

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST THOMAS' C OF E JUNIOR AND INFANT SCHOOL**

Oldham

LEA area: Oldham

Unique reference number: 105714

Headteacher: Mrs P Lodge

Lead inspector: Mr A Calderbank

Dates of inspection: 24 - 26 March 2004

Inspection number: 257975

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary  
School category: Voluntary Aided  
Age range of pupils: 4-11  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 206

School address: Thomas Street  
Lees  
Oldham  
Lancashire  
Postcode: OL4 5AT

Telephone number: 0161 6245152  
Fax number: 0161 6289048

Appropriate authority: Governing body  
Name of chair of governors: Mr R Atkinson

Date of previous inspection: 27/4/1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St. Thomas' C of E Primary School is an average sized primary school for boys and girls aged four to eleven years. The majority of the pupils who attend the main school live locally in an area consisting of mixed private and council housing. At the time of the inspection there were 206 pupils on roll. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average. Thirty-one pupils (15%) have been identified as having special educational needs, which is about the national average. The pupils receive support for a range of difficulties such as moderate learning difficulties, and emotional, behavioural and communication difficulties. Two pupils have a statement of special educational needs. There are nine pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds but none is at an early stage of English language acquisition. When children start in the reception class, their attainment is below average.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
7979	A Calderbank	Lead inspector	English Science Art and design Special educational needs
19669	F Kennedy	Lay inspector	
2465	G Yates	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Music English as an additional language
30714	D Hiscock	Team inspector	Geography History Physical education Foundation Stage

The inspection contractor was:

Nord Anglia School Inspection Services  
 Anglia House  
 Clarendon Court  
 Carrs Road  
 Cheadle  
 Stockport  
 SK8 2LA

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**St. Thomas' C of E Primary School is an effective school.** The quality of teaching is good overall. From a below average start in the reception class, pupils achieve well in English, mathematics, science, music, history and geography and attain above average standards in these subjects by the end of Year 6. The headteacher provides a very clear vision and is committed to promoting high standards. Pupils are cared for well and have very good attitudes to their work. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils are achieving well in English, mathematics, science, music, history and geography by the end of Year 6. Higher attainers are being suitably challenged especially in Years 5 and 6.
- Writing standards in Years 1 and 2 are improving but are not high enough.
- The headteacher provides the school with very good leadership and management.
- The role of the subject co-ordinator is underdeveloped.
- Teaching is good overall with a high percentage of very good teaching in Years 5 and 6.
- The school does not have a consistent approach to the marking of pupils' work.
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good overall.
- Pupils' attitudes towards their work, their behaviour and relationships are of a very high quality.
- Outdoor play activities in the reception class are not incorporated into all the areas of learning.
- Attendance is well above average.

The school has made **good** progress since it was last inspected in April 1998. Standards in English, mathematics and science have improved significantly and are now higher than those found in most schools by the end of Year 6. The full range of National Curriculum programmes of study is covered in information and communication technology (ICT) and in design and technology. Provision in the reception class has improved but more needs to be done. Governors now have a better understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school improvement plan is of a very good quality and contains appropriate priorities, which are manageable and measurable.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			Similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	B	B	B	B
Mathematics	E	D	A	A
Science	C	C	A	A

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

Pupils enter the school with below average basic skills but make **good** progress overall and achieve well by the end of Year 6. Children get off to a good start in the reception class and the majority are on line to meet the expected standards by the time they enter Year 1. Work seen during the inspection shows that standards are not as high as last year in English, mathematics and science but are still above those found in most schools by the end of Year 6. Pupils are now making good progress and achieving well in Years 1 and 2 and standards in reading, mathematics and science are broadly average by the end of Year 2. However, more needs to be done to ensure that higher attainers are suitably challenged in their writing and that pupils are provided with more opportunities to write in subjects such as history and geography. Pupils' attainment in ICT meets national

expectations by the end of Years 2 and 6. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.

**The provision to develop pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is very good.** Most pupils like going to school and attendance is well above the national average. They are encouraged to enjoy their learning and to become aware of the differing needs of others. Pupils behave very well, have very good attitudes towards their work and care for others.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

**The quality of education provided by the school and the quality of teaching and learning are good overall.** Teachers make use of a good range of teaching styles to interest and motivate pupils. Pupils are given good feedback during lessons. However, teachers' written comments when marking pupils' work do not give sufficient targets for improvement. Assessment procedures and the use made of the information are good in English, mathematics and science but the school does not have a consistent approach to assessment in other subjects. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning through the effective support they give to groups and individuals.

The school provides a good curriculum which meets national requirements. However, outdoor play activities for children in the reception class are not effectively integrated into all the areas of learning. The enrichment provided by visits and extra-curricular activities adds much to the quality of education the school provides. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Partnership with parents is good and very effective links have been established with the local community. The school provides a good level of care for its pupils and pays appropriate attention to their welfare. The procedures for seeking the views of pupils and acting upon them are good.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **satisfactory** overall. The leadership of the headteacher is **very good**. She receives good support from the deputy headteacher and the senior teacher. However, the school does not have a consistent approach to how co-ordinators carry out their role in order to monitor effectively the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects. The governing body fulfils all its responsibilities conscientiously and makes a **satisfactory** contribution to management and decision-making. Financial management is good and the school budget is spent appropriately. There is a common commitment to running a school where all pupils are included and helped to develop well both academically and socially.

## PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Most parents hold **very positive** views of the school and would feel very comfortable in approaching the school with concerns. The majority of children like being at the school and feel they receive the help and support they need.

## IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise writing standards in Years 1 and 2 by ensuring that higher attainers are suitably challenged.
- Develop the provision for outdoor play in the reception class to enable it to be effectively incorporated into all the areas of learning.
- Develop a consistent approach to the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning.
- Introduce a consistent approach to marking so that pupils understand what they have to do in order to improve their work.

(The school has already identified the above areas as being in need of improvement)



## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Overall achievement is **good**. By the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics, science, history, geography and music are above those found in most schools. By the end of Year 2, standards in English are improving but are below average overall, attainment in mathematics and science is broadly average.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in English, mathematics, science, history, geography and music by the end of Year 6.
- Higher attainers are being suitably challenged in Years 3 to 6.
- Reading has improved in Years 1 and 2 but writing standards are not high enough.
- Children in the reception class do not achieve as well in physical development as in other areas.

#### Commentary

1. When children start in the reception class their skills and knowledge in most areas of learning are below those typical for their age. Their skills and stamina in the area of physical development are average. During their time in the reception class children achieve well in all but one of the areas of learning. Though the resources for physical development have improved since the previous inspection, more still needs to be done. The limitations of the outdoor area continue to affect adversely the children's achievements. By the end of their year in reception, most children meet the standards set out in the Early Learning Goals in five of the six areas of learning. Not enough evidence was available to make a judgement about their physical achievement.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	13.6 (14.2)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	12.5 (12.5)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	15.7(15.3)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 30 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

2. In the 2003 National Curriculum tests and assessments taken at the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment was well below the national average and the average for similar schools (those with a similar number of pupils eligible for free school meals) in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. The trend in the school's results over the previous five years has been below the national trend. Teacher assessments in science indicated that standards were below average overall.
3. Pupils' achievement, which is based on their capabilities, is good and standards are rising. Inspection findings indicate that pupils' attainment against national standards in speaking and listening and reading are now broadly average. However, standards in writing are still below those found in most schools. Teachers do not provide pupils with enough opportunities to use and develop their writing skills in other subjects such as history and geography. In mathematics and science standards are now average. Good improvements have been made

in information and communication technology (ICT) since the previous inspection resulting in standards that are similar to those found in most schools.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.8 (27.7)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	29.1 (26.6)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	30.9 (28.3)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 29 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

