

INSPECTION REPORT

ST THOMAS' CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Canterbury

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118777

Headteacher: Mr W Kelly

Lead inspector: Mr M Phillips

Dates of inspection: 19 - 21 January 2004

Inspection number: 257971

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	5 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll;	180
School address:	Old Ruttington Lane Canterbury Kent
Postcode:	CT1 1NY
Telephone number:	01227 462539
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Joan Blows
Date of previous inspection:	14 September 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Thomas' Catholic Primary school is situated near to the centre of Canterbury and is smaller than most other schools, having 180 pupils on roll ranging in ages from 5 to 11. Children join the school in the Reception Year of the Foundation Stage with standards below those expected. From Year 1, pupils join and leave the school throughout the year and 38 per cent of pupils in Year 6 did not join the school in Year 1. This pupil mobility is high. Just over half the pupils are from a rich diversity of ethnic backgrounds, 11 per cent of whom learn in English as an additional language, all of which is well above the national average. Most pupils live near to the school in owner occupied or rented accommodation and about 1 in 5 of them come from families stationed at the nearby army base. The 33 per cent of pupils identified as having special educational needs is above the national average but the 1.7 per cent in receipt of a statement is average. Almost all these pupils receive additional support to improve numeracy and literacy skills. The 12 per cent of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals matches national averages, but this figure could be higher because the surrounding inner city area has a high level of social deprivation and the percentage of free school meal entitlement does not include children from the nearby army base. The school received the national School's Achievement Award for 1999-2000 and for 2001-2002 and also received the national Basic Skills Quality Mark for 2002. The school is to be part of a national project to teach French in the next school year.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
7704	Mr M Phillips	Lead inspector	English English as an additional language
9163	Mr G Humphrey	Lay inspector	
14732	Mrs E Korn	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Music Foundation stage
20877	Mr D Pink	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Physical education Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This effective school provides good value for money because it is very well led, there is a high proportion of very good teaching and pupils achieve well.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- the very good leadership of the headteacher who is ably supported by key staff;
- very good use of assessment to plan lessons and settle new pupils into the school;
- the strong learning and Christian ethos;
- teaching that is sometimes very good and occasionally excellent;
- the opportunities pupils have to be included in all the school offers;
- pupils' very good behaviour and their eagerness to learn;
- pupils' achievement that is very good for those with special educational needs and others who learn in English as an additional language;
- the leadership of the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory;
- pupils do not learn scientific enquiry skills sufficiently.

There is good improvement since the last inspection in the use of assessment to plan lessons. Improvement is satisfactory in the use of computers to help pupils learn, with a dramatic improvement in their achievement since the computer suite came into use this term. The school now meets all statutory requirements.

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	B	C	C
mathematics	C	C	C	C
science	D	C	D	D

*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 good.

The 2003 national test results for Year 6 in English and mathematics match national averages and reflect inspection findings. In science, test results were below national averages but standards are now in line with expectations. Children join the Reception Year with standards below those expected. Their achievement is satisfactory but some do not reach standards expected in all their learning goals by the end of reception. By the end of Year 2, pupils' achieve well but, in comparison with similar schools, national test results for 2003 showed standards in reading well below national averages. Standards in reading are now higher but still below national averages. In writing and mathematics, national test results for Year 2 showed standards below the average. National test results have to be considered with caution because at this small school, one pupil over or under achieving in tests changes the school's results significantly. By Year 2, inspection evidence shows that standards by Year 2 match national averages in writing, mathematics, science and information communication technology (ICT). Taking into account that from Year 1, pupils leave and join the school all the time so that there are few pupils in Year 6 who joined the school in Year 1, the large proportion of pupils with special educational needs and of pupils who learn in English as

an additional language and the constantly changing learning needs of groups of pupils by Years 2 and 6, pupils at this school achieve well and those who learn in English as an additional language and others with special educational needs achieve very well.

Pupils' personal development is very good, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are successfully taught the difference between right and wrong and to be sensitive to the needs of others. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. Pupils enjoy coming to school where they behave very well and are enthusiastic learners.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. A high proportion of teaching is **good** and sometimes it is **very good** and occasionally **excellent**.

Very good use of assessment contributes to a good, well planned curriculum. However, planning identifies too few times for pupils to undertake scientific enquiry to improve their learning. In less successful teaching, that is nevertheless satisfactory, the over-reliance on worksheets sometimes results in higher attaining pupils not being challenged enough. The most effective teaching ensures that challenging work matches the different needs of pupils and the infectious enthusiasm of teachers and assistants sweeps pupils along in their learning. There are highly effective partnerships with other schools that enrich the curriculum.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good**.

The headteacher leads this self-evaluating school very well, supported by an effective senior management team. His commitment to high standards, a strong Christian ethos and continuous improvement are shared by staff and governors. Management by subject leaders and governors is good and governors are committed to working with increasing effectiveness in partnership with the school. They know the school well and ensure statutory requirements are met. Good, prudent financial management is underpinned by the principles of best value.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

There is a high level of satisfaction amongst parents and pupils with the quality of education provided. Pupils enjoy this school where they say they are valued and work hard. Inspectors disagree with the few parents who thought the school provides too few activities after lessons because this provision is better than at most other similar schools. A few parents want improvements in communication with the school. The school provides good, frequent information for parents but more informal daily contacts with parents are not consistently well provided for through the school. Inspectors investigated concerns about bullying and found that the few incidents in the past were dealt with swiftly, effectively and sensitively. Bullying is not an issue at this school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- to improve the leadership and management of the Reception Year;
- to improve pupils' learning through scientific enquiry.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement in the Reception Year of the Foundation Stage is **satisfactory**. Achievement is **good** in Years 1 and 2 and from Years 3 to 6. By Year 6, standards in English, mathematics, science and ICT are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is very good for pupils with special educational needs and for those who learn in English as an additional language.
- From Year 1 to Year 6, most pupils achieve well, including the high proportion of pupils who join the school throughout the year.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.8 (16.2)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.1 (14.2)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.9 (17.3)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 22 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.6 (28.3)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	26.6 (27.3)	26.8 (26.7)
science	28.2 (28.7)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 34 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. National test results for Year 6 show standards in line with national averages for English and mathematics but below for science. A closer examination of the science result shows that the percentage of pupils reaching the nationally expected Level 4 for their age was above the national average but it was below average for the percentage reaching the higher Level 5. At this small school, one pupil over or under achieving in tests changes the school's results significantly. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level in science was the equivalent of one pupil below the national figure and this demonstrates that, although important, national test results for this school need to be treated with caution.
2. By Year 2, standards in writing, mathematics, science and ICT are rising and now match national averages. Standards in reading are also rising but they are still just below the national average. These standards are higher than the Year 2 National test results in 2003 and indicative of this school's continuous improvement. National tests showed that in comparison with all schools nationally and similar schools across the country standards in writing and mathematics were below national averages. In reading, standards were below the average and well below the average for similar schools.

