

INSPECTION REPORT

ST THOMAS AND ST ANNE CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Hanwood, Shrewsbury

LEA area: Shropshire

Unique reference number: 123525

Headteacher: Mrs L Slater

Lead inspector: Mr M Carter

Dates of inspection: 17-19 May 2004

Inspection number: 257970

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 Controlled
Age range of pupils: 3 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 112 and 21 part-time children in the Nursery class

School address: St Thomas and St Anne CE Primary School
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Shrewsbury
Shropshire
Postcode: SY5 8JN

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body
Name of chair of governors: Mr C Bagley

Date of previous inspection: 06.07.1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school serves the area around its location to the south of Shrewsbury. About a third of the pupils come from further afield because of the school's reputation. There are 112 pupils on roll with a further 21 attending the part-time Nursery class. The school is smaller than average. There are currently no pupils for whom English is an additional language at an early stage of acquiring spoken English. There is an above average 25 per cent of pupils with special educational needs and the proportion with statements is very high at nearly 10 per cent. These pupils' difficulties span a wide range including visual impairment, and emotional and behavioural disadvantages. Socio-economic indicators are above average but not very representative of the pupils' backgrounds. The level of take up of free school meals is about nine per cent. However, pupils backgrounds range widely in terms of the degree of support and parental aspiration with a significant minority having a variety of difficulties at home. There is an average degree of mobility¹ through Years 3 to 6. Attainment on entry to the Nursery varies from year to year and is below average overall. By end of the Reception year, attainment is average.

¹ Mobility refers to the pupils who join the school after the Reception year and leave before the end of Year 6.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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20714	Mr M Carter	Lead inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education Foundation Stage
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2759	Mr Sleightholme D	Team inspector	Special educational needs English Science Information and communication technology Geography History Religious education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides a very rich curriculum, particularly for the pupils' personal, social and health education. Overall, its **effectiveness is satisfactory**. Standards in Year 6 are below average mainly because of the high numbers with special educational needs but partly because a few pupils of average and above average ability do not achieve as well as they could. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs, who achieve well. Teaching is satisfactory with good features. The leadership and management of the school are good overall. Senior management has successfully established a very good ethos and very strong links with parents and the community. However, actions to tackle underachievement by a small proportion of the average and more able pupils in Years 3 to 6 have not been effective enough. Governors have a good involvement in the school's development. **Value for money is satisfactory**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The quality of education is exciting and enriched well through the curriculum and other activities, many of which involve the very good links with parents and the community.
- Standards at Year 6 have fallen over the last two years and are currently below average in English, mathematics and science.
- Good leadership by the headteacher and senior teachers has created a school with an admirable ethos where the pupils' very good behaviour, attitudes, attendance and personal development, and excellent social development, are successfully promoted.
- Provision for and the standards achieved in physical education are strong.
- The provision for pupils with a large range of special educational needs is good.
- The systems to track pupils' progress are not used well enough to overcome any underachievement in Years 3 to 6 or to provide work that stretches the more able pupils.

Since the school's last inspection in July 1998, standards in Year 2 have been largely maintained and kept pace with the rising trend nationally. However, standards in Year 6 have fallen in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. In some of the non-core subjects, such as music and religious education, standards are not as high as they were at the last inspection. Although there were no main key issues in the last report, work done has effected improvements in all the minor points identified in the last report. Opportunities for outdoor learning by the youngest children have been greatly improved and members of staff in the Foundation Stage have had professional development. The building has been improved substantially, including the provision of a suite for information and communication technology. Governors are now frequently involved and check on issues in the school's development plan. The school's aims are now extended. There have been a good number of projects to extend the curriculum and support the pupils' maturation. However, due to the weaker standards of the Year 6 pupils, improvement overall has been unsatisfactory since the previous inspection.

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	C	D	E
mathematics	C	C	D	D
science	C	E	D	E

*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.*

Achievement is satisfactory overall. Throughout the school the substantial majority of pupils are working to potential. The less able are caringly supported and achieve in line with their capacity for learning. Pupils with typical ability, the bulk of the school population, mostly achieve as well as pupils of similar ability in other schools. The majority of the more able pupils make progress that is consistent with national expectations. However, a few pupils of average and above average ability have the potential to do even better and for these, progress in Years 3 to 6 is less than expected nationally. Overall, achievement is good in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Despite some low attainment on entry, most pupils attain the goals expected by the end of the Reception year and a few exceed them. Standards by Year 2 are generally above average. By Year 6, few pupils attain the higher levels and standards overall are below average in English, mathematics and science. Achievement in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory in English and science but is unsatisfactory in mathematics. Standards in information and communication technology are above average in Year 2 and average in Year 6. In religious education, standards are in line with the expectations of the local agreed syllabus in Years 2 and 6. The school fosters the pupils' personal qualities very well and overall their **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good**. Their understanding of the responsibilities of living in a community is excellent. Attendance, behaviour and attitudes are very good and help support a strong climate for learning.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Despite some shortcomings in provision for more capable pupils in Years 3 to 6, **the quality of education is mainly good** with particular strengths in the well-enriched curriculum. Curricular provision in the Foundation Stage is also good. Teaching is satisfactory overall with several good features. The unsatisfactory teaching found in the last inspection has been eliminated. The pupils' learning is at least satisfactory and often good. It is supported well by the teachers who help pupils to be very aware of what they learn. Despite this, in Years 3 to 6, progress in the long-term is unsatisfactory for a minority and work is not well enough matched to the needs of more capable pupils. However, those with special educational needs are taught and supported well, helping them to achieve well. **The personal care, guidance and support offered to all the pupils is very good**. The ways in which pupils are involved in the school are excellent and their views help shape some developments. This helps pupils' self esteem and general maturity. The school also has very good links with parents and the community. Homework is generally well supported at home and the local community provides valuable help in enriching the pupils' educational experiences.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The school has gained a high profile because of the headteacher's leadership which has positively influenced other staff and led to a number of awards. The school is also well managed although there is insufficient rigour in redressing weak progress through Years 3 to 6. The work of the governing body is generally good.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents' views are mainly very positive. A high proportion of parents returned questionnaires, which indicated no significant areas of dissatisfaction. Nearly all the pupils like school and feel there is always someone to help them. They feel trusted and that their views are respected. A minority think that other pupils do not behave well but parents think that behaviour is good and

the inspection found that behaviour was very good. Some parents felt the school lacked a musician on the staff but the school works hard to overcome this.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- raise achievement and standards in English, mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6 to at least national average levels;
- provide more well-matched work for the average and more able pupils, using past checks on their learning to aid planning.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards achieved are satisfactory. Achievement is good in Years 1 and 2, and satisfactory overall in Years 3 to 6. In Year 6, standards are below average and lower than at the last inspection but the substantial majority in Year 6 are achieving to their capacity for learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 and often achieve well in the Foundation Stage.
- Progress in Years 3 to 6 is inconsistent.
- The results of the Year 2 national tests are generally above average.
- The results of the Year 6 national tests have fallen to below average over the last two years and current standards are below average by Year 6 in English, mathematics and science.
- Despite the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, the large majority of pupils attain the expected standards by the end of Year 6; however, a small but significant number of average and more able pupils are not doing well enough.

Commentary

1. The pupils' standards of achievement are satisfactory overall. Despite a variety of difficulties, such as a high level of special educational needs and a number of emotional disruptions from their homes, most pupils make good efforts and achieve the expected standards at Year 2 and 6. However, the 2003 national test results show that the more capable do well by Year 2 but fewer pupils than average achieve the higher levels by Year 6. Overall standards are above average in Year 2 and below average in Year 6. While there has been some pupils joining or leaving the school during Years 3 to 6, and there is a high proportion with special educational needs currently in Year 6, there are also a small number of pupils in this year group who have not achieved enough.
2. In information and communication technology, standards are good in Year 2 and satisfactory in Year 6. Religious education remains a strong subject and standards are satisfactory at Years 2 and 6, although slightly lower than at the last inspection. Throughout the school, standards in music are satisfactory. However, in physical education standards are above average throughout and this maintains the position at the last inspection and reflects the school's awareness of good health issues. In art and design, design and technology, geography and history, a full set of judgements could not be made.
3. In the Foundation Stage, attainment on entry to the Nursery class is slightly below that of similar local schools. The children make at least satisfactory progress and by the end of the Reception year, most achieve the expected early learning goals in the recommended areas of learning. They start to work from the National Curriculum programmes of study with standards that are close to average. From below average attainment on entry in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and personal, emotional and social development, the children achieve well. In knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development they achieve satisfactorily.