4. In the 2003 national tests, pupils in Year 6 achieved above average standards in English and well above average results in mathematics and science. When their results are compared with those achieved by the same pupils at the end of Year 2, they show that the progress made by the pupils was above average in English and well above average in mathematics and science. The school did not achieve the target it set for the percentage of pupils to attain Level 4 in English and just fell short of it in mathematics. It did, however, meet its target with regards to the percentage expected to attain Level 5. This reflects the emphasis placed by the school to ensure that higher attainers are suitably challenged. The trend in the school's results over the past five years has been above the national trend.
5. Standards in English, mathematics and science have improved significantly since the last inspection when they were found to be satisfactory and in line with national expectations. A scrutiny of work and information from lesson observations and from discussions held with pupils demonstrates that pupils are achieving well and that standards in English, mathematics, science, history, geography and music are above those found in most schools.
6. Standards in ICT have improved since the previous inspection and are now average and pupils are provided with satisfactory opportunities to use their skills in most other subjects. It was not possible to make an overall judgement about standards in physical education. Pupils' attainment in all other subjects is similar to that found in most other schools. Religious education was the subject of a separate diocesan inspection.
7. Girls and boys have the same access to all aspects of the curriculum with no noticeable differences in the standards achieved during the inspection. Teachers ensure that all pupils, including the few from ethnic minority groups, participate fully in all activities and achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, and are suitably challenged. The school is aware of pupils' strengths and weaknesses through its assessment and testing procedures in English and mathematics. Teachers make good use of this information to plan appropriate work for the pupils and ensure that for most of the time they receive the necessary support to complete their tasks successfully.

**Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' attitudes to school are **very good**. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are **very good**. Behaviour is **very good**.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are well motivated and work hard.
- Relationships are very good.
- Pupils come to school happily, in the knowledge that they will be free from bullying and harassment.
- Attendance rates are well above the national average.
- Children behave very well.

- More emphasis could be placed on developing pupils' multi-cultural awareness.

## Commentary

8. Pupils' attitudes are very good. Their enthusiasm is apparent in their very good levels of attendance and in the interest they show in lessons and activities. This is one of the reasons why pupils learn at a good rate. Discussions held with pupils and their responses to the questionnaire clearly show that they like attending St. Thomas' school. Parents agree that their children enjoy school. Pupils are well motivated, happy to be involved in class activities and respond well to the good quality teaching. They have a pride in their achievements. In Years 3 to 6, pupils invariably enjoy meeting new challenges and use their own initiative well, because they are encouraged to do so.
9. Children in the reception class achieve well in their personal, social and emotional development. They are confident enough to share resources, take turns and to deal with new situations calmly. However, weaknesses in the outdoor provision reduce the children's scope for exploring at their own pace.
10. Pupils with special educational needs are effectively included in all activities and work well within their classes. This is especially true of the pupils who have statements.
11. The behaviour of pupils throughout the school is very good and as a result they make significant progress in lessons. The school is on more than one site and the main accommodation is two stories high. The pupils move sensibly between buildings and cope well with the steps and changes in levels. Most can be relied upon to behave responsibly even when there is no adult present. The school's philosophy builds very much on reinforcing and supporting positive behaviour.
12. Moral development is very good. Pupils respond well to school rules, many of which they helped to compile, and have a fair understanding of right and wrong. They are quick to resolve problems. This was demonstrated during a playground dispute when an older pupil calmly interrupted an argument between younger pupils and talked sensibly to defuse the situation. Pupils are polite and very friendly individuals who enjoy the chance for conversations with visitors. They are proud of their school and confirm that there is very little bullying or oppressive behaviour. Pupils are confident that teachers would listen to them and help them if they had a problem.
13. Relationships within the school are very good and it is a happy, friendly place in which to learn. There are good levels of respect and consideration for others and pupils have a genuine liking and affection for their teachers.
14. Pupils make significant progress in developing their social skills as they contribute enthusiastically to the life of the school and community. They rise to the challenge admirably when asked to undertake responsibilities. For example, pupils get the hall ready for assemblies and act as monitors and house captains. They help at playtimes and lunchtimes by organising a range of games and activities for everyone to take part in. Their involvement in playtimes is one reason why behaviour around the school is so good. The school councillors who spoke to the inspector held mature views about the school and were proud of the improvements they had been able to bring about. These included obtaining new litter bins with lids and the provision of boxes of play equipment for use at playtimes. Their latest venture is organising the adoption of a tiger through WWF.
15. Pupils' spiritual development is very good. The school fosters a climate in which pupils can sometimes develop a sense of wonder through their learning. This was noticeable in a science lesson when there was an element of surprise as the teacher cut open a grapefruit to

reveal its red flesh. In other lessons, teachers interest pupils by exploring their views and ideas. School assemblies are well planned and have a good balance of singing, prayer and reflection. Cultural development is good overall. The school is successful in developing an awareness of local and traditional British culture. Multi-cultural awareness is developed satisfactorily but too few opportunities are provided for pupils to learn in depth about the diverse cultures present in modern society.

**Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)**

Authorised absence	
School data	3.8
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.4
National data	0.4

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

16. Attendance rates are well above those found in most schools. The school places a strong emphasis on promoting attendance and has put in place good systems to record and monitor it. The very good attendance rates reflect the fact that pupils like coming to school. Very few pupils are late, allowing lessons to start promptly.

**Exclusions**

**Ethnic background of pupils**

**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – any other mixed background

No of pupils on roll
197
6
1
2

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0

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

17. No pupils were excluded in the previous academic year.

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

**Teaching and learning**

The overall quality of teaching and learning is **good**. Assessment procedures are **satisfactory** overall.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of teaching is good overall and is often very good in Years 5 and 6. As a result pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- Most teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach.
- In Years 1 and 2 pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to develop their writing skills.
- In the reception class outdoor play activities are not planned for in all the areas of learning.
- Teaching is good overall for pupils with special educational needs.
- The marking of work does not always make it clear to pupils how to improve.
- Effective use is made of a classroom assistant’s very good ICT knowledge in the teaching of specific skills.

- The very supportive relationships between pupils and staff give pupils confidence and increases their self-esteem.