3. Children join the school in the Reception Year of the Foundation Stage with standards below those expected in most areas of learning, and very low for personal, social and emotional development. Although the children make satisfactory progress they do not reach expected standards by the end of the Foundation Stage in all the nationally agreed Early Learning Goals.
4. Inspectors found that the school's sharp focus on improving literacy is improving pupils' learning all the time. Speaking and listening skills are very effectively promoted through the many opportunities provided in lessons for pupils to discuss and explain their learning, for example, when presenting geographical research by using computer generated graphics in Year 6. Although numeracy skills are reinforced well at times, there is still more to do to ensure these skills are reinforced as well as those for literacy. Numeracy skills were reinforced well during registration time in Year 2, in some work seen in pupils' history and geography books and during science lessons when pupils were required to calculate. The best practice is in provision for pupils with special educational needs and those who learn in English as an additional language because the consistently effective reinforcement of numeracy and literacy skills contributes to these pupils' very good achievement, many of whom join the school throughout the year.
5. By Years 2 and 6, pupils' achievements and standards in ICT have improved dramatically since the ICT suite was opened at the beginning of term. There was insufficient time to observe enough teaching in other subjects to reach secure judgments on standards and achievement, but the examination of pupils' work and teachers' planning show that pupils produce a lot of good work they take a pride in. There are no obvious weaknesses in learning.
6. The school very effectively analyses the achievement and standards of boys and girls, pupils from different ethnic backgrounds and with different levels of attainment to ensure that there are no significant differences in achievement between groups of pupils. This is achieved successfully through the excellent monitoring of each pupil's progress, the very good use of assessment by teachers and the highly effective analysis of national test results and other tests the pupils do.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils enjoy school very much and their **very good** attitudes and behaviour contribute hugely to their **very good** spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The outstanding spiritual ethos of the school.
- Very good relationships and racial harmony.
- Pupils' very positive learning attitudes and very good standards of behaviour.
- Moral and social values that are very well developed.
- Pupils' very good understanding of cultures and beliefs different from their own.
- Behaviour management in the Reception class is inconsistently managed.

Commentary

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	5.4
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.1
National data	0.4

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

7. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory and in line with national figures. Pupils' attitudes, values and behaviour are very good. They respond enthusiastically to the often infectious and inspirational enthusiasm of their teachers, particularly in Years 1 and 2. Older pupils work independently and in groups sustaining high levels of interest and concentration. Apart from the Reception class, behaviour is very well managed.
8. Inspectors investigated the few parent's concerns about bullying. Pupils interviewed said that the few incidents of bullying, which occurred in the past, were dealt with quickly, effectively and sensitively. Scrutiny of school records bears this out. Pupils say that they know what to do should bullying occur and have confidence that should such incidents recur they would be dealt with equally as well. No incidences of unacceptable behaviour were seen during the inspection. Inspectors consider bullying not to be an issue at this school.
9. One pupil with complex behaviour difficulties was excluded for a short time in the last twelve months and now attends a school that more appropriately meets his needs.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	62	1	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	12	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	99	0	0

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

10. Very good relationships and racial harmony are strengths of this school. Pupils show care and consideration for others, are courteous and polite to adults and welcoming to visitors. They feel valued and consider their views respected. There are good opportunities for them to learn to use their initiative well and to take increasing responsibilities as they grow older. For example, Year 5 and 6 pupils organise and supervise games for younger pupils at break times. Others proudly help manage library books, assist teachers with the preparation of lessons and lead prayers in class and in whole-school assemblies.
11. The spiritual ethos of the school is outstanding and contributes to the school being a strong Christian community. There are very good opportunities for pupils to explore their own values, beliefs, feelings and emotions through poetry, literature, their own writing, music, art and religious education. The well explained and understood moral code is appreciated by pupils. They express views with confidence and respect those of others. They support and care for each other and learn to act according to their own principles to challenge constraints upon the human spirit, such as aggression, injustice and discrimination.
12. The school strongly promotes equality through an understanding and appreciation amongst pupils of faiths and cultures different from their own. As a result, pupils learn what it means to live in a multicultural society. Good use is made of the school's location in an historic city with strong Christian traditions that include links with the Church of St Thomas. The school

provides pupils with many opportunities to participate in a broad variety of creative, religious and challenging activities. Pupils of other faiths and cultures share their beliefs and traditions with others to the mutual benefit of all concerned.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education. The school is very well led and the management of key staff and governors is good. The high quality teaching and a well-planned curriculum ensure the wide diversity of pupils' learning needs is met very well to ensure their good achievement.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The high quality teaching sweeps pupils cheerfully along in their learning.
- Teaching has improved well since the last inspection.
- The high expectations for learning and behaviour results in pupils' good and often very good achievement.
- There is very good use of assessment to plan lessons; this has improved greatly since the last inspection.
- The partnership between teachers and their assistants encourages and challenges pupils.
- Pupils with different learning needs and from diverse backgrounds are fully involved in lessons.

Commentary

13. The high proportion of good and very good teaching, and teaching that is occasionally excellent, ensures numeracy and literacy skills are very effectively taught. Speaking and listening skills are promoted well. The highly effective partnership between teachers and their well qualified and experienced assistants results in very good provision for pupils with special educational needs and for others who learn in English as an additional language. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 30 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (3 %)	5 (17 %)	14 (47 %)	10 (33 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)

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

14. One of the main reasons why pupils who are new to the school settle down so quickly to learn well is because of the headteacher's excellent practice that identifies pupils' learning needs as soon as they join the school and tracks their progress to the time they leave. This exemplary practice is used very well by teachers, alongside their own assessments, to provide work that not only matches learning needs, but interests and challenges pupils. In the most effective teaching, this practice leads to the use of a variety of resources and teaching methods that inspire pupils to do their best. In an excellent Year 1 lesson, pupils' learning was driven along, first through their involvement in drama, then reading as a class from a big book, to tasks that matched their different needs and on to songs that reinforced learning. At the end of the lesson, excellent practice was seen of pupils explaining what they had to do next to improve. This exemplary practice has yet to spread through the school because too often lessons end by only reviewing learning. It was not just in this Year 1 lesson that the teacher's

infectious enthusiasm swept pupils cheerfully along in their learning. It was also seen in Year 2 when pupils improved their story writing and in a Year 5 lesson when pupils learnt about African cultures. A Year 3 class produced a lot of work writing 'rap' poems that they performed enthusiastically to music. The good management of homework results in pupils knowing what is expected of them through tasks that prepare them well for their lessons.

