

INSPECTION REPORT

ST PATRICK'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Churchtown, Lancashire

LEA area: Sefton

Unique reference number: 104918

Headteacher: Mr J J Hogan

Lead inspector: Mr F Ravey

Dates of inspection: 13 – 15 October 2003

Inspection number: 257904

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:	263
School address:	Radnor Drive Churchtown Southport
Postcode:	PR9 9RR
Telephone number:	01704 225906
Fax number:	01704 507180
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Bond
Date of previous inspection:	8 June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school has a broadly average number of pupils, having 263 on roll. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language and no pupil is in the early stages of learning English. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is below the national average. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs, including those with statements of special educational needs, is well below the national average. On entry to the school's reception class, pupils' attainment is above average overall. The school's main characteristics are very similar to those at the time of the previous inspection and very few pupils start or leave school other than at the usual times of year.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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19366	Mr W Walker	Lay inspector	
15474	Mr J Fairclough	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Special educational needs
30205	Miss T Kenna	Team inspector	Science Geography History Foundation stage

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very effective school. By Year 6 pupils achieve very well in many subjects. Teaching is very good overall. As a result, pupils learn very well. The school is very well led and is well managed. It provides a good range of learning opportunities and takes very good care of its pupils. The school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils' very good achievement in many subjects by Year 6.
- The very good achievement of pupils with special educational needs.
- Pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour.
- The quality of teaching, which is often very good throughout the school.
- The very good care the school takes of its pupils.
- The very effective way in which the headteacher and other senior staff motivate and influence staff and pupils and the very positive impact this has on standards and pupils' achievements.
- The school does not have a long-term plan to match its yearly plan for improvement and allow a longer-term view on school development.
- Outdoor provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very limited and this restricts some aspects of their work and achievement.

The school has made good improvement since its previous inspection. Standards in English, mathematics, and science at the end of Year 6 have been consolidated well above the national averages. Standards in art and design, history and geography have risen well. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has improved well. The school has addressed successfully the issues raised by the previous inspection, relating to special educational needs, writing and investigative learning.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2003	2003
English	A	A	A*	A
Mathematics	B	A	A	A
Science	C	C	A*	A

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.

Overall, pupils achieve very well. By the end of the Foundation Stage, most children exceed the goals set nationally for them in all areas of their learning. In so doing, they achieve well. For pupils in Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are well above average and pupils achieve very well. For pupils in Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average and in English and science they are very high. This reflects pupils' very strong performance in the most recent National Curriculum tests, as shown in the table above, in which attainment in English and science was among the top five percent of schools nationally. It represents very good achievement by all groups of pupils, including pupils with special educational needs. Similarly very good achievement is evident in art and design, history and geography by Year 6. Pupils' good and very good achievement are due in large part to the challenging and interesting nature of the work set for them and to teachers' high expectations of their performance.

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall.

Pupils have very good attitudes to school and to learning. They behave very well. The school's very positive ethos and staff's high expectations contribute strongly to these very positive outcomes. Attendance and punctuality are good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a very good quality of education. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. Teaching in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 is good overall, with some very good teaching evident. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is very good overall. Teaching in English, mathematics and science is very good overall throughout the school, Very good teaching was seen in all year groups during the inspection. Teachers expect pupils to work hard and they provide work that stretches them. As a result, all groups of pupils often learn very well, producing lots of good quality work in many subjects.

The curriculum is of good quality. It enables pupils to develop their skills effectively across a broad range of subjects. The way in which the skills of literacy and numeracy are used to help develop skills in other subjects is very successful. Extra-curricular activities such as French and Spanish lessons, sports activities and clubs also add to the curriculum's effectiveness.

The school takes very good care of its pupils. It looks after them very well and also provides them with good academic support. Staff work hard to encourage pupils to think for themselves and for older pupils to increasingly take responsibility for checking their success in the work they do. Very good links with parents support this process successfully.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

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

School leadership is very good. The headteacher has built a strong team of teachers and support staff who are very committed to the school's success and they share a clear view of its future success. The leadership of the school sets the tone for its very positive and successful ethos. School management is good. Priorities for development are clearly identified and are achieved well. Subject leaders have clear and accurate ideas as to how to continue to improve standards. The work of the governing body is sound. Governors are also very committed to the school. However, the school's longer term planning suffers from the lack of a long-term development plan that would enable best use to be made of resources to assist its further development.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have very positive views of the school. They express strong satisfaction about many aspects of the school's work and especially about the quality of teaching. Very few parents express concern about any aspect of school life. Pupils also speak very positively of school. They clearly very much enjoy coming to school and the opportunities they are given to develop and express their skills.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- provide long-term planning to clarify in greater detail its educational aims and to show how resources will be used to achieve them;
- provide a suitable outside area for the development of children's learning in the Foundation Stage.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement in the Foundation stage is good. It is very good in English and mathematics throughout Years 1 to 6. In other subjects, achievement is mostly good and sometimes very good in Years 1 and 2 and mostly very good in Years 3 to 6. Standards in the core subjects are well above average and in English they approach the levels expected of much older pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achieve very well in English and mathematics throughout the school.
- Pupils achieve very well in science, art and design, history and geography in Years 3 to 6.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well.
- Children in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 achieve well.
- The school has made good improvements in standards recently and is sustaining these levels this year.

Commentary

1. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well and a large majority is expected to exceed the targets set nationally for children this age in all areas of their learning. This is due to teaching that is always at least good and sometimes very good, and to the good quality of the learning environment provided for them.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	17.2 (16.7)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	17,2 (15.8)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	17.6 (17.4)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 38 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	30.4 (29.8)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	29.4 (28.4)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	31.7 (28.8)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 39 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. The two tables show that standards in the school consistently exceeded those attained nationally in 2003, and often to a large degree. Standards have also shown considerable improvement from the scores attained in 2002, much more so than national test results overall. The proportions of pupils achieving high levels in their national tests last year rose considerably in writing and mathematics at Year 2 and in English, mathematics and science at Year 6, where the school's figures for pupils achieving high levels were often twice the national averages. Work seen during the inspection indicates that these improvements are being sustained this year.

