

INSPECTION REPORT

ST THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Saffron Walden

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115263

Headteacher: Mrs M Hall

Lead inspector: Mike Capper

Dates of inspection: September 15th – 17th 2003

Inspection number: 257978

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:	205
School address:	South Road Saffron Walden Essex
Postcode:	CB11 3DW
Telephone number:	(01799) 523248
Fax number:	(01799) 525800
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr K McLoughlin
Date of previous inspection:	June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a voluntary aided Catholic primary school, which admits pupils between the ages of four and 11. There are 205 pupils on roll and they are taught in seven single-age classes. Pupils come from generally favourable home backgrounds and the number eligible for free school meals is below average. There are 19 pupils on the register of special educational needs. This is broadly average with pupils having a range of needs. The number with statements of special educational need (two pupils) is also broadly average for the size of school. Pupils' attainment is above average overall when they join the school at the start of the Reception Year. There are three pupils with English as an additional language. Their home languages are Spanish or Malaysian.

The school received a School Achievement Award and a Healthy School Award in 2002.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23239	Mike Capper	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage, mathematics, Information and communication technology (ICT), physical education, English as an additional language
9545	Kevin Greatorex	Lay inspector	
23609	Alison Cartlidge	Team inspector	English, geography, history, citizenship , special educational needs
30904	Maureen Reardon	Team inspector	Science, art and design, design and technology, music

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **very good** school. Pupils behave very well and have very positive attitudes towards learning. Attainment is high in many subjects and pupils achieve well. Very good management means that there is a clear understanding of how the school can improve further. The school provides **good** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- the inspirational leadership of the headteacher has maintained the very strong Christian ethos of the school whilst ensuring that there is a very strong shared commitment to achieving high standards in all areas of the school's work;
- pupils' attainment is very good in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6;
- the school is very inclusive; members of staff value and welcome pupils from different backgrounds and with differing needs;
- the very good partnership between home and school makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning;
- good quality teaching means that children learn well in lessons and over time; and
- there is not enough time in Years 3 to 6 to cover the history and geography curriculum in sufficient detail.

The school has made good progress since the last inspection in 1998. High standards have been maintained and there is now no unsatisfactory teaching. Weaknesses in provision for information and communication technology and children in the Reception Year have been successfully addressed.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	A*	A*	A	B
mathematics	A*	A*	A	B
science	A*	A*	A	C

Key: A - very high; 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' **achievement** is **good** throughout the school, with National Curriculum test results showing a good improvement from 2002 to 2003, especially in science at the end of Year 6 where over two-thirds of pupils achieved the higher Level 5.

In the Reception Year, standards are very good in personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy, with the majority of children on target to exceed expectations for their age by the end of the Reception Year. Standards are good in knowledge and understanding of the world, mathematical and creative development. There is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on children's attainment in physical development.

By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment is well above average in reading, writing and mathematics and above average in science. In science, there are some missed opportunities to extend more able pupils, especially in the way that they record work. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is well

above average in English, mathematics and science. Speaking and listening are very good throughout the school but some written work is not presented neatly enough.

Pupils' attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) is good by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. In history and geography, pupils' attainment is good by the end of Year 2, but only satisfactory by the end of Year 6 where there is some underachievement when compared with pupils' attainment in other subjects.

The **very good provision** for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, enables pupils to become very caring, thoughtful and responsible. The pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour make a significant contribution to their learning and achievement. The school is very good at taking into account pupils' views. Levels of attendance are satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **very good**. **Very good levels of care and good quality teaching** mean that pupils are able to learn well throughout the school. Key features of teaching are the good quality assessments and the effective way that teachers plan work to meet the needs of all pupils. Setting in mathematics is very effective, especially in Years 3 to 6 in ensuring that there are high levels of challenge for more able pupils as well as very good levels of support for children identified as having special educational needs.