15. From Year 1, teachers' very good management of behaviour and learning, and high expectations for both, result in classrooms that are often alive with the buzz of activity. The strong partnership between teachers and assistants contributes hugely to the good, trusting relationships pupils enjoy with each other and with staff. Challenging questions during whole class teaching are spread around the class to keep pupils 'on their toes' and to ensure their full involvement in learning. Some very good practice in a Year 4 literacy lesson and then a history lesson was seen when the teacher effortlessly moved from speaking English to speaking French in order to include all pupils in the lesson. In Year 6, a very challenging lesson about writing for different audiences was well managed to make sure pupils with different learning needs improved all the time.
16. The partnership between teachers and their assistants very effectively provides for lower attaining and special educational needs pupils and others who learn in English as an additional language, so that they achieve very well. Good planning and the deployment of assistants are sharply focused on pupils' learning objectives. A Year 4 teaching assistant used different voices to bring a text alive to the delight of her group who then responded eagerly to her challenging questions. There is a very productive partnership between teachers, the assistant who oversees the management of the new ICT suite and a highly qualified ICT assistant. This partnership is helping to drive up both pupils' and teachers' ICT skills and results in the good use of computers in lessons and in the ICT suite to improve learning. The work completed by lower attaining and special educational needs pupils in the suite to improve their basic skills contributes to these pupils very good achievement.
17. A strong feature of planning for the year, each term and then for the week is the way teachers plan together to pool their good subject knowledge in order to identify ways to reinforce literacy skills across the curriculum. For example, in science pupils write about their work paying good attention to handwriting, spelling and punctuation, in history and geography they learn to improve skills when writing factual reports in different styles and design and technology work demonstrates good attention to clear, factual explanations of learning.
18. Where teaching is less effective, but nevertheless satisfactory, is in the challenge of higher attaining and gifted and talented pupils. Analysis of work shows that sometimes worksheets these pupils use to improve are not challenging enough. Marking of work in Year 6 provides encouraging advice on how to improve, but this very good practice is not always in place in Years 3 to 5 to ensure that all pupils achieve well. A well-planned lesson using scientific experiments in Year 3 is typical of the type of work that does not occur often enough to ensure that by Year 6 standards in science continue to improve, and higher attaining pupils are more consistently challenged, to increase their skills and understanding through scientific enquiry.

The curriculum

The good curriculum meets pupils' diverse learning needs **effectively**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education underpins the curriculum and contributes strongly to the school's very good learning atmosphere.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs and for pupils who learn in English as an additional language is very effective.
- The use of ICT is improving learning in other subjects.
- The very good range of activities outside lessons enriches the curriculum and pupils' learning.
- Provision in the Reception class of the Foundation Stage does not prepare pupils sufficiently for Year 1.

Commentary

19. The curriculum meets statutory requirements, is broad and balanced and effectively provides for the wide range of pupils' learning needs. The very strong provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education underpins curriculum planning to reflect the school's Christian aims that include the full involvement of pupils in all it offers through a sharp focus upon equal opportunities. The very good provision for personal, social and health education is the direct result of highly effective curriculum planning that contributes to very good, warm relationships and a very positive Christian and learning atmosphere in this inclusive school. Considering the small size of this school, the range of activities available outside lessons over the year is very good, enriches the curriculum and improves pupils' learning.
20. The school provides very well for the significant proportion of pupils who are in need of additional support for learning through highly motivated, experienced and well trained assistants who work very well in partnership with teachers. Very good planning ensures that work these pupils do outside the classroom is linked to work other pupils do in class. This is because assistants are well briefed by teachers to make sure they know pupils' individual learning targets. All this very good practice contributes to the pupils' good self-esteem and eagerness to learn.
21. Good, specialist provision for physical education is enhanced through effective links with a local Catholic secondary school. The new ICT suite is providing good opportunities for pupils to improve their skills and knowledge, partly as the result of highly productive links with a nearby technology college. Provision for special educational needs, lower attaining pupils and pupils who learn in English as an additional language is good, and very good in the new ICT suite, and contributes to these pupils' very good achievements and their eagerness to learn. However, enquiry based scientific activities are not sufficiently developed through the school to challenge pupils, especially higher attaining and gifted and talented pupils, to ensure standards continue to rise by Year 6. In the Reception class, the curriculum is unsatisfactory because it allows too much time for unstructured activities and lacks the rigorous attention to assessment and learning objectives seen in other classes.
22. Provision is very good for pupils with special educational needs and those who learn in English as an additional language. In Year 6, additional activities available in mathematics for higher attaining pupils to improve are raising their achievement. Others have extra provision in mathematics and literacy that contributes to good or better achievement. In history, geography and art and design the over-reliance on worksheets to plan the curriculum results in higher attaining and gifted pupils being inconsistently challenged and, although pupils' skills in the use of special, subject language are satisfactory, some are

capable of achieving more. Curriculum planning for art and design reveals, at times, a lack of emphasis on improving pupils' practical and creative, skills. The most successful provision to improve pupils' use of specialist language to explain and improve their learning is in Year 6.

23. The school is committed, as part of a national project, to teach French within the next year. There are secure plans as the result of staff training to improve curriculum planning already in place to maximise the opportunities for all pupils to learn French.
24. Links between the Reception class and Year 1 are satisfactory. However, the assessment of pupils' attainment is not precise enough for teachers to plan challenging work that matches learning needs well to ensure their new pupils' make good progress straight away. Pupils are well prepared for their move from Year 6 to secondary school through very good curricular, planning and pastoral partnerships.
25. The strong spiritual and moral ethos is a very special feature of this school. Social learning is developed very effectively through structured play activities and supervisors trained to engage pupils at playtime. The school is also innovating by expanding its literacy work across the curriculum especially in Year 6. It is also seeking ways of improving the provision for music involving pupils in Year 6 at this school and pupils in Year 7 at the Catholic secondary school.
26. The enrichment of the curriculum is very good through activities outside lessons and links with the community and church. There is a close relationship with the local cathedral and pupils regularly take part in musical and dramatic activities and join with other schools in the study of St Augustine. The school stages an annual, dramatic production and takes part in local services within the parish. There is an extensive range of school visits including a Year 6 residential trip. A very good range of sporting activities is available for the pupils: football, cricket, golf, tennis and rounders. The girls' football team gained recent success as champions in local competitions. The school supports another school in Nigeria. The priest who is the headteacher of that school makes annual visits.
27. The quality of the accommodation in the Reception Year is satisfactory and good elsewhere. The school is very well maintained. Outdoor play spaces are sufficient and well managed for the older pupils. Outside space is too limited for pupils in the Reception Year. The match of staffing to the curriculum is good with two bilingual teachers and a bilingual teaching assistant. Teaching assistants are well trained and add considerably to the achievement of pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for care, guidance and support is **very good**, contributing to a high degree of mutual trust and respect between pupils and staff.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good welfare support and pastoral care.
- The mutual trust and respect between pupils and staff.
- Pupils know their views and opinions are valued.
- The links with feeder nursery schools are not well established.