3. Pupils enter school with attainment that is above average overall. They leave with attainment in English, mathematics and science that is at least well above average. The strength of pupils' attainment in the well above average band indicates very good progress in these subjects. This is demonstrated especially by the very high proportion of pupils gaining high levels in their tests in 2003 and the fact that inspection findings indicate that these high levels are being sustained this year.
4. All groups of pupils achieve very well in English and mathematics because these subjects are taught particularly well. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils should achieve and set challenging work that matches the learning needs of different groups of pupils. This is true in classes containing pupils from two different year groups as well as those having pupils from one year group.
5. The effective way in which the skills of literacy and numeracy are taught has a progressively stronger impact as pupils move up through the year groups and can be seen in the increasingly rapid and extensive progress they make. As a result, although pupils achieve well in other subjects in Years 1 and 2, the impact of these key skills becomes more and more apparent in Years 3 to 6 and the pupils achieve very well in these subjects. This improvement was aided by the school's very effective action following its analysis of test data in science, which showed some underachievement by high attaining girls in Year 6. The consequence has been very good achievement in science, history and geography in Year 6. Pupils also achieve very well in art and design owing to very good teaching in this subject.
6. The high proportions of pupils reaching high standards in English, mathematics and science by Year 6 indicates the school's success in meeting the needs of high attaining pupils. The school is also successful in meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs, whose achievement is very good. This is due to the good support from teachers and teaching assistants that enables these pupils to succeed in lessons and to the very effective ethos for learning in many lessons. This results in all pupils being keen to succeed and in them working productively and to their capabilities.
7. In ICT, pupils achieve well overall and in some lessons they achieve very well. This is due to confident teaching and to the very good use the school makes of its investment in computers and software programs.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The attitudes and behaviour of pupils throughout the school are very good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Pupils' attendance is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good support is in place in the Foundation Stage to further children's personal, social and emotional development.
- Pupils in all year groups have very positive attitudes to school and to learning.
- All members of the school community have very good relationships with one another.
- All staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, resulting in high standards of behaviour throughout the school.
- Older pupils' involvement in assessing their own academic performance develops self-awareness and responsibility very effectively.
- Pupils respond very well to the very good opportunities they are given to develop spiritually, morally and socially.

Commentary

8. Children in the Foundation Stage are encouraged very effectively to develop their social skills. They learn that it is important to take turns and share and, though some find this hard at first, they generally manage very well. The children develop very good relationships with all the staff and demonstrate good levels of perseverance with their learning, even when they find their tasks hard. The approach taken to involving children in managing resources and equipment for themselves is very effective in helping pupils to develop a sense of responsibility about their work.
9. Pupils throughout Years 1 to 6 are very keen and enthusiastic in all they do. They arrive at school on time and attend regularly. It is noticeable how quickly they become ready to learn at the starts of lessons. This is due in significant measure to the very good relationships that exist between teachers and pupils, and to the very effective way teachers manage pupils' behaviour. Pupils are polite and not afraid to ask pertinent questions. In lessons, in response to the teachers' high expectations, pupils listen carefully and concentrate very well on the tasks they are given. The very good relationships ensure that all are valued for their contribution to this Christian community. Teaching and support staff have a very engaging manner which strongly effects pupils' behaviour in a very positive way. Staff and pupils are involved in considering and establishing the high expectations of behaviour throughout the school. This helps to make rules and routines very effective.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	262	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0

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

10. The lack of exclusions last year is a fair reflection of the very good standards of behaviour in the school and of the school's very effective approaches to managing pupils' behaviour. An integral part of this is the interesting and challenging nature of work provided in lessons.
11. Pupils in Years 4 to 6 are involved in self-appraisal of their academic performance, They set targets for themselves in their work which ensures that they develop the self confidence to accept responsibility for their own learning and behaviour. As they get older, they enter into an agreement with their parents and teachers, who support and help them to reach their goals. This is a very effective means of developing pupils' sense of personal responsibility for achieving as well as they can.
12. Staff succeed in creating a very good spiritual environment for all pupils, thereby fulfilling an aim set out in the school's mission statement. Prayer is an integral part of daily life and pupils learn to reflect on their personal experiences, question values and develop a very good level of self-knowledge. Spirituality often expresses itself in writing, which can be very sensitive and moving.
13. From their early days in school, young children learn the value of rules and routines. They quickly come to recognise the impact of their actions on others. As pupils move through the year groups, their social skills develop very well. They become accustomed to sharing their news with the class, negotiating targets with teachers and parents, and making choices about activities. Strong moral messages are reinforced throughout the school day and all

pupils are well able to distinguish right from wrong. They learn from the very good example of adults in the school to care for each other, to share their time and resources, and to think of those less fortunate than themselves. In a very practical way, pupils become involved in fundraising, and contribute their own spending money to help children living in deprived areas of Africa. In so doing, they learn also of the very different cultures and traditions found in the wider world. The school is aware of the need to prepare pupils for a culturally diverse society and does this well.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	5.3
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.5

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

14. The table shows that absence from school last year was slightly better than average. However, this figure is not representative of levels of absence in most other recent years. Normally, attendance is considerably higher, as it is during the present school year. The reason for the higher levels of absence last year was an outbreak of influenza that resulted in much higher than usual levels of absence in most local schools at that time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided is very good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are very good overall

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils should achieve.
- The work challenges all groups of pupils to achieve very well, including pupils with special educational needs.
- Very good relationships between teachers and pupils result in a very effective ethos for learning.
- Management of pupils' attitudes and behaviour and the provision of challenging and interesting learning tasks lead to good collaborative and independent learning.
- Teachers' command of subject knowledge in Years 1 to 6 is often very good, especially in English and mathematics.
 - The teaching of literacy in the Foundation Stage is very effective.
 - Very good teaching is seen throughout the school.
 - Occasionally, a lesson lacks the sparkle found in most and pupils only achieve satisfactorily.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 38 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	18 (47%)	11 (29%)	9 (24 %)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