The breadth of the curriculum is only satisfactory overall because there are weaknesses in provision for history and geography in Years 3-6. Accommodation is good. The school has plans to provide a secure outdoor area for children in the Reception Year to extend opportunities for working freely outside. High staffing levels in mathematics and specialist teaching in music have a very good impact on learning. The school is successful in enriching the curriculum through a good range of additional activities such as clubs, visits and visitors. There is a very good partnership with parents and the school works closely with the local community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of the leadership and management of the school is very good. The headteacher has extremely high aspirations, motivates staff very effectively and provides excellent leadership for the work of the school, with management being very good. Members of staff work well together as a team. The headteacher has enabled them to develop their roles and responsibilities so that they can make an important contribution to school improvement. Monitoring of the school's work is rigorous, helping to ensure that weaknesses are addressed.

The headteacher is supported by a very hard-working governing body, which ensures that governance is very good. They play a very effective role in planning for school improvement. Careful financial planning has helped the governing body to retain staff.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very supportive of the work of the school. They have no major concerns although a small number would like more information about their children's progress. The school is addressing this issue by introducing an additional written report at the end of the autumn term. However, some parents would also like an opportunity for a parent/teacher consultation meeting in the first term of the academic year.

Pupils are happy at school. They feel that they are valued and are listened to by members of staff.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important thing the school should do to improve is:

- review the balance of the curriculum in Years 3 to 6, including the amount of time taken up by swimming lessons and to raise the achievement of pupils in history and geography.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is good throughout the school, with children in the Reception Year and pupils in Years 1 to 6 achieving well in relation to their capabilities. Standards of attainment are very good in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6, with all pupils making good gains in knowledge and skills. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys or girls or pupils from different backgrounds, including the very small number with English as an additional language.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs, enabling them to achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment.
- Reading skills are very well developed throughout the school.
- Speaking and listening skills are very good. Pupils are very confident and articulate and listen very carefully in lessons.
- Pupils' number skills are a particular strength in mathematics.
- The percentage of pupils (70 per cent) achieving Level 5 in tests at the end of Year 6 in 2003 was very high.
- Investigative work is a strong feature of pupils' work in science.
- There is very good provision for more able pupils in mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6.
- Pupils' handwriting is variable in quality.
- Pupils do not achieve as well as they should in history and geography by the end of Year 6 because there is not enough time to study some topics in sufficient detail.

Commentary

1. Children in the Reception Year achieve well, benefiting from good quality teaching. As a result, children make good progress, acquiring new skills quickly and achieving good standards overall. Standards are very good in personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy, with the majority of children on target to exceed expectations for their age by the end of the Reception Year. Standards are good in knowledge and understanding of the world, mathematical and creative development. There is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on children's attainment in physical development.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.3 (18.6)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	14.7 (15.7)	14.4 (14.3)
mathematics	17.6 (17.7)	16.5 (16.2)

There were 28 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. Inspection findings show that by the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment is well above average in English and mathematics and above average in science. National curriculum tests results in 2002 confirm that pupils' attainment was well above average in reading and mathematics and average in writing when compared with all schools. When compared with similar schools, pupils' attainment was above average in reading, average in mathematics and below average in writing. However, test results for 2003, for which comparative data is not yet available, show good improvement from 2002, especially in writing where a much higher number of

pupils achieved the higher Level 3. Writing has been a focus for school development over the last year, leading to better performance in tests and a higher quality of work, although the pupils' handwriting is still variable in quality.

3. In science, where teachers assess pupils' attainment, in 2002 all pupils achieved the expected level for their age (Level 2) but only an average number of pupils achieved the higher Level 3. Again, 2003 results show a good improvement, with more pupils achieving Level 3. Nevertheless, pupils' attainment is lower in science by the end of Year 2 than it is by the end of Year 6 because there are some missed opportunities to extend the learning of more able pupils.
4. Test results confirm that there is no significant difference between the attainment of boys or girls or pupils from different backgrounds. Results in 2003 reverse the slight downward trend that was evident from 2001 to 2002 at the end of Year 2.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.6 (30.9)	27.0 (27.0)
mathematics	29.6 (29.9)	26.7 (26.6)
science	30.2 (31.3)	28.3 (28.3)

