

INSPECTION REPORT

ST NICOLAS C of E Aided INFANT SCHOOL

Guildford, Surrey

LEA area: Surrey

Unique reference number: 125189

Headteacher: Mrs C Bowen

Lead inspector: Mr G R Logan
11810

Dates of inspection: 6 – 8 October 2003

Inspection number: 257892

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
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	5 – 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	94
School address:	Portsmouth Road Guildford Surrey
Postcode:	GU2 4YD
Telephone number:	01483 561639
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Reverend Dr Andrew Norman
Date of previous inspection:	15 June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Nicolas CE Infant School serves a relatively advantaged, though diverse, community close to the centre of Guildford in Surrey. The school is relatively small. Most of the 94 pupils live in the locality, though some come from further afield because of the Anglican affiliation of the school. Pupils are mainly from White European backgrounds with a very small number of pupils of Indian, African and Asian heritage. Some families are attached to the University of Surrey, as staff or students. Around four per cent of pupils are learning to speak English as an additional language. There is a below average proportion of pupils with special educational needs (five per cent) for mainly moderate learning difficulties. No pupils have statements. There is one pupil from a Traveller background. Around 13 per cent of pupils leave or join the school over the course of the year, other than at the end of Year 2. At the time of the inspection two children in the reception class, known as the *Foundation Stage*, were attending mornings only. The profile of children's skills and knowledge when they start in reception is above average overall, but with a considerable spread and a significant group of below average children. The school celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2002. It gained Government Achievement awards in 2001 and 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
11810	Mr G R Logan	Lead inspector	mathematics; science; art and design, design and technology; music; physical education; English as an additional language.
13874	Mrs J Chesterfield	Lay inspector	
14706	Mrs B Knowles	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage; English; special educational needs Information and communication technology; geography; history.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an **effective and much improved school** with a very supportive, caring ethos. It is very successful in including all pupils in its activities. Pupils achieve well over time. Teaching is good overall. Experienced staff have high expectations. Standards overall are above the national average, with some very good features, and have risen steadily since the last inspection. The school is very well led by the headteacher. She provides a very clear educational direction and is supported tirelessly by senior staff. They work creatively with governors to ensure that the school has a clear agenda for continuing improvement. The school provides **good value for money**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Children have a good start in Reception.
- Standards in mathematics and reading are well above average; standards in writing and science are above average by the end of Year 2.
- Pupils achieve well. Those with special educational needs receive good support and make particularly good progress. Support staff contribute significantly to pupils' progress.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. Their personal development is very good. The Christian ethos is a key strength.
- Teaching is good and pupils learn well. Assessment is very good.
- Pupils benefit from a rich curriculum.
- Parents value the work of the school and the good care their children receive.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership. The governing body is highly supportive.
- Although higher attaining pupils achieve well overall, there is not always sufficient or challenging work available for them in lessons.

The school has made very good progress since the last inspection. All of the issues raised have been successfully tackled. Now that long-standing staffing issues are resolved, the pace of change has increased and there is a commitment to maintain the current level of improvement. The quality of teaching has improved significantly. A School Achievement Award in 2003 and the steady improvement in performance are indicators of the school's growing effectiveness.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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*

- Children who have recently entered Reception have made a very good start and are on track to achieve the goals set for them.
- Standards by the end of Year 2 are above average overall. Standards are particularly good in mathematics and reading.
- In aspects of art and design, music and physical education, pupils are achieving well.
- Good writing skills enhance the quality of work in geography and history.

Pupils achieve well. Those with special educational needs or who speak English as an additional language achieve as well as they do because of the good support they receive.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are very good. Their **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.** Relationships and behaviour are very good. Attendance and punctuality are good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided is good, with some very good features.

Teaching is good overall. This is a commendable outcome given that two of the four teachers are in the early weeks of their teaching career. The highest proportion of good teaching was in Year 2. Occasionally, inexperience means that teachers do not plan enough work, so that some pupils, particularly the more able, finish quickly and are not challenged sufficiently. Teachers know their pupils well and have a good understanding of how to move learning forward. Very good assessment procedures are used very effectively, particularly in Year 2. Pupils are encouraged to work independently. Teachers plan very well to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. Learning support staff are invariably well prepared and responsive to the needs of pupils. Teaching in subjects such as art and design and music is increasingly effective now that staff have very good guidance for planning. **The curriculum is rich and interesting** and has significantly improved since the last inspection. It is broad and balanced, although time given to ICT is insufficient. Class music and physical education are enhanced by activities such as choir, football and swimming. **Pupils receive good care and support.** Good induction procedures help the youngest children to settle quickly. Child protection procedures are good. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. **The school has a good partnership with parents. Links with other schools are good. Links with the community, particularly the church, are very good.**

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the school is very good and the management is good.

The headteacher has led the school very well through an extended period of change. Staffing issues delayed planned improvements, but progress has been particularly rapid in the last year. The changes made have significantly improved many aspects of the school. The school evaluates its work rigorously and makes good use of available data and expertise. Governors efficiently manage the school, are supportive and committed, although their input to development planning is limited. School administration is efficient.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very happy with the school, although a few feel that they are not much consulted about its running. In other respects they feel they receive good information and that the school is well led. **Pupils enjoy school very much.** They feel that the lessons are interesting and fun. They feel that adults will always be available to help them if things go wrong.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

There are no significant key issues, but the school should work on these development points:

- Increase opportunities for parents and pupils to be consulted about changes.
- Ensure sufficient time is given to the development of ICT skills.
- Ensure a consistent approach to the needs of higher attaining pupils across the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils' achievement overall is good. Children in Reception make good progress. Standards in mathematics and reading are well above average, and standards in writing and science are above average by the end of Year 2.

Standards are above average in geography and history, and average in art and design, design and technology, information and communication technology (ICT) and physical education.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved significantly since the last inspection.
- The school met its challenging targets in national tests in 2003, other than in writing, and has set equally demanding targets for 2004.
- The school is working effectively to boost pupils' achievements in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Boys and girls of all capabilities and from different ethnic backgrounds make similar good progress over time. Those with special educational needs do well because of the good support they receive. Pupils who learn to speak English as an additional language achieve well.
- Pupils from a Traveller background are supported well. They make steady progress, directly reflecting their levels of attendance.
- The school makes good use of available data to target good achievement in all years.
- Although staff are keen to promote the use of ICT across the curriculum, pupils spend too little time developing their skills.

