

INSPECTION REPORT

ST OSWALD'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Coppull

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119675

Headteacher: Mr J P Burgess

Lead inspector: Mrs J Platt

Dates of inspection: 13 – 15 October 2003

Inspection number: 257895

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:	5 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	135
School address:	Spendmore Lane Coppull Chorley
Postcode:	PR7 5DH
Telephone number:	01257 791379
Fax number:	01257 795516
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Reverend Father L Mayne
Date of previous inspection:	18 June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Oswald's is a voluntary aided Catholic primary school in Coppull, Lancashire. With 135 boys and girls, it is smaller than most primary schools. Virtually all pupils are of white United Kingdom heritage and no pupils are learning through English as an additional language. Whilst the school has a lower than average number (6 per cent) of pupils on the register of special educational needs, there is a higher than average number of pupils with formal Statements of Special Educational Needs. Difficulties include specific and moderate learning difficulties. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (9 per cent) is below the national average. Pupils come from a wide range of different background, and the socio-economic circumstances of most families are broadly average. Most children enter school with levels of attainment similar to what is expected for their age. The school has received a basic skills award and an Achievement Award for improvement in national tests.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
11565	Mrs J Platt	Lead inspector	English Science Creative, aesthetic, practical and physical subjects Special educational needs English as an additional language
11457	Mrs J Beattie	Lay inspector	
22740	Mrs M Leah	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage Humanities

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an **effective school with many very good features**. Overall achievement is good and standards in Year 6 are well above average in English, mathematics and science. The overall quality of teaching is good and leads to effective learning. Leadership and management of the school are good and there is a strong team spirit to raise standards. The school is held in high esteem by parents and pupils and is a friendly community. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science are above average in Year 2 and are well above average in Year 6 in English, mathematics and science.
- Teaching is good and leads to effective learning, although teachers do not always make it clear what pupils are to learn or provide enough opportunities to develop independent learning skills.
- The leadership of the school is good and there is a strong commitment to including all pupils in the life of the school. Governors are very committed to the school and particularly effective in ensuring that money is spent prudently in the best interest of the pupils.
- Overall personal development is good. Very good promotion of social and moral development leads to a caring school which reflects the school's Catholic character. Pupils have a good understanding of their own culture but have little knowledge of other faiths and traditions.
- Standards in information and communication technology are satisfactory but teachers do not always make full use of the available resources to extend and consolidate learning.
- Assessment systems in English and mathematics are good and the school uses information effectively to track pupils' progress. Procedures are lacking in other subjects and subject leaders do not have details to check on standards. Assessment information is not being used to tell pupils clearly what they need to do to reach higher standards.

Since the school was inspected in May 1998 the rate of improvement has been good. The school has received an Achievement Award for improvement in the results of national tests. Most pupils in Year 6 now have a neat style of handwriting. Standards in information and communication remain satisfactory but the school has improved planning and resources. More attention is given to teaching basic computer skills but computers are not always used as effectively as they could be to extend learning. In English and mathematics the school now uses assessment information effectively to monitor the school's performance as well as track individual progress. This is not the case in all subjects and so it is more difficult for subject leaders to gain an informed picture of the standards being achieved in the subjects they lead.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Year 6 results

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	A	C	A	A*
Mathematics	A	A	B	B
Science	A	B	A	A

Key: A* - very high, in the top five per cent in the county; A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average

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

Overall achievement is **good**.

In 2002 pupils achieved very well when compared with all and with similar schools. The results in 2003 were not quite as high in English and mathematics because fewer reached above average standards. This is not the case with the current Year 6 where a significant number of pupils achieve very well and standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science. Achievement in Year 2 is good. The school has been giving more attention to the needs of higher attaining pupils and standards are now above average in reading, writing and mathematics. In the Foundation Stage, achievement is satisfactory and the children are on course to reach the learning goals set for them in all aspects of learning. In their personal and social development, achievement is good and in response to good teaching children settle happily into school. Staff meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and they make good progress.

Overall provision for pupils' personal development is good. Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They are eager to please and try hard in lessons. They arrive punctually and attendance is above average. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. **The spiritual development of pupils is good and their moral and social development is very good.** These aspects are promoted in an atmosphere of respect reflecting the school's Catholic status. The pupils have a good understanding of their own culture but have limited knowledge of other faiths and traditions.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality of education. Teaching and learning are good. It is very good and occasionally excellent in Year 6 when pupils benefit from different teachers sharing their specific expertise. This raises achievement in the final year in school. English and mathematics are taught effectively throughout the school. Games activities and lively introductions make these lessons interesting and, as a result pupils develop good literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers manage behaviour effectively and the relationships between staff and pupils provide a good basis for learning. Support staff provide very effective help which especially benefits pupils with special educational needs, who are fully included and respond well to sensitive guidance. The best lessons hold pupils' attention because tasks are presented in an exciting way. This is not always the case and some lessons lack pace and variety so that pupils lose interest. Teaching in the Foundation Stage and a few subjects does not always allow pupils enough opportunity to become independent learners. Planning is satisfactory but teachers do not always make it clear to pupils what they intend them to learn and so pupils are unsure about the focus of the lesson. Teachers mark pupils' work but it is not always made clear to pupils how to improve by adding informative comments or setting individual targets.

The school offers a good curriculum. It is readily accessible to all pupils and is enriched by a good range of visits and after school activities. This is a very caring school with a focus on raising self-esteem. The school has a good partnership with parents and the local community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is **good**. Governors carry out their role effectively and are well informed about the school's strengths and weaknesses. Leadership of the school is good. The headteacher and key staff work well as a team with a clear focus on raising standards for pupils of all abilities. Relationships are good and all work to support each other in a climate of mutual respect. Management is good and the school runs smoothly. Staff and governors monitor and evaluate standards and promptly tackle any identified weaknesses. Financial control and routine administration are very good.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very satisfied with the education their children receive. Pupils say they like school and feel their opinions are taken seriously and action taken if they raise any concerns.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- improve assessment procedures in subjects other than English and mathematics so that progress can be more closely monitored;
- set pupils' targets so they are clearer about how to improve their work;
- make more use of computers to support learning in class and in other subjects;
- make sure it is clear what pupils are intended to learn in lessons and provide enough opportunities for pupils to make choices and work independently;
- provide more opportunities for pupils to learn about other religions and traditions so they are more fully prepared for life in a multi-ethnic society.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

In the Foundation Stage¹ pupils achieve satisfactorily and reach the level expected for their age. Achievement in Years 1 and 2 is good and standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Achievement is good in the early years of the juniors and accelerates in Year 6 and standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science in Year 2.
- Standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science in Year 6.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
- Progress in the Foundation Stage is good in personal and social development and children exceed the level expected for their age. Progress is satisfactory in other areas of learning and children reach the required level.
- Standards in information and communication technology are satisfactory. Not all aspects of the subject receive enough attention because resources are new and teachers do not always make enough use of computers to consolidate the skills taught in the computer suite.