Commentary

28. The school supports its pupils very well. It creates a caring ethos that encourages them to do their best. Child protection and health and safety procedures are very effective and the provision for first aid is very good. There is a high degree of trust between pupils and their teachers. Pupils say that they receive good advice and guidance should they have

concerns. Support for pupils who require additional help ensures they are fully included in all aspects of school life. Advice and guidance for pupils' academic progress has improved well since the last inspection.

29. Induction procedures for children entering reception are satisfactory but the links with feeder nursery schools are not as well established to ensure that all parents participate fully when their children first join the school. Induction procedures for older pupils are good and particularly well matched to the needs of pupils from families at the nearby army base. There is very good support and guidance for pupils when they transfer to secondary education.
30. Pupils' opinions and views are valued and acted upon, for example they were consulted about ways to improve the playground and playtime activities that led to improvements. Their views are confidentially sought through a questionnaire and plans for a school council are well advanced.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Partnerships between the school, parents, other schools and the community are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of the parent school partnership is good.
- The strong links with a nearby Roman Catholic church and the wider community.
- Good relationships with receiving secondary schools.
- Links with other primary schools are good.
- The links with feeder nursery schools are not well established.

Commentary

31. The positive views of parents are reflected in their satisfaction with the quality of the education provided and the school's strong Christian ethos. The partnership between the school and parents is good. Parents receive good information every term about what their children will learn and annual reports provide a good summary of their children's progress. A few parents at the pre-inspection meeting stated that they would appreciate more information about how well their children were getting on. Inspectors agree that the annual progress reports lack specific guidance on what their children need to do to improve. Inspectors also note that the school has well advanced plans in place to spread the very good practice seen in the reports at the end of Years 2 and 6 into all reports to indicate how well their children achieve in relation to national expectations. Some parents would like advice with reports on what to do to help their children learn. Inspectors note that the school has plans in place to do this in order to forge even closer partnerships with parents. Regular consultation evenings afford parents opportunities to meet class teachers to review their children's work and progress and discuss ways to help their children improve. The school has satisfactory arrangements for gaining the views of parents but, although it is very open and welcoming, there is no formal consultation process, for example through a questionnaire. The school has good arrangements for dealing with complaints.
32. Discussions with pupils indicate that the majority of parents help their children with homework and so make a good contribution to their learning. Many parents actively contribute to school life by supporting teachers in the classroom, helping with school outings and joining with the pupils and staff for special services and assemblies. The school successfully includes parents from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds by encouraging them to organise special assemblies, for example to celebrate Diwali as part of a school assembly, and to practise their own religious beliefs with their children.

33. There are good links with the community. There is a close relationship between school and the congregation and pastoral council of St Thomas' church with both church and school being closely integrated in a wide range of social and community initiatives. There are also well established ecumenical links with Canterbury Cathedral. Pupils regularly participate in drama, art and music festivals and acts of worship. There is an active parent, teacher and friends association that organises a wide variety of social and fund raising events such as fashion shows, bazaars and barbecues. The school works hard to remain at the heart of its community and has continued to achieve this since the previous inspection. The school and its community are also involved in supporting a school in Nigeria, both financially and through regular communications and visits from the headteacher.
34. The links with other schools are good. The school is a member of the Canterbury consortium of schools and works in close partnership with four other local primary schools. There is a well established working relationship with Chaucer Technology College and older pupils make weekly visits to benefit from the college facilities. There are good links with the receiving secondary schools and pupils visit the schools of their choice prior to transfer. The links with the feeder nursery schools are not as well established and this remains an area for improvement.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's leadership is very good.
- This school evaluates itself well as it strives for continuous improvement.
- There is good leadership and management by senior teachers, other key staff and governors.
- Good, prudent management of school finances is underpinned by principles of best value.

Commentary

35. The headteacher's firm commitment to high standards, a strong Christian and learning ethos and continuous improvement is shared by all staff. He leads by example by spending a lot of time supporting pupils and staff in order to develop the skills of both. As a result, staff and governors work very effectively as a team within this self-evaluating school where all are highly valued, different cultures and beliefs respected and where pupils are keen to do well because they know they will be well cared for and treated fairly.
36. The aims of the school are reflected well in all it strives to achieve. Notable features are high standards of learning and behaviour, care and respect for each other and the inclusion of all pupils in all the school offers.
37. The school improvement plan is used very well as a strategic tool. Its priorities are arrived at through careful analysis of past performance, including national test results, staff consultations, evidence from performance management and the governors' critical review of progress. This self-evaluation enabled the school to identify improvements needed in numeracy and literacy skills in Years 1 to 2 in particular and in ICT provision, both of which are driving up standards. Although the headteacher and governors welcome views of parents, there is no formal means to consult them. The current plan has as a priority a joint audit of the curriculum by staff and governors that uses guidance from central government to improve curriculum planning and teaching and to increase governor involvement.
38. The school's commitment to continuous improvement is evident in the two national awards it received. The school received the School's Achievement Award for 1999-2000 and for 2001-2002. It also received the Basic Skills Quality Mark for 2002.

39. Since the last inspection, the leadership and management of the school has been reorganised. Over the last year, the post of deputy headteacher has been replaced by two assistant headteachers and this is spreading leadership and management tasks evenly amongst the senior management team. Their roles and responsibilities are well defined and understood. The headteacher is improving the pupil monitoring and assessment skills of senior and other key staff so that they lead even more effectively as a team on the continuous improvement of the school.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	552,705	Balance from previous year	47,950
Total expenditure	543,706	Balance carried forward to the next	8,453
Expenditure per pupil	2,395		

40. The governing body knows the school's strengths and areas to improve well and is effectively led by an experienced chair. They are organised into committees whose defined tasks match school priorities well. They evaluate their own effectiveness and identify areas for improvement. Governors ensure statutory requirements are met. There is good induction of new governors that enables them to become swiftly and effectively involved through well planned support and training. The very effective leadership by the governor responsible for finance contributes greatly to the school's prudent financial management that is underpinned by the principles of best practice. For example, the success of expenditure on the new computer suite will be measured by how well the skills of teachers and pupils improve.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision is **satisfactory**.

