

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST OSWALD'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND AIDED PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Mollington, Chester

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 130929

Headteacher: Mrs J E Holmes

Lead inspector: Mr R. P. Bamber

Dates of inspection: 18 – 19 November 2003

Inspection number: 257897

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	113
School address:	Grove Road Mollington Chester
Postcode:	CH1 6LG
Telephone number:	(01244) 851 642
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J. J. Lamb
Date of previous inspection:	6 July 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Oswald's Church of England Aided Primary School is located in a village outside Chester. It is smaller than the average primary school with many of its pupils coming from relatively advantaged backgrounds and entering the school with above expected standards. Fewer pupils than usual have special educational needs. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational need and no pupil is at an early stage of acquiring English. A significantly higher than average proportion of pupils join or leave the school at times other than the normal for leaving or transfer. This is linked to the fact that the school serves a local military camp. The school has been in receipt of a DfES achievement award for the last three years.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
15064	Paul Bamber	Lead inspector	Mathematics Geography History Physical education English as an additional language
1329	Kevern Oliver	Lay inspector	
29504	Shirley Herring	Team inspector	Science Music Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage Citizenship
32579	Jan Buckland	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an effective school. Pupils attain high standards and achieve well because they are well taught and have such good attitudes to learning. Leadership is well focussed on promoting and maintaining high standards, but aspects of the management of the school's performance could be more rigorous. Through a period of significant change the school has been well led and good improvements made. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils attain well above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, attendance and punctuality are all very good.
- Strengths and some relative weaknesses in teaching and learning are not sufficiently identified because lessons are not observed often enough.
- The achievement of the more-able pupils in Year 2 is not high enough in science.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Parents have very positive views of the school and support its work well.

Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Standards have risen significantly and the quality of teaching and curricular provision is better. The key issues from the last inspection have been fully addressed: standards are now higher in information and communication technology (ICT); teaching programmes are now comprehensive and promote higher standards and assessment systems now inform teachers much better about pupils' progress. Governors are now more involved in strategic planning.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

The pupils' achievement is good overall. Pupils enter the school with above average standards and make good progress towards meeting or exceeding the targets set for them by the time they enter Year 1. Standards are well above average in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school and above average in art and design and geography in Years 3 to 6. Test results indicate that pupils in Year 6 consistently attain very high standards in English and mathematics, achieving well or very well. In Year 2, although pupils of all abilities and backgrounds achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics, more-able pupils do not achieve well enough in science because many of the tasks they are set are not difficult enough, nor of sufficient range. The school has raised standards in information and communication technology (ICT) since the last inspection. A much higher than average number of pupils joins the school at various times of the year in all year groups. The school effectively supports these pupils, those with learning, behavioural or physical difficulties and those whose mother tongue is not English, which enables them all to achieve well.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good overall. They have very good attitudes to their lessons and behave very well. Attendance and punctuality are both very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. The quality of teaching and learning is good, particularly in promoting pupils' very good literacy and numeracy skills. **The quality of teachers' assessments is satisfactory.** Teachers' careful planning ensures that lessons are well organised and their creative use of resources contributes significantly to the very good attitudes pupils have to their work. The curriculum is good, provides pupils with a wide variety of opportunities for enrichment and is well planned. Pupils are generally well cared for and provided with effective guidance and support. The good partnership with parents and the community ensures that pupils' learning is well supported at home and that visitors and visits significantly enhance pupils' experiences.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is well led. Management and governance are satisfactory. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have taken effective action to improve standards and the quality of education, building a strong and positive staff team. Although management is satisfactory overall, key staff are given insufficient opportunities to carry out rigorous evaluations of the effectiveness of the provision within their areas of responsibility. Governors are sufficiently involved in strategic planning and are aware of the school's main strengths and weaknesses, which enables them to effectively support the work of the school.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents express very positive views of the school. They are particularly pleased with how much their children enjoy school, that the staff expect pupils to work hard and do their best, behaviour in the school and the good progress their children make. One or two are concerned that their views are not sought sufficiently. This seems unjustified because the school canvassed parents' views, through a questionnaire, as recently as February of this year, the response to which was overwhelmingly positive. None of the parents spoken to during the inspection expressed concerns about not being consulted sufficiently. Pupils say they like their school and enjoy learning.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

While the school has no significant weaknesses, in order to improve standards further, priority should be given to the following areas:

- More systematic classroom observations in order to disseminate good practice more widely and to identify any relative weaknesses in teaching and learning.
- Ensure that the more-able Year 2 pupils achieve better in science.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to be involved in their own learning, especially through investigation and self-evaluation.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Children in the reception year achieve well and all are presently in line to reach or exceed the targets set for them, by the time they enter Year 1, in all those areas of learning about which it was possible to make a judgement. Standards in English and mathematics are high throughout the school and most pupils achieve well. The more-able pupils in Year 2 underachieve in science.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- National test results are consistently very good.
- Standards in the core subjects (English, mathematics and science) are well above average in Year 6.
- Overall, pupils achieve well throughout the school but more-able pupils in Year 2 underachieve in science.
- Children in the reception year achieve particularly well in their personal, social and emotional development.
- Pupils use their language and literacy skills well to support learning in other subjects.