15. Teachers expect pupils to work hard and to achieve as well as they can. The carefully considered comments made by teachers when marking pupils' work provide good evidence of this. Most lessons have a buzz of interest about them, with pupils eager to make verbal contributions during whole class discussions. Teachers' high expectations are also evident in the tasks they set for pupils. These challenge pupils of different attainments and hence get the best out of them. Where support is provided, for example for pupils with special educational needs, it is planned and used effectively, enabling these pupils to achieve as highly as they should. For high attaining pupils, it seems in some lessons that 'the sky's the limit' in terms of what they and their teachers feel they can achieve. Rigorous demands are made on pupils, for example to write in interesting, well punctuated sentences at the start of Year 2 and to follow formal musical notation, at a swift pace, in Year 6.
16. None of this is achieved in an oppressive way. Relationships in lessons are characterised by smiles and good humour. Where possible, learning is made fun but at the same time pupils are well aware of what is expected of them. As a result, they listen carefully, respond thoughtfully and work hard and productively. Where pupils are taught in mixed age classes, work is carefully planned to meet learning needs. As a result, pupils not only learn very well, they also have very good opportunities to develop the skills of learning independently and they take these opportunities in a mature way. This was evident in the way pupils in the Year 3 / 4 class worked sensibly as they set about the tasks allocated to them while the teacher worked with another group. In this, they were well supported by a teaching assistant. Pupils throughout the school are encouraged to work together to share ideas and help each other's learning. This was achieved very well in some ICT lessons in the computer room. Pupils worked very well together and the result was very good achievement.
17. A major characteristic of the high proportion of very good lessons was teachers' confidence in their knowledge of subjects. Pupils' very good achievement in English and mathematics throughout the school owes in part to teachers' depth of knowledge of the subjects. This is true also of subjects such as art and design, history, geography and sometimes ICT. Teachers are very comfortable with the knowledge required for each lesson. This enables them to respond swiftly and accurately to pupils' questions and comments and quickly to take the learning to a higher level.
18. Teachers are very aware of the learning needs of pupils with special educational needs. They direct questions at the appropriate level and support pupils in the achievement of learning objectives. Targeted support for pupils with greater needs complements the learning of the regular lessons.
19. In the Foundation Stage, the teacher shows great skill in developing children's skills of speaking and listening very well by listening carefully to what the children say, then talking with them as they work and at times, in joining in with their activities. This well focused talk has a positive impact on progress. The work done in literacy during the Foundation Stage provides the secure basis upon which other teachers build in later years and is a crucial starting point for a process that ends in Year 6 with pupils achieving high levels in their English work.
20. Very good teaching was seen in all year groups, demonstrating the depth of quality in the teaching. The impact of this very good teaching is very good achievement by pupils in lessons. It was noticeable how, in many lessons, pupils appeared to be working at full capacity; there was no time to spare and no-one would have wanted to waste it. Pupils were engrossed in their learning and working very hard. Particular concentrations of this good teaching are in Year 2 and in Years 5 and 6. Work in pupils' books and on display give further evidence of the high expectations that characterises the teaching and which enables pupils to achieve very well.

21. Occasionally, a lesson lacks the sharp edge that is usual in the school. This may be because of difficulties with resources, placing one active lesson after another or the teacher does not make the most of the learning opportunities presented by the lesson's content.
22. The school makes good use of assessment in order to help pupils improve their work and to help teachers plan to meet pupils' learning needs. Teachers mark work thoroughly and often provide comments that help pupils rectify mistakes or develop skills and techniques. Sometimes teachers pose questions for pupils to reflect upon and to think closely about what they have written.
23. The school uses a full range of tests and assessments to check pupils' progress and to plan programmes of work. Using the end of Year 2 national test results as a starting point, each pupil is set targets which are then checked regularly over the next four years to see if they have been attained.
24. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 are encouraged to appraise the quality of their own work, In an example of very good and innovative practice, pupils select work they are pleased with as well as identifying weaknesses in it and ways to improve. In Years 5 and 6 as part of this process, targets are set by pupils and agreed by parents who attend a special appraisal day at the school to consider their children's work and targets. These targets are evaluated by pupils and parents towards the end of the year. The process not only encourages pupils to look critically at their work, it also helps their personal development and the skills of independent learning.

The curriculum

The school provides a good curriculum with an interesting and wide range of opportunities. It makes good provision for enriching the curriculum and provides good resources for teaching and learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good use of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum and very good provision for English and mathematics overall throughout the school.
- Work in science challenges gifted and talented pupils very effectively.
- Provision for art and design, history and geography is very good at Key Stage 2.
- Good range and quality of extra-curricular activities.
- Very good participation in sport.
- Good resources support the curriculum.
- A wide variety and range of visits and visitors enrich the curriculum.
- Limited provision for outdoor play in the Foundation Stage limits opportunities to support the broad range of children's learning.

Commentary

25. The school offers pupils challenging and interesting learning experiences. Particularly good provision is made in subjects such as science, art and design at Key Stage 2, geography and sport that enhance the very good provision for English and mathematics. A good range of visits and visitors contribute well to this interesting curriculum and give pupils a realistic setting for learning. For example, recent visits to coastal and dock land environments gave pupils a wealth of experience and this was reflected in the high quality in the writing that followed. Literacy and mathematics are used very well as part of learning in other subjects such as history, geography and science. A greater level of skill and depth of knowledge in these subjects result from this practical use of skills. This high quality provision is most evident in Years 3 to 6, due largely to the fact that skills in literacy and numeracy are more

greatly developed by these years and can influence achievement in other subjects more extensively.

26. Very good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. Teaching assistants ensure that younger pupils take a full part in lessons. Individual education plans set challenging yet achievable objectives for pupils' short-term learning. All pupils are included fully in the life of the school and the full curriculum offers pupils of all abilities good opportunities to develop personal talents. For example, a pupil with special educational needs discovered a flair for art whilst drawing an African mask in pastel crayons and this skill is now being nurtured. Provision for personal, social and health education is good with a particular focus on developing the pupils' self-image and personal relationships. There are satisfactory policies in place for teaching sex education and drugs awareness.
27. Provision to enrich the curriculum is good, with regular, useful homework and after school clubs in French and Spanish. Very good opportunities are provided for participation in sport through extra-curricular activities in netball, swimming, football and tennis. This provision extends successfully to organised sport in which the school has a good record of success.
28. Good resources support the teaching of all subjects. However, provision for reception pupils' outdoor play is limited. This means that social, physical, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative skills are not as fully developed as they could be.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes very good care of its pupils. Pupils work in a healthy and safe environment. Teachers have a very good knowledge of those in their care and the quality of support and guidance they provide is of a high order.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pastoral care of pupils is very good.
- The governors have very effective procedures to ensure a healthy and safe environment for pupils and staff.
- Teachers have a very good knowledge of their pupils and this enables them to provide well-focused and effective support for their academic and personal development.

Commentary

29. The school's unequivocal commitment to Christian values is manifest in the high quality of care which is provided at St Patrick's. All members of staff show great concern for the welfare of those in their charge. Warm and trusting relationships are apparent at all levels. There is a strong sense of community, almost of family. Governors and staff have a very responsible attitude towards matters of health and safety. Risk assessments are carried out routinely, and rigorously monitored. Proper arrangements are in place for child protection. The curriculum is used effectively to promote healthy and safe living.
30. Teachers know their pupils very well. Even before children begin their formal education in the reception class, they seek a shared understanding with parents of their child's capabilities and needs. As pupils progress through the school, teachers and other classroom staff progressively compile clear records of each pupil's capabilities, strengths, and personal needs. The sharing of this information with parents, notably through the pupil-led appraisal day held in the spring term, helps to ensure its accuracy and maximise its effectiveness in raising standards. It is also instrumental in building the bond of trust which epitomises relationships in the school.
31. In the words used by pupils during the inspection week, St Patrick's is a school "*Where you are given respect*", "*Where teachers always keep their promises*", "*Where they always do*

what they say they will do". Although there are as yet no formal procedures for eliciting pupils' views about school life, older pupils clearly have confidence that their opinions are listened to and taken seriously.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has developed a very constructive partnership with parents that contributes much to pupils' learning. Good links with other schools and within the wider community help to broaden the curriculum, to the benefit of all the pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have a very high regard for the school.
- They are very well informed about the attainment and progress of their children.
- The partnership between parents and school contributes effectively to pupils' learning at school and in the home.
- Links with other schools, the parish and the wider community help to prepare pupils well for the next stage of their education.