Judgements could not be made for creative development because not enough lessons were observed in this area. However, from the work sampled, pupils appear to be doing well.

4. The standards of the current Year 2 pupils are above average in English and science and average in mathematics. This is reflected by the results of national tests and teacher assessments for 2003. Standards in Year 2 are similar to those found at the last inspection. Standards of work in Year 2 are also above average in information and communication technology and consistent with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus in religious education. Because of good support from teachers and classroom assistants, the proportion of pupils who do not reach the expected standard is low. Throughout the school, most pupils with special educational needs achieve well. They make good gains in learning because the tasks they are expected to do have been carefully prepared to match their level of understanding. Some pupils access literacy support programmes where they make good progress in the acquisition of basic skills. These pupils achieve well because they benefit from the small group and individual support provided during short lively sessions.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.6 (16.6)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.4 (15.3)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.7 (16.3)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 23 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

5. The standards of work of the current pupils in Year 6 are below national averages in English, mathematics and science and this is below those at the last inspection. These findings were reflected in the national test results for 2003, which had fallen over the previous two years. Taking account of the pupils' standards when they were in Year 2, the Year 6 results in 2003 were well below those of similar schools. The trend in results over five years is below the national trend because of the decline over the last two years. The number of pupils with statements of special educational needs, of which several are in Year 6, is considerably higher than average.
6. The slow progress of some pupils through Years 3 to 6 is due to a number of factors. Reasons identified by the school include an increase in the number of pupils with learning or emotional difficulties and previous inconsistencies in teaching due to staff changes. Additional reasons found by inspection evidence include a minority of lessons in which the work is not well enough matched to the pupils' past learning and where more capable pupils are not challenged enough. Additionally, there has not been enough rigour in redressing the slow progress of some pupils in Years 3 to 6. None of these reasons is sufficient alone but in combination they have led to the lower national test results of Year 6. This is clearest in mathematics where there are occasional gaps in the pupils' learning and a small number of previously high attainers are now only average.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
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English	25.7 (27.0)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	26.4 (26.7)	26.8 (26.7)
science	27.6 (27.3)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 19 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance is very good; pupils enjoy coming to school and willingly involve themselves in learning and school life. Their very good behaviour makes the school a happy place with harmonious relationships because this is a community where pupils' opinions are valued.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils' involvement in their school community is excellent.
- There is very good provision for pupils' personal development.
- Attendance is very good.
- Pupils have very good attitudes towards work and behave very well.
- Punctuality is good.

Commentary

- Attendance is well above average and has improved in the last two years. This is because of very good monitoring by the school, the support of parents and the pupils' enthusiasm for the full attendance certificates now presented each term. Unauthorised absences are well below the national median. Almost all pupils arrive punctually in the mornings. A very few families are late too often and, rushing in, these pupils miss important starting activities.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	95.8	School data	0.0
National data	94.2	National data	0.4

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

- The pupils' very good behaviour is reflected in the lack of exclusions. Pupils are at ease in school. They respond very well to the calm and unflustered ethos. They pay very good attention in class, working willingly and with enthusiasm. They worked well together, really helping each other find poetic features in a Year 3 literacy lesson. Year 4 and 5 pupils rose to their teacher's science challenge: making their own predictions and learning much because the experiment went on all day and their understanding grew. A very high proportion get involved in clubs and other activities and pupils feel valued because their successes are celebrated.
- Pupils' confidence grows as they progress through the school, because their personal development is emphasised. Nursery children may stay to lunch after their morning session, they join in assemblies and other school activities, and this helps them develop socially from the start. Pupils are actively involved in a lot of decision-making; they are asked their opinion, and can serve on the '*children's council*' or the '*eco-committee*'. Consultation is a genuine process: after a three-week trial, pupils' views contributed to discussions about changes to the pattern of the school day. Pupils learn about being part of a vibrant school community, and this is very good for their social development.
- Behaviour is very good around the school as well as in class. Pupils have been involved in improving their facilities and at lunch and break times there is plenty for them to do. They treat the grounds with respect, there is no litter or graffiti, and pupils get on with each other really well. Older and younger pupils talk and play together, and relationships are very good. There is no evidence of any kind of anti-social behaviour and any minor bullying is quickly overcome partly because the school council works to prevent any. Pupils show respect towards all those who work in the school. They understand how their peers' differences may be respected and there is now no name calling or racial harassment.

9. There is an underlying positive ethos and expectation. Pupils willingly undertake tasks, join committees and do things for each other, as a result of a very strong moral lead. Year 6 pupils debated the French government's decision banning the wearing of religious symbols in school. They showed considerable tolerance and respect for other religions, and appreciated the dilemmas faced by pupils in France. Pupils listen very well in assembly, and understand because simple, memorable stories are used which convey powerful messages. They will not forget the vicar's wooden box, damaged by nail holes, and the message that '*anger damages friendships*', but saying '*sorry*' and forgiving can put it right. Such opportunities, along with termly church services, provide well for pupils' spiritual development.
10. Year 2 pupils found it hard to think beyond their extended families, when considering "*people who help us*", but older pupils have more understanding because they take part in the many activities for enrichment and out of school activities which help them to appreciate the wider society in which they live. The school makes good provision for pupils' cultural development in this way and through the creative parts of the curriculum.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good, being enriched well and with at least satisfactory teaching. The school's very good ethos helps to provide a good climate for learning. The care, guidance and support provided for pupils is a strength and the links with parents effectively support the pupils learning. Links with the community are also very good, providing further enhancement to the pupils' learning.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall with several good features. Assessments are satisfactory, with good feedback to pupils, although in Years 3 to 6 they are not used enough to overcome the weak progress of some pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers strongly promote the pupils' own awareness of what they are learning and how to improve their performance.
- Members of staff make very good efforts in helping individual pupils to overcome any difficulties they may have in learning.
- Teachers use support assistants and other adults well and they make a good contribution to the pupils' learning.
- In nearly a third of lessons, the tasks set for more capable pupils are not well enough matched to their needs.
- In some lessons, teachers are not sure about how much the pupils know already.

Commentary

11. The lessons observed during the inspection were all of a satisfactory or better standard. This is an improvement since the last inspection when some teaching was unsatisfactory. A little over half of the lessons that were seen were of good or better quality. The long-term impact of teaching is not as consistently strong as the teaching seen during the

inspection because there is evidence of some weak progress in the pupils' past work and in the records of their achievement.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 33 lessons.

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	3 (10%)	15 (45%)	15 (45%)	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.

12. The knowledge that teachers have of the subjects they teach is generally good. This good knowledge supports the pupils' learning well because teachers show a highly professional approach to improving their own skills and to presenting lessons in ways that the pupils find interesting and accessible. For example, in a very well taught science lesson for pupils of Year 2, the pupils learnt new words, such as "*germinate*", because of clear instruction and the use of growing cress samples, within a context of careful observation and comparison of the conditions for plant growth. The teaching of basic skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology is carefully planned to provide bit-by-bit instruction. Pupils are encouraged to practice these skills through homework activities and to use them in other subjects. Teachers encourage and engage the pupils well and high standards of behaviour are promoted and sustained. In music, there is a lack of expertise on the staff but teachers make good efforts to overcome this and a visiting specialist also supports the pupils' learning.