## Commentary

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 35 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	10 (29 %)	16(46 %)	9(25 %)	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.*

18. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection when 40 per cent of the lessons seen were good and the quality of teaching was judged to be satisfactory. Inspection findings demonstrate that the percentage of good or better teaching has almost doubled. As a result teaching is now good overall with almost 30 per cent of teaching being very good. All staff are very sympathetic to pupils' needs and the atmosphere in class is very supportive. The weaknesses identified in ICT have been rectified and there is now more challenge for higher attaining pupils. However, there is still a need to improve opportunities for outside structured play in the reception class.
19. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall in the reception class. The teacher ensures that there is a good balance between activities led by adults and those where children choose for themselves. Routines have been firmly established and assessment information is used well to guide future planning. However, outdoor play activities are not fully integrated into all the areas of learning and this limits the opportunities for children to explore at their own pace.
20. Throughout the school the combination of good teaching and care for pupils provides a positive environment for learning. Pupils respond very well to this. Most lessons are usually prepared to a good standard and are interesting. Teachers make good use of a range of teaching styles, including role-play, to interest and motivate pupils. Consequently, learning is good and often very good, especially in Years 5 and 6. Because of this, pupils are keen to extend their knowledge and understanding. This is especially so in music with a high percentage of junior aged pupils opting to improve their musical knowledge by learning to play instruments or by becoming a member of the choir.
21. Assessment practices within school, though satisfactory overall, are variable. Sometimes teachers' marking of pupils' work does not help pupils to identify their individual strengths and weaknesses, and move their learning forward. At its best, it is good with clear direction on what the pupil needs to do to improve, and follow up comments provided when this is achieved. The means of assessing pupils' achievements are good in English, mathematics and science and sound overall in other subjects. Assessment findings provide good information that helps the school to recognise where common improvements are needed in standards in English and mathematics. For example, a weakness in developing younger pupils' skills of subtraction has now been addressed successfully. However, in other subjects there is no whole-school approach to assessment and the use made of the information.
22. Teaching in English and mathematics is good overall. Teachers have good subject knowledge in English. Reading skills are taught thoroughly throughout the school. In Years 3 to 6, teachers are good at providing pupils with appropriate opportunities to write for a variety of purposes. Key skills such as spelling, grammar, punctuation and handwriting are developed well. The teachers in Years 1 and 2 are now carefully assessing, on a regular basis, pupils' writing and standards are improving. However, the number of pupils working at the higher levels is still below that found in most schools and opportunities are missed for the pupils to use and develop their writing skills in subjects such as history and geography. In some mathematics lessons there is inappropriate use of commercial worksheets. A strength in the very good teaching of mathematics in Year 2 is the emphasis given to developing pupils' basic skills. As a result standards have risen.

23. Pupils are able to work well, both independently and collaboratively, because teachers' very good classroom management skills ensure a good climate for learning. In many lessons teachers can have, 'a bit of fun' with their pupils without interrupting the flow and pace of the lesson. For example, in a design and technology lesson in Year 5 focused on making bread, the comment 'there is a need to knead bread' was really enjoyed by the pupils!
24. Subject co-ordinators have not had opportunities to observe the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects and as such do not have a complete overview of their curriculum areas. However, the headteacher is taking positive steps to address this situation. Training in co-ordinator skills is planned and all co-ordinators are to be given some additional time to develop their roles.
25. Teachers' planning takes appropriate account of pupils with special educational needs. Support in general from teachers and other adults is effective. For example, when pupils in Year 6 are withdrawn from class for intensive tuition in mathematics, they are given work that is very appropriately focused on developing basic skills, such as the quick mental recall of number facts. As a result of this good teaching, they are making good progress and achieving well.
26. Classroom assistants are well briefed and make a valuable contribution to the quality of learning in lessons ensuring that targeted individuals and groups of pupils receive appropriate support and remain on task. However, the school does not have the resources to provide classroom support all the time and some younger pupils not under the direct control of the teacher can become distracted.

## The curriculum

The curriculum is of **good** quality. The school offers a stimulating range of worthwhile opportunities for all its pupils and a good variety of activities to enrich their lives. The quality of the school's accommodation and resources is **satisfactory**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are not enough opportunities for pupils in Years 1 and 2 to write in other subjects such as history.
- Pupils' in Years 3 to 6 use their personal research skills well.
- Provision for music is very good.
- There is good provision for pupils with additional or different needs in learning.
- The school plans particularly well for pupils' personal, social and health education and to assure the well-being of pupils as they move on to the next stage of their studies.
- A good range of additional activities widens pupils' experiences within and beyond the school day.
- Children in reception class have limited scope for learning through outdoor activities.

## Commentary

27. Since the previous inspection the school has dealt effectively with the shortcomings identified in the curriculum. There is a greater consistency in planning for subjects. Improvements are robust in the juniors (Years 3 to 6) and there are signs of improvement in the curriculum for the infants (Years 1 and 2). The curriculum for children in reception class has improved and forms a good basis on which to build. Effective features include the stronger core of skills for early reading and writing and the much improved balance of activities for children to learn through play activities in the classroom.
28. Subject plans for each year group have been reviewed thoroughly so that studies build successively on what pupils' know and can do already. As a result, the achievement of higher

attaining pupils in the juniors has quickened. This is very evident in the standards they reach in national tests taken at the end of Year 6.

29. The curriculum is well organised now and new initiatives are bringing refreshingly updated ways for the school to plan what it sets out to deliver for its pupils and how it will achieve these aims. These include not only the important skills of working with others, but also, knowing how to keep healthy and what one needs to do to become well-rounded young citizen of the future. The very thorough programme in place for this aspect of children's education carries many of the school's central messages and values, of respect, tolerance and the distinctiveness of Christianity. This is at the heart of the curriculum. The school has put in place a policy for racial equality. The policy formalises the good practice found throughout the school of all pupils being involved in all activities no matter what their background.
30. Pupils have some rich opportunities that broaden their life experiences. For example, a large number of the juniors participate in the very successful choir and in handbell ringing to beautiful effect. Added to these, pupils are encouraged to think about their own performance and how they might improve. For example, they appraise each other's performances in physical education lessons. These sessions provide pupils with the tools to develop a critical sense and the confidence to improve their work which is a vital tool for future learning.
31. Consistently well planned work in Years 3 to 6 ensures that pupils are provided with good opportunities to use their literacy skills in other subjects. As a result pupils gain the skills of research and can use them independently by Year 6. However, the opportunity for pupils in Years 1 and 2 to develop their writing skills in subjects such as history and geography are unsatisfactory. Pupils' mathematical skills are developed satisfactorily in subjects such as science and design and technology.
32. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with a statement of needs, are supported well. Work programmes are linked appropriately to pupils' individual education action plans and feature clearly in teachers' plans to ensure that children have good access to the full curriculum. Where classroom assistants provide additional support, pupils achieve a little more but there are not always enough adults to support lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs in classes with the full range of abilities.
33. The school is striving to broaden the curriculum and make good use of visits, visitors and partnership links with the secondary schools. These help the pupils to learn with a pleasing depth to their studies and assure a smooth transition to the secondary phase of their education. For example, the Year 5 trip to Blackpool helps pupils to understand how the geography of a place affects human activity. In addition, there is a good range of clubs and activities provided outside lesson time for juniors.
34. Accommodation on the upper level of the junior building is now a vibrant and functional area with much additional space to provide for the needs of different groups. It includes a library and a suite of computers. Although the buildings are adequate overall, there are aspects of the accommodation that are not helpful to pupils' studies, even though staff make huge efforts to make the spaces bright, airy and colourful. For example, the floor of the school hall is small, aged and of poor quality for indoor physical education lessons. The accommodation for children in the Foundation Stage and Year 1 is not as well maintained and contrasts starkly with the main building. The outdoor space for children in reception is limited and means that only half the children can use outdoor equipment at any one time.
35. The resources for teaching and learning continue to improve and are sufficient now. The school has prioritised well to ensure that there are enough resources to meet the needs of the topics studied but there are still some gaps. For example, children in reception have a bare range of tools for scientific exploration.

## Care, guidance and support

The school provides its pupils with a **good** level of care and gives them good support, advice and guidance. Staff pay careful attention to pupils' views and concerns.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships throughout the school are of a very high quality.
- The school makes good arrangements for seeking and acting upon pupils' views.
- Pupils receive good support, advice and guidance.
- The school provides its pupils with a safe and healthy learning environment.