Commentary

32. The school is very successful in its primary aim "To foster a partnership between home, school and parish". There is a strong sense of community, of teamwork and of common values and objectives, reflected in the work of the school. It is borne out by the very high level of satisfaction shown by parents, and epitomised by the dedication of governors and parents, who have had the courage to tackle substantial building projects in order to enhance the facilities available to pupils.
33. The overwhelming majority of parents consider that the school provides well for all aspects of their children's education. Reservations have been expressed by a very small number of parents about the school's reaction to reports of bullying, about the approachability of staff and about the provision of activities outside of the school day. The inspection evidence is consistent with the positive views of parents and does not support the concerns.
34. The school works very effectively to keep parents informed about their children's progress, and about the broader work of the school. The procedural and curricular detail provided by class teachers at the beginning of the school year is instrumental in establishing a strong partnership between school and home which has proved to be very fruitful. The spring term appraisal evenings serve to collate both pupil and parent views in agreeing educational and personal targets in a way that is meaningful to both parties. As a result, the end of year written reports are well focused and give parents a clear idea of attainment and progress.
35. Throughout the year the school makes effective use of resources in the community to enrich its curriculum and broaden the educational opportunities for pupils. Parents, for example, organise a cycling proficiency programme; parishioners support the school with its "sacramental programme", local police and beach safety officers provide guidance for a safe lifestyle. Links with other schools and educational institutions serve a similar purpose. A strong partnership has been developed with the local high school both to facilitate an effective and stress-free transfer of pupils, and to extend the science curriculum for older pupils. This has had a strong impact upon pupils' recent, much improved achievement in science. The school also hosts meetings for community groups and educational courses for parents. This good practice helps to strengthen the provision the school makes for its pupils and to strengthen its place within its parish and local community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

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

School leadership is very good

School management is good, with some very good features

School governance is sound

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher and key staff have a clear vision for the school's development.
- The staff team is of very good quality and all its members are very committed to the school's success.
- The school's very positive ethos enables pupils to achieve as well as they do.
- Performance data is used effectively to secure improvements.
- The lack of a long-term development plan hinders the school in planning the best use of its resources to help it achieve its very clear ambitions for improvement.

Commentary

36. The headteacher has a strong, clear and ambitious vision for the future direction of the school. It centres upon spreading the very good achievement now evident in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science into all the foundation subjects. He communicates this vision clearly to staff. The strength of the staff team he has built means that this vision is shared fully by staff and is now being planned in detail. Its impact is already being felt in subjects such as art and design, geography and history. Members of the school's senior management team both support and are furthering this vision, working closely and very effectively with the headteacher in order to implement it. Subject co-ordinators produce well focused development plans for their subjects, identifying clear action for improvement, even where subjects are very successful. This is enabling the school to move smoothly forward in implementing its plans for further extending pupils' very good achievement. The very high level of commitment of all staff to pupils' education means that the school is now moving forward as one in this matter.
37. The school's very positive ethos is built upon staff valuing each child and seeking every possible way in which to ensure that each individual gains most from their education. This translates into a school in which all groups of pupils achieve at least well and often very well, and in which pupils feel valued as people. In short, the ethos is one of high expectation and high quality personal care. This owes much to the personal example of the headteacher, initially, and of all staff, and the results of it can be seen in the very good relationships that exist throughout the school.
38. The school makes good analysis of a wide range of test data and acts upon the results of this in order to make improvements in standards. The headteacher provides strong leadership in this aspect of school management. An example of swift and successful action arising from the school's analysis of test data is to be found in the prioritising of science in last year's school improvement plan. The school's analysis of data confirmed that high attaining girls were not achieving as well as they should in science. A rigorous improvement programme was implemented with the result that not only did the proportion of girls' achieving high levels rise but that of boys did also. As a result, the school greatly increased the proportion of pupils reaching National Curriculum Level 5 (the high level), achieving twice the national figure for this level. These high standards are being sustained this year.
39. The leadership of special educational needs is very good. Teachers, parents and pupils make contributions to regular reviews. The special educational needs co-ordinator has completed extensive training in this aspect of provision and teaching assistants are trained to make a good contribution to the learning of the pupils. The management of the provision for pupils with special educational need is also very good. Regular review records progress with learning targets and makes changes accordingly. As a result, these pupils achieve very well.
40. Staff are deployed carefully and effectively in order to help bring about improvement. For example, the drive to improve achievement in science was very much strengthened by the deployment of a specialist teacher to Years 5 and 6. Where unevenness of numbers on roll

means that pupils of more than one age group have to be in the same class, teaching assistants are deployed to support pupils' learning. This was seen working particularly effectively in the school's Year 3 / 4 class.

41. The governing body is very committed to the school's best interests and its members have a well-organised structure of committees that enable it to meet its statutory obligations. It plays its part in helping the school to clarify its direction for improvement. The school's finances are managed with prudence. Money is not wasted and the expertise of individual governors is used to very good effect in relation to building development. There is, however, a weakness in strategic planning. Governors do not have a longer-term development plan to identify educational priorities and associated budgetary plans over the next three years that indicate how the intended use of resources is linked to the achievement of the school's goals. This issue was also identified in the official auditor's report received in June 2003 and it is a shortcoming in management.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	499,414
Total expenditure	509,432
Expenditure per pupil	2,014

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	25,489
Balance carried forward to the next	15,471

42. The school strives to ensure that it gets best value out of its major spending decisions. Work is put out to tender. The school's performance data is scrutinised closely to compare performance with other schools. The views of parents and pupils are sought informally although as yet there are no formal means for doing this. However, the school has plans to establish a school council this year.
43. The school is in the lowest 25 percent of schools nationally for the cost of educating its pupils. This, together with the its very good educational outcomes and the many strengths in the quality of education it provides, means that the school gives very good value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well.
- Teaching is always at least good, and sometimes it is very good.
- Day-to-day assessment is very thorough.
- Very good classroom organisation contributes very positively to teaching and learning.
- Children are helped to become independent very effectively.
- There is no provision of a distinct outdoor area, which could be used as an extension to the classroom to aid children's learning.