13. In the large majority of lessons the teachers discuss what the pupils are going to learn. They also provide targets for individual pupils to help them improve and use these regularly. The pupils become very aware of their own learning, of how to improve it and they often evaluate their own performance. Throughout the school the pupils are concerned to succeed and this helps them to make good efforts in their work. For example, much of the pupils' work is well presented in their books and often includes comments about what they have learned.

14. Whenever a pupil has a difficulty in learning, for example, due to emotional problems stemming from home, or to learning disadvantages such as visual impairment, teachers and other staff make very good efforts to offer extra help. The teachers and staff strive to provide the best learning conditions for all the pupils. Teachers use well the skills of classroom assistants and the other adults, both in the provision of a learning environment conducive for all the pupils and in supporting groups of pupils in their tasks, sometimes offering a particular expertise. The contribution that other adults make to the pupils' learning extends to extra-curricular activities and the good degree of curriculum enrichment, for example, through projects such as the growing wildlife and garden areas. However, on occasions, classroom assistants are not fully utilised in recording pupils' responses in whole-class discussion times.

15. While teachers know each pupil well and set appropriate targets, their knowledge of what the pupils have learnt previously is not always as clear. This sometimes leads to the setting of work that is not accurately enough matched to the needs of different ability groups. In nearly a third of the lessons observed, the work for higher attaining pupils was not challenging enough. In a very few cases, it was too hard. Records of the pupils' progress over time suggest that a minority has erratic progress through Years 3 to 6 and,

together with a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, has led to some lower results in the Year 6 national tests.

16. In the Foundation Stage, teaching and learning are satisfactory. Children in the Nursery are taught by a trained Nursery officer and Reception pupils are taught by the deputy headteacher alongside the pupils of Year 1. The members of staff have worked hard on a nationally accredited project that helps the analysis and improvement of the Foundation Stage provision and the benefits of this involvement can be clearly seen. Involvement has been effective, especially outdoors, following remarks made in the last inspection report. Planning is good and promotes learning in all the recommended areas. There are occasional missed opportunities to challenge children and extend their learning through sensitive intervention in their chosen activities. Consequently, the self-directed learning of some children is short-lived on occasions. Records of the pupils' activities are kept well and evaluated, although the systems for the Nursery and the Reception classes are unnecessarily different.
17. Teachers set out clearly how the work for pupils with special educational needs will be matched to their capability. Briefing notes are prepared for the start of the school day and provide clear guidance to teaching assistants on the support they will be expected to provide in each lesson. Resources are specifically prepared for pupils with visual impairment. The support provided by teaching assistants is good and they often sit beside these pupils and provide clear instruction and encouragement. Consequently, these pupils usually learn well and are well placed to contribute to whole class discussions.

The curriculum

Provision for the curriculum is good. It is enriched very well and exceeds statutory requirements; this is similar to the findings of the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a very good curriculum enrichment programme.
- Provision for personal, social and health education is very good.
- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs is good.
- There is a good range of extra-curricular activities, which are well attended.
- The accommodation and resources for learning are good and much improved in information and communication technology.

Commentary

18. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is good, being planned to provide learning from each of the recommended areas of learning both indoors and out. The accommodation and resources enable a rich provision and this is enhanced by the activities specifically planned each day and chosen by the children. Recent action to improve provision in the Foundation Stage, particularly outdoors, has been effective.
19. The curriculum in the rest of the school is planned to address the vision statement that gives high priority to pursuing high standards through; "*A culture of collaboration and partnership . . . where all members of the school community will be committed to its aims*". The agenda for raising standards has been successful until the recent dip in attainment in core subjects shown in national test results for Year 6. Sufficient time is

allocated to all subjects, with a priority to English, mathematics and science. All pupils have lessons in physical education, information and communication technology and personal, social and health education weekly. The time provided for the teaching of religious education meets the recommendations of the locally agreed syllabus. In 2001, the school introduced the teaching of a modern foreign language to older pupils; this was extended to younger pupils last year. The non-core subjects are taught through a four-year topic cycle, this is an appropriate recognition of the school organisation whereby, given the typical year group size, pupils at some stage will be taught in a mixed-age class.

20. The success of the school in delivering a good curriculum for non-core subjects, highlighted in the previous inspection, continues through a strong enrichment programme. This provides pupils with very good opportunities to use research and investigation skills and to collaborate well with each other. These experiences are enhanced well through the use of visits and visitors who bring skills and enthusiasm to work with pupils in projects. The success of the school in achieving recognition of "*ECO awareness*" and in the involvement of pupils in drama, as part of national initiative, using computers in partnership with an inner city school in Birmingham, typify the commitment to curriculum enrichment evident through the lively displays mounted in classrooms and corridors.
21. Personal, social and health education provision is very good and is formally planned. Pupils are encouraged to accept responsibility, to think independently, to understand moral issues and to present their views in a mature and coherent way. The topics covered in personal, social and health education sessions contribute well to the very positive ethos permeating through the work of the school, in lessons, at break times and in out of hours activities. The '*Healthy School Gold Award*' confirmed the very good progress made by the school in developing in pupils an awareness of drugs and solvent abuse and the factors contributing to a healthy lifestyle. One outcome of the very good provision is the pupils' excellent willingness to take on responsibilities.
22. The curriculum for pupils who have special educational needs is the same as that for those of other levels of attainment. In lessons, particularly those in core subjects, teachers set out clearly how the work for these pupils will be matched to their ability. Briefing notes prepared for the start of the school day provide clear guidance to teaching assistants on the support they are expected to provide in each lesson. Resources are specifically prepared for pupils with visual impairment. For example, reading materials to be used by pupils are enlarged proportionally thus ensuring these pupils have full access to the same range of resources.
23. The good extra-curricular provision has wide appeal and is popular with the pupils. Teachers, support staff, parents and governors enthusiastically offer clubs covering games skills, creative experiences, cookery, fun fitness and environmental interests.
24. Staffing, resources and accommodation are good. The decision by governors to support teachers by improving the adult to pupil ratio through the appointment of teaching assistants has had a direct and positive impact on the good pupil achievement of pupils who have special educational needs. The premises have been improved with better facilities for pupils in the Foundation Stage, for information and communication technology and in the approach to landscaping the outer area to support pupils' physical and social development and opportunities for investigations.

Care, guidance and support

The school makes pupils' welfare and personal development a priority, and provision for both is very good. Pupils are actively involved in school life. Parents are very happy with arrangements made when their child starts school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is excellent involvement of pupils through consultation.
- The school takes very good care of pupils.
- Induction arrangements are very good.
- There is good support and guidance for pupils.

Commentary

25. Pupils are very well known, and the school makes very good provision for their welfare in the widest sense. Alongside very good academic support and guidance initiatives to encourage a healthy lifestyle have involved pupils at every stage. The headteacher is good at using problems which pupils are facing to give others a greater understanding of the issue.
26. The school works hard to make sure it is an attractive and safe place in which to work, and there have been significant improvements since the previous inspection. Governors are involved in monitoring health and safety matters, there are a good number of qualified first-aiders and all members of staff have received child protection training. Pupils who are injured, unwell, or need routine medication are very well cared for. There are very few accidents, and none relating to rough play, indicating the good co-operative behaviour in the playground.
27. Teachers give very good guidance to their pupils in class. This is because pupils are aware of the targets they are working towards and are encouraged to indicate in their books how well they think they have understood the work. However, this good detailed guidance does not always have the desired impact on progress and some pupils are not challenged enough by their targets. Parents agree that the arrangements made for their children when starting school are very good. The private pre-school which runs in the afternoons uses the Nursery classroom and the same staff, so providing valuable continuity. Nursery pupils are integrated into school activities and this makes transfer to the Reception class straightforward.
28. The way in which pupils are involved in decision-making is excellent. Their ideas and views are sought, and they are given plenty of opportunities to contribute to school decisions. Such experiences prepare them well for secondary school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Parents are supportive of the school. They are kept very well informed, so that they can support their children at home. There are very good links with the community, including the church. Links with other schools are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good communication with parents.
- There is extensive involvement of the community including the church.