Commentary

1. Children enter school with standards that are similar to those normally expected for their age. In response to good teaching and a caring atmosphere most make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and exceed the early learning goals² by the time they enter Year 1. Satisfactory progress is made in the other areas of learning and children reach the level expected for their age. Some tasks are too tightly prescribed by the teacher and in lessons seen children did not make as much progress as they could have done.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores³ in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.3 (16.0)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	15.3 (15.7)	14.4 (14.3)
Mathematics	17.0 (16.8)	16.5 (16.2)

There were 14 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

¹ Foundation Stage – this begins when children reach the age of three and ends at the end of the reception class. It is a distinct stage in preparing children for later schooling and is based on six areas of learning. These mainly refer to communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development, but also includes knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.

² The early learning goals are the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They refer mainly to achievements made in the six areas of learning. There are many goals for each area of learning, for example, in language and literacy children should be able to write their own name and begin to write simple sentences.

³ The average point scores provide schools with a statistic to compare the overall grades attained by all of their pupils with the grades attained by pupils in another school as well as an average for all schools nationally. The score is obtained from the National Curriculum level attained by pupils in the national assessments. For example, in mathematics pupils are awarded 9 points for a Level 1, 15 points for Level 2 and 21 points for Level 3. The average score is then calculated by adding up all of the points and dividing by the number of pupils.

2. These results were in line with both the national average and the average for similar schools in reading and above average in writing and mathematics. In all subjects every pupil reached the level expected for their age. This places the results in the top five per cent in the country. However, the number of pupils exceeding this level was below average especially in writing. The school promptly spotted this weakness and gave the higher attaining pupils more attention in lessons. A small group of higher attaining pupils had additional support in a writing group to give them experiences of writing at higher levels. As a result, the results of national tests in 2003 were much better for these pupils. This success has continued and current standards in Year 2 are above average in reading, writing and mathematics and achievement is good.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	30.0 (27.6)	27.0 (27.0)
Mathematics	27.7 (29.5)	26.7 (26.6)
Science	30.4 (29.5)	28.3 (28.3)

There were 17 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. These results were well above average in English and science and above average in mathematics. When compared with similar schools a very positive picture of high achievement emerges. In fact, in English the results were very high and were in the top five per cent in the country. The trend in results has been in line with the national trend with results being generally above average over the last four years. 2003 results show these high standards have been sustained. Achievement accelerates to very good as pupils move into Year 6. This is because the school gives considerable attention to the needs of pupils in Year 6 and deploys staff with particular subject expertise to this class. The headteacher teaches mathematics daily to Year 6 which allows them to be taught in a small, single age group with a focus particularly on their specific needs. The high quality of this teaching enables all to achieve very well and standards in mathematics are well above average. Similarly, the pupils have a weekly lesson in creative writing taught by a teacher with a flair in getting pupils to write imaginatively. This effectively complements their other writing experiences and most pupils' writing is of a high standard. They write for a range of purposes in grammatical, lively English that is well presented. The Year 6 teacher is the science co-ordinator and shares her subject knowledge effectively so that standards are well above average. Although standards are high in science in the lessons seen and the scrutiny of work pupils are not always having enough opportunity to work independently and follow their own line of enquiry.
4. Literacy and numeracy skills support learning in other subjects although teachers could plan more opportunities for the promotion of numeracy.
5. Throughout the school pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Pupils with statements of special educational need have good help from teachers and support staff. Tasks match their identified need and when one target is achieved another is set to sustain good progress. There is no difference in the progress of boys and girls.
6. Achievement is satisfactory in information and communication technology and pupils in Years 2 and 6 reach the level expected for their age. The status of the subject has improved since the last inspection and teachers give more attention to teaching basic computer skills in the computer suite. However, the suite is small and pupils get insufficient time to consolidate their learning in the suite or when they return to class and this makes it difficult for them to make good progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance is above average. Pupils have good attitudes to school and they behave well. Pupils' social and moral development is very good, spiritual development is good and cultural development is satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attendance is above average and pupils arrive punctually.
- Pupils are very interested in school life and eager to take part in all the activities that the school provides.
- Behaviour is good throughout the day.
- Relationships throughout the school are very good. The older pupils take a good level of responsibility within the school community and they care very well for the younger ones.
- The strong community feeling reflects the school's Catholic nature and contributes well to pupils' personal, social and moral and spiritual growth.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to develop skills of independent learning, investigation and personal study.
- The school does not prepare pupils sufficiently to take part in a multi-cultural society by teaching them about faiths other than their own.

Commentary

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.5	School data	0.0
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.

7. Attendance is above average and many pupils have a record of 100 per cent attendance. Pupils arrive punctually and settle quickly to work.
8. Most pupils are interested in lessons and work with a good level of concentration in class. They are eager to take part in the extra-curricular activities and consequently they develop a very good sense of teamwork. The older pupils take an enthusiastic part in the residential visit, which helps them to grow in self-confidence. The school does not fully develop pupils' skills of independent learning and personal study sufficiently and limited evidence was seen of pupils undertaking independent research for projects and topics.
9. Good behaviour both in class and during breaks and lunchtime enables pupils to make the most of all their opportunities for learning and as a result they make good progress. No pupil has been excluded from school. Parents say behaviour is good and their children, whatever their needs and ability, are warmly welcomed into school and helped to do their best. Pupils value their close friendships with fellow pupils and quickly develop trusting relationships with all the school staff. The school has recorded no racist incidents and pupils say that they know that any incidents of bullying will not be tolerated and must be reported. Pupils confidently play a full part in all activities because they feel secure and valued.
10. From the earliest years the school promotes the pupils' spiritual growth and knowledge of right and wrong in a warm, caring community where Christian values are paramount. Pupils respond very well to the climate of care, support and friendship. The older pupils have developed a strong sense of responsibility for others and they care very well for the younger pupils. The children in the reception class make good progress and exceed the level expected for them in their personal, emotional and social development.