Commentary

44. All children whose fifth birthday falls within the school year begin their reception year at the start of the autumn term. At the time of the inspection, so close to the beginning of the school year, children had received four weeks of full time education. As a result it has not been possible to make judgements about standards in each area of learning.
45. In all nationally agreed areas of learning the majority of children are expected to exceed the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the reception year. They achieve well in all areas of learning. Since the previous inspection, the quality of teaching and learning and the rates of progress in all areas of learning have been sustained.
46. Teaching is good across all areas of learning. The teacher has a quiet and engaging manner, enabling her to form very good relationships with the children, which in turn ensures that they want to learn. She provides a rich variety of well planned activities, which stimulate learning across all six areas of learning. Both the teacher and teaching assistant interact very effectively with the children, which promotes good learning and contributes very strongly to children's good achievement.
47. As soon as children begin their schooling they are assessed against the nationally recommended criteria. This results in very effective planning by both the teacher and teaching assistant, with work specifically aimed at the needs of individual children. The teacher organises the classroom very effectively to enable her to meet the learning needs of all children. Careful, flexible planning ensure that children are provided with a good balance of short periods of direct teaching, intensive work with the teacher or teaching assistant in small groups and opportunities to make choices from a range of activities for themselves. This approach is well matched to the children's attention spans and their need to learn through practical activity. This also successfully contributes to the good progress they make.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Regular routines are quickly established.
- Very strong emphasis is placed on the development of social interaction.
- All staff show a consistent approach when supporting children.

Commentary

48. Classroom routines have been quickly established and are helping the young children to work in various groups, to take turns and share. As a result, children are growing in confidence and developing positive attitudes to their work. They already understand classroom rules and routines and their behaviour is very good. Lining up for lunch is accomplished in a sensible and careful way.
49. Children enter the reception class with personal and emotional developments that exceed the levels expected. However, many find difficulty socialising with their peers. The teacher and teaching assistant place great emphasis on developing children's social skills and in order to do this they design activities supporting all areas of learning. The classroom has been carefully organised to enable children to select what they do from a planned range of activities and work independently, alongside and co-operatively using the available equipment, apparatus, computer, tools and materials. As a result, children achieve well. They already make choices sensibly and most work confidently in the various areas of the classroom. They concentrate for appropriate periods, at times sitting quietly or working as part of the whole class. Most willingly share the resources available and take appropriate responsibility for putting away what they have used.
50. Children are helped very well to become independent. There are clear routines for children to select and work in the different areas of the room or with particular pieces of equipment. Even at this early stage in the school year, children already understand and respond to these routines very well. The approach taken to involving children in managing resources and equipment for themselves is very good for promoting personal development and already they are able to clear things away quickly and tidily when required.
51. All staff give clear ideas of what is expected of the children including the difference between right and wrong. Patient, supportive teaching, where children are encouraged to work together and collaborate in their tasks, results in happy and confident children who make good gains in their lessons.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's communication skills are being developed well.
- Great emphasis is placed on developing children's listening skills.
- Writing is made relevant and interesting.

Commentary

52. Children show confidence in speaking to adults and to other children. Many initiate conversation in their play. They enjoy listening to stories and sharing a book with an adult. Most children know some letter sounds and can draw the shapes of letters.
53. The teacher gives children very good examples of how to use speaking and listening skills by listening carefully to what they say, interacting with them as they work and at times joining in with their activities and play. This has a positive impact children's achievement. Some children already enjoy conversation and are beginning to take turns in speaking and listening, particularly with adults. However, a number do not listen well either to other children or adults. Children answer questions posed by their teacher and are eager to express their ideas in words.

54. Children understand that writing is used to communicate and at times they enjoy working at the writing tables, making books and lists. They also have opportunities to write during their imaginative structured play sessions. Staff work with small groups of children giving them very individually focused help. For example, in one lesson the teacher gave valuable support and help to a group who were writing their news. This good organisational strategy has a beneficial effect upon the way the children learn. Many achieved well as they demonstrated the ability to use their knowledge of sounds to write words that were phonetically recognisable. Children are aware that books are a source of information and pleasure. They handle books with confidence, and are eager to retell the stories. Many are able to recognise some familiar words.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Every opportunity is taken to develop children's counting skills.
- Mathematical concepts are made relevant to children's experiences.

Commentary

55. Children are making good progress in developing their awareness and understanding of mathematics. They enjoy counting. Most can count accurately to 10, and many can count beyond 10. The teacher makes good use of number rhymes to reinforce children's counting. Children count while they sort objects as they play.
56. The teacher organises the classroom very effectively to enable her to meet the learning needs of all children. Careful, flexible planning ensure that children are provided with a good balance of short periods of direct teaching, intensive work with the teacher or teaching assistant in small groups. Mathematical learning opportunities are planned into a range of activities that children choose for themselves. This results in good achievement.
57. Most children can recognise simple two-dimensional shapes. They know circle, square, triangle and rectangle, and can recognise many of them when their properties are described. They use their shapes to construct pictures and can "read" the printed patterns they have made. For example "2 *blue circles*, 2 *red squares*." They use appropriate vocabulary when answering questions, such as those about 'more than'.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

58. Insufficient opportunities for observation mean that judgements cannot be made about standards, teaching and learning. However, analysis of documentation and observations of display indicates provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is good. As a result, most children reach at least the goals expected nationally by the end of reception. Good use of a range of materials successfully promotes children's interest and learning. They have been interested in their work on autumn, for example, some are very keen to discuss the colours and sizes of the leaves they had collected. Great delight was expressed when they discovered they could blow bubbles using the doll's bath water. Children use the computers with confidence, using the mouse to identify and move items on the computer screen and pointing to illustrations. Various programs are used well to promote the children's understanding in this area of learning.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good classroom organisation ensures children's manipulative skills are developing well.
- Lack of a suitable outside area limits the use of the very good large equipment, which would develop the children's physical skills.

Commentary

59. Children move around the classroom with growing confidence. They show an increasing awareness of space, for themselves and for others. They use small equipment with increasing control as they draw or write. Most can manipulate construction materials. They handle equipment with care and most are aware of the need to do things safely.
60. Though there is a good selection of large play equipment, its use is very limited due to the lack of an appropriate area in which to site it.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

61. Insufficient opportunities for observation mean that judgements cannot be made about standards, teaching and learning. However, analysis of documentation and observations of display show that provision in creative development is good. As a result most children reach at least the goals expected nationally by the end of reception.
62. Children enjoy a good range of well-planned art and craft and creative play experiences to stimulate their imagination. They concentrate well on these, making pictures and models with a variety of materials and paint. They are beginning to relate well to each other and share in imaginative ideas to create stories and events. They enjoy making models and discovering the difference between high and low sounds.
63. Children are able to join materials together using sticky tape or glue. At times they work with intense concentration on their tasks, paying attention to small details. This was seen as the children made monster masks, as part of a literacy lesson discovering "M".