Commentary

1. At the last inspection, standards were significantly affected by a high proportion of mediocre teaching and not all pupils were achieving the standards they should. Changes in staffing, raised expectation, better subject documentation and planning and much improved assessment procedures have had a very positive effect on the standards achieved. Attainment on entry to the school is above average overall. However, analysis of the entry profile indicates that there is a higher proportion of below average attainers and a lower proportion of very high attainers than might be predicted. The balance lies slightly above average. In most subjects, pupils achieve well from their different starting points. Standards in national tests have risen. Variations from year to year are now more often a reflection of the make-up of a particular year group than of shortcomings in either teaching or expectation. Higher-attaining pupils do well, with a well-above-average proportion of pupils achieving the higher level 3. Both boys and girls do well in national tests and school data shows that both groups make similar rates of progress during their time at school. That said, the current Year 2 has a cluster of particularly mature, high-achieving boys.
2. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and meet the targets set for them. They receive good support in lessons, which ensures that they make good progress. Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve well. A number arrive with no English at all, but receive good support from teachers and class assistants. Over time these pupils achieve well, but the school is entirely dependent upon its own small staff to provide the specialist input necessary.

Foundation Stage

3. Almost all children in the Foundation Stage have had some pre-school experience and are generally well-prepared for entry to school. They benefit from good induction procedures and good teaching and they have already settled well into school routines. The good

provision in many elements of the curriculum ensures that they are well placed to achieve well. On entry to Year 1, their attainment exceeds the expected level, particularly in language and literacy, mathematical and personal and social development.

Key Stage 1

- Year 2 results in 2003 were well above average in reading and mathematics and above average in writing when compared with the national picture and to similar schools. There was no significant variation in performance between boys and girls. Results in 2003 showed a slight decline in reading and writing, but an improvement in mathematics, compared with results in 2002. The proportion reaching level 3 in reading and writing also declined slightly – but improved in mathematics.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	17.8 (18.8)	15.9 (15.8)
Writing	15.1 (16.0)	14.8 (14.4)
Mathematics	18.2 (17.3)	16.4 (16.5)

There were 33 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- Standards in the work seen in core subjects are well above average in reading and mathematics, and above average in writing and science at the end of Year 2, confirming recent test results. The school promotes very good handwriting and is successful in creating opportunities for pupils to write purposefully across the curriculum. Reading has been a significant strength of the school over many years and this continues to be the case. However, there is less structured support for the development of pupils' speaking skills. While some pupils are articulate and socially confident, not all communicate effectively and there is further work to be done here. Last year, the school identified some weaker elements in mathematics – in particular, pupils' problem solving skills. High quality professional development in the past year has given a significant boost to teaching in this area and this is borne out by the significant rise in standards in mathematics in 2003. Standards in science have improved over time, largely because of clear subject guidance for staff and better opportunities for pupils to undertake practical and investigative activities – an earlier focus for improvement. This shows up well the school's effective improvement strategies. In other subjects, for example, in art and design, pupils are encouraged to use reference material and research for themselves and there is an increased focus in lessons on pupils evaluating their own work and that of others. There is some cross-curricular use of ICT, but the overall time given to the subject each week is limited.
- Standards in geography and history are above those expected. Standards are as expected in art and design, design and technology and physical education. No judgement is possible on standards in class music, though the standard of singing in assembly is good. Pupils enjoy learning about history and work in books shows a secure knowledge of key facts and a growing understanding of times past and present. Standards in art and design, though as expected overall, are improving steadily and in some units of work, standards are above what would be expected, reflecting recent staff training and improved documentation to guide staff. Likewise, elements of the physical education curriculum are strengths, particularly swimming and the school's creative approach to the teaching of dance.
- The school makes very good use of available data to ensure that pupils make good progress in all years. Assessment procedures and the use of the information which these provide are now a strength of the school's work. A commitment to raising standards underpins many of the improvement initiatives which the school has undertaken recently. Key to the success of all these developments has been the engagement of the right staff. The school is now

confident as to the quality, commitment and high expectations of the team which has been brought together.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are **very good**. Attendance and punctuality are **good**. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils behave very well in lessons, around school and in the playground.
- Pupils are very helpful and supportive of others.
- The school raises pupils' awareness of themselves and others very successfully.
- Pupils come to school regularly and on time.

Commentary

8. Attendance at the school has improved so that it is now above the national figure. The school insists on high standards of attendance and punctuality and parents support this. They recognise the value of education and bring their children to school regularly and on time, so that their learning is not disrupted.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.0	School data	0.5
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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

9. The school sets high standards of behaviour for its pupils. They are aware of this and do their best to live up to the school's expectations. They move around the school sensibly; do as they are asked in lessons, and show consideration for others in the playground. Pupils' relationships with one another are very strong. Girls and boys of different ages and backgrounds work and play happily together. In particular, pupils are very ready to support one another where necessary. A pupil performing in assembly was given a great deal of encouragement from his classmates, for example. Similarly, a child at the early stages of learning English was shown how to be a special helper by a classmate. This inclusive attitude, fostered by the school, boosts pupils' self-esteem and helps them feel confident as to what they can achieve.
10. The school is very successful in developing in its pupils a sense of themselves, firstly as individuals; then as part of the school and the local community, and ultimately as part of a global community, with all the responsibility that entails. The school's Christian ethos and the focus on environmental issues give pupils a feeling of the beauty of the world around and beyond them. Involvement in events and activities in Guildford makes pupils feel part of their own town and its culture. Awareness of cultural diversity is built in to the school's daily life and work, so that pupils find it natural to absorb understanding about the different cultures within and outside the school.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	76	0	0
White – any other White background	8	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided is good. Teaching and learning are good. The curriculum is good, with good extra-curricular provision. Pupils are cared for well. The partnership with parents is very good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is good overall. It is best in Year 2 and in Reception, where staff are more experienced. Expectations are generally high and learning proceeds at a good pace. In a few lessons, planned activities do not fill the time available and learning slows. Overall, however, teachers use assessment information very well to plan future work. With a permanent and committed team of teachers and support staff in place, the school is well-placed to build upon the already good standards of teaching and learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good overall and have improved significantly.
- Teachers' use of assessment information to plan future work is very good.
- The proportion of good teaching is highest in Reception and Year 2. Teachers have good subject knowledge and understanding.
- There is good teaching in almost all subjects. This enables pupils to make consistent progress. Pupils use their writing skills well across the curriculum.
- Deployment of support staff is very effective in engaging pupils with special educational needs, those with English as an additional language and those from a Traveller background.
- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well.
- Teachers plan lessons effectively. The majority of pupils make good progress in learning.
- Overall, the level of challenge is good. However, learning is affected in some lessons because not enough work has been planned and more able pupils finish early.