41. Children join the school in the Reception Year of the Foundation Stage when they are five. There are 17 children who attend all day. Most of them have not had any form of pre-school provision. Standards on entry for most children are below those expected and they are well below that for personal, social and emotional development. Although children's achievements are satisfactory by the time they leave the Reception Year, standards are below those expected.
42. Since the last inspection there have been some good improvements to the accommodation. The accommodation inside is satisfactory but outside accommodation is unsatisfactory due to the playing area being too small to fulfill all the learning functions for which it is intended.
43. Teaching was good at the last inspection. While there are more strengths than areas to improve, the quality of teaching is now satisfactory and so not as good as it was at the time of the last inspection. Teaching by the teacher's assistant of children who are learning in English as an additional language is good.
44. The leadership within the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory. The roles of teachers and other adults are not clearly defined to help children learn well. Long term curriculum planning satisfactorily covers all nationally recommended areas of learning but planning provides unsatisfactory guidance for staff when teaching because planning for the term and for each week lacks clearly defined learning intentions. As a result, while most children's achievement by the end of the Reception Year is satisfactory, most do not reach the Early Learning Goals by the time they leave reception.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The provision for children's personal, social and emotional development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- When they join the Reception class standards in this area of learning are well below those expected.
- Children achieve well by the end of the Foundation Stage although many do not reach expected standards.
- Teaching is good and relationships between adults and children are very good.

Commentary

45. Children make good gains in their personal, social and emotional development, but around one third of them lack confidence to talk to adults and other children, to try out new activities, to engage in unfamiliar experiences and to dress and undress themselves independently. The youngest children have difficulty following classroom routines for any length of time and some feel insecure when leaving the classroom. The class teacher's very good relationship with the children and her sensitive and clear guidance and encouragement improves the children's confidence to improve. Consequently, the children flourish, especially the youngest, and they achieve well. Children improve their skills and their confidence to play in an increasingly settled manner, concentrating well on their activities and frequently working co-operatively. More still needs to be done to improve children's independence so that they do not rely so much on adults to gather, organize resources and to put them away.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

The provision for children's language, literacy and communication skills is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many children join the Reception Year with below average language, literacy and communication skills.
- Children enjoy hearing stories.
- Children who learn in English as an additional language achieve very well.
- Children achieve satisfactorily but by the end of reception most do not reach the expected targets.

Commentary

46. Children's spoken language varies considerably from good to poor. Some speak fluently and express ideas well, for example when negotiating the use of resources with adults and other children. About a third of the children have too little language to do this and their skills are well below those expected, resulting in them frequently playing in silence. The class teacher encourages all children to improve their use of spoken English and the role-play ('acting out') area is very imaginatively resourced to improve language skills. While the role-play area is used well to improve the language skills of more able children, it is not used as well to improve the language of those whose skills are low.
47. Children who learn in English as an additional language achieve very well in their English language and communication skills because of the very skilful support they receive from a learning support assistant. These children's learning is reinforced and extended well by the class teacher.
48. Achievement for most pupils is satisfactory. There is a strong emphasis on literature and the theme of each week is based upon a well known children's story. This theme permeates many activities, making learning meaningful. Children sat enraptured by a well read story of the 'Princess and the Pea' and their interest in the story was sustained over several days through the reading of different versions of the story that children discussed to improve their language and literacy skills. This good practice results in children progressing well in knowing letter sounds and leads to higher attaining children starting to read. However, teaching is not as good for other aspects of children's learning, although all children know that print carries meaning. There is unsatisfactory progress in most children's recognition of the key words they need to know to communicate well when speaking and writing. Most have difficulty transferring learning from one story book to the next. There is insufficient emphasis on the development of children's early writing skills. For those in the early stages of writing independently, there are few opportunities for them to practise to improve. Consequently, for most children their achievement in learning to write is unsatisfactory.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

The provision for children's mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of number is mainly good and most children achieve well.
- Children enter the Reception class with satisfactory understanding of number and are securely on course to reach the Early Learning Goals by the end of reception.

Commentary

49. A high proportion of the teaching of number and shape is good and most children achieve well because the pace of learning challenges them and the teacher's good use of praise increases their confidence. A good range of teaching methods helps pupils learn. They sing number rhymes, count and recognise numbers. Higher attaining children recognise numbers to twenty and they use mathematical language to identify shapes, such as 'oblong' and 'triangle', but they are not yet recording their work to improve learning. Lower attaining children are supported well by the learning support assistant so that they are fully involved. The bi-lingual class teacher supports French speaking children well so that they make good progress in their use of mathematical language. At times, there is good informal teaching with specific children. The use of free choice activities, including the use of large construction blocks, supports children's mathematical development well.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

The provision for developing children's knowledge and understanding of the world is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Planning is not specific enough about what children are to learn.
- Most children will not reach the Early Learning Goals.

Commentary

50. Children enjoy their work and concentrate well when learning about different types of material, for example when making sand castles with moulds and when rolling dough. Although there is a good range of activities to help children learn, resources are not always managed well enough to ensure children's learning improves. As a result, their achievement is not sufficient for them to reach the learning goals by the time they leave reception. Adults do not consistently encourage children to discover and then talk about the different properties of materials and substances to improve their learning, for example, what sand feels like and what happens to it when it is mixed with water. There are too few opportunities provided for pupils to learn about the world by talking about models they have constructed.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

The provision for children's physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well in gymnastics lessons.
- Children's achievement shows them to be on course to reach the learning goals by the end of reception.

Commentary

51. Children's balancing, jumping and climbing skills are satisfactory. Teaching in gymnastic lessons is good and equipment is used well to help pupils improve. Good attention is paid to children's health and safety and lessons are calmly conducted with good use of praise to help children do well. They are taught the importance of exercise to be a healthy. Three quarters of the children move their bodies well in time to music, due to regular opportunities to do so in dance lessons. Outdoors, staff use the limited space well for the children to reach satisfactory standards in pedaling tricycles and in their awareness of space. This outdoor space is not large enough, and lacks protection from inclement weather, to ensure children sustain their

current rate of progress and that all nationally recommended aspects of the outdoor curriculum are met. Inside, teaching children to develop finer physical control, for example by threading beads, sewing and using pencils, is less well provided for.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

The provision for children's creative development is **good** and they **achieve well**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's good progress means that they are on course to achieve the learning goals.
- The well provided for role-play area interests pupils and improves their learning.
- Adults do not manage some children's learning well enough to ensure good progress is sustained.