- Parents are frequently consulted, and outcomes are reported back.
- Reports could give more quantifiable information.

Commentary

29. There was a very good and positive response from parents to the pre-inspection questionnaire, indicating a high level of parental satisfaction with the school's work. Parents feel easily able to contact the school. The refurbished entrance area is very welcoming. Parents participate in decision-making through being consulted, and told the results of their contributions.
30. The school is very good at providing parents with the right kind of useful information. The "Monday Messenger" newsletter is excellent because it ensures important reminders are sent home at the start of every week. In addition, good details of the curriculum are sent each term. Pupils record both their homework and personal targets in a home-school book, which parents are invited to use for dialogue with the teacher. All these give parents confidence and encourage support for learning at home. There are also plenty of leaflets available on specific areas of school activity.
31. Parents' attendance at consultation meetings is good, and the timing of these has been improved, since the last inspection. End of year reports give parents much information about what their child knows, understands and can do. They are written in clear language and include guidance and targets for the next work. However, they do not give parents information about how their child is getting on in relation to National Curriculum expectations for their age, or for their own ability. Providing parents with this information could involve them in raising standards.
32. The headteacher has been largely responsible for improving community involvement with the school. Many willing volunteers help in school and the links with the church are improved. A good number of organisations contribute both to the curriculum and to school initiatives. During the inspection, the '*Eco-committee*', which includes pupils and adults, had a presentation from a member of the local council promoting safer routes to school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management by the headteacher and key staff are **good**. The governance of the school is **good**, although some governors are not always as aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses as they should be.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher is successful in promoting a clear vision and high profile for the school.
- The governors are very supportive of the school and take strong pride in celebrating its successes.
- Although governors check on the impact of decisions taken, they have not given sufficient attention to recent test results.
- Management is good overall with clear systems promoting many developments, although actions taken to address some weak progress in Years 3 to 6 have not been effective enough.

Commentary

33. The headteacher has worked very well with pupils, staff, parents and governors to raise the profile of the school and help it to earn a good reputation. The good standing of the school, the positive views of parents and the reputation it has gained for supporting pupils who have special educational needs is testimony to the enthusiasm and hard work of the headteacher, who leads others well. This results in a strong commitment by staff to provide a rich and inspiring curriculum.
34. The headteacher's tenacity to see action points in the improvement plan through to completion permeates through key staff. Good teamwork by the headteacher and staff has secured wide support of parents and the community to see plans through to fruition. The premises were successfully improved to incorporate a computer suite because the headteacher's enthusiasm engaged the spirit of those working in the school and the community. This strong community partnership focussed effectively on raising funds that were then matched externally. The refurbishment of the school entrance positively supports the friendly and professional welcome visitors receive.
35. Since the previous inspection, *'Investors in People'* status has been achieved, acknowledging the whole-school commitment to performance reviews, the promotion of teamwork and support for career development. Performance Management arrangements are good and build well on an effective programme of induction for all newly appointed staff.
36. The governors have supported the school well in its strategy for improvement to facilities and resources. They are justifiably proud of the very many strengths of the school and know that, through the good leadership of the headteacher and key staff, it has earned a good reputation with parents. They are also knowledgeable about the school's achievements through successful accreditation for *'Eco-awareness'* and the *'Healthy Schools Award'*. They discharge their statutory responsibilities well, using committees efficiently to make recommendations to the full governing body. They regularly visit the school, some having developed a particular interest in an aspect of provision. The Chair of the Finance committee is particularly well informed on the budget profile and options for spending.
37. Governor discussions with inspectors revealed that their knowledge about standards and trends in test results is variable. Some governors spoke confidently about the subject in which they have a special interest, others made no reference to concerns about the recent decline in standards at Year 6. This shows that not all governors are well placed to hold the school's leaders to account. Although governors follow up the impact of

decisions taken, for example, by visiting the school to assess the impact of the new computer suite, they have not given sufficient attention to recent test results.

38. Most aspects of management are good with considerable progress made in using self-evaluation techniques since the previous inspection. The headteacher, who has attended training in self-evaluation, has consulted subject coordinators on the implementation of a monitoring programme. This embraces the quality of teaching, the work of the pupils and progress in implementing the actions within the school improvement plan. The management role of the deputy headteacher in coordinating a Foundation Stage project led successfully to improvements in provision, particularly the outdoor area for this key stage. Whereas these formal arrangements for self-evaluation have led to improvements, action taken to reverse the recent decline in test results has not been fully effective and has not unlocked the potential that some pupils have for higher attainment.
39. The coordinator for special educational needs has made a good start to managing this aspect of school provision by reviewing the progress of each pupil on the special educational needs register. Although time was provided specifically for this task, the coordinator does not formally have time allocated for the administration, assessment and advice aspect of this important role at this school. The drawing up of individual educational plans is satisfactory. Reviews are carried out each term for pupils with special educational needs and once each year for those identified as gifted and talented. These documents satisfactorily record the targets to be met, the support mechanisms to be provided and the actions to be taken. Although most of the targets relate to improvements in core subjects, including literacy and numeracy skills, other aspects of personal development are also identified. Governors have supported special educational needs making provision a priority within the budget; the impact of this is clearly seen in these pupils' good progress.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	393,777
Total expenditure	378,246
Expenditure per pupil	3,126

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	5,329
Balance carried forward to the next year	20,860

40. The school's finances are well managed and overseen by governors in a way that is detailed and promotes the good use of best value principles. The school's development priorities are clearly funded and several additional funding streams are used well for their purpose. An appropriate balance is carried forward. However, there is weak progress through Years 3 to 6 by between 10 and 25 per cent of pupils, depending on the subject and the year group. This indicates some loss of effectiveness and the school currently provides satisfactory value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

41. Children are usually accepted into the mornings-only Nursery class at the beginning of the term in which they are four. In the following September they join the Reception class full time. In addition to this funded provision, a private pre-school group meets at the school for every afternoon. Some children attend both the Nursery and the pre-school group, which is run by the Nursery class leader, who is a trained Nursery officer. This arrangement provides for very good liaison between the Nursery class and the pre-school group. The coordinator for the Foundation Stage teaches the Reception children and good liaison is also provided here through her regular visits and teaching in the Nursery class on two mornings a week.
42. The children receive a good start to their education in these classes and they achieve well in most of the recommended areas of learning. This is partly because the provision has been carefully reviewed and improved, following the coordinators' involvement in a national project. This major commitment involved research in the school to identify how good the provision was and to lead improvements. Notably, the outdoor provision has been significantly improved since comments in the last inspection report. It now provides well for Nursery and Reception children, with good access and facilities to help the children's physical development as well as development in the other recommended areas of learning. Another of the strengths is the way in which a theme is used to help develop pupils learning in several areas. For example, the building of a "*Book of Trolls*" showed significant gains in creative and practical skills while also being used to develop the children's understanding of numbers and combinations.
43. Teaching is satisfactory in the Nursery class and generally good in the Reception class. The curriculum is well planned throughout the Foundation Stage and there is a good degree of support provided by classroom assistants and visiting helpers. In the Nursery, a good range of activities and stimulating apparatus is provided and the balance between adult-led and pupil-chosen activities is effective. On occasions, members of staff do not intervene with pupil-chosen activities sufficiently to encourage more learning, especially by more capable children. However, records of what the children learn are kept regularly. Occasionally during the inspection, a few Nursery children were not engaged enough and wandered from activity to activity without joining in. In the Reception class, pupils are taught alongside those of Year 1. Here, activities are sometimes more formal but provide a good degree of choice for children, who also often join in whole-class discussion and learning sessions. Sometimes, their group tasks are supervised and taught by a classroom assistant and sometimes by the teacher. The curriculum, staff and resources are very well organised to meet the children's needs. In Reception, the children's learning is checked and recorded using the nationally required Pupil Profiles. However, in the Nursery, where there is no requirement, a different recording system is used and this makes unnecessary work at the transfer to Reception.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are many opportunities for children to mix and these encourage them to communicate.
- By joining in with role-play activities, members of staff demonstrate social skills for the children.
- Children in the Nursery co-operate only when prompted.