Commentary

11. At the last inspection, teaching was satisfactory overall. A lack of planning to meet individual needs and the slow pace of lessons were key weaknesses, leading to average standards at best. The headteacher has worked hard to bring about change in personnel and practice. Only very recently has a team finally been established which is working to a common vision and to consistent standards. Two staff are newly qualified and are still, early in the school

year, finding their feet. However, the indications are that this is a robust, highly-committed and knowledgeable team, with good potential.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 24 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	2	15	7	0	0	0

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

12. Staff in the Foundation Stage have a good understanding of the areas of learning and are working well in partnership to enable the children to learn well. Teaching and learning in the lessons observed were consistently good. Good teaching is supporting good achievement for most pupils across Years 1 and 2. The pace of learning at present is better in Year 2, where the teacher is highly experienced, than in Year 1. Staff are already carefully assessing what they need to amend in their planning to strengthen this weaker feature. Pupils in Years 1 and 2, even at this early stage in the school year, show an impressive capacity to work independently or collaboratively. Higher attaining groups in particular are often expected to be able to 'get on' with tasks. This promotes independence well and encourages pupils to show initiative and to be more self-sufficient. Teachers question pupils well and, in the best lessons, encourage them to think strategically; to devise ways of approaching a problem which can be applied in other circumstances. This approach is used routinely, and to very good effect, in Year 2.
13. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support from learning support assistants, who are well deployed and effective. Teachers set suitable learning challenges in response to pupils' diverse learning needs. The work provided is closely matched to the targets identified in pupils' individual learning plans. Support staff are well-prepared, effective communicators and manage pupils well, giving them sufficient support to enable them to move forward in their learning.
14. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are taught effectively, particularly in small groups which are well planned to encourage the development of speaking and listening skills. At this stage of the year, all these pupils are very new to the school and those in the Reception class are still settling in. Support staff have helped children to adjust to a very new experience and are working to establish an initial basic vocabulary. This is challenging work for staff who do not have specialist training, and it requires close monitoring. Historically, however, the school has coped very successfully, in similar circumstances, with pupils who arrive with minimal English.
15. Teachers' methods are chosen well to assist pupils in gaining knowledge and developing understanding at a steady rate. The youngest pupils, however, have limited scope for individual choice of activities. Overall, planning is good. The school has developed good planning structures with plenty of guidance for staff to draw on. Clear objectives are set for learning and very good use overall is made of assessment to inform the planning of suitably challenging work to match pupils' needs and capabilities. Work is well-matched overall to pupils' needs – this is a significant strength in Year 2, though a weaker feature in Year 1 at present. Pupils are given useful comments when their work is marked, to help them improve future efforts. The school has made real strides in carrying out and using assessment. Teachers make very good use of data to track pupils' progress and identify areas of weakness. Target-cards are used in Reception. Individual targets are set in English, some long-term, some short-term and readily achievable. The school is working towards developing individual targets in mathematics. Assessment structures are in place for all subjects of the curriculum. Good use is currently made of homework to support pupils' achievement.

The curriculum

The overall quality of the curriculum is **good**.

The range and quality of learning experiences throughout Reception and in Years 1 and 2 are good. The curriculum is relevant and appropriate to the age of pupils. Good extra-curricular provision enriches the curriculum and homework is given to reinforce what is done in school. The quality and range of the learning resources is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A comprehensive and effective two-year curriculum plan has been established.
- Nationally-validated schemes effectively underpin the school's curriculum.
- Provision in Reception is good and is securely based on the recommended curriculum for Foundation Stage children.
- The curriculum fully meets the needs of all pupils.
- The school has sufficient accommodation and resources to meet the demands of the curriculum, although the hall has an awkward shape for some activities.
- Efficient management of the curriculum ensures smooth transition from Reception to Year 1.

Commentary

16. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 meets statutory requirements. The quality and range of opportunities provided are good. The emphasis on the delivery of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has raised standards in those subjects. Nationally-validated schemes of work are used effectively to support planning and provision in other subjects and these have been successfully woven together in a two-year cycle, around half-termly topics. Teachers carefully link the areas of study, for example geography with mathematics and ICT. Schemes of work identify what is to be taught and when. This is an improvement on the curriculum at the time of last inspection, when schemes of work were lacking. Similarly, planning in terms of daily or weekly plans, is now sharply-focused with learning objectives clearly identified and sensitively adapted to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. The quality of challenge provided for higher attaining pupils remains variable, and the school recognises this as an area for continued attention. Literacy and mathematics are used and developed well across the curriculum. For example, pupils write a diary about the fire of London as part of their work in history.
17. Equality of access to the curriculum is a strength. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and they are achieving well as a result. The challenge provided is appropriate for their needs and they are given effective support in class. Individual education plans are sharply-focused and promote effective learning. The dialogue between support staff and class teachers ensures a consistent approach to these pupils. The school provides effectively for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE), with good opportunities for all pupils to learn social skills, such as sharing, helping others, resolving simple arguments and resisting bullying. Pupils are encouraged to empathise with others. PSHE is taught as a discrete subject, but there is at present no scheme of work and staff have not undertaken professional development in the subject. The school has a policy on sex and relationship education and seeks to develop the curriculum in this area. The curriculum prepares pupils well for subsequent stages of education. Between the Foundation Stage and Year 1, the transfer of assessment information effectively ensures progression in each pupil's learning. Less secure is the exchange of information between Year 2 staff and subsequent schools.
18. Enrichment of the curriculum through extra-curricular activities is good. There are regular activities such as recorder and choir, together with French and sporting opportunities such as weekly football coaching. These are augmented by educational outings to enrich learning with direct first-hand experience. Before and after-school clubs to care for children outside school hours are well used by parents. Both the accommodation and the resources to deliver

the curriculum are good. The school is well-staffed. Staff have appropriate qualifications and, though some have little experience, they are well supported. The accommodation is safe, attractive and well resourced, enabling the full curriculum to be offered, although the shape of the hall restricts its use for physical education activities. Every effort is made to ensure that accommodation is accessible to all. The steep site makes access difficult for disabled people.