Commentary

1. In the reception year, children achieve well in all aspects of their learning, but particularly well in their personal, social and emotional development. This is because the adults who work with them constantly encourage children to take responsibility and devise activities which require them to work together, to take turns and to follow simple rules, children respond by being very independent, behaving well and respecting each other.
2. In the Year 2 national tests in 2003, pupils attained very high standards in reading and writing and well above average standards in mathematics. When compared to schools of similar type, standards in reading were very high, well above average in writing and above average in mathematics. Standards in science were not so high because fewer pupils attained the higher Level 3 than in the other subjects that were assessed. Because of the small number of pupils in each year group, the performance of individual pupils has a disproportionate effect upon average standards, but the general trend in the Year 2 national test results has been one of good improvement over the last four years.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	31.0 (30.6)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	30.0 (29.2)	26.8 (26.7)
science	30.7 (29.7)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 18 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. The school's performance in English, in the 2003 national tests reflected the consistently very high standards (within the top five per cent nationally) achieved over the last four years. In mathematics, standards over that period have either been very high, as in 2003, or well above average. Pupils' performance in science was well above average in 2003 and has always been at least above average since 2000. The senior management in the school continually seeks to improve or maintain these high standards through promoting good teaching and by refining its methods for tracking and assessing pupils' progress in English

and mathematics. The same rigorous assessment systems are not used in science and as a result, standards are not quite so high. Overall, the school's results in 2003 were much better than those of similar schools. Data shows that last year's Year 6 pupils made very good progress between Year 2 and Year 6.

4. Presently, pupils in Year 6 are attaining standards well above those expected in English, mathematics and science. The school has established a tradition of high achievement and senior managers, staff and pupils all work together very effectively to maintain high standards. In those subjects that receive less teaching time, pupils' achievements are not as high as in the core subjects. However, pupils in Years 3 to 6 do attain standards above expectations in geography and in art and design.
5. Pupils' achievements are generally good throughout the school. Because the staff know pupils so well, any specific needs individual pupils have are quickly addressed. As a result, pupils with learning or physical difficulties, those who do not speak English as their mother tongue or those who attend school occasionally because of their parents' lifestyle, all achieve well. They receive good support from teachers and teaching assistants in lessons, their progress towards their targets is carefully assessed and appropriate resources, including the use of technology, are provided to meet specific needs. Most of the pupils who require extra support, and those who join the school part way through their primary schooling, attain at least expected standards in national tests with several reaching higher levels.
6. Presently the only group of pupils who do not achieve as well as they should are the more-able Year 2 pupils in science. Teachers' assessments and evidence gathered during the inspection show that too few pupils attain standards above expectations. This is because of shortcomings in teaching and in the way the curriculum is taught.
7. Pupils' very effective use of their language and literacy skills significantly contributes to their good achievements. Their ability to articulate their thoughts and opinions clearly, pupils' fluent reading and their wide breadth of writing enhance the quality of their work.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to school are **very good**. Their attendance and punctuality are **very good**. Pupils enjoy contributing to all aspects of school life. Their personal, moral, social and spiritual development is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils really like their school. They get on well with each other and all the adults who work with them.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to their work. They thrive on responsibility and eagerly contribute to all aspects of school life.
- Behaviour in lessons and in the playground is very good. There is, therefore, a good learning environment and freedom from harassment.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, but the school provides only limited opportunities for pupils to learn about cultures other than their own.
- The school has very good systems to ensure that pupils come to school and arrive on time every day and as a result attendance and punctuality are very good.

Commentary

8. St. Oswald's pupils thoroughly enjoy their school life. They are polite and friendly, get on well with each other and all the adults around them. They feel trusted, enjoy welcoming visitors into the school and thrive on responsibility. Relationships between older and younger pupils are very positive. The former not only help to look after the latter during assemblies and at

playtimes, but also regularly help them to improve their reading. Pupils of all ages happily help each other to solve problems and learn.

9. Behaviour is very good. Lessons are rarely disrupted and everyone gets on with the day-to-day business of teaching and learning to the best of their ability. Playtimes are lively, happy occasions with pupils enjoying each other's company and a wide range of games. Most unusually and impressively boys and girls of all ages take part in the lunchtime football game with the older pupils taking great care to ensure that the younger ones are included and come to no harm. No bullying and very little rough play was observed during the inspection. Pupils confirmed that this was the norm and that if any problems did arise they would tell an adult immediately.
10. Pupils have a very good understanding of social and moral issues. They understand the school rules, clearly distinguish between right and wrong, and are very aware of what they have to do in order to ensure that the school is a happy and successful community. On occasions such as whole school assemblies, pupils have excellent opportunities to reflect and explore their inner feelings. The school's provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory overall, but pupils have limited opportunities to learn about and experience cultures other than their own.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	3.2
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.5
National data	0.4

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

11. Overall, attendance and punctuality are very good because parents ensure that their children attend regularly and are punctual and the school has effective systems for following up absences and encouraging punctuality.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
82	0	0
8	0	0
2	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 is good. Teaching effectively promotes high standards and good achievement. The curriculum provides enriched experiences for pupils. The quality of care is satisfactory. Good quality resources enhance learning and accommodation is adequate. The effective partnership with parents contributes well to pupils' learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