Commentary

44. On entry to the Nursery, the skills of most pupils are below average and this is lower than at the time of the last inspection. While many are reasonably confident, they often lack the skills and inclination to communicate with each other sociably. However, the provision and the good teaching encourage the children to achieve well and by the end of Reception, standards are average.
45. The Nursery children sometimes lack independence. For example, a child hanging from a rope, kicked, in an effort to gain help, rather than jumping or moving along. A few children exhibit slow development and possible emerging special educational needs. However, all the children are happy and largely confident in their activities although the learning opportunities are not always made clear to them. In some lessons, a minority of pupils lack purpose in their activities and wander aimlessly from group to group. Occasionally, children snatch food at '*snack time*' but they respond quickly to prompts, such as examples of how to join in with action songs. In this class, they cooperate in their play when they are encouraged to do so. The school offers a good level of flexibility to parents' wishes, for example, at lunch-time, which provides good opportunities for the children to gain social skills because of the good discussions and care provided by staff.
46. The Reception children know the class and school routines and generally behave well, not needing behavioural expectations to be made explicit. Most are confident and can express opinions in whole-class discussions, together with the pupils of Year 1. They are given opportunities to collaborate but find compromise difficult, for example, in choosing how a collage of a castle should be made. Pupils are all included fully, for example, a visually impaired child could easily manipulate construction bricks but was quickly frustrated when the outcome was not as required. Nevertheless, the children cooperate well in pairs in the hall, when they work alongside older pupils of Year 1.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children achieve well and most attain the early learning goals by the end of Reception.
- Although generally confident to talk a significant minority have unclear speech at first.
- Planning is good overall and the children are introduced well to the conventions and delights of books.
- Sometimes the progress of more capable children is not promoted enough.

Commentary

47. On entry to the Nursery class, the children's standards are generally a little below average. Many are confident to talk but their speech is unclear. However, most children achieve well and by the end of the Reception year, the majority met the expected Early Learning Goals. This is because teaching is often good and the planning ensures that the children are introduced well to books and reading, with opportunities for beginning to write. Members of staff regularly engage pupils in talking and often give good examples of how to say things.

48. In the Nursery, the provision both indoors and outdoors provides many stimulating activities for this area of learning. For example, the reading of a story was very engaging and prompted the children to become very involved, offering relevant comments and learning about the shape of stories and the characters. There are many opportunities for pupils to engage in role-play and although some are hard to understand others successfully communicate, engaging in short periods of co-operative play. By the end of the Nursery many can write their name and are beginning to know about the sounds that different letters make. Although the planning promotes the teaching of all the relevant areas of well, sometimes there is a lack of clarity about what is to be learnt, particularly for more capable pupils. However, the teaching is good and good use of made of adult help.
49. In the Reception class, teaching is also good and classroom assistants offer good quality support for the children's learning. Most of the children write their names and have good knowledge of what they are to learn and gain from both their chosen and adult-led activities. Assistants make good contributions to the records of progress and targets are set for individual children. The coordinator offers feedback to staff on the planning and progress records that are checked throughout the Foundation Stage. These records include the children's self-chosen activities and are good although occasionally they are not evaluative enough of the children's learning. By the end of the Reception year, most children meet the Early Learning Goals and can talk in sentences. They are beginning to write and read words as well as listen well to instructions. Achievement is good but a small number of more capable children could achieve better.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Because of good teaching the children achieve well from a generally below average start.
- There is wide range in the children's attainment on entry to the Nursery.
- Nearly all the children achieve the expected standards by the end of the Reception year.

Commentary

50. On entry to the Nursery the children's attainment is very varied with several having little or no sense of numbers or sizes and standards are below average overall. Planning is detailed and clearly promotes progress towards the Early Learning Goals. The children make good progress and achieve well because of the good teaching and support so that by the end of the Reception year most meet the expected standards.
51. In the Nursery class, rhymes and songs are used well to help the children become acquainted with numbers. Members of staff create many opportunities to raise the children's awareness of sequencing, size and numbers at unplanned occasions as well as those specifically provided to increase the children's skills. A minority of more capable pupils can identify sizes and numbers to 10, while the less capable pupils can hardly count out three objects correctly. Activities are provided well, especially to help those pupils with fewer mathematical skills. Opportunities to learn to write numbers to 10 are effective for many.

52. In the Reception class, many of the children are close to meeting the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning. Targets for each step in their learning are provided and the children are clearly aware of what they need to learn next. These pupils are often challenged (sometimes too much) at the whole class discussions that they join with pupils of Year 1. However, the planning of activities combines appropriately learning objectives from the Foundation Stage and Year 1. Often, the Reception children are taught in group-work by a classroom assistant and this help is well led and very effective. Most children can count accurately to ten and some beyond. They can recognise these numbers and, in a lesson, were learning to add and take away small numbers to make ten, confidently using dice. They enjoyed this work but some had to wait for a long period while others took their go.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Learning opportunities have been improved, especially outdoors and are good.
- On entry to the Nursery many pupils have average levels of knowledge, particularly about the living world.

Commentary

53. Although there were few direct observations of children's learning in this area, judgements were possible from the pupils work, records, planning and provision. Because of the strengths in the children's knowledge and understanding about the living world, most enter the Nursery, with average attainment. They make satisfactory achievements and by the end of Reception, meet the Early Learning Goals expected. The aspects of teaching observed were at least satisfactory.
54. In the Nursery, planning is comprehensive and includes, for example, road safety. The outdoor provision now includes opportunities for learning in many aspects. Drainpipes and guttering provide children with opportunities to learn about water and gravity and there are several examples of the children's involvement with growing plants. The school's general discussion about the grounds and country environment supports the children's awareness of living things. Most are well aware, for example, that milk comes from the cows they see locally and that apples grow on trees. Several can describe things about their homes and journeys to school and are especially keen to talk about their pets, knowing that they are different from inanimate objects. They know about other creatures such as spiders, although several cannot pronounce the word. In some of the activities provided there is a lack sufficient, sensitive intervention and so some children do not maximise their learning in self-chosen activities.
55. In the Reception class, the children build on their knowledge and understanding and the enriched curriculum provides further learning. These pupils also have access to the well provided outdoor area and their past work shows they have a sound sense of their own age and their journey to school. In both classes, the children work confidently on computers and most have adequate skills in using and controlling programs with a mouse. In the Reception, the pupils build on their knowledge of the natural world by detailing, for example, what are the conditions for plants to grow.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is satisfactory with some good features.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The variety of outdoor apparatus provides a good degree of challenge through which children develop confidence, balance and extend their control of movements.
- The lessons in physical education in which the Reception children take part with Year 1 provide a good degree of challenge and support, particularly that provided by class assistants.

- The hand and fine movement skills of a minority of Nursery children are below average.

Commentary

56. Despite the difficulties that some children have in controlling pencils and scissors at first, attainment on entry to the Nursery is average and by the end of the Reception most children have gained the Early Learning Goals expected. Achievement is good overall. Teaching is satisfactory in the Nursery and good in Reception. Lessons are planned well and there is a strong emphasis on gaining skills in body control.
57. In an outdoor lesson for Nursery pupils, good use was made of the wide variety of opportunities for children to extend and develop their skills and confidence. Many used wheeled vehicles competently. One younger pupils was trying out a two-wheeled scooter, but had not learned to balance on it, however, he was not shown how to do so but was offered to *"have a fill up of pretend petrol"*. Other children were well cared for in their attempts to walk up slopes and balance on ropes, occasionally relying too much on the adult support provided. Nevertheless, the children felt confident to try new challenges.
58. The Reception children also use the outdoor area sometimes but during the inspection they joined the Year 1 pupils in a gymnastics lesson in the hall. They made very good efforts and aspired to the performance of their elders. They were well supported by class assistants and were prepared to work hard at energetic activities. The good teaching promoted high standards. In both classes the pupils have a sound range of opportunities and teaching to gain skills in manipulating tools and pencils, etc. Standards are very varied with some younger pupils finding it very hard to control a pencil and the marks it makes on paper. Nevertheless, most are on course to achieve the expected standards by the end of the Reception year.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

59. There was insufficient evidence seen to make judgements about this area of learning. Displays and records of past work indicate that some pupils have produced pictures to a high standard and have used a number of interesting techniques. Other work indicates some inaccuracy in controlling tools, for example through some weak colouring. The singing of a song by Nursery children was weak and unenthusiastic but their joining in with expressive movements was vigorous and done well. This area of learning is planned for fully and appropriate facilities are available.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection in Year 2 but have fallen in Year 6.