Care, guidance and support

Care and support for pupils are **good**. Involvement of pupils in the school's work and development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships between staff and pupils are very good.
- Daily routines are well organised.
- The school does not seek pupils' views as a matter of course.

Commentary

19. All adults working in the school, irrespective of their role, know the children very well and are involved in caring for them. The quality of monitoring and the guidance available to pupils from adults is good. Teaching, support and administrative staff all have pupils' welfare as their priority. This is particularly striking in class where staff teamwork means that any difficulties are speedily addressed. As a result, pupils feel secure and settled and ready to learn. Those who responded to the inspection questionnaire were unanimous that there was always someone they could turn to if they had a problem. Although the school listens very carefully to pupils' individual ideas and concerns, both informally and through circle time, there are no formal systems for gathering pupils' views on school issues.
20. The care with which the school manages and organises its daily routines is another important factor in helping these young children to feel happy and settled. The development of the playground facilities is especially significant here, as playground experiences can have such an impact on pupils' well being. The school has transformed a bleak and barren piece of tarmac into an inviting and exciting area with the addition of seating, covered areas and role-play areas, and the provision of toys and books. This makes playtime something to look forward to for all pupils, and they return to class afterwards happy and ready to get on with their lessons.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has **very good** links with the local community. Links with parents and other schools are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a very close partnership with the church.
- Very good use is made of the community.
- Parents are kept well informed about the school and their children.
- Parents are not systematically consulted about changes which affect them.

Commentary

21. The school's very close relationship with the church and the local community helps to give pupils an understanding of who they are, where they belong, and what it means to be part of a bigger group. This was particularly apparent in the school's recent 150th anniversary celebrations, where the pupils got a sense of their place in history which will stay with them

for a long time. Church links help to familiarise pupils with the Christian traditions and principles which form the basis of their school's ethos and give them experience of doing things for others, be it collecting for charities or singing for the elderly. The school takes full advantage of its location on the edge of town and country to provide a wealth of experiences for pupils which bring aspects of their learning to life and which they will remember. Pupils who were interviewed had vivid recollections of their trips to the theatre or the open-air museum, which had had a significant effect on them.

22. Reports to parents on their children's progress are good. They focus well on what the children have achieved, and they give a good indication of what they need to do to improve further. An especially good feature of the reports is the way that they tell parents how their support has made a difference and what they can do next to help their child. This is very useful. Reports would be even better if they told parents clearly how well their children are doing for their age, so that parents have a realistic idea of their children's attainment.
23. Information to parents about what is happening at school is very good. Regular weekly newsletters are detailed and welcoming, while supplementary letters explain important changes or developments carefully. The prospectus and governors' annual report give a good picture of the school, although governors need to ensure that their report contains all the information it should.
24. The school responds swiftly to any concerns parents raise, and staff are readily accessible to talk to parents at the end of every day. However, systematic consultation of parents is not part of the school's approach to improvement and change at the moment. Nonetheless, the school has just introduced weekly opportunities for parents to discuss their children's progress, as a result of the inspection questionnaire. This shows the possible benefits of consultation for all parties involved.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall

The headteacher has led the school through an extended period of change with considerable success. She has been effective in appointing key staff, significantly improving the quality of teaching, reviewing and improving the curriculum, upgrading the accommodation and resources and ensuring that the school makes steady progress in improving the quality of education for pupils. With a settled, ambitious and committed staff now in place, the school is poised to move forward, tackling its agenda for continued improvement. The governance of the school is good. Governors are committed to the school and meet their responsibilities well, overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the school is very good and more effective than at the last inspection.
- The headteacher and her senior staff form a strong, effective partnership that is successful in moving the school forward. Monitoring activities are well-established, in the context of a relatively small school.
- The school has a very strong ethos and a commitment towards equality for all.
- Strategic planning is very good and well linked to performance management systems and the professional development of staff.
- The governing body fulfils its statutory duties well and provides good support for the headteacher and her team.

Commentary

25. The quality of leadership and management provided by the headteacher and senior teacher is very good. They have a clear vision of how they would like to see the school develop. The management team is dedicated and hard working. All staff and governors have a shared

sense of purpose and a commitment towards making things better for pupils. The successful approach to promoting equality of opportunity for all is a very good feature of provision. The management role of subject leaders has been developed well in the circumstances. The context of a small staff and recent turnover – and the appointment of two newly-qualified teachers – means that co-ordinator responsibilities are now shared among three rather than five members of staff. This is demanding in terms of the monitoring of standards and support of colleagues.

26. Planning for future development is very good. The school improvement plan provides a well-structured programme for raising standards. It takes careful account of cost implications within budget restrictions and gives clear guidelines for measuring success. The school has embraced self-evaluation readily and openly and has a clear sense of direction at present. Good support from the local education authority numeracy adviser has also played an important part in raising standards in mathematics and is much appreciated by the school.
27. Governors, some of whom have been associated with the school over an extended period, make a purposeful contribution to its work. The chair of governors has a very good working knowledge of the school and has a positive working relationship with the headteacher. He is also a visible link with the parish church. The current governing body is well informed, organised and efficient. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses through regular updates from the headteacher and key subject leaders and through regular visits to the school. The governors oversee the management of resources successfully and are aware of the principles of best value when making decisions about finance. They are aware that the current shortfall in numbers may affect their budget in due course and have a clear view of the options available should that be the case.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	381,577	Balance from previous year	38,869
Total expenditure	361,546	Balance carried forward to the next	20,031
Expenditure per pupil	2,620		

28. The headteacher has implemented performance management structures well. Staff appreciate the very good opportunities for professional development which are provided for them and this input has had a demonstrable effect on provision and standards, for example in the provision for science, mathematics, art and design and physical education. The school has good capacity to build for future success and currently provides good value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