The quality of teaching and learning is **good**. The quality of teachers' assessments is **satisfactory**. Whilst teachers mark work regularly, providing pupils with a good understanding of how they are progressing, they do not sufficiently involve pupils in assessing their own work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Effective teaching of literacy and numeracy skills.
- Very good promotion of personal, social and emotional development for children in the reception year.
- The teaching of science to more-able Year 2 pupils is not rigorous enough.
- Teachers use effective questions, well-prepared resources and imaginative teaching methods to promote pupils' good achievements.
- Pupils work well together and independently, without constant supervision and contribute to each other's learning sensitively.
- Teachers do not always involve pupils enough in their own learning.
- Pupils use their very good language skills well to respond to questions and to articulate their opinions.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 15 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	1	13	1	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 quality of the teaching of basic language, literacy and numeracy skills is good throughout the school. Because teachers pay close attention to systematically teaching letter sounds, an interesting range of vocabulary and correct spelling and punctuation, pupils' standards in reading are high. They write interestingly for different purposes and in a wide variety of styles. Teachers ensure that pupils have a secure knowledge of basic number and multiplication facts and that they reinforce these on a daily basis.
13. Teaching for children in the reception year is consistently good, but particularly effective in promoting their personal, social and emotional development. Both the class teacher and her teaching assistant, take every opportunity to encourage children to work together happily, make choices and to be independent. As a result, children learn effectively. They take time to talk or to engage in activities, attentively listening to each other and adults and helping each other when necessary. Children are also given a good start to their learning in language, literacy and mathematics.
14. There are some weaknesses in the teaching of science to more-able pupils in Year 2. The work set is often the same for all pupils in the year group and is too concerned with requiring pupils to respond to worksheets rather than providing opportunities for pupils to carry out scientific investigations of their own. As a result, more-able pupils do not achieve high enough standards.
15. Teachers and support staff use questions well, to both establish what pupils already know and to extend their understanding. Teachers use well-prepared resources to clarify more difficult concepts for pupils or to engage them fully in lessons. A telling example was observed in a good geography lesson in the Year 5/ 6 class. Because teachers often use interesting teaching methods, including the effective use of ICT, pupils are often rapt in their attention, which means they learn and achieve well. Year 1 pupils, for instance, were

captivated by a teaching assistant pretending to be a Victorian lady, talking about toys and games from that era.

16. The quality of pupils' learning is effectively enhanced as a result of their ability to work on their own, in pairs or in groups without frequent supervision. Pupils work productively on individual tasks in lessons or at home, co-operate with a partner to discuss problems or to use a computer and plan designs or presentations amicably.
17. Although pupils demonstrate a good facility for working independently, teachers sometimes fail to involve them sufficiently in their own learning. During introductions to lessons, for instance, teachers too rarely invite pupils to participate actively or to explore their own ideas or strategies for the benefit of other pupils. When this did happen, pupils' normal keen interest in what was being taught was heightened even further. Too few opportunities are provided for pupils to explore ideas or hypotheses in lessons or as homework tasks, in order to enhance their achievement even more.
18. Pupils use their language skills very effectively in lessons to ask searching questions and to articulate their thoughts and opinions. They are not at all inhibited about pointing out possible anomalies in the tasks they are set or errors in what the staff say. However, they display very good social skills in the sensitive manner in which such matters are raised. As a result, pupils' learning is enhanced and their personal and social development is well promoted.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **good** overall. The curriculum provides satisfactory opportunities for enrichment. Accommodation is satisfactory overall and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum for pupils in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 to 6 is good.
- The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs who as a result achieve well.
- Links between various subjects of the curriculum are good.
- There is a good range of visits to enhance learning.
- The use of the outdoor play area for the reception class is underdeveloped.

Commentary

19. The school offers a broad range of learning opportunities for all ages and makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. Learning is enhanced by a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities and by a good range of visits to places of interest and by visitors to school. There has been a good improvement in the provision for ICT since the last inspection. This has had a positive effect on standards, which have risen to the expected level.
20. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good and so all the children in the reception class achieve well. Work is well planned to take full account of the nationally recommended early learning goals and is closely matched to the needs of individuals.
21. The national strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are now fully in place and this has helped to raise standards in English and mathematics significantly since the last inspection. All classes contain pupils from more than one age group and teachers' plans are successful in meeting the needs of the different age groups. Work in different subjects is linked well, providing a cohesive range of work and reinforcing learning across subjects.

22. There has been a satisfactory improvement in the provision for ICT since the last inspection with additional resources and the introduction of a suitable teaching programme. This has meant that standards are now in line with expectations. However, the layout of the accommodation, with no dedicated computer suite, inhibits the teaching and practising of skills for a whole class.
23. The school's management ensures that all pupils are fully included in the curriculum. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and as a result, they achieve well throughout the school. The focused support and the effective individual educational plans provided for these pupils, contribute well to their progress in lessons. Those pupils who do not have English as their mother tongue or come from travelling families are made to feel very welcome and their needs well catered for.
24. The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils' personal, social and health education in science and religious education lessons. However, this is in the early stages of development and there are, as yet no regularly timetabled lessons to further develop pupils' understanding of issues arising during discussion. Specific lessons to help pupils become more aware of issues concerned with relationships and the dangers of drugs abuse contribute well to pupils' sex education and moral development.
25. The range of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory in this small school. The children travel comparatively long distances in this rural area and this makes it difficult for them to stay after school. Football and netball clubs are well attended but the school has been disappointed by the lack of uptake of musical activities offered. Learning is enhanced by a good range of visits to places of interest, including a residential visit to Wales. Similarly, visitors to school, such as the vicar, school nurse and football coach enrich the activities on offer.
26. Accommodation is satisfactory overall. It is bright and well cared for and is enhanced by good quality displays, which celebrate pupils' work. However, pupils, with some justification, feel that the semi-open plan nature of the classrooms can cause a degree of distraction when other classes are involved in more noisy practical activities. The designated outdoor play area for the reception class is adequate in size, but the long narrow area is uninviting and difficult to utilise. There is no large climbing equipment or soft surface and this restricts the range of learning opportunities, particularly in physical development. The lack of any cover also limits its use. Resources are plentiful, of good quality and enhance learning in all classes.