Main Strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average by Year 2 but below average by Year 6.
- Pupils' achievement is good by Year 2 and satisfactory by Year 6.
- The teaching is mostly good.

- The curriculum in the non-core subjects provides many opportunities for pupils to use their English skills.
- The new coordinator has made a good start in managing this subject.

Commentary

60. Standards of reading, speaking and listening and writing are above average in Year 2. They are below average overall in Year 6, where there is a high proportion of pupils who have special educational needs. Achievement in Years 1 and 2 is good and in Years 3 to 6, where some pupils could do better, it is satisfactory.
61. By Year 2, more capable pupils can read clearly, with expression introducing a pause at the appropriate stage. They can tell the main events of a story well. Less capable pupils read slowly but steadily, using techniques such as *'sounding out'* to overcome words they find difficult. Most pupils speak confidently in lessons and they listen well. A Year 2 pupil took on the role of a scarecrow to answer questions put by other pupils. When asked about standing in the field in the snow the "scarecrow" replied, *"I feel like I am covered with a white blanket!"* Most pupils write competently, many producing good standards of presentation with relatively few spelling errors. Pupils have learned to plan their writing and to introduce description. Some pupils have started to use presentation skills, such as bullet points, in their factual writing in topic work.
62. By Year 6, the more capable pupils are mature readers, using skills such as reading the *"blurb"* and skimming the text to select books. These pupils have good information retrieval skills and they can convey well-founded opinions. Some speak very confidently about the qualities they are looking for when choosing a book. Less capable pupils use strategies such as finger pointing and illustrations when they find words difficult. In a poetry lesson higher attaining pupils could cope with challenging phrases such as *"plunged into obscurity"* as they analysed the components of a poem. Few pupils, however, have reached these standards in the current Year 6 cohort. Most pupils can write for a variety of purposes. They produce letters, reports, descriptions of characters in stories and short stories. Most have a secure grasp of the use of punctuation and this contributes positively to the overall good standards of presentation found in many books.
63. Standards in Year 6 have declined sharply from 2001, when they were well above the national and similar schools averages. The well-established tracking system shows that a substantial majority of pupils have achieved a satisfactory rate of progress in Years 3 to 6, although, for a minority, mainly average and more able pupils, progress has been inconsistent and not as good as it should be. There has been some movement of pupils out and in to the Year 6 age group, between Years 2 and 6 and some periods of temporary staffing. Such factors suggest reasons for slower progress by a small number of pupils. The lower standards are also because of more pupils with special educational needs, who are less likely to attain above expected levels. Observations of these less able pupils show they regularly achieve well. They benefit from the input of teaching assistants who provide some elementary repetition of the key teaching points in lessons but more importantly, work that is well matched to these pupils' level of understanding, delivered with sensitive support and encouragement.
64. The quality of teaching is mostly good with strengths in subject knowledge, delivery of lively engaging lessons, provision of work matched to pupils' prior attainment, very good pupil management and good equality of access. In a Year 2 lesson, the teacher created

an immediate impact by wearing a scarecrow's hat to set the scene for shared reading. Lively discussion followed with pupils keen to contribute. At one stage in the lesson, the teacher carefully covered some of the text to help the pupils to focus on aspects of writing. A teaching assistant provided individual support to a pupil with visual impairment thus ensuring the pupil was fully engaged in the activities. In a lesson for a mixed-age class covering Years 5 and 6, the teacher taught a poetry lesson very well challenging the pupils' analytical skills. By the end of this lesson most pupils had learned to scrutinise and compare two poems in terms of their type, subject, structure and aspects that they found appealing or less interesting. When the pupils read about the earth being described as a "*ball*", the teacher introduced the class globe to make a very effective link with their understanding of geography.

65. The recently appointed coordinator has quickly taken action to improve standards. Within three months the coordinator has scrutinised pupils' work, observed teachers teaching literacy sessions, provided feedback on planning, and offered guidance. There are action points identified, such as increasing the time for the teaching of poetry. The coordinator is promptly following up the outcomes of this good monitoring activity by providing school based training sessions to all staff. These actions reflect the good quality of subject leadership.

Literacy across the curriculum

66. Pupils' skills in literacy across the curriculum are good. There are many opportunities for pupils to practise English skills through other subjects. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 study the topic "*Around the Farm*" and have been encouraged to develop their speaking and listening skills both as shoppers and assistants when visiting the farm shop in each classroom. Corridor displays show that pupils are encouraged to write for each other. In follow up to work on the solar system, pupils in Years 5 and 6 wrote questions such as "*Who was the first person on the moon?*" for other passing pupils to answer.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2.
- Standards in Year 6 are below average because few pupils have high attainment.
- The pupils gain a good awareness of their own learning.
- More capable pupils are not challenged enough on some occasions.

Commentary

67. Standards in Year 2 are average and indicate that pupils make at least satisfactory progress from Year R. Standards in Year 6 are below average because, although most pupils reach the expected level, few exceed it. Overall, standards have fallen since the last inspection and in Year 6, test results indicate a fall in standards over the last two years. This is because there are fewer pupils who reach the higher level.
68. On entry to Year 1 pupils have a wide range of attainment that is average overall. Despite the above average proportions of pupils with special educational needs and the home difficulties of a minority, they achieve well and by the end of Year 2, standards are at least average and, in some years, results in the national tests have been above average. The teaching is usually good and often mathematical ideas are learnt well because practical work and visual resources help pupils' to understand them.
69. The majority of pupils attain the expected standards for their age. However, the school's records show that in a significant minority of cases, the progress made is weak. Some of the pupils, who had high standards for Year 2, have only average standards now and there are occasional gaps in what they have learnt. The reasons for this include changes of teachers, the difficulties that some pupils experience at home and a degree of under-challenge for the more capable pupils. Staff changes are now in the past and teaching is more settled, which is why current provision is satisfactory. However in Years 3 to 6, achievement is unsatisfactory overall.
70. Teaching is good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6, with some good features. For example, among the good features, the pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own learning and often evaluate their own performance. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject and provide well-planned and interesting lessons that offer a range of activities and good pace to the learning. However, the planned activities, while different for groups of pupils of varying capability, are not always accurately enough

matched to provide challenge for more capable pupils. This is because assessment is not used sufficiently when planning work.

71. In many ways the subject is well led. Systems for checking on the pupils' learning are regular. Evaluation of their performance is promoted well and homework plays an effective role in supporting the pupils' learning. Tracking systems provide regular checks on the pupils' progress but these have not always been acted on sufficiently to redress the weak progress of some pupils through Years 3 to 6, or to promote work at higher levels for the most capable pupils. Co-ordination is therefore satisfactory overall.

Mathematics across the curriculum

72. The pupils use mathematical skills in other subjects and these are often planned well to link with the skills being learnt in mathematics lessons. For example, mathematics work about compass points and angles for pupils of Years 4 and 5 was immediately used in science lessons about the shadows thrown by a stick through a day. The pupils show a good facility in translating skills to new situation in other subjects.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**. Standards have been maintained in Year 2, but fallen in Year 6 since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average by Year 2 but below average by Year 6.
- The teaching is mostly good and sometimes very good.
- Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall, but improves when there are regular opportunities to carry out investigations.
- The science curriculum has been enhanced through the '*Eco-awareness*' and '*Healthy Schools*' programmes.

