts some opportunities for active practical work with the larger classes of older pupils. The school was awarded the Activemark in 2003, in recognition of the very good range of curricular and extra-curricular opportunities provided for the pupils. In recent years these have included cricket, hockey, netball, athletics, cross-country, football and dance, where workshops have successfully challenged stereotypes.
79. Assemblies and practice sessions indicate that in **music** standards of singing are very good. Pupils benefit from opportunities to take part in events both within and outside of the school. Pupils in Year 4 sang with enthusiasm in their lesson, when practising for an assembly. They used gesture well to bring the song to life and later performed in front of the school and parents with great confidence, pride and enjoyment. They also confidently demonstrated their knowledge about woodwind instruments, showing good evidence of prior learning experiences. In a short singing lesson in Year 1, pupils sang very tunefully, used percussion instruments as accompaniment and were able to follow a simple beat with great accuracy. They all knew how to hold and play the instruments properly and enjoyed their lesson immensely.
80. Music plays a very significant part in the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils frequently sing to welcome the rest of the school into assemblies. All singing in assemblies is tuneful, expressive and joyous. Pupils also have opportunities to receive lessons from a peripatetic teacher or to learn to play the recorder in school as part of their lessons in Year 2. Keen recorder players can join a lunchtime club if they wish. Music is sometimes grouped with other expressive arts in order to offer extended opportunities in these subjects through projects both in and out of school.

Art and design

Provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is of very good quality and is carefully linked to work in other subjects
- Pupils achieve very well and have enthusiastic attitudes to their learning
- The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- Displays are of high quality and enhance the learning environment

Commentary

81. Pupils attain well above average standards because teachers at all stages of learning enable pupils to build on their knowledge and skills, develop their creative ideas and become keen, competent artists and designers. Pupils talk with great enthusiasm about their work. Because very good links are made with other subjects, pupils have a mature understanding of the links between art and different cultures. They recognise how art enables people to represent their ideas and views through a range of media. From the

earliest days in the reception classes, children are introduced to the work of famous artists, for example Van Gogh, and by Year 6 they compare and contrast techniques and styles of artists competently and articulately.

82. Projects that engage a home-school partnership approach to learning, support pupils to achieve standards that are well above those usually seen for their ages. Year 2 pupils talk about the life and times of Lowry and present their own impressions using pastels and charcoal. Year 6 pupils make links to science as they take elements of evidence from habitats and turn them into attractive designs using ICT and a range of colour schemes and design techniques. Pupils co-operate very well, share ideas and appreciate the work of others. Teachers plan exciting opportunities that capture pupils' imagination and interest. They use clear explanations and demonstrations to enable pupils to extend their knowledge and skills by trying out new ideas. Skills and techniques are practised through the use of sketchbooks so pupils develop skills and confidence before embarking on new projects.
83. Younger pupils use different types of media to create pattern and texture and observational drawing is of high quality. By Year 6 pupils have a very good understanding of shape, line and proportion and bring together their knowledge and understanding to produce very interesting design ideas. Links with subjects such as science, history, English and religious education develop an understanding of art in the context of different cultures, for example as they design different styles of crosses and expand close observations of tree bark, exploring texture through pastels and poetry. Pupils are proud of their displays and are very keen to explain to visitors the background to their work. They delight in showing visitors around and all ability and age groups reflect a high level of interest in art.
84. The subject is well led and managed through a close staff partnership, which sets high expectations for teaching and learning. Teaching assistants provide very good support for teachers and pupils and enhance the quality of provision. These many strengths have a very positive effect on pupils' achievement and the high standards reached.

Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average
- The subject is well led and managed
- There are very good links to other subjects, particularly English
- The subject makes a very positive contribution to developing pupils' creativity.

Commentary

85. Standards have improved since the last inspection; pupils make very good progress throughout the school and achieve very well. From work seen, those with special educational needs take a full part in lessons and achieve as well as their peers. Work shows a strong emphasis on developing pupils' ability to evaluate their work and make improvements on their designs. In Year 6 this evaluation extends to seeking the views of others for example on the quality of the hats they produced.

86. Little teaching of design and technology was observed. The high quality of work on display, lively discussions with pupils and analysis of high quality work in books suggests that the quality of teaching and learning is very good. From the earliest stages in the reception class children are introduced to construction and model making. These early experiences are built upon well. In a very good Year 2 lesson pupils were enthusiastic and totally engrossed in examining and evaluating how different puppets were constructed. Through teachers' skilful uses of questioning, pupils develop and extend their speaking and listening skills. Literacy is also developed through carefully constructed writing frames that help young pupils to construct their thoughts and writing in a logical way. Older pupils use a broader range of materials and tools and this is reflected in the progression in work samples. In Year 3, pupils make 'pop-up' books that have hide and reveal mechanisms and pop-up mouths. A Year 4 history project shows the in-depth study of the development and design of Tudor fashions. In a Year 6 project on hats, pupils devise their own detailed plans, testing, evaluating and modifying them where appropriate and applying their numeracy skills to work out the unit costs of production.
87. The subject leader supports staff well and provides very good direction for the inclusion of design and technology across subjects. These strong links make learning both meaningful and enjoyable. Pupils have very enthusiastic attitudes to design and technology and regard it as a favourite subject.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education

Provision for personal social and health education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The excellent relationships between adults and pupils make a significant contribution towards pupils learning.
- The curriculum in Years 1 and 2 lays the foundations for developing pupils' confidence and awareness of their responsibilities
- The schools' work in developing the Healthy Schools programme has a positive impact

Commentary

88. There is a very good emphasis on developing pupils' self-awareness and sense of responsibility for oneself and others. The positive approach to promoting life skills enables pupils to build positive relationships and deal with difficult situations. This helps pupils to make the most of their abilities, prepare for the next stage of their education and for life as responsible citizens. The provision meets all statutory requirements for the education of sex, drugs and relationships. Pupils achieve very well in this aspect of their work. They are very articulate and able to express their own thoughts and views about issues that affect themselves and the wider community. Pupils take an active part in decision making and are consulted on a range of issues. All pupils take pride in their school.
89. Little teaching of discrete personal, social and health education lessons was observed. However, many aspects of this area are integrated very effectively into other subjects and in the overall approach the school takes. Through the Healthy Schools programme

the school is continuing to build on its very good work in developing healthy eating and lifestyles. This is having a beneficial impact on the lives of pupils who are encouraged to eat fruit for snacks and be more active through sport and walking to school. Planning for personal, social and health education is very good. All staff have clear guidelines within which to develop pupils' understanding. Staff have regular access to relevant training opportunities and visitors to support the programme. This contributes much to making the school a purposeful and vibrant place in which all are valued and respected.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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