29. The children in the Reception class become five during the course of the year. Almost all attend both morning and afternoon sessions from the start, apart from two children, one of whom has had no prior school experience. The remaining 28 children have had pre-school, nursery or similar experience. Since the last inspection, the Foundation Stage curriculum has been structured around the nationally recommended Areas of Learning for children under five, extending, as the school year progresses, into the National Curriculum programmes of study. **The provision for Reception children is good.** Parents are made to feel welcome. They receive good information before their children join the school and there is effective communication later, as they hear about the progress their children make and attend consultation meetings through the year. Parents are positive about their choice of school and feel that the school is very successful. Many parents are happy to help with reading at home. Children are very keen to come to school and, although some are still very young, few are tearful on leaving adults in the morning.
30. The management of the Foundation Stage is good. The co-ordinator bases her assessment on 'stepping-stones' for learning identified in the national documentation and plans towards the six Early Learning Goals. At this stage of the year she has assessed each child and the information gained will contribute to the Foundation Stage profile. No children with significant special educational needs have yet been identified. The teacher leads a very successful team consisting of a senior teaching assistant and a learning support assistant who work together very effectively to assess children's development and facilitate the learning activities. The Reception classroom is bright and stimulating. There is access to the enclosed outdoor environment with opportunities for play and wheeled toys and climbing apparatus for physical activities.
31. Children are encouraged to move around the classroom activities provided, including the use of outdoors. Their activities are directed rather than child initiated. Learning is effective in this context. The safety aspects of using apparatus outdoors mean that constant adult attention is needed, and children are often monitored from inside the classroom. **Teaching is good.** Teachers have high expectations for children's behaviour and work. They prepare very thoroughly, and imaginatively, to extend and enrich children's experience.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are consistently good. Staff work together very effectively.
- A good induction programme enables the youngest children to settle in well.
- Good provision for children of all capabilities leads to good achievement and above average standards at the end of Reception. Children with English as an additional language are supported very well.
- The curriculum is well-planned and children achieve well; reading and writing skills and personal and social development are promoted particularly well.
- Good use is made of technology to support learning.
- Good cross-curricular links are made through creative activities.
- The Foundation Stage is managed well.
- Planned opportunities for speaking are limited.
- Opportunities for children to initiate creative activities are limited.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Circle times, assembly and classroom activity promote relationships well.
- Children develop independence when changing for physical education.
- Children share class resources well and take turns readily.

Commentary

32. Most children arrive in Reception with good pre-school experience in which they have developed good skills of social interaction. In role-play and using the puppet theatre, they enacted the religious education story they had just heard about, saying, 'Thank you'. Target cards, setting out each child's next personal goal, are used effectively in personal, social and health education (PSHE) as well as in literacy and mathematics. Parents are informed when the target has been reached. In Circle Time sessions, children talk about why friends are special, taking turns to say who their special friend is and why. "Friends make me smile", says one child and they play pass the smile on. Independence is promoted as children change, mostly without help, for their physical education lesson, dressing themselves again afterwards. Children were excited by the activity of building bridges, learning to share the new blocks. Similarly, they are happy to wait their turn to use the three computers in the classroom. Overall, much of the teaching in this area of learning is good, enabling children to achieve very well. Children are very well-prepared for entry to Year 1.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Focused activities promote children's phonic knowledge well.
- Children achieve very good standards in the early stages of reading. They enjoy stories and books.
- Children speak clearly and confidently, although planned opportunities for speaking are limited.
- Children with English as an additional language learn well.
- Children are taught good letter formation and the basis of joined script and some write sentences independently.

Commentary

33. Literacy skills are promoted very effectively, Children achieve very well and standards are well above average by the end of the Reception year. Using 'Jolly Phonics' and 'Letterland' schemes, children quickly learn the sounds of letters along with the hand movements which reinforce memory of letter shapes. Daily activities often relate to the letter being learnt, For example, mosaics cut from green paper were used to embellish a letter 'g'. Many children have good experience of hearing stories at home and listen attentively when they are read to in the classroom. Reception children are taught carefully how to form letters. This supports their joined handwriting later. At the post box in the writing corner, children are invited to write a letter to their friends. Planned opportunities for children to speak are more limited. In circle time, for example, they tended to repeat what each other had said. However, in the less formal structure of the role-play corner, they are ready to express themselves more freely. Children who do not have English as their first language learn well alongside the rest of the class and are given daily extra vocabulary practice.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are given a good introduction to mathematics.
- Teaching is good.
- Children make good progress in developing their mathematical skills and achieve well. Attainment by the age of five is good.

Commentary

34. Children have rich experiences of number. They close their eyes and accurately count the number of marbles dropped into a tin and then increase the number by one. The teacher introduces a special 'number of the week', which they learn to write. Many can count up to 100 and sometimes do this spontaneously. Their painted handprints up to 20 hang on a washing line. Number lines and number squares are referred to frequently. Language is used well to compare and describe numbers and relative sizes. In the 'Three Billy Goats Gruff' story, the concepts of 'over' and 'under' are reinforced effectively. Conkers were effective in weighing activities to illustrate 'heavier' and 'lighter'. Bar charts show the range of hair colour in the class and there are pictographs of eye colours. A learning support assistant effectively supports those for whom English is an additional language. Teaching is good and every opportunity is taken through the day to reinforce number learning using number songs and rhymes. Children thread beads in patterns of three and buy glasses at the opticians for 3p. There is a daily time with a numeracy focus. ICT tasks appropriate to the number activity are used well to reinforce children's understanding. Children make good progress in developing their mathematical skills and understanding. They achieve well in Reception and standards exceed those expected by the end of the year.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are well-taught and achieve well in this area.
- Children learn about other cultures and places in the world.
- They have good opportunities to use technology.

Commentary

35. Children enter Reception with good general knowledge of the world about them. Opportunities to investigate objects using all their senses are planned effectively. Blindfolded, children described textures of fabrics and surfaces using their fingers or feet. They identify soft and hard and are encouraged to think of more expressive vocabulary. They successfully learn about autumn and seasonal changes and have planted bulbs. The 'Harvest of the World' display reflects an increasing knowledge of other cultures and produce. Children learn to operate the listening centre and computer mouse correctly and are able to take digital photographs of activities linked to the topic. Children are well taught, interact well and achieve well in this area of learning. Standards are above those expected by the end of Reception.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children use equipment safely and with control.
- Children are made aware of the effects of exercise upon health.

- Hall space is limited and this affects what can be achieved indoors.

Commentary

36. Children achieve satisfactorily in this area and standards are in line with those expected by the end of Reception. Children change into PE kit independently and efficiently, leaving clothes tidily. They successfully complete the assault course, which has challenging elements. They balance and move over equipment confidently. However, there is insufficient space to spread the class in the hall to develop control fully. Children are aware that their hearts beat faster during physical activity and practise appropriate warm up and cool down activities. The use of wheeled toys outdoors enables children to move freely. They challenge each other to circuits on their scooters and cycles. Very good overarm throwing was observed as they aim for targets. Fine motor control is developed through use of scissors, pencils and activities such as picking up sand and salt with pincer movement of thumb and finger to fill a container. Some equipment, such as the small climbing frames, encourages adventurous exploration, although a soft landing surface is not provided. Supervision of free play on the outdoor equipment relies on children observing the rules and not going beyond the cones. They are observed through the classroom window. In general, they keep to these rules well.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good opportunities to use a variety of media and a range of equipment.
- Children have good opportunities for role-play.
- Adults intervene too often – too few creative activities are initiated by the children. This affects learning and the development of independence in this area.