Care, guidance and support

The overall standards of care, welfare and health and safety are **satisfactory**. The support and guidance provided for pupils, including the monitoring of their achievements and personal development are satisfactory. The school is good at taking pupils' views into account and ensures that they are involved in its work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Child protection procedures are very good.
- There are very good first aid and health and safety systems and procedures.
- There is good support for pupils with special educational needs.
- The good ways in which the school, particularly through the recently established school council seeks and acts upon pupils' ideas and views.
- The very good trusting relationships between pupils and all the adults who work with them.
- The good arrangements for introducing new pupils, whatever their age, into the school community.

Commentary

27. There are very good child protection arrangements and all the staff have a clear understanding of them. The school is bright and clean, and safety arrangements closely follow the local education authority's guidelines. The headteacher and a nominated governor regularly survey the entire site and risk assessments of activities, including educational trips, are models of good practice. First-aid arrangements are very good with three people qualified in first-aid on site during the school day. There are however some areas of care and safety which are not yet at the high standard of all of the above. The headteacher and governors are aware of these shortcomings and are already taking action to improve things.
28. There is a caring family atmosphere and very good relationships between pupils and all the adults who look after them. They all respect each other and those pupils who have special educational needs or who do not use English as their mother tongue, are fully included in all aspects of work and play. The lunch time team is particularly kind and caring in the way that they ensure that pupils eat their food in a calm and "civilised" atmosphere. During their chats with inspectors, pupils of all ages confirmed that they would, without hesitation, talk to an adult if they were worried or upset.
29. Pupils' views and ideas are valued and the close informal relationships between staff and pupils ensure that these are taken into account. A school council has very recently been set up and its members are already hard at work, collecting their classmates' views and putting forward proposals, which range from improvements to the lavatories and playground to the introduction of a school pet.
30. The school's systems for welcoming new pupils and parents into school are good. There are very close links with the pre-school nursery which occupies the old school building. A programme of half-day visits for children and briefing sessions for parents, ensure that the start of formal education is as smooth and stress free as possible for everyone. Parents and pupils, of whatever age, who arrive during the school year are warmly welcomed and given comprehensive information.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The links, which the school has with parents, are **very good**. Links with the community are good and those with other schools and colleges are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents' very high levels of satisfaction with the education which the school provides for their children.
- The very good, close attention which the school pays to parents' views.
- The very good information, which the school provides for parents about their children's education and all aspects of school life.
- The good contribution which parents make to their own children's education and the general life and work of the school.
- The school's good links with the local and wider communities.

Commentary

31. Since the last inspection, there have been major improvements in the links with parents. They are now very good. The overwhelming majority of parents are very pleased with the ways in which the school is helping their children to learn and grow up. The school values their views and ideas and this year carried out a major survey of them in order to analyse and act upon positive and negative opinions.

32. The school provides a wealth of useful information about what pupils are doing and how they are getting on. End-of-year reports cover not only what pupils have achieved but also what they need to do next in order to improve. All parents attend the formal, termly consultation meetings with their children's teachers.
33. Because the school operates an open door policy, parents are able to drop in and see the headteacher and class teachers at almost anytime. Parents value the regular curricular letters and the innovative monthly "drop in " sessions where they can find out what's going on and look at pupils' work.
34. Parents effectively help their children to learn. They actively support homework, including reading, and a small group regularly comes into school to listen to pupils read and help out in lessons. There is an active parents association, which arranges social events for pupils and parents. Events, such as the school's Christmas concert, are always very well supported.
35. As well as good, close links with the local church, the school contributes to and benefits from the local and wider community. Last year, for example, pupils raised a great deal of money for national and local charities. The local Football Club runs the very popular, after-school, coaching sessions and the parish council uses the school for its meetings.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership of the school is **good**. Management and governance are **satisfactory**. The headteacher and key staff provide good leadership especially in promoting high standards and strong teamwork. Although satisfactory overall, there are relative weaknesses in the management of the school's performance. Governors ensure that there is sound financial management, support the school's work effectively, but could be more involved in evaluating the school's progress in meeting priorities in the school development plan.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Clarity of vision of headteacher and key staff.
 - Strategic planning of the school is reflected in the school's direction and goals.
 - The commitment by the school ensures that all pupils are included in the full range of activities and this contributes to their achievements and the positive ethos of the school.
 - The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection because of the effective leadership of the headteacher and governors.
 - Not all the actions taken to improve provision have been effective enough.
36. The governing body has a satisfactory knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and this enables them to contribute to the direction of the school. Their role in monitoring and evaluation, however, needs a tighter focus upon the agreed priorities for improvement. Short term financial planning has improved since the last inspection.
 37. The headteacher, who is supported well by her deputy headteacher, provides good leadership. She has created a dedicated team of hardworking staff who work well together and are committed to continuing improvement. The school development plan has a clear strategic view, key tasks are well defined and the staff all know what actions they are responsible for. As a result, pupils' high standards are maintained and those improvements deemed necessary, achieved.
 38. The school is fully committed to including all of its pupils whatever their abilities, difficulties or backgrounds and this is a key strength. Because the senior management team is determined that all pupils in their care should be fully included in all the school's activities, the school community is a very happy one, relationships are very good and most pupils achieve well. The deputy headteacher's contribution to the good provision for those pupils with

special educational needs is central to the school's success in ensuring that pupils who have particular barriers to learning are enabled to achieve well.