## Commentary

36. The school provides a good level of care for its pupils. Child protection procedures are of a high order. The designated teacher receives appropriate training and strong support from the local education authority. The school nurse, who is based at a nearby clinic, visits the school regularly and makes a valuable contribution to its work.
37. Security and health and safety inspections are carried out regularly. Pupils are supervised carefully when crossing the road between the main building and the annexe, for example at playtimes and lunch times. Arrangements for recording and reporting accidents are thorough.
38. Procedures for monitoring and supporting the pupils' personal development are good. The school has very strong links with the church and upholds Christian values in all aspects of its life and work. Clergy come into school every week to lead an assembly and also support teaching in religious education lessons. 'Circle time' takes place in all classes, and gives pupils valuable opportunities to talk openly and honestly about their thoughts and feelings on a given topic. It forms a very important part of the programme of study for personal, social and health education and citizenship. The very good relationships that exist within the school community create a warm and friendly environment in which the pupils trust and support one another. All the adults working in the school provide very good role models for the pupils and the pupils know they can turn to adults if they have any worries or concerns.
39. Parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaires consider their children are treated fairly and expected to work hard. Almost all are of the opinion that their children like school. A small minority say that their children have experienced a degree of bullying at some stage. Parents who attended the meeting with inspectors expressed confidence in the school's anti-bullying policy and voiced their appreciation for the way in which the school's rules and behavioural expectations are made clear to pupils and parents.
40. The school council is well established and contributes toward the general level of care provided for the pupils. School councillors are currently raising funds to improve the school's outdoor environment because the pupils feel that the proposed seating area will make play times more enjoyable. One of the responsibilities of councillors is to make senior managers aware of pupils' worries and concerns about play times and lunch times, so that appropriate action can be taken. The school council has recently co-ordinated the pupils' views and ideas about how to prevent and eliminate bullying. The resulting 'bullying statement' has been approved by the governors and is now displayed in many areas of the school.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has established a **good** partnership with parents. The school has **very good** links with the church and the community and works in close partnership with other local schools.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The parents have very positive views of the school.
- The school keeps parents well informed about the life and work of the school and about their children's standards and progress.
- Procedures for dealing with parents' concerns and complaints are very good.
- Parents make a good contribution to their children's learning.
- The school has established very good links with the church and the local community. Links with other schools are good.

## Commentary

41. This aspect of the school has shown good improvement since the time of the last inspection. The consultation exercise, prior to the inspection, revealed that parents have a very high regard for the work of the school. In particular, they are happy with the way the school is led and managed, the standard of teaching and the approachability of staff. They feel their children are expected to work hard and encouraged to become mature and responsible. Parents are of the opinion that their children are treated fairly and that they like school.
42. The quality of the information provided for parents is good. Through the prospectus, the governing body's annual report and regular newsletters the parents are kept well informed with regard to the life and work of the school. Helpful information about curriculum topics is provided for parents at the beginning of every term. Very useful 'transition' booklets explain school organisation and procedures and help parents to support their children when they start school and when they transfer from the reception class to Year 1 and from Year 2 to Year 3. Formal consultation meetings, twice a year, provide suitable opportunities for the parents to discuss their children's standards and progress with class teachers. Parents of pupils on the register of special educational needs are appropriately involved in setting their children's targets and drawing up their individual education plans. Pupils' annual written reports are of a satisfactory standard.
43. Parents make a good contribution to their children's learning. They ensure their children attend school regularly, and this is reflected in the fact that the school's attendance rate is well above the national average for primary schools. A number of parents and grandparents help inside school and with school visits. Good parental support for the home-school reading scheme is having a positive impact on reading standards throughout the school.
44. Parents are made very welcome in the school. The headteacher and staff are always available to talk to parents, give advice or deal with any problems or concerns. The very supportive Parents', Teachers' and Friends' Association, the weekly coffee afternoon for parents and the thriving 'Parents' and Tots' group exemplify the way in which the school works hard to involve parents and to serve the local community.
45. Links with the church and the local community are very strong. Clergy lead weekly assemblies and parishioners help inside school. Pupils visit the church as part of the programme of study for religious education and the school holds services in the church, for example at Christmas and Easter, to which parents, friends and parishioners are invited. The school provides a valuable focal point for the local community, and the building is in constant use, outside of school hours, by church and community groups. Pupils make a weekly visit to the local library and this strongly supports their reading development. Visitors to the school, for example theatre groups and musicians, broaden and enrich the curriculum and help to make learning interesting and enjoyable. Overall, the school's links with the church and the local community make a very good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
46. The school works in close co-operation with other local schools. The Year 6 pupils spent a whole day, recently, working with pupils from two other primary schools in the parish, studying

African music and dance under the direction of visiting specialists. At the end of the day they gave a joint performance, attended by the mayor, the Director of Education, the local education authority's director of music and the Headteachers of the three schools. Good links with local secondary schools help to facilitate a smooth transfer, for Year 6 pupils, to the next stage of their education.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The governance, leadership and management of the school are **satisfactory** overall. The school is **very well** led and managed by the **headteacher** who is firmly committed to the raising of standards and the quality of teaching and learning.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides very good leadership and management.
- Most curriculum subject leaders are insufficiently involved in monitoring and evaluating their subjects.
- The headteacher, senior management team and governors are committed to providing a good quality of education which meets the needs of all the pupils.
- The school improvement plan is very well written and provides very clear guidance on what needs to be improved.

### Commentary

47. The leadership and management of the experienced headteacher are very good. She has been in post for just over a year and in this relatively short period of time has been very successful in bringing about significant improvements in standards and in the quality of education pupils receive. For example, standards in mathematics by the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6 have improved greatly. The resource base area for pupils in Years 3 to 6 has been totally transformed into well organised work bases where pupils can be withdrawn for additional support.
48. The headteacher generates an atmosphere of calm in which pupils know what is expected of them. Teachers and support assistants are equally committed. The school puts into practice very well its Christian foundation. It provides equally for all pupils whatever their attainment, race or background in keeping with its motto 'To be the best we can in the sight of God.'
49. Overall leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has created a committed and enthusiastic senior management team that is mutually supportive and makes an effective contribution to the management of the school. Management systems are good overall. The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. However, procedures for involving subject leaders in the monitoring and co-ordination of their subjects are fairly recent innovations. Co-ordinators are now more involved in evaluating some aspects of their subject such as monitoring teachers' planning and scrutinising pupils' work. However, more still needs to be done so that they can get a clearer picture and understanding of the quality of teaching and learning in their areas and how agreed policies, for example, with regards to marking are being implemented throughout the school. This is something the school is aware of and has planned training to equip subject leaders with the skills needed to carry out monitoring and evaluation activities effectively.
50. A strength in leadership and management is the school's procedures for self-evaluation and the taking of appropriate action. All the issues identified during the inspection have already been picked up by the headteacher. Since the last inspection good improvements have been made in addressing most of the Key Issues raised. At the time of the last inspection the School Development Plan was found to be an ineffective tool for improvement. This is not the case

now. The headteacher has undertaken a full and comprehensive audit of all aspects of school life. The detailed outcomes are prioritised very well in the current school improvement plan. This plan provides an excellent framework for action towards clear objectives in order to improve the quality of learning. The school's performance against schools nationally and against similar schools is checked carefully, and challenging but realistic targets are set.