Commentary

37. Children sing songs that are linked to the topic and learn hymns for assembly. They paint pictures of themselves and their families. However, this activity is adult directed and paintings lack variety. Freer painting which is child initiated was not evident. Hand printing connected to mathematical activities and mosaic work on the letter 'g' were also adult led. Musical activities were linked to the 'senses' theme. As in the last inspection, children talk and play imaginatively in their medical area role-play. While there is much playing alongside each other, many children are also ready to play with others. Limitations in learning and independence, because of the adults' tight control of creative development, mean that teaching is only satisfactory in this area. Pupils' achievement could be boosted further. They are, at present, on track to achieve the Early Learning Goals in this area of development.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE ONE

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment is above the national average. Standards in reading and handwriting are well above average. Standards in spelling and writing are above average.
- Pupils achieve well. Effective individual targets are set.
- Teaching is good. Support staff make a significant contribution to pupils' learning.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

- The management of English is good.
- Speaking skills are less effectively developed.

Commentary

38. Standards in reading and handwriting are well above average by the end of Year 2. Standards in writing and spelling are above average. High standards in reading have been sustained since the last inspection, while standards in writing have fluctuated from year to year. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected level in writing in 2003 showed a slight decline on the previous year, although the proportion achieving Level 3 increased.
39. Pupils achieve well, even from the above average starting point. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good because of the focused support they receive. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are supported well by staff and make good progress.
40. Handwriting and reading are particularly successful elements of the English curriculum. Handwriting is taught from Reception as cursive script. Good standards of handwriting and presentation seen within literacy lessons are also evident in other subjects of the curriculum. Pupils take pride in their work. Presentation is a strength. Reading skills build very successfully upon the good teaching of the sounds and shapes of letters in Reception. Pupils also receive good support in guided reading and at home. Pupils write well overall and test standards reflect this. However, the analysis of test results has shown a relative weakness in narrative writing and this is the current focus of development. Spelling is systematically taught. Correct use of capital letters and full stops is expected from the beginning. Planned opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking skills are limited at present, so that a number of pupils lack confidence and fluency in their speaking. Although standards in speaking are average overall, an increased focus on spoken language skills would enable pupils to develop greater confidence in speaking.
41. Teaching and learning are good overall. Learning objectives are clearly explained at the beginning of lessons and effective plenary sessions focus on what has been achieved. Pupils with similar needs are grouped appropriately and are mostly given work of the correct standard. Support staff are particularly well-prepared and effective in support of group work. Pupils are increasingly able to work independently, without being overly dependent upon the teacher. Good assessment procedures have been developed. They are used effectively to identify pupils who may require support in literacy. Higher attaining pupils are identified but are not consistently challenged to develop literacy skills, for example in poetry. A lesson drawing upon pupils' ICT skills involved highlighting words within a text and was an effective cross-curricular activity. Teachers mark work regularly and thoroughly and give clear guidance as to what is needed to improve. Frequently teachers encourage pupils to select more adventurous and varied vocabulary, for example, to choose 'replied', 'asked', 'shouted' or 'yelled', rather than 'said'.
42. Overall, the subject is managed well and there is a clear focus on raising standards and building on the many strengths which already exist.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

43. The school is well-advanced in creating planned opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills across the curriculum. There are good examples of extended writing opportunities in history and geography, such as the work produced by Year 1 pupils on the Fire of London. The development of pupils' speaking skills through other areas of the curriculum is too limited. At times effective questioning provides pupils with the opportunity to give thoughtful answers. A particularly good example of this was seen in a Year 2 science lesson on 'good and bad medicines' when, in response to effective cues from the teacher, pupils were able to

talk at some length about their experience of illness, hospitals and medicine. Nonetheless, even within one class, the range in pupils' communication skills was considerable.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average, and better than at the last inspection.
- Pupils achieve well. Higher attaining pupils make good progress.
- Teaching is rigorous and learning is consistently good through the school. Expectations are high and pupils are challenged effectively.
- Support staff are very well-prepared and have a significant effect on pupils' learning.
- The numeracy co-ordinator manages the subject very well.

Commentary

44. Good teaching helps pupils to reach standards which are well above average by the end of Year 2. Standards have continued to rise because of the school's commitment to high standards and the very effective additional training which staff have undertaken in the past year. This has enabled the school successfully to target weaker aspects of the mathematics curriculum, such as problem-solving. The school has also focused well on pupils of differing abilities and makes very effective use of committed and knowledgeable support staff. Pupils with special educational needs are well-supported in smaller groups so that almost all achieve the expected level by the time they leave the school. More able pupils are similarly taught in groups which focus on their needs. This has ensured in 2003, for example, that a well above average proportion of pupils achieved the higher Level 3 in the national tests. The school is, therefore, enabling pupils to achieve well.
45. Teaching and learning are good. There is some variation between the year groups, with the better teaching seen in Year 2. While teaching in Year 1 (where both staff are new to teaching) is good overall, there was some mismatch in the work provided for the higher attainers. These pupils might finish a task quite quickly and there was not always an appropriate additional task ready for them. Teachers and learning support staff have very good relationships with pupils. They encourage pupils to feel very secure and confident in their ability to succeed. Many pupils are developing a mature approach to their work and the higher attainers in particular are guided – and able - to work well independently, even at this early point in the school year. For example, in Year 2, pupils were being encouraged to think strategically as they tried to identify missing numbers from a sequence – general approaches which would then be transferable to other aspects of their work. A key feature of the best lessons observed is the brisk pace. No time is wasted. Also, where teaching is particularly good, teachers are skilled at assessing how well pupils are learning and in adapting their lesson plans as a result of what they notice. When marking work, teachers often include helpful comments which point the way forward.
46. The recent development work in mathematics has motivated staff effectively and sharpened their approach across the curriculum. The subject co-ordinator is knowledgeable and highly-committed. She has watched colleagues teach and has given them effective support and advice, based on her own extensive training. This has ensured that the Numeracy Strategy has been effectively adapted to meet the differing needs of pupils in the school, including those who are early learners of English.