39. Following the last inspection, the governors and headteacher took effective action to improve the quality of teaching in the school. This involved taking difficult decisions, which resulted in changes in the teaching staff. Subsequent appointments have strengthened the all-round quality of teaching, have meant that previous weaknesses no longer exist and that teaching is now good. Teachers have been well supported by senior managers to continue to improve their practice by attending courses and adding to their qualifications.
40. The school's self evaluation cycle is used to raise standards. Effective action is taken based on the careful analysis of test results and pupils' work, for example, the introduction of individual writing targets in English. However, systems are not in place for subject co-ordinators to carry out their roles effectively. Lack of classroom observation by key staff means that good practice is isolated in individual classrooms and that relative weaknesses in the teaching of science and in the curriculum for science in Year 2 have not been fully addressed.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	286,219
Total expenditure	300,185
Expenditure per pupil	2,656

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	26,072
Balance carried forward to the next	13,966

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage

41. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. It gives them a good start to school and develops their very good attitudes to learning. There have been good improvements since the last inspection, notably the effective introduction of the nationally recommended early years curriculum and in the provision for children's personal, social and emotional development.
42. Children's attainment when they enter the reception class is above average for their age. They achieve well in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development and exceed the goals expected for their age. The strong emphasis on personal, social and emotional development enables children to attain well above the expected standard in this very important aspect. It is not possible to make an overall judgement on standards of knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development or creative development but all the work analysed was above average. Teaching is consistently good. Learning is enhanced by the very good contribution from the classroom assistant and the regular support provided by parents in the classroom and also in hearing children read at home. There is good support for children with special educational needs or with physical difficulties and they achieve well alongside their peers. The good induction procedures enable children to settle quickly into school life.
43. The Foundation Stage is well managed by the co-ordinator. The new curriculum, based on the nationally recommended early learning goals, is a well-planned and organised teaching programme. Assessment procedures are good and are used effectively to provide suitable support and challenge for individuals, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Children have direct access to a secure outdoor play area. However, it is uninviting and the long narrow area makes it difficult to supervise. There is little space and no soft area for large outdoor climbing equipment and this limits the learning opportunities in physical development.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and permeates all aspects of children's work.
- The very good teamwork between the teacher and classroom assistant provides a good role model for children.
- There are high expectations of behaviour and manners.

Commentary

44. The quality of teaching in this aspect is very good. The teacher has clear and consistent expectations of how children should act and behave, such as putting up hands and listening to others, and this explains why children have settled so well into school routines after only a short time in school. Adults treat the children with respect, for example greeting each individual during registration using their name and expecting the same in return. Children learn about rules for living in a community and keeping safe as they devise their own rules. They are expected to get themselves changed for physical education, though help is at hand where needed, and this promotes independence very well. The teacher corrects children firmly but fairly on the rare occasions this is necessary so that children quickly come to

appreciate the difference between right and wrong. Effort and good behaviour are reinforced through the judicious use of praise and rewards. This was seen in a dance lesson when a child who had worked very hard was chosen to lead the line.

45. There were many instances observed of children co-operating with each other, such as in the fishing game in mathematics and when mirroring each others' movements in dance. Children are expected to tidy up and are well used to returning finished work to the correct place. The teacher and classroom assistant provide a very good example of co-operation and this spirit of working together is evident throughout the day. Activities are interesting and suitably demanding and this promotes very good attitudes to learning. Children are in line to exceed the targets set for them in this area of learning by the time they enter Year 1.

Communication, language and literacy

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and children achieve well.
- Good attention is paid to the systematic development of phonic skills and letter formation.
- Clear assessment procedures are used well to match work to individual needs.
- Regular practice at school and at home develops reading skills well.
- A few lessons are a little too long, causing younger children to lose concentration.

Commentary

46. The quality of teaching is good and as a result almost all children are on course to attain or exceed the expected targets by the end of the reception year. The school has planned and implemented a good system, for teaching children the important basic skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening that prepares them very well for literacy work in Year 1. Children are given good opportunities to listen and to speak, and they attain standards above those expected, for example, speaking confidently in sentences when describing a holiday in Paris.
47. Letter sounds are taught systematically and children build steadily on previous work. The children develop their reading skills well as they join in the reading of the *Big Book* story. Children build up a good reading vocabulary and quickly develop a love of books through reading with an adult in school and taking books and words home to share with their parents. Children are well taught to form letters correctly. Most write simple words accurately and more-able children write simple sentences, using capital letters and full stops.
48. Literacy lessons can last for over an hour. Whilst the teacher changes the activity several times during that time, it is too long for the younger pupils to sustain concentration in their first term.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for mathematical development is **good**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Teaching and support are of good quality.
- Much of the recorded work is based on worksheets and this limits children's independence in setting out their work.