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

5. Inspection findings show that by the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is well above average in English, mathematics and science. This is confirmed by National Curriculum test results in 2002. Results for 2003 show a continued improvement in attainment, especially in science where more than two-thirds of pupils achieved the higher Level 5. This is because of the very good quality teaching of science, which has a very good impact on pupils' learning. In mathematics, pupils have been well supported through the grouping by prior attainment for lessons. This has meant that needs have been met well. Although the group of pupils taking the tests in 2003 was identified as comparatively weak, they achieved well in relation to their capability, exceeding the targets that had been set. Almost all pupils reached the expected level expected for their age (Level 4) and a significant number achieving the higher level (Level 5).
6. Other areas of focus for the inspection were ICT, where pupils' attainment is good and history and geography, where attainment is good by the end of Year 2 but only satisfactory by the end of Year 6. In ICT, pupils achieve well, benefiting from the good opportunities to apply their skills in lessons. In history and geography, pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 with pupils extending their knowledge at an appropriate rate. However, by the end of Year 6 there is some underachievement, with some topics being studied superficially due to insufficient time being allowed for the teaching of the subject.
7. The very small number of pupils with English as an additional language in Years 1 to 6 are supported well and make good progress. Teachers are aware of their needs and plan work accordingly, ensuring that there is an appropriate focus on language development.
8. Throughout the school, pupils confidently use their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. However, the use of writing to support learning is underdeveloped in history and geography in Years 3 to 6 and there is little evidence of the library being used for pupils to carry out research.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The very good provision for developing personal qualities, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, enables pupils to become very caring, thoughtful and responsible. The pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour make a significant contribution to their learning and achievement. They arrive at school punctually and rates of attendance are in line with national averages.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Interesting activities and clear explanations enable pupils to listen and concentrate very well in lessons.
- Clear school and class rules, written with the help of the pupils at the start of the school year and the well-planned use of rewards result in very good behaviour at all times of the day.
- There are very good opportunities for older pupils in particular, to take responsibility and they respond sensibly and maturely. For example, when acting as 'buddies' in Years 4 and 5, they support the learning of younger pupils effectively.
- The high profile of multicultural education helps pupils to appreciate and respect the beliefs, customs and views of other people, many of whom they would not have occasion to meet at the school or in their local community.
- Adults in the school provide very good, caring role models and pupils develop very good relationships and support each other's specific, including special, needs with sensitivity.
- A calm and contemplative atmosphere during collective worship enables pupils to reflect on spiritual matters and as in a class assembly in Year 2, they share prayer topics honestly.
- When given shared tasks such as carrying out investigations in science in Year 6, pupils collaborate with each other very well.
- The school values pupils' opinions and provides them with very good opportunities to express themselves and build self-esteem and confidence during lessons and in school and class council meetings.
- Pupils with special educational needs are valued and supported very well by all members of the school community and take an active part in reviewing their own progress.
- Some parents of children in the Reception class do not take full advantage of the opportunities offered and attendance in this class is lower than it should be.
- Pupils are not given enough encouragement to present their work neatly and to correct their own errors.

Commentary

9. The school's very good provision for personal development and the responsiveness of pupils have been maintained successfully from the time of the last inspection. The excellent leadership and example set by the headteacher and the inclusive ethos of the school means that girls and boys of all ages and abilities feel safe and happy. Members of staff provide very clear guidance on how pupils can become tolerant, responsible citizens. Pupils are very positive about all aspects of school life and parents feel that the very few instances of bullying are dealt with swiftly and effectively. There have been no recent exclusions at the school.

Attendance

10. Attendance has improved in the last school year and is satisfactory. Attendance rates have been adversely affected in the past by a few parents taking children on term time holidays or removing their children from the Reception class before the end of the school day on one or two days in each week. The school is working hard to discourage these practices. Other absences are for genuine reasons such as illness. Pupils are punctual, enabling the school to make a prompt and efficient start to the school day.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	5.9
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0
National data	0.5

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

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
176	0	0
2	0	0
20	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0
4	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. Good quality teaching and good levels of care and support mean that pupils are able to learn well. There is a very good partnership with parents and the school works closely with the local community.