Commentary

52. The imaginatively furnished role-play area stimulates children's interest and effectively improves their creative development. Around one third of the children play here very regularly, engrossed in their roles, negotiating with others as they replay the story of the week. However, adults do not use children's play skillfully or often enough to extend learning or to involve those who need to improve through this type of activity. When adult intervention is effective, there are good gains in learning, as seen when three girls role played being 'the teacher' and the class teacher responded by introducing a story tape for them to sit formally, as if a class of older children, listening and pretending to share an imaginary book. Children listen to and move in time to music satisfactorily.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching that is sometimes very good and occasionally excellent ensures pupils achieve well.
- Pupils with special educational needs and others who learn in English as an additional language achieve very well.
- Skills taught in English and literacy lesson are reinforced well in other subjects.
- Very good use of computers contributes to the very good achievement of pupils with special educational needs.
- Sometimes the over-reliance on commercially produced worksheets results in a lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils.

Commentary

53. By Years 2 and 6, standards match national averages in most areas of learning. By Year 2, reading standards are higher than the 2003 national test results but still just below those expected nationally. Pupils enter Year 1 with standards below national expectations. They make good progress over time to achieve well by Year 2. Pupils with special educational needs and those who learn in English as an additional language achieve very well. This good and better achievement continues to Year 6 and explains why standards are rising, especially for lower attaining pupils, and why standards are now better than the 2003 national test

results, particularly by Year 2. There is no significant difference in the learning of boys and girls and between pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. It is commendable that at this school pupils achieve so well given that a high proportion of them join the school throughout the year from Year 1. These late admissions include higher attaining pupils but also large proportions of pupils with special educational needs and others who learn in English as an additional language.

54. The key to pupils' good and better achievement is the highly effective teaching. Expectations for learning and behaviour are high. Literacy hour routines are well established and confidently managed. Work is well explained to pupils so that they know what is expected of them and well qualified teaching assistants are effectively deployed to provide individual and small group support. The excellent monitoring of individual pupils' learning as soon as they join the school ensures teachers know pupils well. Assessment is used very well to plan challenging work that meets the different learning needs of pupils. Teachers set clear boundaries for behaviour that is managed expertly through praise and a sprinkling of good humour. Teachers involve pupils with different levels of attainment in discussion by spreading questions well to keep them 'on their toes'. Good and better teaching is taught at a challenging pace with moments of reflection for pupils to review their learning. Very good achievement in speaking and listening is the result of many planned opportunities for pupils to discuss and explain their learning so that by Years 2 and 6 standards match those expected nationally. All this highly effective practice means that pupils with different learning needs are fully involved in lessons. The strong emphasis in Years 1 and 2 on reading and writing skills successfully teaches pupils to make sense of unfamiliar words and phrases. It is pushing up standards and raising pupils' confidence and provides a secure platform for continuing improvement by Year 6. While the achievement of higher attaining pupils and those who are gifted and talented is satisfactory, the over-reliance at times on commercially produced worksheets is not challenging enough for them. The most effective teaching uses a variety of imaginative approaches to ensure pupils' very good achievement that include drama, music, computers, song and tasks that improve skills through different types of writing and a variety of books. The infectious enthusiasm of teachers often inspires pupils so that they are keen to learn and produce lots of work. In an excellent Year 1 lesson, enthusiastic teaching, very high expectations and the highly effective support of the teaching assistant swept pupils along in their learning.
55. Reading is managed well and standards are rising by Year 2, although just below national averages. By Year 6, standards match national averages with a little over a third of pupils exceeding them. Classroom libraries are well organised and teachers use story and factual books well to reinforce reading skills in most subjects. Books from a commercial scheme are carefully graded. As a result, pupils enjoy reading and they talk eagerly about the books they take home so that their confidence is boosted as their skills improve. This aids their good progress. By Year 2, pupils describe what they have read and average and higher attaining pupils expand upon why they like certain stories. By Year 6, higher attaining pupils explain how authors use language to bring their writing alive and average attaining pupils explain character and plot well. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are adept at using non-fiction books to do research. There is a good range of books from different cultures that are used well to improve pupils' knowledge of cultures different from their own. These books also interest and improve the skills of pupils who learn in English as an additional language, contributing to their very good achievement.
56. Pupils write for many different purposes and use computers well to improve spelling and enlarge their vocabulary. They write factual reports in history, poetry that included Year 3 pupils performing 'rap' poems to music and in Year 6 a script for a computer generated display of a geography research project. There is good improvement in handwriting since September, particularly in Years 1 and 2, that is improving pupils' confidence. Overhead projectors, white boards and big books for whole class teaching are often used very

effectively to improve writing. The experienced teaching assistants are used very well to improve reading in English of pupils who learn in English as an additional language and the reading skills of others who need extra support. Personal development is effectively promoted through good group work, as seen when Year 6 pupils wrote about spiders for children of different ages in order to learn how to write for different audiences. The very good practice of marking work that encouragingly provides advice on how to improve, often with references to pupils' learning targets, has yet to spread through the school. Another highly effective feature seen in Year 1, that is not yet common practice, is the use of time at the end of lessons that goes beyond just the review of learning to include discussions about what pupils need to do in the next lesson to improve.

57. The subject is very well led and managed. Careful analysis of national test results, other tests pupils do and the monitoring of individual pupils' achievements are used well to lead on school improvements. Good advice offered to colleagues contributes to highly effective teamwork.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

58. One of the reasons why pupils achieve well and some very well is the way literacy skills are consistently reinforced in other subjects. For example, in science pupils are required to use appropriate language that is correctly spelt and punctuated, in geography and history pupils are expected to use books and the Internet to research and write findings in their own words. There is very good practice in the use of computers in the new ICT suite that is contributing to the very good achievement of pupils with special educational needs.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved since the last inspection.
- The very good teaching in Years 1 and 2 supports effective learning.
- Very good relationships and behaviour management contribute to pupils' good achievement.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those who learn in English as an additional language achieve very well.

Commentary

59. By Years 2 and 6, standards are in line with national averages and match the 2003 national test results. These test results show that the number of pupils achieving the nationally expected levels were average in both years and that pupils reaching the higher level in Year 6 were also close to the national average. Pupils achieve well and some do so very well. There is a strong, challenging learning atmosphere at this school where all pupils are fully included in all learning opportunities. Most lower attaining pupils, pupils with special educational needs and those who learn in English as an additional language achieve very well. Boys and girls make similar progress and there are no differences in learning between other groups of pupils.
60. There is good improvement since the last inspection in standards and in teaching, especially in Years 3 to 6. Pupils leave and join the school all the time and the school does well to improve the learning so quickly for pupils who join during the year and those who learn in English as an additional language or who have special educational needs. While the school is very successful in supporting these pupils, many do not reach nationally expected standards by Year 6.