51. The governance of the school is satisfactory. Governors share a common vision and support the headteacher and staff well as they strive to improve the learning opportunities for the pupils within a Christian environment. An appropriate committee structure has been established and governors have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses from the regular and detailed reports that they receive from the headteacher. Governors feel they are now involved far more in the life of the school. As such they are beginning to be more effective in taking on the role of critical friend. The governing body is clear about obtaining value for money and is rightly proud of the improvements made to the junior work areas.
52. The management of special educational needs is good overall and the school uses its own budget to supplement resources. The arrangements for the identification of pupils who have special educational needs are effective. Pupils are identified early and teachers take careful account of the targets included in the individual educational plans. The contribution made by the classroom assistants is a particular strength of the provision. However, there are times during the day in class lessons when the school does not have the resources to provide groups of pupils with extra support, which would be of benefit to them.
53. The school does not keep a record of gifted and talented pupils. The headteacher has identified this as an area for development.

## Financial information

### *Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003*

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	463,970	Balance from previous year	32,251
Total expenditure	459,623	Balance carried forward to the next	36,598
Expenditure per pupil	2,210		

54. Good procedures are in place to ensure that services and resources provide good value for money.
55. The school clerk with the support of a local education authority bursar ensures that financial control is efficient. The findings in the most recent audit report found the systems in operation to be sound. Governors receive up-to-date budgetary monitoring reports on a regular basis and the finance committee has a good overview of financial affairs. The award of contracts for work to be undertaken is carefully considered in order to obtain best value for money. The school has more than 5 per cent of its budget in reserve but this includes £20,000 owed for building work already carried out but not yet paid for.

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

The curriculum for children in reception is **good overall**. The school has improved the curriculum but is hampered by the limited space for outdoor activities. This being the case, the shortcomings noted in the previous inspection have not all been fully resolved.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The good quality of teaching and learning is based on thorough recording of children's steps towards the Early Learning Goals in this improved curriculum.
- Planning and assessment arrangements are good.
- Relationships promote a climate of calmness and order in which children behave very well.
- All the children achieve well, including those who have special educational needs.
- The outdoor accommodation for learning continues to be unsatisfactory.

#### **Commentary**

56. When children start in the reception class their skills and knowledge in most areas of learning are below those typical for their age. The exception to this is the area of physical development where children's skills and stamina are typical of most four year olds. During their time in reception children achieve well in all but one of the areas of learning. The resources for physical development have improved but there is still much to do. The limitations of the outdoor area continue to adversely affect provision.
57. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Children are keen to play and to work alongside others because adults are very clear about how they are to play and learn together. There is a good balance between activities led by adults and those where children choose for themselves. Most of these experiences are challenging and where children make choices about what to do next, they are helped by clear routines and picture signs. The very best of these activities are planned into topics.
58. At the end of their year in reception, children are ready for work in the National Curriculum. Most of them meet the standards set out in the Early Learning Goals in five of the six areas of learning. Not enough evidence was available to make a judgement about their physical achievement.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff develop the children's trust and confidence well.
- Children mature quickly into eager young learners who delight at new things.
- They behave responsibly, listen very well and care about others.

#### **Commentary**

59. Good teaching ensures that children are confident enough to share resources, take turns and change their clothes for themselves. They deal with new situations and regularly troop between buildings with a calmness and order beyond their years. This level of development is a consequence of the good role models demonstrated by the adults who work with them.

There is no stress in this caring classroom and the children want to be here. Many of them become absorbed in their work and play and show pleasure when they achieve. They are well aware of the class routines and feel happy and secure in their environment. However, the weakness in the outdoor provision reduces their scope for exploring at their own pace.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children develop good early skills for reading and use their very good knowledge of letter sounds to write.
- Children choose to write readily but there could be more invitations and reasons to write.
- Children listen very well and are listened to by adults.

### **Commentary**

60. Teaching is good and very closely focused on individual needs. It is based on a close awareness of progress towards the next steps in reading and writing. Children have very good knowledge of letter sounds and they know a lot about books. They use the familiar words and other clues to gain an idea of what is happening in the stories they share. More able children can read and spell some simple three-letter words and write a sentence independently. Children are provided with good opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills. They listen really well and are absorbed in the focused sessions. Some have the confidence to ask questions and to amuse themselves with rhyming words as they play.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- All children achieve well in their understanding of number and those who are quicker to achieve are well on course to exceed the Early Learning Goals.
- Planned activities are full of fun and help children to understand number patterns well.

### **Commentary**

61. The teaching of number is enjoyable and rigorous. As a result of good teaching, most children recognise and understand numbers to 10. They handle these with increasing confidence and are learning to handle simple everyday problems in their heads. More able pupils deal with harder ones such as: "I had 6 bananas in a bunch and I bought 4 more". The majority of children are working at the levels expected for their age and the work in their books indicates the activities they undertake promote their mathematical understanding effectively. The breadth of mathematical ideas is taught in practical ways so that, children learn, for example, which objects are lighter and which are heavier then make comparisons as they watch the balance of a scale.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

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

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children use computers really well.
- Children's understanding of the world is broadened through well linked activities.
- Children's work is very well presented.
- There are few suitable tools for investigations in scientific.

## Commentary

62. Good teaching and planning help children to make connections between their existing knowledge and that of the wider world by fusing new ideas into familiar and trusted situations. Adults provide good support for children, prompting and guiding them in situations that demand concentration. Teaching is good. Very well managed sessions using the computers means that children can use the mouse and navigate the screen using icons with relative ease. For one child with little prior experience of computers, there was a flush of delight as she succeeded. "I've done it! I can do it!" Children's work across this area of learning is remarkably well presented and their achievements are celebrated in a "book" for each child. There are too few tools for children to use for themselves and this curtails curiosity and investigation.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

No judgement could be made about provision overall.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children develop their manipulative skills well.
- Opportunities in the school hall demonstrate children's very good behaviour.
- The school has bought some new resources but there is some way to go to develop children's strength, mobility and stamina on large equipment.
- There is a lack of outdoor space that adversely affects children's opportunities to achieve as well as they might.

## Commentary

63. Children have plenty of opportunities to use small tools and materials. They show skills and control that are typical for their age when they handle paintbrushes, pencils and manipulate small figures. Newly purchased resources include scooters, trikes and a small slide. Overall, and despite improvements in resources, it is likely that some children do not achieve as well or as quickly as they could. When they walk across to the main building for lessons in the school hall, they show a good understanding of safety and self-control. Both indoor and outdoor opportunities could be bettered.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for creative development is **sound** and there are some improvements since the previous inspection.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are imaginative in their play.
- They explore musical instruments and respond to simple rhythms with pleasure.
- Some resources for construction and exploration are mediocre and as such do not encourage quality play.

## Commentary

64. Evidence from children's activities in play in the hall and using small world figures indicates that children are very engaged in their experiences and gain from well planned sessions that fire their imaginations. Teaching and learning are good overall and most children are working at the levels expected for their age. Children are given opportunities to draw and paint and have access to a range of appropriate resources to express themselves creatively. There are good opportunities for role-play and most children play imaginatively and purposefully together. Children thoroughly enjoy participating in singing and most can tap out the syllables of their name to the rhythm of a familiar song.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well by the end of Year 6 and higher attainers are being appropriately challenged.
- Standards in writing are improving in Years 1 and 2 but are still not high enough.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. A high percentage of teaching is very good in Years 3 to 6.
- Teachers' written comments in pupils' books do not always make clear how pupils can improve their work.
- The co-ordinator has not had the opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school.