Mathematics across the curriculum

47. The basic skills of numeracy are taught well in all classes. The school has focused well on giving pupils the opportunity to use their mathematical skills in subjects across the

curriculum. For example, there is evidence of the use of non-standard units of measurement when judging a person's height in science and in measuring and cutting tasks in design and technology. Bar graphs and tally charts are used well in science and geography as a means of representing information.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well. Standards have improved since the last inspection.
- Practical and investigative activities are now a strong feature.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils, particularly in Year 2, and use assessment well.
- The co-ordinator leads the subject well.

Commentary

48. Standards are above average by the end of Year 2. Standards have risen since the last inspection, on the basis of teacher assessment, with more pupils attaining the challenging Level 3. This is because the school builds well on pupils' prior learning; provides a good level of challenge in investigative activities, and focuses effectively on the needs of different groups of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are supported well. Good availability of support staff means that pupils are supported well in small groups when they are given activities to do and this enables them to make good progress. This is enabling the school to build well upon their earlier learning.
49. Able pupils in Year 2, studying the use of medicine as part of their 'Healthy Living' topic, could talk at length about the use of inhalers to support breathing and of their experience of illness. One asked perceptively, 'Does a sore throat always mean that you have a cold coming?'. Pupils' written work from last year shows that able pupils are well challenged. They attain greater independence as the year progresses. For example, they use fewer worksheets and produce more independent writing from one term to the next. By Year 2, the depth of coverage is very thorough with a focus on consolidating pupils' knowledge and understanding of their topics through regular revision and assessment tasks. A clear improvement since the last inspection is the effective use of practical activities to reinforce understanding. Year 2 pupils, for example, closely observed plants and animals; tested vehicles on ramps when looking at 'Forces', and counted the seeds in different fruit when studying the differences between plants and animals. This ensures that basic principles are understood and enables pupils to make good progress.
50. Pupils achieve well because teaching and learning are good in most classes. Teachers have good relationships with pupils, treat their ideas with respect and so give them confidence and security. Lessons are planned well and pupils are given a clear understanding of what it is they are to learn in each session. Occasionally, and largely because of inexperience, teachers do not plan enough activities for a lesson, or pupils progress at a faster than anticipated pace, so covering the work more quickly. This can lead to a loss of pace and affects learning. Overall, however, pupils are challenged well and consistently. The rigour of questioning is a strength, particularly in Year 2. This is very effective in enabling pupils to develop their understanding. There has been good progress in the use of assessment. Teachers are skilled at assessing how well pupils are learning in lessons and using this information to adapt future plans. The plenary session is used well for this. For example, in a Year 1 lesson on growth, the teacher effectively demonstrated the key learning point, that height is not necessarily consistent with age, by lining up the pupils in order of age.

51. The subject co-ordinator has effectively supported developments and the school is pleased with progress made, particularly in the use of support staff and of assessment to raise pupils' achievement. Good staff training has underpinned the improvements achieved.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- ICT is used effectively overall to support learning in other subjects.
- Staff and support assistants have been trained well and are confident in their subject knowledge.
- Pupils extend their experience well by making good use of the digital camera and listening centre equipment.
- Allocation of computers does not support whole-class teaching effectively. Pupils spend too little time on computers each week.

Commentary

52. Standards in ICT are at the expected level by the end of Year 2. Since the last inspection, there have been improvements in the number of computers available for class use. However, the deployment of the equipment and the need for pupils to work on machines independently for brief periods during the week means that, for most pupils, too little time is spent on the subject. This is a weaker feature. The weekly introductory session, where pupils observe a computer, but are not able to use it, is not as effective as it might be. Standards are better than might be expected for many pupils because of the access which many have at home and because pupils' very positive attitudes and mature approach mean that they do not waste any of the limited time available to them on the machines. This helps them to achieve satisfactorily.
53. From Reception, children acquire key computing skills, such as manipulating the mouse and changing format and colours when using a paint program. Reluctant learners are keen to operate the computer. All pupils achieve satisfactorily overall, including those with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs. In addition, younger pupils listen to stories while following a text. The school's digital camera is well used by the pupils.
54. Teaching is satisfactory overall. All teachers have been trained in computer use. They are knowledgeable overall and are able to support pupils effectively when necessary. Support staff have also developed sufficient skills to be able to assist pupils as they work. The key area for development remains the level of access which pupils have to computers.
55. The subject is well managed by the co-coordinator, who is increasing in confidence. She is supported well by a technician shared with two other schools. This is an effective partnership. In this small school, there is limited time to monitor ICT. The school makes good use of a commercially produced, structured scheme-of-work which ensures satisfactory attention to each branch of the subject. This is working well.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

56. The use of ICT to support learning in subjects across the curriculum is satisfactory. The use made of the classroom computers is not extensive, though they were being used during the inspection to support learning in geography as well as in literacy and numeracy.

HUMANITIES

Geography and History

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in these subjects.
- Pupils' good literacy skills enhance attainment.
- A well-established curriculum plan ensures good balance in teaching time.

Commentary

57. Standards are above those expected in both subjects. Although only one lesson was observed, judgements are based on the good body of evidence available in pupils' books from the last school year. Handwriting and general presentation reach a very good standard. Learning is good, and pupils make good progress through the year as they cover topics such as Mary Seacole, Victorian Schools and the Fire of London. Pupils' literacy skills are used well in both subjects. Pupils write letters describing their experience as a child in Victorian times and also compose a diary reflecting the progress of the fire. A Year 1 pupil produced a page of legible writing which began "I've woken up to the Great fire of London".
58. Half-termly studies within in a two-year cycle in the humanities are based on a nationally produced scheme. Adequate time is allocated to these subjects. Pupils study significant men, women, children and events from the recent and distant past, from Britain and the wider world. Information from a range of sources - books, pictures, artefacts and people - is studied. In the current local environment study, the use of ICT in geography has enabled pupils to locate their homes on a map by using their postcodes. This is an effective way to use ICT across the curriculum. Pupils have gathered information in a tally of how they travel to school and have presented this graphically using a computer. The pupil for whom English is an additional language did not have full access to this lesson owing to his limited knowledge of the language, but was supported well by the support assistant. Pupils' learning is supported particularly effectively by an extensive programme of visits, to the river, the castle and the museum. This enables them to begin to learn about the wider world. The school building, and the parish church, themselves constitute excellent resources for history. as did the recent activities when the school celebrated its 150th anniversary.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

No **design and technology** was taught during the inspection period and no detailed judgements are possible. However, the evidence of pupils' work provided from the last school year suggests that **standards are at the expected level**. Pupils have satisfactory making skills. They now prepare design sheets for each task and evaluate their work carefully at the end using well-designed pro-formas. The curriculum provides a broad and appropriate range of experiences, in line with the national guidance. Assessment procedures are in place and are used effectively by staff.