11. Opportunities for pupils to gain knowledge of their own culture and some of the cultural traditions of other countries are woven into the curriculum, for example, in literacy, art, music, history and geography. However, the school does not prepare pupils sufficiently for a multi-cultural society by teaching them about other religions and religious festivals and traditions.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **good quality of education**. Teaching is good and leads to effective learning. The curriculum is good and meets the needs of all pupils effectively. The care and welfare of the pupils are given significant attention and this is a very caring community.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Parents are virtually unanimous in their judgement that teaching is good. The best teaching seen was in the mixed Year 1 and 2 class and in Year 6. Teaching is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage. Assessment is satisfactory but there is a weakness in sharing with pupils what they need to do to improve their work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach, especially English, mathematics and science and have high expectations of standards in these subjects.
- Teaching is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage. It is good in promoting children's personal and social skills but in other areas of learning expectations the focus of activities is not always clear.
- A positive feature in lessons is the warm relationship between pupils and staff which leads to good behaviour and sets the scene for pupils to do their best.
- Support staff provide very effective help that enables the school to fully meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs.
- In a few lessons there is a higher focus on teaching rather than learning. This prevents pupils learning independently and developing the skills to find out for themselves.
- Planning is satisfactory although teachers do always make it clear what pupils are to learn. Teachers do not plan enough opportunities for the use of computers.
- Teachers mark work and many include positive comments which help pupils to learn from their errors. As yet, pupils are not given targets which tell them what they need to do to improve.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 26 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	3	14	8	0	0	0

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

12. The grid above shows that all of the teaching seen was satisfactory or better and was good overall. This is a similar picture to the teaching observed at the last inspection. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory with good features in the promotion of pupils' personal and social skills. The best teaching seen was in mixed Year 1 and 2 class and in Year 6 and this boosts learning in these classes. Teaching was excellent in mathematics in Year 6 and the teacher's enthusiasm is transmitted to the pupils and much new learning takes place.
13. Teaching of mathematics, English and science is good. Good subject knowledge is shared effectively with pupils and leads to good learning. Mathematics lessons include practical activities and successful questioning draws from pupils the methods used to solve problems. This enables pupils to learn from each other as they discover different methods to carry out calculations. Reading and writing are taught well. In the Foundation Stage and infant classes

a variety of games and rhymes are used to teach pupils the letters and their sounds. These are enjoyable sessions and pupils absorb this information and promptly put it to use in early reading and writing activities. Since the last inspection more attention has been given to teaching handwriting and most pupils leave school with a neat style of writing.

14. In all lessons seen, including the Foundation Stage, teachers establish secure and effective learning conditions. As a result, pupils' behaviour is good and they work hard and purposefully. Methods of discipline are unobtrusive and effective and based on mutual respect for pupils. Teachers and support staff encourage pupils by celebrating their efforts and achievements and so classrooms are happy places. This is especially effective for the newcomers in the Foundation Stage who have quickly made friendships and understand the importance of sharing.
15. Planning is satisfactory. Teachers carefully follow the school's detailed long term plans to ensure topics in the mixed-age classes are not repeated or omitted. Literacy skills are taught well in other subjects and this extends pupils' skills. The promotion of numeracy and information and communication technology is satisfactory. Teachers do not always include these skills in their planning and as a result some opportunities are missed. Basic computer skills are taught well in the suite but teachers do not make full use of the suite or the computers in their class to support learning in other subjects.
16. Teachers and support staff plan carefully to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs. Tasks are often practical and if different to the work of other pupils are carried out unobtrusively in class so that pupils feel a full and valued part of the community.
17. In the best lessons it is made very clear to pupils what they are to learn and the conclusion of the lesson revisits this and checks that pupils have achieved the learning outcome. In many lessons, however, what pupils were expected to learn in that lesson was not clear and hence what they had learnt was difficult to check. This was a weakness in literacy lessons observed when it was unclear if pupils were writing playscripts or dialogue and the confusion did not lead to effective learning. Similarly, in the Foundation Stage the focus of activities is not always clear and some tasks lack sufficient challenge to extend learning.
18. Most lessons are conducted at a brisk pace and include a variety of activities which make learning interesting. For example, in the mixed Year 1 and 2 class the teacher includes role-play and group work and a buzz of activity is a regular feature of learning in this classroom. A weakness in several lessons is that tasks are too tightly prescribed by the teacher so pupils do not grow in confidence to follow their own ideas and explore beyond what is planned.
19. Assessment is satisfactory overall. Teachers mark pupils work and often include informative comments so that pupils know how to correct any mistakes. As yet, information assessment is not used to set pupils' targets and pupils informed inspectors they were unclear about the next steps they need to take to improve. The lack of rigorous assessment procedures in subjects other than English and mathematics makes it more difficult for teachers to keep a track of current standards when planning lessons. This leads to some lessons seen where all pupils were set the same task rather than it being pitched at the differing abilities in the class and pupils did not achieve as much as they could.

The curriculum

The overall quality of the curriculum is **good**. The school provides its pupils with a good range of worthwhile learning opportunities which successfully meets their interests, aptitudes and particular needs.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are very effective.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The school values each individual and makes very good arrangements to promote equal opportunities in all areas of school life.
- Provision for personal, social and health education is good but there are few opportunities for pupils to appreciate the cultural diversity of life in Britain.
- Independent learning skills are not promoted strongly enough in Years 1 to 6 and there are not enough opportunities for child initiated learning in the Foundation Stage.
- Support for learning outside the school day is good overall with very good opportunities for participation in the performing arts.
- The good numbers of support staff make a significant contribution to pupils learning.
- Resources in information and communication technology have been considerably improved since the previous inspection, and are now good although more use could be made of the computers in class.

Commentary

20. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. A range of well-prepared activities promote overall sound achievement, but there are insufficient opportunities for children to work independently. This restricts the richness of experience across all areas of learning. The particular emphasis on personal, social and emotional development has helped the children settle quickly into school life. The curriculum in Years 1 to 6 meets statutory requirements. Strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are particularly well developed and promote learning very well. The school has received a national quality mark award for its teaching of basic skills. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been adapted successfully to meet the school's identified needs. In particular, the teaching of reading skills outside literacy hours leads to pupils enjoying reading and reaching high standards. The curriculum in numeracy pays great attention to the development of skills through understanding. The good emphasis on thinking skills enables pupils to achieve very well in mental mathematics. In all other subjects of the National Curriculum, successfully adapted national guidance, supplemented by the school's own schemes, provides a good basis for teachers' long term plans. The use of information and communication technology in the computer suite supports learning successfully in other subjects. However, the small suite means only a few pupils can be taught at a time and this makes it difficult for pupils to have the amount of teaching time required ensuring good progress. Computers are not always used well in class to extend the skills taught in the suite. Opportunities for pupils to follow their own interests and work independently are not well developed across the school. The headteacher and senior staff regularly review the whole curriculum taking into account assessments of pupils' performance. This leads to considered development of specific areas to improve the school's work. For example, in response to more attention on the needs of the higher attaining pupils in the infants more pupils are now exceeding the level expected for their age.
21. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school is committed to ensuring these pupils have full access to the curriculum and this is very beneficial for the pupils with formal Statements of Special Educational Need. They have detailed individual education plans which provide detailed guidance for staff who check that work set matches the pupils' needs.
22. The provision for personal, social and health education is good. There are very good features in the provision of specific personal, social and health education lessons, and in the workings of the pupil council and in whole school projects. In Year 6, good arrangements are made for drugs and sex education. Opportunities to appreciate life in a multi-cultural society are not well developed and the pupils have little experience of working with others from a diversity of ethnic backgrounds.