Commentary

73. Science results for Year 6 have fluctuated in recent years and in 2003 improved slightly on the previous year. This inspection shows that most pupils in Year 2 are attaining the expected level for their age with standards overall above average. By Year 2, most pupils have a good understanding of the topics covered such as forces or classification of materials. Achievement in Years 1 to 2 is good. Achievement through Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory but the progress of a minority of pupils is less than it should be.
74. By Year 6, most pupils show some knowledge and understanding of common scientific principles. They have improved their use of scientific vocabulary and can research information, such as about the solar system, using an Internet search engine. The picture at Year 6, however, continues to show the impact of a high percentage of pupils who have special educational needs with standards overall in Year 6 judged as below average. Initial analysis suggests one third of pupils currently in Year 6 did not make the expected rate of two levels of progress from their teacher-assessed attainment when they were Year 2. One reason is that there has been some pupil movement out and into this cohort. In addition, there were two periods when temporary teachers taught these pupils. These factors have impacted negatively on the overall rate of progress and subsequent spread

of attainment. Lesson evidence and that from pupils' work shows that many Year 6 pupils are now making steady progress because of the impact of recent good teaching.

75. Most teachers are confident in their knowledge of science and skilled in organising practical work that pupils find appealing. Teaching and learning are good overall throughout the school. Year 2 pupils sowed cress seeds in sand, soil, compost and gravel and in dry and wet conditions in a previous lesson. They checked to monitor progress. Their teacher posed questions very carefully, probed pupils' observational skills and helped advance their learning. Similarly pupils in a mixed age class covering Years 4 and 5 learned the importance of rigorous measurement in science when they made hourly checks on the movement of a shadow throughout the school day. Here the teacher's confidence and ability to challenge the pupils scientifically was the key factor in the learning gains. The lesson linked well with to the pupils' prior knowledge of angles and co-ordinates as they made predictions of how the pattern of movement was likely to develop. In both lessons the teachers had organised very good investigations that encouraged pupils to become more independent in their learning. This led to pupils of different levels of attainment responding enthusiastically and achievement was good. Those who have special educational needs were guided sensitively by teaching assistants who provided some practical help and simple explanations of the important points covered by the teacher.
76. The school has given a high priority to the development of environmental education through the '*Eco-awareness*' project and the '*healthy schools*' campaign. Although the school has met the assessment criteria for both initiatives, the activities continue to feature within the topic cycle. The development of the environmental garden has improved the opportunity for pupils to learn about plants, animals and insects. The school improvement target to establish an activity area for older pupils will provide more opportunities for pupils to link their personal fitness with an understanding of science. Coordination is good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **good** and has improved markedly since the previous inspection. Achievement is good. Standards are above average in Year 2 and average in Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils make good progress in acquiring a wide range of information and communication technology skills.
- Information and communication technology provision has helped improve pupils' independence as learners.
- Although the facilities of the information and communication technology suite are good and well used, insufficient use is made of computers in classrooms.

Commentary

77. In Year 2, most pupils recognise and can use the shift, enter, delete buttons and space bar on a computer keyboard. They confidently use the toolbar buttons of information and communication technology software to enter their preferences and respond to commands. Pupils can also programme simple commands into an electronic turtle to

send it on a pre-determined route. In Year 6, standards are average. A significant minority of pupils have special educational needs and although they achieve well their attainment is below that which is expected for their age. The Year 6 pupils have made sufficient progress to be able to compile a good quality visual presentation of their research findings. Year 6 pupils can, for example, select and research information about a planet using the Internet and produce a travel brochure to advertise the attractions that would be available to a visitor taking a space journey. The more able pupils in Year 6 are challenged by the work and achieve well.

78. Most pupils enjoy information and communication technology activities and they work hard making good progress in gaining skills. This is also true of lower attaining pupils who, although working with a more limited range of skills, progress well because they are supported and encouraged sensitively by teaching assistants. Many pupils, including those of higher attainment are confident and independent when using workstations. Most have a good grasp of information and communication technology terminology and a good understanding of techniques and shortcuts needed to achieve quick results. Consequently, pupils use a mouse quickly and efficiently to enter and edit text and data, sometimes using drop down menus and dragging techniques.
79. The curriculum is broad and suitably enriched through challenging projects and access to a wide range of resources. Pupils have had good opportunity to widen their experience through web design and e-mail contact with other schools. The facilities for information and communication technology are much better than those at the time of the last inspection. The headteacher has worked hard with staff and governors and secured the support of parents to successfully promote a matched-funding initiative. This resulted in the premises being extended to incorporate a purpose built information and communication technology suite that is used well. The ratio of computers to pupils is good. Teachers have a generally good knowledge of the subject and are confident in their teaching. Although efficient time-tabling ensures all classes have regular access to the suite, the workstations that are located in classrooms are under-used. Teaching is good overall and subject leadership is satisfactory.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

80. During this inspection, there were few examples of pupils using computers in classroom based lessons to further their knowledge in other subjects. However, some pupils with visual impairment do make good use of laptop computers, where the text and images are enlarged to meet their specific needs. There are some good examples of work produced by the pupils in other subjects using computers. This work is helping the pupils to consolidate their computer skills. The use of information and communication technology in other subjects is satisfactory and the school is keen to increase this.

HUMANITIES

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **good**. The subject is still strong in the school although standards are lower than those judged at the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school policy is implemented well.
- Pupils are encouraged to consider religious themes from different viewpoints.
- Teaching to older pupils is good.

Commentary

81. Due to timetabling arrangements, no teaching was observed in Years 1 and 2. There is insufficient evidence to make secure judgements about teaching, learning and pupils' achievement for these years. However, scrutiny of pupils' work shows that standards are broadly average in Years 2 and 6.
82. The school meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus successfully. This ensures that pupils learn about Christianity and the traditions of other world religions through a broad and balanced programme. The village church is used well as a meaningful source of learning when pupils study Christian themes. These visits help pupils to learn about baptism, the Christmas and Easter stories. Co-ordination is satisfactory and supports the enrichment provided for learning about Christianity well, although this is less strong for other religions.
83. Factual learning about world religions is supplemented well through activities that encourage pupils to think deeply about religious events and concepts. Year 2 pupils, having learned about the key events leading to the birth of Jesus then went on to think about the significance of giving and receiving presents. By Years 5 and 6 past work shows that when pupils studied the betrayal and crucifixion of Christ, they were challenged to think about the events at that time from different perspectives, including that of a Roman Soldier.
84. This inspection has showed that through good teaching, older pupils can embrace an understanding of difficult religious ideas. When a class of Year 5 and 6 pupils studied the Creation they were first asked to reflect on the themes of one God embracing many religions. The teacher's use of probing questions skilfully challenged the pupils' thinking, helping them to think deeply about the world in which they live. When a pupil cited the planets, sun and stars as being a very significant aspect, the teacher made a very successful link to the pupils' learning in science. As the discussion developed, the pupils were deployed into groups to plan a story sequence that would incorporate the Creation theme. Many pupils used their story planning techniques learned in English lessons such as *"build-up, problem setting and resolution"* to successfully complete this task. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good but there was too little evidence to judge teaching in Years 1 and 2.

Geography and history

85. Due to timetabling arrangements no teaching in **geography** or **history** was observed during this inspection. There is insufficient evidence to make judgements about teaching, learning and the pupils' achievement. However, displays and scrutiny of pupils' work suggest that standards are broadly average in Years 2 and 6.
86. By Year 2 in **geography**, most pupils can draw a map showing features such as a wood, lake and mountain. They can produce a key for their map with symbols to represent these features. They have learned about the effect of wind and water on the landscape and they can plot a route around their school. Using world maps pupils have learned the names of oceans and the location of continents such as Africa. Pupils visited a museum to find out about the history of

domestic life. They compared past and present skills in cooking and washing. These observations suggest at least satisfactory standards.