One brief lesson only was observed in **music**, so that the evidence base for the quality of class music, or the standards achieved, is very limited. The school feels that considerable progress has been made in the subject since the last inspection, and that its scheme-of-work, together with a published music resource, provide a very effective framework within which staff can work. The wider dimensions of school music are clearly a strength. Pupils sing very well and this was evident in assemblies. There is a school choir, which, though low on numbers at the beginning of the school year, makes a significant contribution to school events and services. A number of pupils learn to play the recorder. It was not possible to judge the overall standard of playing at this early point in the school year.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards, though still average overall, are rising, with some good work emerging.
- The curriculum is secure and pupils have a broader range of experience, including more three-dimensional work.
- Good links with ICT are helping to raise standards.
- Introduction of sketchbooks in Year 2 is helping to secure pupils' skills.
- Staff training has been used well to develop staff skills and to raise standards.

Commentary

59. Good teaching and raised expectations are having a positive effect on standards. Though still average overall by the end of Year 2, standards are rising and there is evidence of good quality work from individual pupils and in certain topics covered. Recent staff training and the introduction of a detailed scheme of work to support teachers in their planning are leading to significant improvements in the range and quality of work. Although pupils' achievement remains satisfactory overall, this too is improving. Year 2 pupils are now using sketchbooks and this is securing their skills in drawing, pencil control and basic perspective. In the 'Mother Nature Designer' unit from the last school year, pupils achieved some striking results. Focused on a natural object, such as a twig, leaf or stone, they sketched its texture lines, represented it in a digital photograph and then prepared a collage based on its configuration. This successful activity demanded considerable patience and an awareness of line and tone. Pupils have experimented with tonal intensity and have used a viewfinder successfully to frame a scene – a desert landscape for some pupils. They have created effective three-dimensional work in clay, linked initially to a planned visit to a sculpture park. They have some awareness of other artists, having produced self-portraits after Matisse and created stick patterns, after Andy Goldsworthy. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. Where necessary, they are supported well by adults. Pupils with English as an additional language are not significantly disadvantaged in art, receiving any support necessary to access the work.
60. Teaching and learning were good in the lesson observed. A significant strength was the contribution of the voluntary helper and support staff. One adult was guiding Year 2 pupils in applying a paint wash to a sketched portrait which pupils had just enlarged. This included a highly effective introduction to colour-mixing, cleverly linked to the idea of varying skin tone, and to the control of brushes and paint to achieve delicate effects. Pupils gained considerably from the rigour of this introduction and their efforts and the outcomes reflected the quality of the input. Where subject knowledge and communication skills are as good as this, pupils are able to achieve really well.
61. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The co-ordinator has contributed significantly to the improved teaching and the rising standards. Staff work together well and have shared in training, which has supported the improvements coming through. Detailed planning is now available for staff and assessment structures have been introduced to enable them to track the development of pupils' art and design skills closely.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Dance is a well-developed element of the curriculum.

- Pupils achieve good standards in swimming.
- The hall is small and this restricts indoor activities, especially in gymnastics.

Commentary

62. Standards are average overall in physical education, although in some elements of the curriculum, such as swimming, standards are above average.
63. Of the lessons observed, two involved gymnastics. Year 1 pupils were creating different body shapes, such as hedgehogs and lampposts, and eventually combining some disparate shapes into a sequence. In Year 2, pupils were linking two actions, body shapes or balances in a controlled way and then devising ways of travelling on apparatus. In both instances pupils were attentive and interested and demonstrated control and co-ordination appropriate to their age and experience. In all lessons, pupils were appropriately changed. No time was wasted in beginning the lesson. Good use is made of warm-up activities. All staff follow common practice in asking pupils about the effects of exercise on health and to enable them to evaluate the work of others.
64. Staff work hard to create interesting opportunities in dance. Teachers aim to develop the creative aspects of the activity, rather than to ask pupils to respond to taped programmes. Although standards remain average overall, there is evidence of good practice and this element of the curriculum has good potential for development. Year 1 pupils demonstrated a movement sequence on penguins. They caught the typical movements very well and presented them confidently. The best presentations showed close attention to detail, demonstrating good co-ordination and an imaginative engagement with the theme. However, the session as a whole was rather long. Pupils with English as an additional language are supported well by support staff, ensuring that they understand well enough to be involved in the lesson.
65. Swimming is an additional element of the PE curriculum, not normally offered to younger pupils. Records indicate that pupils are very successful swimmers (though a number benefit from good opportunities outside school). A substantial proportion swim at the standard expected of Year 6 pupils by the end of Year 2.
66. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils. They have a positive rapport and pupils are very keen to please. Lessons are very well planned. The best sustain a brisk pace. Occasionally, and particularly with the less experienced staff, activities do not quite fill the extended time available and this affects progress. Teachers work hard to promote self-evaluation among pupils, encouraging them to comment upon the work they see. This makes some contribution to the development of speaking skills. Teachers' subject knowledge is good, in part because of the good recent opportunities for staff development, particularly in dance.
67. To compensate for the limited space outdoors, the school has the use of a high quality playing field for games and athletics. The shape of the hall is awkward and it is a difficult space for gymnastics. However, teachers adapt lessons accordingly, though there are difficulties when apparatus is used.
68. The co-ordinator provides good leadership and supports colleagues well. This contributes significantly to the consistent practice observed. Assessment structures have been implemented. This is also helping to push standards forward.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is **good**.

- The school is a harmonious community in which all pupils have equal status and show respect for each other.
 - Pupils are very supportive of each other when difficulties arise. Circle Time is used well in the school.
69. Personal, social and health education is well provided for, though no formal scheme-of-work is yet in place. The school is a socially and racially harmonious community in which all pupils are given equal status. The school pays good attention to health awareness aspects. Younger pupils learn about the need for a good diet to keep them healthy and about how they should differentiate between 'good and bad medicines'. Pupils benefit from the very good role-models provided by staff. Pupils relate very well to one another and show tolerance and respect for views different from their own.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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