23. The school values each individual very highly. Care is taken to ensure that the needs of all are met through careful assessment and thoughtful allocation of resources. Particular care has been taken to ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of pupils in all the mixed age classes, but especially in the cross-phase classes in reception and in Years 2 and 3. Links with the high school are good and ensure smooth transfer for pupils from Year 6 to Year 7. Teachers within the school share information about individual pupils' progress effectively to ensure continuity of experience between classes and departments.
24. There is a good range of after-school clubs in computer and a variety of sports. The arts are very well catered for in drama and choir sessions and opportunities to take part in school productions, as well as in peripatetic instrumental tuition in brass and woodwind. There are few extra-curricular activities for infant pupils. A range of educational visits and visitors bring the curriculum to life particularly well in geography and history. Year 6 pupils benefit from an annual residential trip.
25. There are sufficient teachers for the number of pupils in school. Particularly good organisation of the headteacher's time enables Year 6 pupils to be taught as a single age group in mathematics and this is promoting their progress very well. A good number of support staff are all well informed and efficiently deployed. They make a significant contribution to learning in all age groups. The accommodation is satisfactory overall. Cramped conditions in the Foundation Stage, which have affected the curriculum in the past, are about to be improved by a building extension. The school makes best use of its accommodation by siting the computer suite in the only space available. This has greatly improved resources for the teaching of information and communication technology but access is hampered by a flight of stairs and this restricts the opportunity for pupils to use the computers independently for research. The suite is not big enough to house a whole class for a lesson and so time available for lessons is limited. The grounds have been thoughtfully developed to enhance the science curriculum. Good quality resources support the curriculum effectively.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides **very effective care, guidance and support** for its pupils. Achievement and personal development are monitored effectively. The involvement of pupils in the work of the school is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has very good procedures to make sure that pupils are protected and work in a healthy and safe environment.
- The school makes good provision for any pupil's special educational or medical needs.
- All staff, including the welfare and support staff, monitor the well-being and personal development of all pupils very well. Pupils say they have an adult they can approach if worried.
- Arrangements for introducing pupils who are new to the school are very good.
- The school does not use assessment information with enough precision to inform pupils of their individual targets and what they need to do to achieve them.

Commentary

26. The school is always alert to the need to provide a safe and healthy environment. The effective safety policy, risk assessment and very good procedures to minimise accidents enable pupils to learn and play in a safe environment. All staff contribute to the care the school provides and successfully promote the well-being of all pupils, whatever their individual needs.

27. The school has good procedures for child protection and all staff know what to do if they have any concerns.
28. Children entering the reception class are very well supported by carefully organised introduction procedures which include close co-operation with families during the initial home visits. As pupils progress through school, they develop very good relationships with their teachers and teaching assistants. The very good personal support and guidance provided makes sure that that pupils grow in confidence. Prefects from Year 6 help to support and provide for the needs of the youngest pupils during lunch and the mid-day playtime. All pupils learn to take increasing responsibilities within the school so pupils in Year 6 are confident, caring and responsible members of the school community and are well prepared for secondary school.
29. The school has good procedures to assess pupils' progress in English and mathematics. However this information is not always used precisely enough to set individual targets so that pupils have a clearer understanding of what they need to do to improve.
30. Pupils are encouraged to raise their views on any aspect of school life. From Year 3 upwards, every year group is represented on the pupil council by elected members. The council members take their work seriously because the school respects and acts upon the issues they raise. Pupils behave well because they respect the rules they have been involved in writing. Pupils are very proud of their school and have been consulted about the provision for outdoor play. Consequently, they have a good sense of ownership of the school and know that they are valued as individual, responsible members of the school community.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership with parents and the local community is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents feel very welcome to approach the school and procedures to work in partnership with parents if a concern arises are very good.
- Parents are well informed and have a high level of trust in the school.
- The school has very good procedures to work together with parents of children new to the school.
- Links with other schools and the local community are good.

Commentary

31. Overall the procedures to provide partnership with parents are good. Parents say that they are very comfortable about approaching the school. Staff are readily available for a quick word with parents. The school has very good procedures to deal with any parents' concerns and to involve parents in their children's education especially when a difficulty arises.
32. The quality of information provided for parents is good. The school invites parents to a consultation evening during the spring term to discuss their children's progress and results of any assessments. Parents would like an earlier opportunity to hear if their child has settled well in their new class and the school has plans to provide an additional consultation evening in the autumn term. End of year reports are good and set general targets for the future.
33. Parents offer good support to pupils by hearing their children read and helping with homework. Parents also provide practical help for school productions and resources for topics which help to make learning more interesting. One parent regularly supports pupils during information and communication technology lessons. These activities show good

support for the school and help to raise standards. However, the Parents' Association has not been as well supported. At present, it is not providing the social and fund-raising activities that have benefited both the school and families in the past.

34. The school has good links with the community. Close links with the church contribute very well to pupils' spiritual development. Governors provide good links with the parish and with industry and these effectively enhance pupils' educational experiences and resources. Visits to the community contribute well to pupils' learning.
35. The school has good links with nurseries and playgroups so that when children start school they are already known by staff and this helps them to settle happily. Very good links with the Catholic secondary school provides for continuity in learning. Parents say that their children are well prepared, and make a smooth transfer to the next stage of their education. The school contributes effectively to the education of secondary pupils by providing work experience. Similarly, students who are training to be teachers benefit from placements in the school. Links with local primary schools are good. Pupils enjoy taking part in joint activities and staff meet for shared training.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is good. Governance is good. Leadership from the headteacher and key staff is good. The school is managed effectively and runs smoothly.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Governors are well informed and know the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Governors carry out their duties in an organised manner and ensure statutory requirements are fully met.
- The school's commitment to inclusion is evident in the additional funding allocated to support pupils with special educational needs.
- The headteacher leads by example and is an inspirational teacher of mathematics which influences other staff to strive for improvement.
- Performance in national tests is closely monitored and changes made when a weakness is spotted. Teaching is monitored and advice provided if needed but the school lacks a teaching and learning policy to guide teachers.
- The school improvement plan is easy to follow and is based firmly on self-evaluation.
- Subject leaders evaluate their subjects, and in information and communication technology a very detailed action plan is drawn up to raise standards. Plans are informal in other subjects.
- Financial management is very good and money is spent prudently.

Commentary

36. Governors provide a good level of support and expertise. Governors bring a wealth of experience and knowledge which is fully exploited by the school. This can best be seen in governors' expertise of business management, which helps the governing body and school management make the most of the school's resources. Governors have a very good working relationship with the school management because they are regular visitors to the school. As a result, they have a thorough knowledge of the school's needs and priorities. Duties are carried out meticulously through a committee structure with each committee making recommendations based on careful exploration of alternative options. Although governors are not fully involved in the initial stages of deciding the school's priorities they do discuss their relevance to the needs of the school. Agendas for meetings are full and include an evaluation of the school's plan for improvement so governors keep in touch with the progress the school is making to meet its priorities.