Teaching and learning

Good teaching throughout the school enables pupils to learn well. Teachers regularly assess what pupils have learned, share this information with the pupils and use it to plan future work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Organising mathematics lessons so that pupils of similar capability are taught together in Years 3 to 6, is particularly successful in meeting pupils' individual needs and challenging higher attaining pupils.
- Teachers provide pupils with good opportunities for speaking and listening during discussions and role-play/drama activities, enabling them to develop these skills particularly well.
- The good expression used by teachers when reading texts to the class is encouraging and copied successfully by the pupils.
- Spelling is taught particularly well in Year 2 enabling pupils to develop helpful strategies.
- Clear instructions and explanations about the purpose of work and probing questioning, involves pupils in their learning effectively.
- A specialist music teacher promotes high standards and with very good subject knowledge ensures that music lessons are stimulating/
- Very good relationships in lessons help pupils to engage in their work and co-operate with their teachers and other pupils.
- Teachers in Years 5 and 6 have very good subject knowledge in science helping pupils to develop very good investigative skills.
- Expectations for how pupils should present their work are not always high enough.

- Opportunities are missed for extending higher attaining pupils in subjects such as history and geography in Years 3 to 6 and in science in Years 1 and 2.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 31 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (6%)	5 (16%)	20 (65%)	4 (13%)	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.

11. The headteacher's very strong commitment to performance management and staff training has been successful in improving the quality of teaching since the time of the last inspection. There is now no unsatisfactory teaching in any class. In the small number of lessons where teaching was only satisfactory, seen in the Reception class and Years 1 and 2, the work provided by the teachers did not enable all groups of pupils to make the good progress typical of other lessons.
12. Throughout the school, teachers plan thoroughly for lessons ensuring that they are well organised and varied and the pace of learning is quick. In many lessons, pupils are encouraged to work collaboratively and they do this very well. ICT is used effectively as an administrative and presentation tool. For example, teachers in Years 5 and 6 often make 'power point' presentations to capture pupils' interest and to support discussions at the start of lessons.
13. Teachers have at least good knowledge of all the subjects and areas of learning. This is especially evident in music throughout the school and science in Years 3 to 6, where the teachers' enthusiasm is a major factor in the very good quality of pupils' learning.
14. Teaching assistants are very well trained and qualified and are particularly successful in supporting ICT work and pupils with special educational needs. All pupils, including those with some significant learning difficulties, are fully valued and included in all parts of lessons. Separate plans are made for some of these pupils so that they are supported and challenged very successfully.
15. Good quality assessment procedures have been maintained since the last inspection helping teachers to plan work that meets individual needs. For example, in the Reception class detailed assessments made after children have only been in school a few days are effective in identifying the starting point in lessons for different groups of children. The quality of teachers' marking is especially good in English, enabling pupils to see what they need to do next in order to improve.
16. Homework is used effectively to support learning, with parents supporting this aspect of the school's work well. This has a particularly marked effect on pupils' achievement in reading, where the willingness of parents to hear their children read at home is a significant contributor to the high standards that are achieved.
17. Despite the overall good quality of teaching there are some areas that could be developed further. Teachers do not always ensure that pupils present their work neatly enough. This leads to them making careless errors in both English and mathematics. In science in Years 1 and 2 and history and geography in Years 3 to 6, recorded work is often the same whatever the capability of the pupils. This affects more able pupils in particular who are not always sufficiently challenged by the recorded work that they are given.

18. Pupils have positive views about their teachers and feel that they make learning fun. Inspection findings support that view.

The curriculum

The breadth of the curriculum is satisfactory overall but there are weaknesses in the school's provision for history and geography in Years 3-6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very carefully planned provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education.
- There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- The very high number of teachers has a very good impact on learning especially in mathematics and music.
- There is insufficient time in Years 3-6 for geography and history topics to be studied in enough depth.
- Restriction in the accommodation for Reception Year children limits opportunities to work outside.