## Commentary

65. Pupils enter the school often with language skills below average. They achieve well in their time at the school because of good learning opportunities. Standards by the end of Year 6 have improved since the previous inspection and are above those found in most schools. There is no obvious difference between the achievements of boys and girls or of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds.
66. Though standards in English are below average overall in Years 1 and 2, they are improving rapidly. These improvements are due to an updating of the literacy policy, the introduction of a new phonic scheme and a systematic approach to the assessment of pupils' skills in reading and writing. As a result of these initiatives reading standards are now broadly average. The proportion of the pupils achieving the higher levels is above those found in most schools. However, more needs to be done to improve writing.
67. Children enter the school as confident speakers. They are not afraid to ask questions and initiate a conversation. By the end of year 2, most pupils listen well and express themselves clearly. They are given appropriate opportunities to practise their speech such as when using stick puppets and pretending to be characters from their shared text 'The shark with no teeth'. Good opportunities are provided in lessons for pupils to develop their understanding through discussing issues in pairs or small groups. For example, in a very good lesson in Year 6, pupils debated whether children should be allowed unregulated access to the Internet. A lively discussion developed as pupils approached the problem from different perspectives such as that of a grandparent. Teachers encourage pupils to participate in lessons and use questioning skillfully to cover the range of abilities in the class.

68. Reading standards are improving in Years 1 and 2. Pupils are now being tested on a regular basis and their progress carefully tracked. Standards are broadly average. Higher attainers read with good expression and enjoy books. One described reading as being, "Just like a film in your head!" They can discuss the work of different authors. For example, one higher attainer when comparing Jacqueline Wilson's work with a fairy story said, "It's just more modern." Average and below average pupils use individual letter sounds effectively to make sense of unfamiliar words but do not blend letter sounds together as well as they should. Good progress is made in the juniors and by the end of Year 6 standards are above average. Pupils enjoy reading, particularly authors such as J.K. Rowling and Roald Dahl. One above average pupil had read 'Animal Farm' by George Orwell and could explain the political meaning, "It has a hidden message. It really grabs you. It's all about politics. The pigs became as bad as the farmers." Pupils have good library skills and can find information from non-fiction books very quickly using the contents page or the index. However, the books in the library are not organised systematically enough and pupils have to spend too much time trying to find a particular book.
69. Writing standards are below average by the end of Year 2. The proportion of pupils working at the higher levels is below that found in most schools. Younger pupils build up their knowledge of letters and sounds and spelling of common words effectively through regular short activities. Teachers teach handwriting and spelling regularly, which is helping to improve the standard and presentation of pupils' work. Pupils are beginning to write longer pieces of work. For example, pupils in Year 2 have written about a special day during their holidays. One wrote, 'I danced on the beach with a grass skirt on and it was red, green and yellow and blue.' However, they are not provided with sufficient opportunities to write in subjects such as history and geography. Good progress is made in the development of pupils' writing skills in the juniors and by the end of Year 6 standards are above average. At the time of the previous inspection, it was found that pupils did not have sufficient opportunities to develop their ideas using different kinds of writing. This is not the case now. Pupils write for a very good range of purposes and audiences. They think that it is "cool to write." This attitude is reflected in the quality of their work as in, "It was silent. All you could hear was the gentle hoot of the owl. As I walked down the dark side street, I tipped my head back and saw the beautiful, round, silver moon."
70. Teaching has improved since the last inspection and is good overall with some very good teaching observed in Years 3 to 6. Developments, which have led to improvements in teaching and learning, include:
- Tracking pupils' progress throughout their time in school with regular tests and assessments in reading and writing.
  - These help teachers to allocate pupils to groups so that they plan the work to match pupils' needs closely.
  - Good support and training opportunities for staff, leading to increased professional expertise in the classroom.
  - Improved resources, particularly reading books.
- However, there is no consistent approach to the marking of pupils' work throughout the school. For example, not all teachers use the information from pupils' work to set individual targets so that pupils have a clear idea of how to improve their work. This hinders pupils from making quicker progress in their writing. Support for pupils with special educational needs is of good quality and helps these pupils achieve well, with work closely matched to their abilities.
71. The co-ordinator is very keen and carries out his duties conscientiously. Though he has contributed greatly to the improvements made in provision and standards, he has not been given the time to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, he does not have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the teaching of literacy, and the guidance some teachers may need to improve aspects of their teaching.

## Language and literacy across the curriculum

72. Overall, teachers provide good opportunities in other subjects for pupils to develop their literacy skills especially in Years 3 to 6. For example, pupils in Year 6 have used the Internet to research information about their favourite authors and write interesting reports in history and geography. However, insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to use and develop their speaking skills in assemblies, which tend to be teacher-led.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well, especially higher attainers, and by the time pupils leave standards are above average.
- Pupils' attitudes towards the subject are consistently very good. Pupils enjoy carrying out calculations.
- Teaching is of a good quality and as a result pupils achieve well. There are some good examples of marking being used well to set targets for improvement but there is no consistent approach across the school.
- The leadership of the subject is good.
- In Years 1 and 2 standards are improving but more needs to be done to improve pupils' knowledge of technical terms.
- In some lessons there is over-use of commercial worksheets.

### **Commentary**

73. Standards are average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. Higher attainers achieve well in Year 6. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. The quality of learning has improved since the previous inspection when it was reported that the work for higher attainers was not suitably differentiated. In most classes, teachers ensure that work is closely matched to pupils' ability. As a result, all pupils are now achieving well.
74. In Year 2 standards are improving because teaching is of a very good quality with the work suitably focused on developing pupils' numeracy skills. For example, pupils use their knowledge of multiples of three in a practical application with confidence. Also they can accurately use the correct notation to interpret and solve problems using numbers to 20. However, in both Years 1 and 2 some pupils when asked to find out the answers to written problems are unable to carry out these activities quickly enough, because they struggle to understand some of the technical vocabulary such as 'how much change'. Higher attaining pupils do well and can subtract two-digit numbers from numbers below 50 accurately. The work pupils are asked to do in Year 1 is now more challenging but sometimes the overuse of commercial worksheets detracts from the objective of the lesson.
75. In Year 6, pupils are able to conduct investigations associated with using numbers to two decimal places and apply their knowledge of inverse operations well. Most pupils demonstrate speed and accuracy in carrying out mental calculations. They can convert fractions into decimals, identify angles, find the perimeter and areas of regular shapes and use percentages in problem solving situations. A survey of previous work and discussions with pupils in the 'booster group' demonstrates that the regular withdrawal of pupils from the Year 6 class is highly beneficial in raising standards of attainment for this group of pupils.
76. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. As a result of good teaching, most pupils achieve well and show positive attitudes towards the subject. Most lesson plans show appropriate tasks being set, according to the prior attainment levels of the pupils. However, in

some classes work sheets restrict the progress made during the lesson because pupils find the instructions too difficult to follow. In the best lessons pupils were keen to answer and enjoyed the challenge, for example, of identifying number patterns. Plenary sessions were used effectively to reinforce learning, to extend thinking or to celebrate success.

77. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory overall. The subject co-ordinator has a clear vision for the further development of the subject and has scrutinised pupils' work. However, she has not yet received training on how to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in order to identify strengths and areas for development. Assessment procedures and the use made of the findings are effective. For example, an analysis of test results resulted in greater emphasis being placed in Year 2 on pupils' developing their skills of subtraction. As a result this weakness in provision has been addressed successfully. The co-ordinator recognises the need to extend the use of marking to include individual targets for improvement for older pupils. Resources are of a good quality.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

78. Mathematical skills are used soundly in other subjects. In design and technology pupils use their weighing skills well. In science, graphs have been produced to demonstrate how distance affects sound. In another class graphs have been made to show the best sound insulators. In geography pupils use their numeracy skills well to work out problems related to scale drawings. In ICT, pupils use data they have collected well to construct spreadsheets.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well and attain above average standards by the end of Year 6.
- Standards are improving in Years 1 and 2 and pupils are now achieving well and attainment is broadly average.
- Teaching is good in Years 3 to 6.
- Pupils enjoy scientific investigations.
- The co-ordinator for science has not had the opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching throughout the school.