37. Overall leadership is good. The headteacher is very accessible to all because he teaches daily as well as being active around school and readily available to discuss any concerns. He leads by example and this has earned him the respect of all. Parents consider the school is well led and managed and are confident in the education their children receive. Staff and governors are consulted about any decisions and there is mutual respect and a team approach to changes. The school improvement plan is a useful vehicle for strategic planning. It is based on self-evaluation so priorities are linked to identified need. A long-term plan is in place to check all subjects receive attention. However, this is flexible so the school can respond to any national initiatives. Leadership of English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology is good because co-ordinators have sufficient assessment information to guide their decisions. The leadership of information and communication technology is particularly effective and the action plan to raise standards provides a model of good practice with a step by step plan linked to expenditure and training. This is not the case with all subjects because changes are often agreed informally at staff meetings. However, without a written action plan it is difficult for the school to evaluate the progress being made to reach the priorities which do not appear in the school's improvement plan.
38. Management of the school is good. An improvement since the last inspection is the use the school now makes of assessment information to judge its effectiveness. The headteacher carries out detailed analysis of information and shares this with governors and staff so that all are aware of how well the school is doing. Areas of weaknesses are promptly tackled and this has been most effective in raising standards of the higher attaining pupils in Year 2. This information is a crucial part of the school's self-evaluation and enables the school to know its strengths as well as its weaknesses. Performance management is firmly established and training linked to individual and school needs. As part of this process the headteacher monitors teaching and offers useful advice when an aspect needing attention is observed. However, the school lacks an agreed teaching and learning policy and some teachers have not made a close link between their teaching and its effect on pupils' learning. For example, the headteacher identifies some staff not clearly identifying what it is they want pupils to learn and although advice has been proffered this remains an area that a few teachers need to give more attention to. Support staff are not yet involved in performance management but this is to be resolved as the school moves forward in its quest for Investors in People status.
39. The management of special educational needs is good. The requirements of the Code of Practice⁴ are fully met. The support for pupils with formal Statements of Special Educational Need is good. Teachers identify other pupils who are causing them concern because of lack of progress. However, no central record of their needs is maintained to check closely their needs are being met.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	337,091
Total expenditure	339,929
Expenditure per pupil	2394

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	31,027
Balance carried forward to the next	28,189

40. The quality of financial management is very good. Spending decisions are based on systematic and careful analysis of all funds available. The school is alert to any opportunity for

⁴ Code of Practice- this gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities, duties and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help and support to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001.

extra funding and has, for example, won a competition which has provided funding for the science garden and play area. Administrative support has a very clear knowledge of financial

procedures and is very effective in checking on spending. This ensures the headteacher and governors are very well briefed so that they can make reasoned decisions. Governors know funding is tight so give close attention to obtaining value for money. They are committed to topping up the special educational needs budget so that these pupils have full access to the curriculum. Spending on the building and refurbishment is based on the determination to allow pupils to learn in the best environment they can possibly provide.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The quality of provision is **satisfactory**.

Pupils' attainment when they enter the reception class is average for their age. Their achievement is good in personal, social and emotional development and satisfactory in all other areas of learning. By the time they start in Year 1, children are likely to exceed the expected standard in their personal, social and emotional development and to meet the expected standards in the other areas of learning.

The curriculum is satisfactory and in the main meets children's needs. There are, however, weaknesses in the balance of child-initiated and teacher-directed activities with insufficient opportunities for pupils to make choices and select tasks and equipment for themselves. Relationships between staff and between staff and children are particularly strong and supportive and all staff work together very successfully as a team for the benefit of the children. All staff make individuals feel valued and ensure all are included in all activities.

Leadership and management are good. Very thorough assessment procedures are used effectively to track children's progress and plan new work. There is good provision for children with special educational needs. Reception staff make very good arrangements for children as they start school and have established very supportive links with parents. Very efficient arrangements are in place to enable children to make a smooth transfer to Year 1.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good and standards are above average when pupils start in Year 1.
- Teaching is good and leads to good learning.
- Children follow instructions carefully but do not independently select tasks for themselves.

Commentary

41. All staff value the children's efforts and use praise successfully to encourage the children and raise their self-esteem. Rules and routines are clearly established. As a result, children know what is expected and most try hard to please. They respond quickly to the teacher's signals and conform to the school's expectations. Children make good progress in learning to share by taking part in well-organised group activities, such as number games and taking turns using the computer. Whilst children settle quickly to group work allocated by the teacher, there are not enough opportunities for children to select activities for themselves. This restricts their ability to develop their ideas independently.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The emphasis on speaking and listening skills is good.
- Teaching assistants are well informed and make a significant contribution to learning.
- Assessment is thorough and used successfully to plan new work.
- Learning outcomes are not always specific enough and some group tasks do not promote progress successfully.

Commentary

42. Children listen carefully to stories and know a wide range of rhymes and songs. They are just beginning to recognise reliably some letters by shape and sound and use them in their early attempts at writing. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teaching assistants work effectively with small groups to promote children's active use of language as well as their understanding. Careful observations of children at work are used successfully to check progress and usually to plan suitable new work. However, some group tasks lack sufficient focus and it is not clear exactly what children are intended to learn. The pace of learning slows when children complete colouring-in tasks which fail to stimulate the pupils and do not encourage effective learning.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Effective use is made of number games and practical activities.
- Inefficient organisation and rotation of groups slows the pace of learning.
- Plenary sessions consolidate learning successfully.

Commentary

43. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Games are used effectively to make learning more interesting. For example, when playing a *pass the parcel* game children confidently recognise and name numerals to 5 or 10. They are not competent, though, in copying the correct number of claps to match the numeral shown. When working practically with common two-dimensional shapes children sort, match and count accurately. Group work is lively and carefully organised to hold children's interest and motivate them to learn. The organisation and rotation of groups of children around set tasks is time consuming because of the frequent gathering of the whole class together to redistribute tasks. This interrupts learning and slows the pace of lessons. Sessions at the end of lessons when children share their completed work with the rest of the class are well focused and reinforce teaching points successfully.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Tasks engage children purposefully.
- Resources are of good quality and are carefully prepared.
- Cramped accommodation sometimes limits provision.
- The outdoor area is used effectively as a learning resource.