Commentary

49. Teaching is good overall, children achieve well and are in line to reach the expected targets by the end of the reception year. The teacher makes good use of simple resources such as number lines to improve children's counting skills. Questions are targeted well to involve all children whatever, their ability. Instructions are very clear so that children know what to do and the good level of support from adults, including parents, helps children to derive maximum learning from their tasks. Clear guidance and demonstration of well-structured activities help children to appreciate concepts such as starting from the larger number when adding. The teacher and classroom assistant observe the children closely during lessons to assess their level of understanding. The session at the end of the lesson is used effectively to clarify any areas of difficulty and to note whether any child needs more practice to reinforce their understanding.
50. All the activities are suitably practical, though the recording is very much based on worksheets, and this sometimes inhibits children's focus on the task and the development of independence in setting out their work in an organised way.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

51. It is not possible to make an overall judgement about provision, teaching or standards in this wide area of learning as no specific lessons were observed. However, the quality of the work displayed around the classroom and in photographs, was good. The children are confident when using the computer and know how to move objects round the screen and how to print their work. They enjoyed visiting The Welsh Zoo to see the landscape and produced good drawings and observations.
52. The activities are closely linked to the Year 1 teaching programmes in science, history and geography to prepare children well for the next stage. Activities are suitably practical, for example, children learn about different materials as they sort them according to colour and texture. However, the requirement to record what they have done on a worksheet confuses a few children and does not add to their learning.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

It is not possible to make an overall judgement on provision in this practical area. One dance lesson was observed and was of good quality.

53. In other lessons, in which aspects of children's physical development was promoted, children were provided with many opportunities to use a wide range of tools and implements and were shown how to use these correctly. For example, how to hold a pencil correctly to improve their control and the quality of their work. Children manipulated the computer mouse skilfully to move objects precisely around the screen.
54. In the dance lesson observed, children demonstrated a good awareness of space as they entered the hall. The teacher gave clear instructions and demonstrations to develop their skills in linking movements together. The children showed considerable control, although opportunities for individual creativity were limited.
55. Although there is a dedicated outside area for children in the reception year, it lacks stimulus for children or large climbing equipment. As a result, its full potential for encouraging creative play and for promoting children's awareness of space is undermined.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

56. It is not possible to make an overall judgement on provision as no lessons were observed in this area. However, children's work on display is above average for their age. Children produce good collage pictures using natural materials, mix colours to make subtle changes of shades in their patterns and work with clay to make tiles. They joined in well when singing in assembly and interpreted the music sensitively in a dance lesson.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been significant improvement in standards of writing across the school.
- Pupils have high standards in reading and speaking.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good and all pupils achieve very well.
- Whilst leading the subject well, the co-ordinator does not have sufficient time to observe teaching or to ensure that good classroom practice is disseminated.

Commentary

57. Standards in reading, writing and speaking and listening in Year 6 are very high in comparison with the national average. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection in all aspects, but especially in writing. There is a similar pattern in Year 2 where standards in all aspects are very high with very good improvement in all aspects, but again most significantly in writing.
58. All pupils achieve very well throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs and those whose mother tongue is not English, are particularly well supported and every effort is made by staff to raise their attainment through well-planned work and very good support from teaching assistants.
59. Reading is of a consistently high standard and pupils achieve very well. There is a structured reading programme with many opportunities for pupils to be engaged in individual, paired, group and whole class reading sessions. Pupils confidently show that they use a variety of strategies to read unknown words. They readily name their favourite authors and enthusiastically describe their favourite characters from books they read. The high quality of pupils' speaking skills adds considerably to the good quality of their learning in many subjects.
60. Pupils make very good progress in their writing. The regular termly assessment of work by all staff and the introduction of individual writing targets have contributed significantly towards this improvement. Pupils are very clear about what they needed to do to improve. They are now more able, as a result, to write in different styles for a variety of purposes and for a range of audiences.
61. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Planning of work and teaching is linked well to previous learning. In a good lesson on character profiles, pupils were actively involved by writing their ideas on individual white boards, sharing examples with their 'talk partner' and by demonstrating to the whole class before being given the task to write. Speaking and listening is, therefore, given a high profile. Pupils are very articulate and able to express themselves well. This results in very good achievement. However, during a satisfactory lesson on instructional writing not all pupils were given enough opportunity to apply the skill taught.

Information and communication technology is used regularly as an effective tool for teaching and learning, especially to help pupils edit their writing.

62. The subject is well led and satisfactorily managed. Analysis of test data and pupils' work is used to inform individual and school targets and to purchase specific resources, for example, non-fiction books. However, a relative weakness in management is the lack of opportunity for the co-ordinator to observe and monitor lessons or for current good practice to be disseminated to others.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

63. Pupils' literacy skills are used well to support learning in other subjects. Opportunities to apply their writing skills in other subjects have been planned well and give pupils a real purpose for their writing.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved very well since the last inspection and are now well above average.
- Numeracy skills are taught very systematically which enables pupils to securely develop their mathematical knowledge and understanding and to achieve well.
- Teachers use resources well, to explain more complex mathematical concepts and to motivate pupils in the subject.
- Pupils are not always sufficiently encouraged to explore mathematical relationships and ideas.
- The subject co-ordinator has had insufficient opportunity to observe colleagues teach.