### **Commentary**

79. Standards achieved in science are broadly average by the end of Year 2. These findings are similar to those made at the time of the previous inspection when pupils' attainment was judged to be in line with national expectations. Most pupils are working at or around the expected level for their age. In 2003 teacher assessments showed pupils' attainment to be below average. However, inspection evidence indicates a better picture, with standards improving in response to more emphasis being placed on experimental and investigative science. By age seven, pupils can distinguish between pushing and pulling forces. They have studied growth and spoke enthusiastically about a visit made by a mother with her baby. They worked in pairs to draw up a series of questions to ask and "tried some baby food to see what it was like." Pupils in Year 1 developed their observational skills well when they looked closely at a variety of fruits and learnt that a seed is like "a little package of new life" which, given the right conditions, can grow into a new fruit tree. In this lesson good links were made with art and design when pupils produced observational drawings of fruit segments.
80. A scrutiny of work shows that pupils cover a good range of scientific topics and investigations in Years 3 to 6. Discussions held with pupils show that they enjoy their work, especially when they are given the opportunity to engage in practical activities. They displayed a very good

knowledge of what makes a test fair and explained clearly how they would go about setting up an experiment to find out which brand of washing powder was the most effective. In one very good lesson, pupils in Year 6 used their ICT skills well to model what would happen to the brightness of a bulb if the power of the batteries was increased. They learnt that too much power could blow the bulb. They were able to apply their new knowledge to good effect when it came to actually doing the investigation. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys or girls or pupils from different ethnic groups.

81. Only one lesson was seen in Years 1 and 2, so it is not possible to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching throughout the school. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good overall with much that is very good. Teaching is effective because it includes a strong practical element that helps pupils' understanding and enhances the quality of learning, especially for pupils with special educational needs. This was very evident in Year 5 when the pupils worked energetically to identify factors that could have an effect upon pulse rate. They were very careful to try to ensure that the tests were fair. Good links were made with mathematics as they recorded their findings as graphs. In addition to lesson observations, an analysis of work shows that most pupils are making consistently good progress, particularly in the understanding and use of scientific vocabulary. Skills of investigation are also progressively developed. Pupils' learning is based on prediction, enquiry, observation, and recording of what has been found out. The quality of teaching has a very positive impact on pupils' attitudes and enjoyment of the subject. Pupils are well motivated, show genuine interest and are keen to answer questions. They co-operate with each other sensibly in practical work. Teachers give pupils constructive verbal feedback during lessons but written comments in pupils' books, whilst being positive and supportive, rarely identify what pupils have to do next in order to improve.
82. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory overall. The co-ordinator has good subject expertise and is very keen. She has taken effective action to address the areas of weakness identified in the previous report and has successfully promoted a more practical approach. However, she has not been given the time to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in the subject throughout the school. Resources are good and organised very well.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in ICT is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good improvements have been made since the previous inspection when National Curriculum requirements were not being met. As a result, standards are in line with those found in most schools.
- Good use is made of a support assistant to help pupils develop their ICT skills.
- Up-to-date equipment is available to enable pupils to use their skills. However, there is little evidence that ICT is used in withdrawal groups to help pupils with special educational needs.
- There is no whole-school approach to recording pupils' skill development.

### **Commentary**

83. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 are attaining standards that are at the nationally expected level. Progress in other years is good and pupils achieve well in their time at the school. However, opportunities are missed when special educational needs pupils are withdrawn for additional support to use ICT to help them to progress. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection when not all areas of the ICT curriculum were being covered. Since then, the introduction of a small computer suite and a concentrated training programme have had a positive effect on improving the provision in the subject.

84. Most Year 2 pupils can manipulate a mouse accurately. With adult support pupils can use the Internet and save information to a word file. They use the shift key well to locate capital and lower case letters. Pupils understand that technology can be used for different purposes. For example, they know that washing machines can be programmed to operate in advance. Pupils are able to program a roamer to move in different directions. By the end of Year 6, there is strong evidence of pupils typing directly to screen with good attention given to presenting work well. They can use text and colour to produce their own reports. Pupils can interrogate a database successfully and use the results to produce different types of graphs. Many pupils are able to load, save work, print and choose from a menu.
85. It is not possible to make any overall judgement about the quality of teaching. In the lessons observed work was planned suitably to meet pupils' needs. Effective use is made of a classroom assistant who has very good ICT expertise. She keeps detailed notes on the progress pupils make and uses the information well in ensuring that work is matched to pupils' needs. During the week of the inspection, in the lessons seen, teaching was of a good quality. Learning was made relevant because the work they did was linked to their own interests. For example, pupils in Year 6 developed their own slide presentations of their favourite pets.
86. The management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has good subject expertise. She is keen to improve standards. There is, however, no consistent approach to the recording of pupils' progress and the monitoring of teaching and learning. A support assistant from the local education authority provides appropriate technical advice. Resources are of a good quality but there is a need for additional roamers so that pupils can have more opportunities to use and develop their skills in the control aspect of ICT. All ICT hardware and software is well maintained.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

87. Information and communication technology is planned for soundly in most subjects. Good use is made of ICT in literacy, with pupils in Year 6 using the Internet to research famous authors and produce their own well-processed reports. In history in Year 1 pupils use the 'appleworks' program well to draw their own pictures of Queen Victoria. Pupils in Year 5 use the computer to very good effect in designing packaging as part of a design and technology project. A good display of well-presented work in the junior building heightens the profile of the subject.

### **HUMANITIES**

No lessons were seen in history or geography. Sufficient evidence was gathered from a scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning to enable judgements to be made about standards by the end of Year 6. There was insufficient evidence to judge attainment by the end of Year 2. Religious education was not inspected.

### **GEOGRAPHY**

#### **Commentary**

88. In geography, pupils' achievement and attainment is above average by the end of Year 6. In Years 3 to 6, pupils' work indicates that the shortcomings identified in the previous inspection have been dealt with. Moreover, there is a streamlined approach to teaching the skills necessary for personal research. These important skills blossom in the topics that each pupil in Year 6 undertakes. Pupils research a river or place of their choice and present their work with all the organisational features of an information book. In addition, geographical fieldwork extends pupils' knowledge and ensures that they have a thorough understanding of how to use and draw maps. In one example, pupils were able to compare a series of old and new maps of Lees and so they became knowledgeable young geographers; observant of detail and interested enough to ask more questions.