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

English

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average overall and in writing they are approaching high levels by Year 6. This constitutes very good progress.
- Recent improvements to standards are being sustained and mean that the school is strengthening its position above the national trend in performance.
- Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve very well throughout the school.
- Teachers' high expectations and the demanding quality of work they set contribute strongly to this very good achievement.
- The skills of literacy are used very effectively to promote achievement in other subjects.

Commentary

64. Most recent National Curriculum test results at Year 2 and, especially, Year 6 show that the school is making significant improvements to pupils' performance. The high proportions of

pupils achieving high levels in reading and writing are evidence of this. It means that the school has made good improvement since its previous inspection. It continues to aim for still higher standards. Work seen during the inspection at this early stage of the school year provides evidence of this. It was particularly noticeable in Year 6 that pupils were making very good progress in their writing and that, if continued, this would result in high attainment by the end of the year. In Years 1 and 2, the maturity of pupils' writing was very much evident. For example, a high attaining pupil in Year 2 started her story, *'It was a lovely sunny day in spring...'* In reading, Year 2 pupils show above average attainment in their understanding of what they read and in their use of reference books to help them find information. In Year 6, pupils show a very mature grasp of how an author can use words to create a particular feel within a text, for example, in 'slowing down' a story to emphasise the change from town to country life. A further example of very good progress was evident in Year 2, where pupils' ability to extend their sentences in an interesting and smoothly flowing way also improved very quickly from September to the time of the inspection in October.

65. Pupils achieve very well throughout Years 1 to 6. This is due in great part to teachers' high expectations of what should be achieved, especially in writing. Very good relationships in lessons mean that pupils are happy to accept that they should work hard. Tasks set challenge all groups of pupils. Teachers have a high expectation that pupils should work independently and find things out for themselves. These expectations extend to pupils with special educational needs but are tempered by good support from teaching assistants and by well-focused learning targets. These pupils are always included fully in lessons. Support is provided sensitively but effectively so that pupils achieve equally as well as other groups in the class, within the boundaries of their learning plans. Marking of work often provides a further 'spur' to an individual pupil in order that further progress can be made. The impact of teaching upon pupils' learning and achievement is very good overall and enables very good progress to be made. An example of this was seen in the improvements made to pupils' work on display in Year 6. Work in September was of good quality, providing evidence of high attainment in the structure and use of language. Four weeks later, the quality and choice of words and the complexity of structure has improved noticeably.
66. Pupils are hardworking because the very positive ethos created by staff makes them keen and enthusiastic and they very much like the challenging work they are asked to do. This shows in the very good learning environment that is created in many lessons. For example in a Year 3/4 lesson, there was very little conversation as pupils were absorbed in the tasks set for them (and the tasks for the two year groups were both appropriately challenging). They were proud of their work and took great care over how they presented it. In Year 5, a group of pupils became increasingly absorbed in reading from a play script. Not only was their reading of well above average standard, they improved their speaking skills very clearly as the session progressed. Year 6 pupils concentrated intensely as they explored the features of figurative writing, including personification. Those who responded to the teacher's questions showed a high level of understanding of figurative language and an equally high level of speaking skills.
67. Discussion with the subject co-ordinator provides further insight into why English is so successful in the school. Despite the well above standards being achieved, there is no sign of any complacency but rather of a desire to build further on success. The co-ordinator has a very accurate and detailed grasp of why the subject is so successful and is providing very good leadership through high expectation and good teamwork to ensure its continued improvement.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

68. The school achieves great success in using the skills of literacy to help raise standards in other subjects. From an early age, pupils are expected to write their own accounts rather than copy or simply fill in worksheets. For example, pupils in Year 2 use sentences well in order to explain their scientific findings. Through Years 3 to 6, this use of literacy skills to

enrich learning elsewhere becomes increasingly evident and effective. A multiplicity of examples came to inspectors' attention. In Year 4, a pupil wrote an accurate interpretation of a 'pie' chart that showed the different way land is used in the local area. In Year 5, pupils wrote reports of great accuracy and interest about their recent trip to part of the Liverpool Docks whilst others communicated facts about Henry VIII very clearly and succinctly through the use of bullet-pointed statements. In Year 6, a plethora of examples was available, one of the best relating to the hygiene in a Victorian town in which the author stated bluntly, *'This town needs to clean up!'* The way in which the skills of literacy are used wherever possible in other subjects both enriches writing skills and helps deepen knowledge and understanding of the subject being studied. As a result, it is very effective in helping to raise achievement in other subjects.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good overall**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good standards and achievement at both key stages.
- Very good teaching with high level of challenge and high expectations at both key stages.
- Good use of numeracy skills in other subject areas.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to mathematics.
- Marking helps pupils to make improvements to their learning particularly at Key Stage 2.
- Very good assessment during lessons identifies supplementary teaching points.
- Occasionally, there is insufficient focus on relationships, for example, properties of shape which means that sometimes pupils make less progress as a result.

Commentary

69. Standards at the end of Year 6 have risen over recent years and this improvement is continuing. Although standards at the end of Year 2 have fallen slightly in recent years from a very high point three years ago, unvalidated national test results for 2003 and inspection evidence indicate that they are now steadily improving. Standards are well above average at both Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils are challenged to high attainment in lessons. They maintain a good level of concentration, work hard and produce a good quantity of work. As a result, pupils' achievement is very good at both key stages. Year 6 pupils use accurate terminology when discussing graphs and understand the use of scale in graphical representation. They can multiply 18 by 15 and place numbers such as 0.286, 0.283 and 0.285 in order. Pupils of all abilities complete similar work at appropriate levels of complexity. Year 2 pupils use place value to find missing numbers in a 100 square. Higher attaining pupils select coins to make values such as 35p and double the amount and represent the answer with two coins. Lower attaining pupils are successful in identifying coins to represent simple amounts such as 8p.
70. Pupils have very good attitudes to their learning. Pupils in Year 2 responded with enthusiasm and confidence to a lesson on money so that one pupil was correctly totalling the coins on display during a session about recognition of different coins. Pupils' books are consistently neat. They show pride and interest in their work.
71. Teaching and learning are very good overall through Years 1 to 6, with very little less than good and no teaching less than satisfactory. As a result all pupils make good progress. High expectations and a good level of challenge were present in almost all lessons seen. Questions were used well to focus on pupils of different abilities and to probe and further their understanding. Assessment of learning during the lesson meant that ideas could be re-presented in a different setting to strengthen understanding. Marking is always supportive and in Years 3 to 6 it is also constructive in pointing pupils towards better understanding. All this very good teaching is founded on a secure knowledge of the subject. Very effective methods

are used together with an insistence on full attention and concentration from the pupils. This, together with interesting and encouraging presentation, means that pupils discover the pleasure of the subject and so make greater gains in learning. However, where teaching was occasionally less successful, the teacher did not fully explain the properties of shapes. Pupils were then not able to explain accurately the differences and similarities between squares and rectangles.