Commentary

64. Standards in mathematics, both in Year 2 and Year 6, are presently well above average. This reflects both the very good improvement made since the last inspection and the standards achieved in the national tests over the last four years. In some of those years, standards have been in the top five per cent in the country, which has been acknowledged by several DfES achievement awards.
65. Pupils, throughout the school, of whatever ability or background, achieve well. Pupils with a learning or behavioural difficulty, with a physical impairment, those who join the school at different times to the normal, or who have another language other than English as their mother tongue, all make good progress given their prior attainment and often reach at least expected levels in the national tests.
66. A major strength in the quality of teaching is the systematic way in which pupils' mathematical knowledge and understanding are developed. Carefully planned lessons, the content of which reflects what teachers already know about pupils' attainment, invariably start with a clear statement of what pupils should learn, how that extends or consolidates what they already know and what pupils will do to achieve their target for learning. As a result, pupils achieve well in tightly organised, productive lessons. These good qualities were exemplified in a good quality Year 5/ 6 lesson about calculating and measuring perimeters of compound shapes.
67. Teachers also use resources well to help pupils of all abilities to understand or calculate more clearly. In a well taught Year 2 lesson, pupils with higher ability used a 100 square to help them quickly find change, whilst less-able pupils were skilfully supported by their teacher who used 'coins' to help them correctly compile given money totals. In a Year 3/ 4 lesson,

the class, but particularly the boys, were captivated by the teacher's use of a data projector, linked to a computer, to illustrate more clearly how to organise a problem set out in words in order to solve it more quickly. All pupils, regardless of ability, achieved well as a result of the imaginative use of this technology.

68. During a few lessons, teachers fail to involve pupils sufficiently in their own learning, tending to provide too much information themselves rather than requiring pupils to explain how they work out calculations or to demonstrate to other pupils how to solve problems. Similarly homework tasks, especially for the more-able mathematicians, sometimes lack the stimulus for pupils to explore number patterns or to come up with their own discoveries about mathematical relationships. Given more of these opportunities, a few pupils could achieve very well, rather than well as at present.
69. The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory overall. The co-ordinator has closely evaluated teachers' plans and pupils' work to ensure that the curriculum is delivered effectively. The subject action plan reflects relevant priorities for improvement. However, because the co-ordinator has not been able to observe teaching throughout the school, there has been no opportunity to disseminate the specific good practice to be found in classrooms, for instance, the very good use of ICT identified in the Year 3/ 4 class.

Mathematics across the curriculum

70. Pupils apply their mathematical skills satisfactorily to their work in other subjects. Mathematical development is well integrated into many areas of learning in the reception class. In Years 1 and 2, pupils apply their knowledge of shape and money to support their learning in geography and history. Older pupils use their measuring skills accurately to help them in their design and technology lessons. They confidently apply their knowledge of data handling to organise scientific data into tables and graphs.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**. The introduction of a new teaching programme, based on national guidelines, has provided good guidance for teachers and has contributed to the very good improvement in standards since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils attain well above average standards by the time they leave school.
- There is insufficient challenge for more-able pupils in Year 2.
- Leadership of the subject is good, which has meant that there has been good improvement in standards.
- Marking is good and helps pupils to improve.
- The two-year rolling programme plans for a single topic to be taught each term. Consequently there are long gaps between aspects being revisited and developed, and this is hindering the provision of work at the higher level for more-able pupils in Year 2.

Commentary

71. By Year 2, pupils attain standards that are above average. Achievement is satisfactory overall. It is good for average and less-able pupils, who all attain the required standard. However, the practice of providing all pupils with the same worksheet results in a lack of challenge for the more-able pupils, with fewer than would be expected reaching the higher Level 3. In addition, the long gaps between revisiting topics means that more-able pupils are not given more advanced work.

72. By Year 6, all pupils attain standards that are well above average and achievement is good overall. Analysis of pupils' work shows that all pupils are working at the required Level 4 or above and there has been a good improvement in the opportunities provided to investigate ideas and draw conclusions. Pupils' work is well presented and clear, showing a pride in what they do.
73. So far this year, pupils throughout the school have been working on the same topic, related to materials and their properties, and it is clear that pupils build on their previous knowledge from class to class. Pupils in Year 2 correctly group materials according to whether they can be changed by squashing, rolling or twisting and concisely record their results on their worksheet. Pupils in Year 6 show a good understanding of how mixtures can be separated, for example, using condensation or evaporation, and explain the processes in precise and correct technical language. They have developed a good format for recording experiments, with more-able pupils making good suggestions as to how their work could be improved.
74. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers build well on pupils' knowledge and understanding of living things and physical processes. Teachers give clear explanations and provide helpful demonstrations to illustrate scientific principles. They encourage pupils to discuss what they observe in groups and to record their findings logically. Many of these positive features were observed in a lesson for the Year 3/ 4 class about solubility. However, a relative weakness in this lesson was that all the groups used identical tests, with little freedom to design their own methods. When marking work, teachers make good suggestions as to how pupils can improve, and the high expectations of using the correct language improves pupils' scientific knowledge.
75. There are good links with literacy and numeracy as pupils record their results, measure carefully and write clear conclusions.
76. The subject is led well, resulting in the very good improvement in standards by the time pupils leave school. Management is satisfactory overall. However, there has been no opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and learning, which would have identified the lack of more advanced work in Year 2.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The provision for information and communication technology is **satisfactory**. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Developments in the subject are well managed.
- Word processing is taught well and is used effectively in many other subjects.