Commentary

44. When 'testing' wheeled vehicles and saying how they work, children use vocabulary such as *push, pull, pedal, steer* and *corner* with good understanding. They show an alert awareness of change when finding signs of autumn in the school grounds. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Tasks are lively and interesting. Resources are chosen effectively to promote enquiry. Whilst the cramped accommodation currently limits some investigative activities, building work on the new extension is due to start very shortly.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

No direct teaching was observed during the inspection so it is not possible to make an overall judgement on provision in this area of learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are adept in handling tools.
- Physical education lessons, taught in the hall, enhance the curriculum.
- Outdoor play is restricted by the lack of a secure area, but this will be remedied in the soon-to-start building extension.

Commentary

45. Children use paintbrushes and scissors with satisfactory control and skill. They handle large toys with good co-ordination and an awareness of others.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults intervene successfully to extend imaginative play.
- The curriculum is enhanced by weekly music lessons taught by the music co-ordinator.

Commentary

46. Children are imaginative in exploring colour and technique using fingers and brushes in paint. They investigate sound with interest and enjoy making music when scraping, shaking or tapping percussion instruments. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Imaginary play areas are successfully organised to stimulate children's ideas and resources chosen effectively to extend play. Teaching assistants use questions purposefully to help children develop their roles.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in the infants is good and pupils in Year 2 reach above average standards.
- Achievement accelerates as pupils move into Year 6 and overall standards are well above average.

- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
- The overall quality of teaching is good and leads to effective learning. In some lessons teachers do not make it clear to pupils what the focus of the lesson is and do not allow pupils enough opportunity to work independently.
- Reading is given extra time throughout the school so that by the time pupils leave school they are enthusiastic readers.
- Teachers do not make enough use of the computers in class to extend the skills taught in the computer suite.
- Assessment information is used effectively to track pupils' progress. It is not used to set individual targets for pupils so they know how to improve their work.
- Management of the subject is good and has led to changes being made to the curriculum to tackle identified weaknesses.

Commentary

47. Effective leadership has led to good improvement in English since the last inspection. The National Literacy Strategy has been adapted to meet the school's needs. This means that reading is given additional time during the day and pupils read individually or in a group guided by the teacher. As a result, standards in reading are above average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6. Letters and sounds are taught thoroughly in Years 1 and 2 and pupils have several strategies to decipher unfamiliar words. Many pupils in Year 6 have favourite authors and types of books because they are encouraged to select and read a library book and a popular fiction book of their own choice. A good number of pupils work at levels higher than expected for this age and discuss how popular children's authors make their stories interesting for the reader. Writing is taught well. Pupils in Year 2 write in short sentences and many use basic punctuation correctly. Pupils in Year 6 experience a wide range of writing activities and achievement increases in this class. Standards are well above average and many pupils are working at levels higher than expected for their age. Many confidently write in a range of modes for a variety of purposes. In a lesson devoted to creative writing the teacher inspires pupils to write imaginatively. Many include lively English that is accurately spelled and punctuated. Handwriting was a weakness at the time of the last inspection. This is now good and most pupils have a neat joined- up style, although a few are stubbornly clinging to their printing style.
48. Lessons often include discussion and role-play and pupils reach above average standards in speaking and listening. Older pupils appreciate how language changes in different situation and understand the difference between formal and informal terms both in their writing and their speaking.
49. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. It is best in the mixed Year 1 and 2 class and in the Year 5 and 6 class. Here the teachers are clearer about what it is they want the pupils to learn. In some lessons it is unclear what the focus of the lesson is and pupils are not clear about the features of the writing they are being asked to do. For example, in two lessons pupils were unsure if they were writing a play script or dialogue and this confusion did not encourage effective learning. In the mixed Year 1 and 2 class the teacher made the lesson exciting by using information and communication technology to write a class poem on the large computer screen. This captured the pupils' interest and they all made good attempts at writing their own poems. In other classes computers were not used to extend learning and opportunities for pupils to work independently at the computers were missed. However, basic skills of word processing are taught well in the computer suite. Support staff and teachers are very aware of the needs of pupils with special educational needs. They check tasks match their needs and they make good progress.
50. Assessment information is used effectively. For example, the school quickly identified from a scrutiny of the results of national tests that higher attaining pupils were not performing as well as they could in the infants. More attention was given to their needs including extra writing

sessions and the results in national tests last year showed these interventions had been most effective. The Year 6 teacher has started to identify pupils' individual needs and makes it clear to pupils what they have to do to reach the National Curriculum level expected for their age. This increases their motivation and performance in the national tests. Targets are not evident in other classes and pupils are not clear what they need to do to improve.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

51. Language and literacy are used effectively to support work across the curriculum. Reading skills often support learning in other lessons. Teachers also promote writing skills and this can be seen clearly in science. Pupils write up their investigations using lists and bullet points and even the pupils in Year 2 know how to label diagrams and use arrows to help the reader.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Standards have risen since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6.
- Achievement is good in the infants and increases in the juniors especially in Year 6 where it is very good.
- Teaching and learning are consistently good in all lessons.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.
- Thorough assessment systems are used successfully to monitor pupils' progress but pupils are not set individual targets to help them know how to improve.
- There is not enough planned use of mathematics across the curriculum or of computers to support learning in numeracy lessons.

Commentary

52. Standards in numeracy are a strength of the school. Pupils in Year 2 are already competent in adding and subtracting to 20 and in understanding place value in hundreds, tens and units. Mental mathematics is particularly well developed and pupils in Year 6 are proficient in working out problems involving percentages in their heads. They clearly explain the processes they have used and consider each other's ideas when discussing the quickest way to find an answer. A significant proportion of pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 already exceed the level expected for their age.
53. Pupils with special educational needs are supported effectively in class and make good progress. Lower attaining pupils are identified efficiently and given extra help so that they achieve very well. Higher attaining pupils respond positively to good levels of challenge.
54. The good teaching throughout the school has a significant effect on pupils' learning. Teachers plan work very carefully to promote step-by-step development of skills by building on what pupils know. The correct use of mathematical language is emphasised very effectively so that children successfully learn to articulate their ideas. In Year 3, pupils confidently name and describe three-dimensional shapes, such as *hexagonal prisms*, with reference to *vertices* and the number and shape of *faces*. Games and practical tasks are carefully organised to promote learning. Teachers ask questions skilfully to help pupils focus their thinking as well as to assess what they know. In the very good teaching seen in the mixed Year 1 and 2 class the teacher makes especially good use of the computer and the large screen to support learning. However, in some classes opportunities are frequently missed to work independently using information and communication technology to solve problems. The headteacher

teaches mathematics to Year 6 every day. This boosts learning as pupils in Years 5 and 6 are taught in small single age groups. The teaching seen in Year 6 was excellent and promotes learning very well indeed and is the main reason for the very good achievement made in the final year in school. The teacher's very high expectations and insistence on pupils thinking for themselves, excellent organisation of learning and own enjoyment and expertise fill pupils with enthusiasm. As a result, pupils reach well above average standards and have very positive attitudes to the subject.