61. Year 6 pupils interpret graphs in a number of different formats to reach satisfactory standards and this learning is reinforced well when using computers to do geographical research. By Year 2, pupils confidently use numbers to 10 to reach satisfactory standards and they make good progress when adding three single digit numbers together. This good achievement continues to Year 4, where pupils confidently devise different ways of subtracting larger numbers, and into Year 5 where pupils reach satisfactory standards. Year 5 pupils improve their mathematical language well when mentally calculating addition, subtraction and division sums and when carrying out mathematical investigations. They identify and describe the patterns of graphs well and use their knowledge of co-ordinates to plot information on graphs. By Year 6, pupils' good progress in their use of mathematical language enables them to achieve well, as seen when they confidently explain and describe their findings to the class. Analysis of pupils' work shows that they take a pride in what they do and that by Year 6 their understanding of shape and space is in line with national averages.
62. The quality of teaching and learning is good and it is very good in Years 1 and 2. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. This effective teaching creates a positive learning atmosphere. This is achieved through great emphasis on the social relationships within the school and in the very effective teamwork established by all teaching and non-teaching staff. Pupils know what they are to learn each lesson, probing questions during whole class teaching involves all pupils and behaviour is managed well through the use of praise. Pupils are expected to explain their learning to other pupils and this enhances the opportunities for them to improve their speaking skills. The very good teaching in Years 1 and 2 results in pupils growing in confidence and developing skills for their continuing good or better achievements. Teachers use their good subject knowledge well to provide challenging work that matches pupils' different learning needs. High expectations throughout the school, good humoured teaching and the effective deployment of skillful assistants all contribute to pupils being happy and confident in the learning.
63. The subject is well led. Information from the headteacher's monitoring of pupils and the teachers' assessments are used well by the subject leader to provide good advice and support for colleagues. This highly effective practice contributes to teaching methods and resources being used consistently well within nationally recommended strategies. In Years 1 and 2, national strategies are used very well to raise standards and achievement. The highly effective and very well planned use of the ICT suite improves significantly the skills of lower attaining and special educational needs pupils and pupils who learn in English as an additional language.

Mathematics across the curriculum

64. Although satisfactory, an area to improve is planning in order to identify more times to reinforce numeracy skills. Good practice was seen when pupils made good use of computers during geographical research and when doing calculations in science in Year 6. During registration, Year 2 pupils do mental calculations using information from attendance and lunch registers.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By Year 2, pupils achieve well from a low start.
- Pupils achieve well in their knowledge of 'materials and their properties' and in 'physical processes' due to good teaching.
- There are too few planned times for pupils to improve learning through scientific enquiry.
- The curriculum promotes a healthy lifestyle.

Commentary

65. Standards by Years 2 and 6 match national averages. Although current standards do not fully reflect the 2003 national test results, they are, in fact, very similar because, due to the small number of pupils in the 2003 Year 6 class, one pupil's test score was one point below the national average and this made the school's performance below average overall. Analysis of the 2003 results shows that pupils who were at the school from Year 3 made good or better progress to achieve well by Year 6, with higher attaining pupils achieving very well and exceeding standards expected nationally. There is no significant difference in learning between boys and girls or between other different groups of pupils, all of whom are eager to learn. Improvement since the last inspection in the use of practical work to improve learning is satisfactory with room still for further improvement.
66. By Year 2, pupils achieve well because they make good progress over time having entered Year 1 with low standards. Achievement is very good by the end of Year 1 because of the emphasis on practical work and scientific enquiry. This very good achievement is not consistently sustained to the end of Year 2.
67. Teaching is good and pupils want to learn. Expectations are high for standards and for behaviour. Behaviour is managed well with effective use of praise and humour. When pupils' attitudes are at their most positive, teachers use practical work to reinforce and extend learning. The recent introduction of individual learning targets and good assessment of pupils' attainment are increasing pupils' knowledge about what they need to do to improve and teachers' lesson planning helps them do so successfully. Sometimes teacher's satisfactory subject knowledge is not used effectively to plan scientific investigations to reinforce learning, or to challenge higher attaining and gifted pupils. Good attention is paid to pupils' health and safety. At times, higher attaining and gifted and talented pupils are not challenged enough to reach conclusions based on their analysis of evidence. When scientific enquiry is used well, as seen in Year 3, pupils work enthusiastically to make great gains in their learning. Teaching includes all pupils in learning, often through the use of a good range of probing questions that ensure the whole class pays attention. However, the highly effective support for pupils with special educational needs and those who learn in English as an additional language, through practical work and support from assistants, results in their very good achievement.
68. Good teaching in Year 6 skillfully extended pupils' understanding by demonstrating how different materials change when burnt or heated. In Year 5, pupils achieve well learning about the earth's place in the solar system. Throughout the school, pupils use computers to research and record scientific evidence, using tables and graphs to analyse evidence and to carry out calculation, all with good effects on learning in ICT and numeracy skills. Throughout the school, good attention is paid to improving literacy skills when pupils write about their learning, and speaking and listening skills are improved when pupils explain their learning. As pupils grow older, they increase their knowledge and understanding of the importance of diet and exercise to lead healthy lives.
69. Although subject leadership is good, further improvement is needed in the evaluation of the effectiveness of teachers' planning and learning to lead on curriculum improvements to ensure standards continue to rise. Colleagues receive good advice and support. Computers are used effectively to help pupils learn. The leader recognises that improvements are needed in the use of scientific enquiry to raise standards further and ensure pupils achieve well.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good use of the new ICT suite and skilful teaching assistants has resulted in pupils' very good achievements this term.
- The use of computers contributes to the very good achievements of pupils with special educational needs and those who learn in English as an additional language in their literacy, numeracy and English language skills.
- Computers are used well across the curriculum to reinforce numeracy and literacy skills.