87. By Year 6, most pupils have learned about the key features of a mountain landscape. Pupils have worked in groups to study mountain ranges such as the Himalayas and Pyrenees using atlases for research purposes. They can locate the Pennines on a British Isles map and the Andes on a world map. Some pupils used their information and communication technology skills to produce a presentation of their findings. These observations suggest satisfactory standards.
88. Pupils study **historical** periods such as Ancient Egypt to find out about the lifestyles, beliefs and traditions of those living at that time. They present their work as a bound topic booklet. The content provides good opportunities for skills in other subjects to be combined. Pupils compared the average temperature of Cairo with Birmingham, they drew up a time line of significant events and they learned how the pyramids were constructed. The subject enjoys a high status and standards appear at least satisfactory.
89. The '*Eco-awareness*' programme has extended the humanities curriculum well to incorporate an understanding of environmental themes. This has provided good opportunities for pupils to present their opinions when writing about environmental issues. Teachers work hard to provide additional interest through displays and artefacts, such as a pyramid shaped tent located in the hall which contains many interesting objects connected with the study about Ancient Egypt. In these ways, the curriculum is very well enriched.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design and design and technology

90. No lessons were seen in these subjects and judgements are not possible. Discussions were held with the coordinator and the pupils' work was reviewed as were displays around the school. The examples seen of pupils' work were at least of a satisfactory standard. There was little art available in pupils' folders but it suggested good efforts and occasional very good work. There is little indication from this work of a clear progression of skills in either subject.
91. Their written work and plans for making products in Years 3 to 6 indicate that pupils learn the key processes of designing, making and evaluating well. Often the same object is produced by all the pupils in these year groups and consequently the development of pupils' skills is not evident. For example, pupils of Year 6 and of Year 4 had produced a pop-up-book each to a similarly good standard, including the less capable pupils. The pupils had made good efforts and taken very good care with their products.
92. The art work seen is often of a good standard although there was little of it available. The work of pupils of lower capability is of a similar standard to others. Pupils' occasional drawing in sketch books is generally less mature than other work and suggests that this skill may not be developed bit-by-bit. Pupils of Year 6 have appraised the work of famous artists and engaged in reflective discussion. Throughout the school pupils have been introduced to a range of different media. The school also provides an after-school club for art activities.
93. Design and technology topics are usually effectively linked to other subjects. For example, the pupils had made model Egyptian coffins in connection with their history work. Further enrichment is provided by specific "*challenge*" days that are held once or twice a year. The subjects use a four-year plan that is linked to a nationally recognised

scheme of work and checks on the pupils' learning are made using sheets listing the key learning objectives.

Music

Provision in music is satisfactory with some good features.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers work hard to overcome any lack of expertise they may have.
- Pupils achieve well in Years 3 to 6 due to some teaching that engages them well.
- Standards are not quite as high as they were at the last inspection.

Commentary

94. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are average overall and a little lower than at the last inspection. Throughout the school, the pupils gain a sound knowledge of key features of music such as, pitch, timbre, dynamics and tempo. They enjoy the lessons and handle instruments carefully without playing them too soon. The quality of singing shows a good sensitivity to the shape of the melody and the sound pupils produce is satisfactory. However, teachers sometimes miss opportunities to help improve the pupils' singing.
95. In a very engaging lesson for pupils of Years 5 and 6, the teacher passed on much detailed knowledge about music from the Tudor period and taught the pupils the rhythm and form of a pavane. There was a good range of activities including clapping the rhythm, learning about the instruments, appraising a recording and trying out the dance. Despite some minor inaccuracies in the terminology used, the pupils achieved well because of the engaging nature of the activities. In a lesson for Year 2 pupils, the teacher was supported by a visiting specialist and the pupils learnt to choose percussion instruments to accompany a story. They did this well and created a short piece of music in groups. However, there were occasional missed opportunities to instruct pupils in the use of instruments or to identify criteria about what makes the more successful piece and how to record it. In lessons, the teachers involve all the pupils well whatever their capability. However, occasionally pupils miss lessons for a variety of reasons, such as extra mathematics tuition or council meetings. Despite the occasional missed opportunities and inaccurate information, teachers overcome their lack of subject expertise and teaching and learning are satisfactory. Lessons are well organised and pupils managed well.
96. The planning often uses a published scheme of work, which provides support for teachers' own knowledge of the subject. The coordinator has no means of clearly identifying standards in the school, but the teachers' planning is checked to make sure that all the programme of study is being taught. Key objectives reached are recorded for each class with annotations made for individual pupils. The subject is enriched well with visits, visitors, performance opportunities, tuition in playing several orchestral instruments and clubs for recorder players.

Physical education

Provision for physical education is good and the subject is a strength of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average throughout the school and have been maintained at least since the last inspection.
- The subject is enriched well with extra-curricular activities and other events.
- The school has recently won awards such as the "*Gold Award National Healthy Schools*".

Commentary

97. Standards are high because of a strong emphasis on the subject and good teaching. Throughout the school the pupils enjoy these activities and strive hard to improve. Their interest has been enhanced through the work for the Healthy School recognition and they achieve well throughout the school.
98. In a lively lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6, pupils showed a good understanding of the effect of exercise on the body and of safety issues. The lesson was taught at a good pace and the pupils moved without affecting others' space naturally. The quality of pupils' movements was improved during the lesson partly because of demonstration and discussion and partly because of the good advice given to individual pupils by the teacher and assistants. In other lessons also teachers show a good knowledge of the subject and are able to coach pupils in gaining particular skills. Teachers provide a good degree of challenge to which pupils respond well, making considerable efforts. On occasions, this challenge is increased for pupils who already have good performance. Teachers have recently benefited from staff training at the school.
99. The subject is very well enriched by well-attended extra-curricular activities. Some of these are provided using community help. Year 6 pupils have extended sporting opportunities through a residential trip to an activity centre. The new coordinator has already made a good impact and the school is proud of its many successes in the subject. Recently, application has been made for "*Activemark Gold Standard*".

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is very good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good links made with other subjects where relevant.
- The pupils' learning is enhanced well through a number of school activities.
- Learning of citizenship has separate time allocated in Years 3 to 6.
- A strength are the ways in which pupils' views are sought and acted upon, including a "*Children's Council*".

Commentary

100. There are lessons for personal, social and health education throughout the school. There are also lessons in citizenship time-tabled in Years 3 to 6. These lessons provide a helpful way in which the pupils can learn about drugs abuse, relationships and sex education. The school's prospectus provides a very helpful review of what is taught, confirming that statutory requirements are met and that personal, social and health

education and citizenship takes a high priority. Importantly, the school aims to help pupils to become well-informed, confident and with high self-esteem. The inspection found that the school is largely successful in these aims.

101. The pupils have a good sense of self-esteem and lessons in which pupils sit in a circle, discussing personal issues help to develop this. Three lessons were observed in which the teaching was satisfactory and supported the pupils' maturation well. In addition to such lessons, the school makes very good provision for the pupils' personal development in its daily activity. The school's strong climate of respecting other people and their views extends to an ethos in which pupils know their views are valued. Consequently, they are trusted with responsibilities and they make a good contribution to the school's decision-making process in several aspects. The "Children's Council" and the "Eco-committee" provide good platforms from which pupils learn about democracy and the strength of team work.

102. The result of the lessons and the general provision is that the pupils have a mature sense of self-worth and they gain a strong respect for others views. The "Healthy Schools" project has promoted a keen sense of how to stay fit and take care of one's body. Through such themes as, the duties and skills of people who work in the community, pupils learn about the inter-dependence of community roles. A "web-play" project has been highly successful in helping pupils to study aspects of citizenship electronically with pupils from a Birmingham school. This area of the curriculum is led well and has made a good number of links to other parts of the curriculum and involved people from the local community and further afield.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	5
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
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	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	1
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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