## **HISTORY**

### **Commentary**

89. History displays and pupils' work reflect a vibrant curriculum in Years 3 to 6 but in Years 1 and 2 there is too much copied work, insufficient use of pupils' own ideas and little opportunity to practise their writing. Pupils' growing awareness of the past is seen at best in their exploration of history through art. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 produce a lot of work of good quality and in fact the more able pupils in Year 6 can research, select and combine their information very well. They also relish the details of past life and locate interesting snippets of information to use. This is evident in their findings about the Egyptians: "A lot of people would work on the tombs. Slaves...or even farmers...who couldn't work on the land because it was the flood". Although no lessons were seen during the inspection, it is evident from pupils' books that marking is inconsistent. At best, pupils know what to do to improve their work and they do it.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

### **ART AND DESIGN**

#### **Commentary**

90. No lessons were seen so no overall judgements can be made about teaching or provision in art and design. Discussions held with pupils and a scrutiny of work show standards by the end of Year 6 to be similar to those found in most schools. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about standards in Years 1 and 2. Pupils in years 3 to 6 develop a satisfactory range of skills and are provided with the opportunity to work with an appropriate variety of media. They make sound progress.
91. Art and design makes a valuable contribution towards pupils' cultural development and the quality of the learning environment. For example, pupils in Year 1 have studied the work of Vincent Van Gogh and used pastels and paints to create Sunflowers whilst pupils in Year 3 sculptured a very effective processional dragon to celebrate the Chinese New Year. Throughout the school, there are good examples of art and design being used to support the work being done in other subjects. Pupils in Year 6 recently visited a neighbouring school and enjoyed a whole day of African music, singing and dance. In preparation for this, they tie-dyed their own T-shirts. In Year 1 the pupils used watercolours to paint detailed images of a variety of fruits they had been examining during a science lesson. Computerised programs of well-known artists are used as inspirations for similar work.
92. Most staff have undertaken recent training and a new scheme of work has been introduced to support more adventurous approaches. There is a good range of resources but limited space for making and displaying three-dimensional work. There is no whole school approach to the assessment and recording of pupils' achievements as they progress through the school.
93. The management of the subject is satisfactory overall but no opportunities have yet been found to influence the work of other teachers by observing colleagues teaching and giving them feedback to help them improve.

### **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

#### **Commentary**

94. Only one lesson was seen in design and technology and as such no overall judgements can be made about provision and the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers' planning demonstrates that pupils are introduced to the full design process. The school has worked hard to improve standards in design and technology which were found to be below national

expectations by the end of Year 6 at the time of the previous inspection. The full range of the National Curriculum programme of study is now in place and pupils' achievements are similar to those found in most schools by the end of Years 2 and 6.

95. Discussions held with pupils show that they take great pride in their work. Displays of model fairground rides and of breakfast cereal packages designed and constructed by pupils in Year 6 are of good quality. Pupils in Year 2 have constructed their own moveable vehicles. In the one lesson seen in Year 5, teaching was of a very good quality. Pupils were making their own bread. Good links were made with mathematics as they measured out accurately quantities of flour.

## **MUSIC**

Provision in music is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are given very good opportunities to develop their singing and instrumental skills.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall in Years 3 to 6 and pupils achieve well attaining above average standards.
- The range and quantity of pre-recorded music resources is in need of improvement.

### **Commentary**

96. Music is a strength of the school, and has very positive influence upon its life. It is not possible to make any judgements about music in Years 1 and 2. Standards of attainment by the end of Year 6 have been maintained since the previous inspection and are still above average. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve well. The school has improved the range of instrumental provision with the addition this year of a woodwind group.
97. The school has ensured that the time available for the subject to be taught is in line with that recommended. As a result, pupils receive a well-balanced curriculum. Weekly class music lessons that focus on all aspects of the subject provide pupils with very good opportunities to develop their skills. Pupils of all attainment levels, including those with special educational needs achieve well.
98. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 benefit from being able to receive instrumental tuition on a range of orchestral instruments. They have the opportunity to join a choir and to play brass or woodwind orchestral instruments. Pupils can also learn to play recorders, guitars or hand bells. There is a high up take for all activities with, for example, over 60 pupils in the school choir. The very good provision for music has a very positive affect on pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development. Pupils' social development is very well promoted through the sharing and mutual support required in being a member of a choir. Their cultural development is heightened through their contacts with a rich variety of music ranging from modern to classical.
99. Throughout the school, pupils sing with enjoyment, confidence and a good sense of timing and rhythm. Volume, direction and breathing are well controlled, and pitch is almost always more accurate than usual for pupils of this age. Pupils understand what tuneful singing means, and when asked to take part in a 'three part round' respond well. For example, in Year 5 they quickly picked up the idea of singing in a 'three part' version of the round 'Shalom'. In choir practices they follow the conductor well, and improve their performance rapidly in rehearsal. As a result, music in performance is very successful.
100. In the lessons seen in Years 3 to 6 teaching was of a very good quality. Teachers made good use of commercial materials. They involved all pupils in making music and lessons were planned very well. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, pupils were given the opportunity to develop

their singing skills and to refine their instrumental and performing skills. What was very apparent was that pupils really enjoy making music and are keen to improve on their previous best.

101. The management of the subject is good. The school's co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and shares her expertise well by teaching lessons in a class other than her own. Resources are of a satisfactory quality but there is a need for a wider collection of recorded music to develop pupils' music appreciation skills. Very good use is made of visiting peripatetic specialist teachers. Instrumental tuition is enhanced further because some pupils benefit from the wonderful expertise and experience of a senior citizen who teaches handbell ringing.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

### **Commentary**

102. No judgement on the quality of provision for physical education could be made because a limited number of lessons were seen in each aspect of the physical education curriculum.
103. Pupils achieve well in the juniors. The two lessons in gymnastics observed in Years 5 and 6 demonstrate that at the age of 11, attainment in this aspect of the subject is typical of pupils of a similar age. Pupils build on their skills because of very well organised lessons in the cramped school hall. Sequences of gymnastic movements are created, rehearsed and appraised by pupils who are encouraged to improve their performance. They do this with characteristic enthusiasm and thought. Although pupils show average levels of control and balance, the quality of their teamwork, effort and imagination is higher. Pupils in Year 5 devise their own warm-up sessions and do so with remarkable awareness of the effect on their bodies. Good planning and strong teacher knowledge are features of these lessons. Athletics in Year 3 promoted good levels of stamina and helped pupils to adjust their speed and effort for running long and short distances. Conditions on this public field used by the school were unpleasant. The dance lesson observed in Year 1 was satisfactory. Pupils enjoyed the taped music and followed the simple steps well enough.
104. The accommodation for physical education is not one of quality. Apart from the limited space, the wooden floor is aged and in need of repair. Resources are satisfactory overall. The school is aware of the need to purchase new resources of quality to match the improved curriculum and policy for the subject.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

Personal, social and health education and citizenship were sampled, as not enough lessons were seen to support an overall teaching and learning judgement. The school provides very good opportunities for pupils to learn respect for the values and beliefs of other pupils and adults, and to develop confidence.

### **Commentary**

105. Assemblies and timetabled lessons play an important part in developing in pupils a sense of self-worth. For example, during one assembly, pupils were asked to consider why they should feel special. One responded with "I came to school on time today." The teacher immediately picked up on this and made a point of praising her because this was quite an achievement for this particular pupil.
106. The school views pupils' personal development as highly important and the outcomes of the school's approach can be clearly seen in the very good attitudes, behaviour and relationships. Pupils learn that they can play an active part in citizenship, through activities such as being involved in the school council. The school participates in the Healthy Eating scheme, in which pupils have fresh fruit for their snacks each day and water is readily available to them. The

school is applying for an accreditation for this scheme. Sex education and education about drugs are addressed appropriately. Work in these areas helps pupils to develop an awareness of having a healthy lifestyle.

107. The adoption of a clear policy and whole-scheme of work ensures that knowledge and understanding are developed progressively as pupils move through the school. Teachers make good use of specialists such as the school nurse to give talks on specific issues.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