55. The curriculum co-ordinator has a clear overview of the school's provision and uses the thorough assessment procedures to analyse pupils' performance over time. The information gathered from assessment is used effectively to plan new work and to develop aspects of the curriculum. Marking of pupils' work, though encouraging, does not always tell pupils how they can get better. Individual targets are not consistently set or shared. As a result, pupils are unclear about what they must do to improve.

Mathematics across the curriculum

There are good links between mathematics and science where pupils use data handling techniques like graph work, to record their findings. Little evidence was seen of any significant use of mathematics in other areas of the curriculum.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good in the infants and standards in Year 2 are above average.
- Achievement accelerates in Year 6 in response to the high expectations of the teacher and standards are well above average.
- Teaching and learning are good with good opportunities for investigation, although there are missed chances for pupils to work independently.
- Pupils' progress is tracked through a range of assessments but these are not always closely linked to the level expected nationally for the pupils' age.
- Leadership and management are good.
- Good use of literacy and numeracy skills to support learning.

Commentary

56. National test results in Year 6 have been consistently high over the last five years. Pupils in Year 6 benefit from the expert teaching of the science co-ordinator who very effectively shares her knowledge and expertise with the pupils. Although limited evidence is available for the current Year 6 a review of previous work shows high expectations and a rich curriculum. As a result, standards are well above average and pupils have a depth of knowledge of all aspects of the subject. Limited evidence is available of pupils currently in Year 2. What is available shows a secure understanding of growth and the ability to correctly classify living things into groups according to size and age. However, all pupils complete the same worksheets and higher attaining pupils could have achieved more. The lack of an extension activity led to them colouring in the pictures. A review of last year's work shows higher expectations especially when carrying out investigations. Pupils record their findings in their own words and provide good predictions, such as *this bulb will light because the wire is in the right place*. Standards of this work are above average and suggest in response to good teaching the achievement of the current Year 2 is likely to be good and standards will be above average.

57. The quality of teaching is good and leads to effective learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge and insist on the correct use of scientific terminology. Lessons are prepared carefully with resources well prepared so that activities are carried out in an organised way. Relationships are good and teachers have high expectations of behaviour. Pupils respect the trust placed on them and Year 6 pupils moved round the school unsupervised finding different places for the bread they are hoping will grow fungus. Scrutiny of Year 6 books showed teaching over a longer time had high expectations of the presentation of work which led to much work being of a high quality. In lessons seen there were times when teachers relied too much on their knowledge to present the pupils with information rather than getting the pupils to find out for themselves. In the lesson in the infants too much attention was given to recording rather than investigating and following their own lines of enquiry. Examples of work from older pupils shows an element of copying with a focus on teaching and recording the facts rather than pupils finding out and writing up the facts in their own words. Computers were not used in the lessons although plans show they are to be used to enter data and produce a graph of the pupils' findings.
58. Leadership and management are both good and have led to good improvement since the last inspection. Science has a high profile in the school and pupils enjoyed designing the science garden to extend their studies of mini-beasts. Teachers plan carefully to promote literacy and numeracy in science. Investigations are recorded using lists and clearly numbered instructions. The pupils in Year 2 enjoy using their numeracy skills to measure feet and analyse their findings to discover who has the biggest feet. In the infants, pupils' progress is assessed by individual interviews carried out by support assistants. These are effective in checking on pupils' understanding of investigations but the recording is time-consuming and it does not make it clear how well the pupils are doing compared with the National Curriculum levels expected for their age.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Direct teaching was only observed in two short group sessions, both in the computer suite.

Provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

Better resources and improved expertise of teachers have contributed to a rise in standards since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are satisfactory and improving.
- The teaching and learning of skills in the computer suite is good but pupils' use of the suite is limited due to the constraints of the building and of staffing.
- The use of information and communication technology is particularly well developed in the mixed Year 1 and 2 class, but overall not enough use is made of computers in class to consolidate information and communication technology skills effectively or to support learning in other subjects.
- Leadership and management are good.

Commentary

59. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are average. Pupils in Year 2 are adept in using the mouse to label shapes correctly on screen, and skilfully command a programmable toy to complete a set manoeuvre. Their knowledge of the use of information and communication technology beyond school and experience of, for example, using the digital camera in school is good. Pupils in Year 6 interrogate a web site competently when researching a topic. They use specific software to analyse data, and present their findings clearly in graphs and charts. They are not yet proficient in working with spreadsheets but this work is planned for later in the

year. Pupils are not familiar with the use of sensors because the school has only recently purchased suitable equipment. Pupils' word processing skills in Year 6 are average. They produce attractive play scripts, organising and presenting their work thoughtfully on screen before printing.

60. Whilst teaching the skills and use of computers in other subjects in the suite is good, the short allocation of time and the lack of opportunities to consolidate learning in class, results in satisfactory rather than good overall achievement. There is very good practice in the mixed Year 1 and 2 class where the curriculum co-ordinator leads by example. She makes interesting use of the computer and large computer screen to teach skills and enhance learning throughout the curriculum. As a result, pupils in Years 1 and 2 are currently achieving well. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included and make satisfactory progress alongside their peers. The curriculum is clearly planned and focused securely on the step-by-step development of skills. Teachers' expertise supported by recent training from the curriculum co-ordinator is now good and leads to the setting of challenging work. Teachers give clear instructions and use questions skilfully to check pupils' understanding. Relationships and management are good and as a result, pupils settle very quickly to tasks and are enthusiastic learners.
61. The curriculum co-ordinator provides good leadership and manages the subject successfully. A detailed action plan is in place to show future improvements to be made. Assessment systems provide a useful list of skills against which individual progress is measured. The information gained is used purposefully to plan future work. The school makes best use of its accommodation. Nevertheless, the computer suite is cramped and access up a staircase is difficult. This limits its use to small groups and results in only a short allocation of time to each group.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

There are instances, in most classes, of good use of information and communication technology to support learning in English, science, geography, history and art when pupils work in the suite. The everyday use of computers in class is not as well developed.

HUMANITIES

Work was sampled in history and geography, with only two lessons observed in history and no lessons in geography. It is therefore not possible to make an overall judgement on provision in geography. Provision in history is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In both subjects, the school has adapted national guidance to provide a curriculum which meets the needs of all pupils in its mixed age classes. Statutory requirements are met.
- Field studies support learning effectively.
- Role-play and drama activities bring the subjects to life.
- Effective use is sometimes made of information and communication technology in the suite to support learning but overall, there are insufficient opportunities for independent study.
- Assessment procedures are not well developed.

Commentary

62. Very limited evidence of pupils' earlier work was available in geography so judgements are made on the small amount of current work in Year 6, on discussions with curriculum co-ordinators and on scrutiny of teachers' plans. Standards in geography in Year 6 are average.