Commentary

19. The school has developed a broad curriculum with satisfactory time allocation for most subjects. However, history and geography do not have sufficient time allocated to them in junior classes and this has a negative impact on learning in these subjects.
20. There is very good equality of opportunity for all pupils, whatever their needs or background. The school provides very well for pupils with special educational needs, enabling them to make very good progress. Teachers plan well for these pupils in class and they are effectively supported by teaching assistants who have a good knowledge of their needs and their individual learning targets. Teachers' planning also takes good account of the needs of the small number of pupils with English as an additional language. These pupils are given appropriate additional support as necessary and quickly learn to speak English competently.
21. The curriculum includes very good provision for pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education, including sex education and drug education. The clear policies and the detailed schemes of work have been the subject of wide consultation with interested parties, especially parents and reflect the caring ethos of the school. Aspects are taught as discrete topics or alongside other areas of the curriculum like science and religious education.
22. The school provides good opportunities for enrichment, including a range of extra-curricular provision and offers very good opportunities for pupils to participate in sport and the arts. For example, the school participates in a range of sporting fixtures with other schools including swimming galas, football and netball matches. By organising 'theme days', educational visits and visitors to the school, the children are effectively introduced to a range of activities that promote the arts.
23. The school has good resources and accommodation. However restrictions in the accommodation for Reception Year children limit opportunities to work outside. During the week of inspection the ICT suite was underused by classes and the library was not seen in use at all.
24. Staffing levels are very good overall. The very high number of teachers available to teach mathematics in Years 3 to 6 has a very good impact on learning in this subject. The specialist music teacher teaches each class, whole school singing, the orchestra, choir and four recorder groups, and has a very good impact on learning in music.

Care, guidance and support

The school promotes the pupils' welfare, health and safety very effectively in a secure and caring environment. The school provides good support, advice and guidance for pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Child protection procedures are very effective.
- Health and safety and security are successfully ensured.
- Fire drills and safety checks on equipment are carried out thoroughly.
- Relationships within the school are very good.
- Induction arrangements for children when they start school are good.
- Teachers know the children well.

Commentary

25. In this small community all members of staff know the children well and are well equipped to offer support when it is needed. Pupils confirm that they know whom to approach if they have a problem.
26. The school is very good at taking into account pupils' views. The school council is instrumental in providing the opportunity for pupils' views to be considered. Last year the council was extremely successful in its activities with a number of innovations including the purchase of books, play equipment, a bench and other facilities.
27. All members of staff understand their roles and responsibilities in respect of Child Protection issues; they are aware of the need for vigilance and the steps to take. Site inspections are conducted regularly to identify potential hazards and prepare action plans for correction. All members of staff are safety conscious and watch for the security of the children.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership with parents and the community is of very high quality and is a strength of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very positive about the work of the school.
- The parent and staff association (PSA) is very active and supportive.
- Information to parents, including a very informative website, is of very high quality.
- A very high proportion of parents help in school.
- There is a high level of community involvement in the work of the school.
- Parents are consulted regularly about the school's work.

Commentary

28. Parents responding to the questionnaire and those attending the meeting were extremely supportive of the school and its work. They believe that it has many strengths and feel that they are given very good opportunities to contribute to their children's education.
29. Information provided is of very good quality. Newsletters, curricular information and reports are all extremely useful in providing parents with a full picture of the progress and achievement of their children. They also give detailed information about how parents can support their children with their work at home. Despite the high quality of current reporting arrangements, a small number of parents (13 per cent of the 160 responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire) would like more information about their children's progress. The

school is addressing this issue by introducing an additional written report at the end of the autumn term. However, some parents would also like an opportunity for a parent/teacher consultation meeting in the first term of the academic year. The inspection team agrees that this would be helpful, especially for working parents who have less daily contact with the school.