Commentary

70. By Years 2 and 6, standards match national expectations. There is very good improvement since the last inspection in the range and use of ICT resources, particularly computers. Over time, by Years 2 and 6, pupils' achievement is satisfactory but since the ICT suite came into use at the start of this term pupils' achievement has risen dramatically and is now good.
71. Planning covers most aspects of the subject well. Good, joint planning by teachers and assistants, supported by a very skilled assistant, leads to the often very good use of computers in subjects across the curriculum that ensures all pupils have equal opportunities to learn well. Links with a secondary school with technology status contributes to the use of a computerised learning program in the ICT suite that is improving very quickly the basic skills of lower attaining pupils, pupils with special educational needs and the English language skills of pupils who learn in English as an additional language. The very well resourced and managed ICT suite excites pupils and inspires teachers and pupils to use computers in classrooms in a variety of ways to improve learning in many subjects.
72. Teaching and learning are very good because teachers make highly effective use of training to plan lessons. Behaviour is very well managed. The use of computers reinforces learning very well and brings lessons alive so that pupils learn enthusiastically. By Year 2, pupils with different levels of attainment use a mouse to move information around the screen, improve their literacy skills by redrafting work they check themselves, save and print information. By Year 6, pupils are well supervised to use the Internet to undertake research and to use email, to use graphics that include graphs, pie-charts and photographs that combine speech and sound, and to explore different ways various colours and font styles are used to emphasis meaning. They satisfactorily use desk top publishing. These skills were evident in the presentation by Year 6 pupils of a geography research project undertaken when visiting the River Stour that used computer graphics, sound and digital photography. Their discussions about how to improve, and the skills they need to learn next, demonstrated how the use of ICT inspires pupils to reach high standards. Throughout the school, good planning and use of assistants results in pupils engrossed in work with computers. In the ICT suite, pupils in need of additional support to improve their basic skills, and to improve their use of English as an additional language, work with remarkable and sustained concentration and exclaim with glee when they master new skills. A boy told an inspector, 'You work hard in that ICT room – but I can't wait for my next lesson.'
73. The subject leader manages the subject very well through the advice and support provided for colleagues. Teachers' skills have improved a great deal since the last inspection. Good leadership skills do not match those for management because further improvement is needed in the evaluation of the effectiveness of teaching, learning and the curriculum. The school has identified improvements needed in the use of simulations and models by Year 6, for example to ask 'What if?' questions in science and the use of spreadsheets in mathematics.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

74. Information and communication technology is used well across subjects to reinforce numeracy and literacy skills and to improve learning and make it relevant to pupils' needs. For example, computer programs are used well to research topics in history and geography and pupils learn use the Internet effectively as a research tool, all of which enables them to make connections between subjects so that learning is meaningful.

HUMANITIES

75. In humanities, **one lesson was seen in history and none for geography**. It is, therefore, not possible to make judgments about provision or the quality of teaching and learning. Samples of pupils' work and teachers' planning were analysed. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Subject leadership by the headteacher ensures that the required coverage of the National Curriculum is met in both subjects.
76. In **geography**, pupils' knowledge and use of different types of maps increases as they grow older by using simple maps in Year 1 of their journeys to school, to Ordnance Survey maps downloaded from the Internet to help Year 6 pupils with research projects. By Year 2, pupils understand and use geographical terms to describe the different geographical features of various places, the different types of weather and its effect on the environment. These skills improve as pupils grow older so that by Year 6 they explain how people, the weather and changes to the earth itself have changed and altered landscapes over time. They undertake research projects with some very good use of ICT to increase their interest and understanding. In Year 5, they complete a detailed fieldwork study of a local river that leads to an in-depth research project in Year 6. By Year 6, pupils compare locations in different parts of the world to understand patterns of economic and population activity, for example, by comparing life and geographical features of a Caribbean Island with those found in their city.
77. In **history**, Year 6, pupils investigate differences in the lives of rich and poor children in Victorian times by researching from contemporary novels and parliamentary reports, all of which improves their literacy skills. Year 5 pupils investigate stories of Greek gods from the evidence of pottery.
78. In Years 3 to 6, there is an over-reliance on worksheets. While these worksheets reinforce literacy and numeracy skills they sometimes do not challenge the most able sufficiently.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

79. One **art and design** lesson, one **physical education** lesson and two **design and technology** lessons were seen. No **music** lesson was observed. It is not possible, therefore, to reach secure judgments about standards and provision or the quality of teaching and learning. Samples of pupils work and teachers' planning were analysed.
80. In the **art and design** lesson, standards and achievement were satisfactory. ICT is used appropriately to support learning and the range of artists studied supports pupils' cultural development well. Planning and work seen shows the subject covers all nationally recommended aspects of the curriculum. In **art and design**, planning reveals, at times, a lack of emphasis on improving pupils' practical and creative skills. By Year 6, standards in **design and technology** seen suggest that they are at the nationally expected levels by Year 6, although there is insufficient emphasis on the use of measurement in teachers' planning. Work analysed shows that Year 6 pupils evaluate their own work well to decide how to improve. In a Year 3 lesson, good teaching meant pupils learnt how to measure with precision when designing and making, with good effects on their numeracy skills. Displays of work and other written work seen shows that, through teachers' good attention to literacy skills, pupils

produced good written explanations that were well spelt and punctuated. **Music** is taught by a specialist teacher and requirements of the National Curriculum are met. The standard of singing in a whole school assembly was good and accompanied by a guitar. In assemblies and in some lessons, pupils learn about music from different cultures. In a Year 3 literacy lesson, pupils enthusiastically wrote and performed 'rap' poems to music. In a well taught Year 3 **physical education** lesson, the teacher paid very good attention to pupils' health and safety as they made good progress in their balancing skills through increasingly challenging routines.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education and citizenship is **very good**.

Commentary

81. Parents and pupils greatly appreciate this welcoming school's strong Christian ethos, sense of community and learning atmosphere, all of which contribute to pupils' good achievements, their eagerness to learn and their very good social and personal development. Pupils appreciate and understand the importance of school rules. Teachers and assistants take very good care of pupils. Within this caring atmosphere pupils respond confidently to the very high expectations for work and behaviour that are evident in ways they work and play so well together.
82. Provision to learn about citizenship is very good. Pupils learn what being a good citizen means by being taught to respond thoughtfully to the needs of others, for example through school assemblies, the study of different characters in literacy lessons and during times set aside each week when each class sits in a circle to think about feelings, the effects of different behaviour on others and how they can help those less fortunate than them. The school consults them about school improvements and seriously considers their ideas so that they are proud to belong to this school community. There are well advanced plans for a school council that will further improve provision for pupils to learn about citizenship.
83. Provision for health education is good. As they grow older pupils make good progress in their knowledge about the importance of diet and exercise, particularly in physical education and science lessons. Governors consult parents to approve policies to teach pupils about the dangers of the misuse of drugs and to teach the early stages of sex education.
84. All this high quality provision contributes to pupils respecting views, beliefs and cultures different from their own and to the school very successfully ensuring all pupils are fully included in all it offers.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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