72. Good leadership and management of mathematics ensure that the subject is developing well. Analysis of pupil performance in tests has indicated areas for development. Teaching has improved as result of support from local authority advisers. Standards are higher and rising since the previous inspection and this represents good improvement.

Mathematics across the curriculum

73. Mathematics is used well in other subject areas such as science and geography, particularly in the graphical representation of numerical information gathered in these subjects. For example, work on mapping by Year 5 pupils included good mathematical content. Mathematical skills of proportion and symmetry are used well in art to help pupil similar develop skills, accurate measurement is used in design technology to aid design and information from surveys is represented in a variety of graphical forms using appropriate scale for large numbers.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good achievement in Years 3 to 6; good achievement in Years 1 and 2.
- Recent very good improvement in standards, through raising the profile of the subject with higher attaining girls.
- Very good quality of teaching.
- Very good opportunities for pupils to carry out scientific enquiry.
- Developing the use of computers for scientific investigation within the school.

Commentary

74. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well, owing to good teaching that has a strong focus upon practical work. In Years 3 to 6, pupils' achievement is very good. Again, there is a strong emphasis on investigative work and this has been allied to the school's very successfully strategy for improvement identified in its school improvement plan for 2002/03 and carried out with great success. The school devised strategies to improve the interest and motivation of higher attaining girls in science. A science club was set up and strong and effective links made with a local technology college. This has resulted in a much higher profile for the subject within the school and a very marked improvement in test results in 2003. All indications are that this improvement is being sustained this year. This sustained success means that good improvement has been made in science since the previous inspection.
75. Teachers show good understanding of the subject and so are able to explain ideas clearly to their pupils. Work is very well planned, so that all activities build very well on previous work and are suitable for the differing levels of attainment within the classes. Teachers generally have very high expectations. They expect their pupils to work hard, do their best and behave sensibly. Procedures to assess pupils' progress are developing, and they enable teachers to modify the work in response to individual levels of understanding.
76. All pupils have good investigation skills, assisted by the school's strong focus on this aspect of the work. In Year 2, pupils investigate different food categories. They understand *Vitamins*,

minerals, proteins, fats, fibre and carbohydrates, and use this knowledge to design healthy eating menus. They learnt more about the needs of very young children when, during one lesson, a mother brought her five-month old baby to visit and talked to the class about the baby's needs. Following a visit by a dental nurse, pupils studied the results of a controlled experiment they had set up to measure the effects of *a cola drink, orange juice, blackcurrant, and milk* on eggshells. All were amazed by the results. By the end of Year 6, pupils' investigational skills are very well developed. They devise experiments and investigations and understand how to record their investigations through the use of: aims, variables, predictions and tests. In one good lesson seen, pupils very clearly demonstrated their understanding of the need for experiments to be very accurately carried out, when the results they received from one another made it impossible to reach a conclusion, they agreed the only way to achieve this was to repeat the experiment, with greater accuracy.

77. The school is developing the use of ICT to support work in science. The link with the local Technology College plays a strong part in this, giving pupils and teachers access to equipment which they may not otherwise get to use. The skills of literacy are used very well to enable pupils to record their scientific findings, providing good opportunities to write for a specific purpose whilst also allowing pupils to express clearly and succinctly the good level of their scientific knowledge and understanding.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in work seen in Year 2 are above average and pupils achieve very well.
- Pupils in years 3 to 6 achieve well.
- Teaching is of good quality overall and sometimes it is very good, helping pupils develop their knowledge and understanding well.
- Resources are of very good quality and aid pupils' achievement but the computer room is small and this occasionally makes learning difficult.
- The subject co-ordinator has led staff successfully through a period of great change and is now leading the development of useful procedures to check pupils' progress.

Commentary

78. Pupils in Year 2 showed above average attainment when using a word processor in order to help them present their own poems in an attractive way. Good reinforcement of previously learnt skills, for example about the use of the spacebar and return key, meant that pupils set about their work confidently. It was noticeable how practically all the class had a good level of skill in learning how to change the font from lower to upper case and to import pictures from a graphics package. High expectation by the teacher and a high level of challenge in the task meant that all pupils achieved very well.
79. Pupils in Year 6 demonstrate a wide range of skills, appropriate to the levels expected for their age. They can create a multimedia presentation and insert hyperlinks. They use ICT productively in science, making a table of results on a database. In literacy and numeracy, they use programs to help improve their sentence structure and multiplication skills. Pupils in Year 5 showed above average attainment in a lesson in which they were using computers to help them design the layout for a classroom. The task had a high level of difficulty and pupils were totally engrossed in it. All could create and move shapes; a few were very competent in rotating them. The teacher encouraged pupils to be adventurous and creative in their approaches. As a result, some pupils made further, good improvement.
80. The school has made good improvement in the subject since the previous inspection, both in terms of resources and the quality of teaching. The computer room is very well equipped but

rather small and this occasionally results in pupils in the upper years not having the room to work as effectively as they might. The subject co-ordinator has played a significant part in the school's good improvement since its previous inspection. She has led teachers confidently through a potentially difficult learning process and this is now paying off in terms of the quality of teaching. She has also led the staff team well in devising a successful means of assessing pupils' progress, in order to help teachers plan future work more effectively.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

81. The school makes good, planned use of ICT across the curriculum. In literacy, pupils learn to use the word processor from an early age and by so doing improve the presentation of their work. This often leads to good achievement, with pupils taking great care to lay out work well and to import pictures and other devices to enhance their work. In mathematics, pupils in Year 4 learn how to organise information using the basics of a simple database. Pupils in Year 5 enrich their skills of spatial understanding and design when they make computer models of how a classroom of pupils might best be furnished and organised. Pupils use the Internet regularly in order to help them research, for example in history. Year 6 pupils use technology to make effective presentation of the results of their scientific investigations.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in Years 3 to 6. They achieve well in Years 1 and 2.
- Good teaching enables pupils to learn well.
- Visits make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning.
- The development of literacy and numeracy skills within the subject is very effective.

Commentary

82. Good teaching enables pupils to learn and achieve at least well. Good planning within mixed age classes ensures that all learn well. In one very good lesson observed, pupils from Years 3 and 4 working on different topics learned very well due to the teacher's careful planning and organisation which ensured that all took responsibility for their own learning. An extra 'edge' to the work in Years 3 to 6 is pupils' very well developed skills of literacy and numeracy. The very good use of these skills raises pupils' achievement in the subject to very good levels.
83. Visits from the school are very carefully planned in order to give pupils first hand experience. During the inspection, Year 4 pupils were studying the development of sand dunes following a visit to the local beach while Year 3 pupils discussed ways in which their local area could be improved following their educational visit. Year 5 pupils developed their map reading skills as they traced their route to visit the Liverpool docks. All these visits enabled pupils to acquire first hand knowledge of their local area and its development, thus greatly enhancing their ability to compare their locality with others. The work in literacy that resulted from the visit to the Liverpool docks provides a very good example of the mutual benefit of the use of literacy skills within a subject. Pupils wrote very succinct reports of their visit that emphasised their geographical understanding while also helping them to develop their writing skills.