30. Parents and other members of the community are encouraged to become involved in the life of the school and a very high proportion respond positively. They help extensively in the classroom and around the school as well as on school trips and visits. The Parents and Staff Association is particularly active in fund-raising and social activities. The school values highly the support and contributions made by all parents and members of the community that enhance the children's learning and development.
31. The school is very good at consulting with parents, with questionnaires used well to find their views. A good example of this is the recent questionnaire to parents of reception children, asking for their thoughts on current induction arrangements. The response to this was very positive, showing that parents are very happy with induction procedures.
32. There are good links with other schools. These help to ensure that there are good transfer arrangements at the end of Year 6, as well as regular consultation and support on curriculum issues.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is very well led and managed. The headteacher provides excellent leadership for the work of the school, with management being very good. She is supported by a very hardworking governing body, which ensures that governance is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Members of staff and governors have a very clear understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the school, with a very strong commitment to improving the school's effectiveness.
- The headteacher has established a very clear vision for the work of the school, which is shared by all members of the school community.
- All members of staff have been enabled to develop their roles and responsibilities so that they can make important contributions to school improvement.
- The governors have a very clear understanding of their roles and provide very effective support in the school's long-term planning.
- Rigorous self-evaluation is embedded in school practice. There is very thorough and effective monitoring by the headteacher and governing body.
- All members of staff have very good access to training opportunities and the school's performance management strategies have had a very good impact on developing teaching.
- The role of subject leaders has improved significantly since the last inspection although their involvement in monitoring teaching and learning varies from subject to subject.
- The headteacher has identified the need to involve other members of staff in carrying out performance management.

Commentary

33. The headteacher provides inspirational and purposeful leadership for the work of the school. She is very well respected by members of staff, pupils, parents and governors who recognise the many improvements that have taken place over the last four years. Key to this is the way that the headteacher has successfully maintained the strong Christian ethos in the school whilst thoroughly addressing the areas of weakness found at the time of the last inspection.
34. There is a very clear, shared educational vision, with the headteacher strongly committed to achieving high standards in all areas of the school's work. This is reflected in the very thorough school development plan, which clearly identifies where the school needs to improve further. Improvements that have been made over the last four years have been based on thorough and rigorous monitoring. Monitoring is multi-stranded taking in all aspects of the school's work. The headteacher regularly monitors teaching and learning by observing lessons, test data is carefully analysed and a new assessment tracking computer program is providing very useful information on the progress of different groups of pupils, such as those with English as an additional language or special educational needs.
35. The headteacher has worked hard over the last four years to develop the role of the senior management team, teachers and teaching assistants. Performance management strategies and professional development have been used very effectively to acknowledge strengths and improve weaknesses. Subject leaders have been empowered to take responsibility for their curriculum area. In subjects such as English, mathematics and science this includes opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in lessons. Subject leaders have all now been given regular release time which has been used effectively to draw up and monitor action plans, to review resources and complete schemes of work or policies. These developments have had a good impact on learning and overall, the quality of leadership and management by subject leaders is good. The remaining key areas for development are to give all subject leaders opportunities to monitor provision by observing lessons and to divest some of the responsibilities for performance management to other members of staff. Both of these areas have already been identified by the school as future priorities for improvement.
36. The headteacher has a very strong commitment to providing an all-inclusive school which meets the needs of all pupils whatever their background or need. She has been successful in this aim and under her leadership members of staff have embraced a range of special educational needs, as well as reviewing school organisation so that differing needs within the school are met well. The introduction of setting in mathematics is a good example of the school considering how it can best meet the needs of pupils of differing capability.
37. Governors provide a high level of support for the school, with specific skills used very well in areas such as improving accommodation and managing finances. The key strength in the governing body over the last four years has been the way it has strategically planned in both the short and long term how to maintain strengths and continue to improve. The issue of staff retention and recruitment has been carefully considered and the governing body has taken carefully considered steps to ensure that its good quality members of staff stay at the school. The stability in staffing has been a significant contributory factor in school improvement and this has been maintained through the foresight of governors.
38. Governors are regularly involved in monitoring the work of the school. Governors take responsibility for different curriculum areas and visit the school to monitor provision. On these occasions, they talk to subject leaders and visit classes, which helps them to develop a very good understanding of how the school is working. Very detailed written reports are shared with other governors to give them clear information to help when they contribute to school development planning.