This is a similar judgement to that made in the previous report. Pupils in Year 6 display sound knowledge and understanding of some aspects of life in Kenya when comparing life styles in Nairobi with those in a rural area of Kenya. A group of pupils worked successfully in the computer suite to find information about Kenya.

63. Standards in history are average in Year 2 and Year 6. This is a similar judgement to that made in the previous report. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and lead to sound achievement. Teachers use a variety of methods to promote learning, but pupils are not given enough opportunities to ask and answer questions for themselves. Pupils enjoyed an interesting role-play activity when the teacher interrogated a pupil who was in character as a Roman legionary. However, pupils were not given the opportunity to generate questions for themselves. In some lessons, written tasks of copying words to fill in spaces on a worksheet do not challenge pupils or develop their abilities to find and assess information independently.
64. The curriculum co-ordinators in geography and history provide sound leadership and management but their roles in monitoring standards of work and the quality of teaching and learning are not well developed. Secure assessment systems are not fully in place to enable teachers to judge how well pupils are doing. Field trips, from walks in the locality to visits further afield, are well organised to support topic work where appropriate.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

During the inspection no lessons were seen in art and design and one lesson in physical education and design and technology. In music, one lesson was seen in the infants and a short observation of pupils in Year 6 as well as attending a hymn practice and choir. Insufficient evidence is available to judge the overall quality of teaching in these subjects. Discussion with pupils and scrutiny of work and planning indicate that statutory requirements are met in all subjects. All subjects are soundly managed and co-ordinators have successfully put in place new planning guidelines which provide useful help for teachers when planning lessons. Assessment procedures are based on informal observations and an assessment at the end of units of work. This makes it difficult for co-ordinators to produce detailed action plans based on an informed picture of standards in their subjects.

Art and design

Work in sketchbooks and on display is satisfactory. In Year 2, most pupils show careful pencil control in their observational drawings of mini-beasts. More evidence is available in Year 6 sketchbooks and show pupils understand how to mix different colours. They have worked with a satisfactory range of media including fabric and clay. Art and design makes a positive contribution to pupils' cultural development. For example, they study African art and make colourful masks including geometrical patterns and have accurately captured the style of Cézanne by using pastels and crayons.

Design and technology

In the one lesson seen in Year 1 and 2, pupils showed satisfactory skills in drawing a plan of a post bag. The teaching was satisfactory with strengths in the introduction when the teacher used a real postal bag and role-play which captured pupils' imagination. Effective questioning led pupils on to identify the bag needed to be strong and waterproof. A few recognised this in their bags but others needed more guidance to make a link between their plan and the item they were making. Pupils in Year 6 make models of shelters and show good skills to join straws together to make a frame. Numeracy and literacy skills have been used effectively in plans and some are very detailed and include resources. Pupils practise to check on stability of their models but it is unclear if they return to their plan and adjust it while they are working.

Physical education

In the lesson observed in the infants standards were satisfactory. Pupils showed good control and made good use of space as they moved round the hall. They were not used to working independently and movements lacked creativity because the teacher prescribed some tasks too tightly. As a result, all pupils did the same jump rather than finding different ways to perform. Good organisation included an opportunity to warm up and cool down and pupils understand exercise is good for them.

Music

Standards seen in Year 2 are satisfactory. It was not possible to make an overall judgement on teaching and standards in the juniors.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy singing and making music.
 - The subject leader takes all lessons and enthusiastically shares her musical talents.
 - The curriculum is enhanced by extra-curricular activities which include opportunities to learn to play different instruments.
 - Assessment systems are not in place and teachers rely on the subject leader to complete the end of year reports for parents.
65. Pupils in Year 6 understand how to make music more interesting by including different rhythms and beats. They work well in groups and are happy to practise and improve their part of the class composition. It was not possible to judge how involved the pupils were in the original composition but they understood how to follow a simple pattern to guide their playing. In Year 2 pupils enjoy playing percussion instruments in a small group. A few are unclear about the purpose of the task and choose unsuitable instruments but this is corrected by the teacher so that by the end of the lesson each group could play a short piece of music to represent the movements and sounds of different animals. A strength in the teaching seen is the teacher's knowledge of the subject. Musical terms are used as a natural part of the lesson and many pupils show a good understanding of these terms. Lessons go at a brisk pace and effective management means playing instruments is done in an orderly learning atmosphere. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their work but during the lessons too many suggestions were made by the teacher rather than encouraging pupils to follow up their ideas and suggestions. Pupils sing tunefully in hymn practice and enjoy the activity.
66. Pupils benefit greatly from the opportunity to learn either a string or a brass instrument and to play in the school orchestra. It was not possible to hear the orchestra during the inspection but the choir was well attended and the high expectations of the subject leader mean these pupils extend their musical talents as well as enjoying the activity.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

No lessons were seen in this area of the curriculum and so no judgements are made about overall provision.

The religious education scheme of work includes many aspects of personal and social education. This subject was not part of the current inspection so evidence from these lessons was not available.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Classes have lessons that focus on developing pupils' personal and social skills.
- The school's scheme of work for religious education includes topics that allow discussion about personal and social education. It does not allow enough opportunities for pupils to learn about other faiths and cultures so pupils can gain an in depth understanding of race equality and valuing other beliefs.
- The pupil council and the prefect system in Year 6 allow pupils to experience the importance of representing others and the responsibility of belonging to a community.
- Good attention is given to healthy living.
- Nobody has specific responsibility for managing the subject.

Commentary

67. Every class has a lesson specifically for personal and social development as well as opportunities in religious education to learn about the importance of caring for others and the effect of their actions on others. However, insufficient attention is given to teaching about other faiths so pupils lack the background they need to compare other religions and respect the beliefs and traditions of other cultures. In Circle Time⁵ in Year 6 pupils follow a twelve-week course which focuses on relationships and growing-up. This incorporates a residential weekend in the Lake District where pupils learn the importance of tolerance and getting on together as a group. Citizenship is not taught as a separate subject but is incorporated in all aspects of school life. Pupils learn the dangers of drugs and the school focuses on healthy eating with the infants having a daily piece of fruit. Members of the pupil council take their role very seriously and represent the opinions of other pupils. They feel a valued group because their suggestions are given due consideration and often acted upon. Older pupils often have duties to fulfil and these are carried out conscientiously with pupils playing a full part in helping the school to run smoothly.
68. Overall management is satisfactory. In a small school staff share many of the management roles and it is unclear who has the overall responsibility for the subject. Nevertheless, the staff have agreed guidelines on how to teach the subject but it is unclear how the effectiveness of these plans are being monitored. Although assessment is informal it is effective because the teachers and support staff know the pupils very well.

⁵ During Circle Time pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. It is agreed by all pupils that no interruptions should occur and only one person at a time will speak. Respect for other pupils' views will occur at all times and therefore pupils feel confident that they can talk with ease free from any interruption from other children.

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

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