History

Provision in history is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in Years 3 to 6. They achieve well in Years 1 and 2.
- Very good teaching enables pupils to learn very well.
- The development of literacy and numeracy skills within the subject is very effective.

Commentary

84. Where teaching is very good, pupils learn and achieve very well. Very good use of source materials enabled pupils to investigate the reasons for high infant mortality during the mid 19th century. They studied local parish registers, and compared the statistics from them with those from a village in a different part of the country. This very well planned lesson resulted in pupils' own discovery of information, and very good learning taking place. As in geography, the development of the skills of literacy, in particular, and numeracy influence achievement very positively.
85. The very strong use of literacy and numeracy within the subject enriches development of these skills. Very good literacy skills were used when describing the character of Henry VIII using his portrait. In all classes on many occasions pupils are encouraged to use their literacy skills to compose their own versions of events. Those in Year 6 wrote with great fluency about the levels of hygiene in a Victorian town, expressing strong opinions, substantiated by very well researched information. Pupils' numeracy skills are also used well and developed within the subject. In one very good lesson observed in Year 6, pupils devised graphs to depict the number of infant deaths over a given period of time.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

Provision for art and design is **good** in **Years 1 and 2**; in **Years 3 to 6** it is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching at Key Stage 2 provides very good learning opportunities for pupils with special educational needs.
- Pupils achieve very good standards at Key Stage 2.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to art.
- A wide range of learning opportunities are offered to the pupils.
- There are good links with other subject areas.
- Occasionally, teaching has insufficient focus on the development of skills.

Commentary

86. Standards In Years 3 to 6 are well above expectations. Pupils have completed a good range of high quality work in a variety of media. One pupil with special educational needs used pastels fluently to produce a very good copy of a multicoloured African mask. Other pupils capture good shape and proportion in drawings of model elephants and rhinoceroses. Standards in Years 1 and 2 are in line with expectations. Illustrations are used as a natural part of decoration for pupils' written work. Sketches use shade and texture to represent fruits.
87. Pupils have very good attitudes and enjoy their work in art. They are responsible and careful in the use of materials. They show good confidence in producing models and images. Older pupils concentrate well and readily explain their aims and methods and the difficulties that they have overcome.

88. Teaching is good overall with very good teaching for the older pupils in Key Stage 2. A wide range of learning opportunities links art and design to other subject areas such as history, geography and science. Where teaching is very good the lessons are well prepared. Pupils' interest is focused with a review of the work so far and links to previous success. Discussion of objectives includes awareness of the essential nature of art as a personal representation. Occasionally, where teaching is less successful, there is insufficient focus on the completion of the task and management of techniques. For example, when sketching historical artefacts younger pupils in the Years 1 and 2 age range received insufficient guidance on skills such as shading.
89. Art and design is featured as a development area on the school development plan. The temporary co-ordinator has a good level of expertise in the subject and is looking to raise its profile in the school. Subject management is good and improvement since the previous inspection is also good with higher standards now being attained in Years 3 to 6.

Design and technology

90. Insufficient opportunities for lesson observation mean that judgements cannot be made about standards, teaching and learning. However, analysis of documentation and observations of display show that the school delivers a satisfactory curriculum. Pupils experience a full range of activities and lessons follow an appropriate plan, design and make sequence of learning opportunities.

Music

91. Two music lessons were seen during the inspection and so too little evidence is available to make overall judgements about provision. However, in work seen, provision was good. Year 1 pupils successfully made different sounds using parts of their body, exploring various ways in which this could be achieved. They mostly listened well to their teacher and to each other although they were a little tired and restless following a physical education lesson. Their achievement was satisfactory and they were working at a standard appropriate for their age.
92. Pupils in Year 6 very worked hard to develop the lyrics for a 'rap' type song. High expectation from the teacher was evident in both the demands made in the task and in the way pupils were expected to be familiar with regular musical notation. Pupils worked in pairs very successfully and produced good raps but the teacher was not satisfied and often demanded that exact instructions be followed. Pupils responded very well to this and improved their compositions well. In this lesson, they achieved very well.
93. Whenever pupils sang together during the inspection – in assemblies or in class – they did so tunefully and with enthusiasm.

Physical education

94. Three lessons were observed, two in Year 2, and the range of work seen does not allow judgement to be made about overall provision. In lessons observed in Year 2, teaching was very successful in enabling pupils to achieve very well. One of these lessons was led by a visiting tennis coach and pupils benefited greatly from the expertise provided. The class teacher provided very active support. All pupils tried very hard to develop the skill of hitting a ball over the net using the backhand stroke. They improved greatly in this skill during the course of the lesson. In the other Year 2 lesson, pupils improved their skills of ball control in football very well. Some pupils showed very good learning in identifying the reasons why the ball went much further than they had intended, and in adjusting their technique to rectify this. In a Year 5 dance lesson, pupils worked reasonably effectively in pairs to develop a dance response to music on a theme of smuggling. They interpreted the music well although their movements sometimes lacked sharpness and power. All made some progress and achieved satisfactorily although a greater level of challenge could have been put into the task. The large

number of children in the class meant that space was limited and this in itself limited performance.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal and social education

95. A significant part of the school's programme for personal and social education is grounded in the scheme of work for religious education, a subject not inspected in this voluntary aided school. Without evaluation of this, an overall judgement on provision cannot be made. However, many examples of the school's effective approach to personal and social education were evident during the inspection.
- In the Foundation Stage, great emphasis is placed upon the development of children's social skills. Routines are quickly established and are helping the young children to work together, to take turns and to share.
 - In Years 1 to 6, pupils are given responsibility for undertaking various classroom tasks. They learn from the example of adults to show respect and to care for others. The practical consequences of this value were evident throughout the inspection. Personal development is promoted when pupils are given opportunities to express their opinions and to have to justify them.
 - Pupils' social skills develop very well. They are encouraged to work collaboratively where this is appropriate. They negotiate targets with teachers, learning to take responsibility for their learning. This becomes high quality provision when pupils in Years 5 and 6 take part in an appraisal day in which they set their own learning targets and agree these with their parents.
 - The impact of the school's strongly Christian ethos has a very positive influence on pupils' personal and social development.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	3
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	4
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	3
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	3

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