39. Financial planning is thorough. It is based on a good understanding of the school's priorities, with budgetary decisions made consistently on the basis of 'how will this help the school to improve'.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	589,608
Total expenditure	562,559
Expenditure per pupil	2,771

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	16,101
Balance carried forward to the next	27,049

40. The school is fortunate to benefit from a higher than average amount of money per pupil, with a number of donations from parents and the community having a significant impact on the available budget. Nevertheless, money is used wisely, with a clear understanding of its educational impact. The decision to allocate considerable funds to maintaining high staffing levels, enabling setting in mathematics and specialist teaching in music, is well judged and has had a good impact on learning. The school maintains sensible levels of underspend in order to maintain these levels of provision in the near future.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

41. During the inspection, examples of work from last year's Reception class were sampled. One lesson was observed in each area of learning.
42. Provision for children in the Reception Year has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now good. The quality of teaching is better and is now good. The curriculum now more closely meets children's needs.
43. Improvements have been well led and managed by the two teachers who teach the Reception class. Only one of these teachers was teaching during the inspection. These teachers have worked together well, under the supportive guidance of the headteacher, to improve provision and address the weaknesses identified in the last report. The curriculum is now planned in line with the nationally recommended 'Early Learning Goals' and children are given more opportunities to learn through play.
44. Accommodation has been developed so that there are more opportunities to vary the range of teaching styles and methods. However, there remain restrictions in the accommodation in that there is not yet access to a secure outdoor area where children can work with limited adult supervision. This continues to restrict the outdoor curriculum, having the greatest impact on less able children who are sometimes expected to sit for too long and who would benefit from more opportunities for structured outdoor play.
45. A strength in provision is the very high levels of inclusion evident in the Reception class. Children with special educational needs are very well supported and integrated. Work is planned in all curriculum areas that closely meets their needs. A high emphasis is placed on ensuring that there is equality of opportunity and teaching assistants are very skilled at judging when it is appropriate to work individually with a child so that the learning of others is not adversely affected.
46. The high number of adult helpers in the class, including teaching assistants and parent helpers is a significant factor in the good progress made by pupils. They give good support to teachers, helping to ensure that needs are met well. Teaching assistants are fully involved in assessing learning and are generally kept well informed about expectations before lessons. This leads to effective teamwork.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a very consistent approach by all members of staff to pupils' personal, social and emotional development.
- Members of staff have very high expectations and give pupils very good opportunities to work and play together.

Commentary

47. Very good quality teaching means that children make very good progress in developing personal, social and emotional skills and are on target to exceed the expectations of the 'early learning goals' by the end of the Reception Year. Children are well behaved and sociable.

They work well in small groups and are beginning to learn how to work independently, without adult support.

48. Members of staff are kind and caring and ensure that children settle quickly into school life. They set clear expectations and have a good knowledge of both the social and educational needs of individual children. They have high expectations and this results in children improving their already good social skills. Children are given many opportunities to talk together and to celebrate each other's work. These times are used effectively to encourage children to think about things that affect them and to talk about the needs of others.
49. Very thorough induction procedures for children when they start school mean that they feel happy and secure in their first few days in school.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Reading skills are taught very well.
- Pupils develop very positive attitudes towards reading.
- There are very good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening.
- Very thorough assessment arrangements mean that needs are met well.
- Role-play is under-used as a way of developing skills.

Commentary

50. Very good teaching in this area of learning means that children make very good progress and achieve very well for their capability. By the end of the Reception Year nearly all children have achieved the 'early learning goals', with a significant number already working on the early stages of the National Curriculum. This applies particularly to reading, which is a significant strength of attainment. A key strength in teaching is the very detailed assessments that are made throughout the year. These help to ensure that work is adjusted according to individual need.
51. Reading skills are taught very effectively. A good range of strategies are used to teach children letter sounds and there is a very strong emphasis on learning being fun. Every opportunity is taken to teach children about the sounds that letters make and to introduce them to a range of written vocabulary. Children quickly develop positive attitudes to reading and they are effectively taught how to build words using letter sounds. Children are heard to read regularly by a teacher or teaching assistant. This is a major contributing factor to the very good progress that is made, because it means errors or weaknesses can be quickly corrected.
52. Children write confidently by the end of the Reception Year. Most children write in recognisable sentences and letters are generally well formed. The recently introduced handwriting scheme is having a good impact on this aspect of learning.
53. Children come to school with generally well developed speaking and listening skills and these are extended further. Children are given many opportunities to take part in discussions and talk about what they are doing, so they become confident in speaking to large or small groups as well as to individuals. They explain what they are doing and talk happily to visitors about the work they are doing. Role-play is used occasionally to support learning, but this is an aspect of provision that could be developed further. There was little evidence of role-play being freely available during the inspection.