Commentary

77. Standards at the time of the last inspection were below expectations for all pupils. This was in part due to poor resources. The school has addressed this and standards are now in line with national expectations and pupils achieve well.
78. The quality of teaching and learning is good, especially for word processing. Demonstration by the class teacher and well thought out activities of varying difficulties enable all pupils to apply the knowledge taught to the relevant task. For example, in one lesson pupils successfully used the cut and paste technique to put lines of a poem in the correct order. Lessons have sufficient pace to maintain pupils' interest and as a result pupils behave well and work hard. Resources have improved considerably since the last inspection.

79. Leadership of this subject is good. Good emphasis has been placed on developing teachers' skills and confidence and this is one of the reasons why pupils are now achieving well. Overall, the joint co-ordinators have worked effectively together to support colleagues. They are currently implementing a new lesson planning style and a form of self-assessment, which once fully in use has the potential to improve the quality of learning and standards further.

Information and Communication Technology across the curriculum

80. Pupils satisfactorily apply and consolidate their ICT skills in many subjects. Opportunities to use word processing skills have been well planned with evidence of instructions for a board game and labels on a geography display. Technology is used well by teachers in other lessons, for example, in a mathematics lesson, by using a laptop linked to an interactive whiteboard, pupils were involved and motivated and therefore achieved well. There are also good examples of the use of ICT in design and technology, in science and in the reception class.

HUMANITIES

During the inspection it was not possible to make a judgement about provision in history. Because of the school's denominational status, religious education was not within the remit of this inspection and will be inspected by the Diocese.

Geography and history

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have a good knowledge of geographical features and environments.
- Teachers make effective use of resources and employ imaginative teaching methods to promote pupils' keen interest in and a better understanding of the subject.
- Pupils present their work well, taking great pride in their achievements.

Commentary

81. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 attain standards above expectations. They have a good understanding of the features and course of a river. Many pupils in Years 5 and 6 confidently identify how a river is formed and the different stages it goes through before entering the sea. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 demonstrate their good knowledge of the water cycle by drawing well labelled diagrams to illustrate the different processes involved in forming precipitation and link this well to their work in science about evaporation and condensation.
82. All pupils, irrespective of background and ability achieve well. Most succeed in presenting their work neatly and accurately, showing that they take a pride and pleasure in their achievements and reflecting the high expectations of the teachers.
83. The quality of teaching and learning in geography is good. Significant strengths in teaching are in the effective use of resources and imaginative teaching methods. These were both used to telling effect in a well taught lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6 to enable them to accurately recall key features of rivers and to further enhance their understanding of the erosive effect of both fast and slow running water on river banks.
84. In **history** only one lesson in Year 1 /2 was observed. The quality of teaching and learning in this lesson was very good and pupils attained standards above those expected for their age and achieved well. Significant factors in the success of the lesson were the teacher's

effective planning and use of resources and the excellent contribution of the teaching assistant who acted out a role in costume of a Victorian museum curator. There was an example of very effective partnership with the pupils' parents, who had written accounts of their own favourite childhood toys and sent examples of them in to the class for pupils to look at and discuss. Such good practice contributed significantly to the pupils' very good knowledge and understanding of the similarities and differences in toys of their own and past eras.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

85. A small sample of lessons in design and technology was observed. No lessons were observed in art and design or in music. Pupils work in art and design and design and technology was analysed, discussions were held with pupils and the subject co-ordinators. Physical education was not inspected. It was not possible to make a secure judgement about provision in any subject in this curriculum area.

Art and design

86. Analysis of display and of pupils' sketchbooks indicates that standards are above those expected nationally. Artwork around the school is attractively presented, of good quality and shows a wide range of different media being taught. This is a similar picture to that at the time of the last inspection. A discussion with the art and design co-ordinator indicated satisfactory leadership.

Design and technology

87. Only two lessons were observed during the inspection. The quality of teaching and learning in both lessons was good. In one lesson, clear demonstration by the teacher helped pupils to develop skills and achieve well. Cross-curricular links with English were made with pupils making puppets to represent the characters in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In the other lesson, pupils talked confidently about the features of a hand puppet. Pupils were also able to say that stitching would be a better choice rather than to glue the ears on.
88. Work samples and displays show a wide range of good quality work, including the design of a board game in Year 3 / 4 and a bag for *Mr Grinling's lunch* in Year 1 / 2. Detailed planning suggests good provision. However, there was insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement about standards at the end of Year 2 and 6. A discussion with the co-ordinator indicated satisfactory leadership.

Music

89. It is not possible to make an overall judgement about provision in music because no lessons were observed. However, the following observations can be made. The quality of singing in assemblies is good and all pupils take part in the annual productions. The curriculum is enriched by visiting musicians and by the participation of pupils in Years 4 and 5 in events, such as the county singing project.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

90. There was not enough evidence to report specifically on this area of the curriculum. However, uniformly very good relationships between children and adults ensure that pupils have every opportunity to grow in confidence and develop as contributing members of their school and the wider community.
91. Personal social, and health education is not taught systematically in specific lessons. It is instead tackled through other subjects with teachers taking opportunities to introduce and explore ideas and issues as and when they arise. The responsibilities which pupils have

around the school, their participation in the school council and assemblies, all contribute well to pupils' development in these areas. Sex and relationships education, which is supported by the school nurse, follow an appropriate policy and add well to older pupils' understanding of these areas of the curriculum. The openness with which lessons are conducted, especially the way in which teachers listen to and value pupils' opinions also makes a significant contribution to promoting pupils' self-esteem and confidence.

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	2
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	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	4
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	4

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