54. Parents support their children well in developing reading skills. They hear their children read regularly at home, making helpful comments in reading diaries to help the teacher identify any strengths or weaknesses.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have a very good understanding of numbers.
- Teachers plan a good range of practical activities to support learning.

Commentary

55. Children make good progress in developing mathematical skills and they achieve well, especially in the area of number where attainment is very good. Most children recognise numbers to at least ten, with a large number of more able children recognising, writing and ordering higher numbers. Children enjoy playing simple number games on the computer and confidently use appropriate mathematical language, such as 'bigger than' and 'smaller than'.
56. The quality of teaching is good. Members of staff plan exciting and stimulating activities, for which their thorough planning ensures that the needs of all children are met. Work is carefully matched to individual needs and mathematical concepts are often taught in a practical way that involves the children and promotes good learning.
57. Members of staff assess learning very carefully. Even though children had only been in school a few days when the inspection took place, members of staff already had a very good understanding of the previous learning of different children. This meant that work could be very closely matched to individual needs. These detailed assessments are a strength of provision because it means that the next lesson can be planned on the basis of what children need to learn next.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan activities that build well on what pupils already know.
- Pupils benefit from good levels of adult support.

Commentary

58. Both attainment and achievement are good in this area of learning. Children are effectively introduced to a range of concepts and skills during their time in the Reception class. The use of ICT and literacy skills is well integrated into activities, with children given good opportunities to write purposefully or develop computing skills through practical activities. Children's writing shows a good understanding of the life cycle of a butterfly and they successfully carry out investigations showing the difference between waterproof and non-waterproof materials. In the one lesson observed, children accurately named different parts of the body and successfully used a magnifying glass to look at some of the features of a hand.
59. A scrutiny of work shows that teaching is good overall, although in the one lesson observed teaching was satisfactory. Work samples show that there is a good level of challenge for children and needs are met well, with progress being good or better overall. Good quality

assessments help to ensure activities carefully building on what has already been taught. In the satisfactory lesson, children sat for too long and were unsettled after playtime. This had a negative effect on the pace of learning.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good opportunities for pupils to develop skills in well-planned physical education lessons.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to work outside and to use large play equipment such as climbing and balancing apparatus or sit and ride toys.

Commentary

60. Children's attainment is good, with nearly all children on target to exceed the expectations of the 'early learning goals' by the end of the Reception Year. Skills are taught through a mixture of physical education (PE) lessons and times when children work or play outside. Together, these ensure that needs are met, although levels of achievement are only satisfactory. Weaknesses in accommodation mean that there are few opportunities for use of construction toys and to choose to work outside and practise a range of physical skills. Opportunities to work outside are fewer than are found in many reception classes and this slows progress in this area of learning. The school has already identified this as an area for development and plans are in place to improve accommodation so that there is a secure outdoor area for physical development.
61. There is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching but in timetabled PE lessons, teaching is good. Lessons are carefully planned and learning is made fun. Children with special educational needs are well integrated and take a full part in activities. Explanations are clear and children are successfully encouraged to work purposefully. Children are encouraged to show independence and initiative – for example, by finding their own ways of getting in and out of a hoop. Children respond well to these expectations and work hard, making good gains in knowledge in the lesson seen.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are given good opportunities to develop skills in a wide range of interesting and stimulating activities.

Commentary

62. Attainment in creative development is good and children achieve well. Children benefit from good teaching and a curriculum that has been significantly improved since the last inspection. An imaginative range of resources is used to stimulate interest and promote good learning. Children are successfully encouraged to try out different activities and to experiment with the techniques they have been taught. As a result, children draw and paint confidently, with increasing control of a range of tools. For example, they produce well-observed paintings of 'summer' showing a good understanding of colour and shape.

63. Members of staff have good expectations and encourage children to concentrate on what they are doing so that they produce good quality work. Children work well together in small groups and share resources sensibly. There is good challenge in the work planned, with children able to explore ideas by themselves. For example, children confidently experiment with different effects when 'hand-painting'.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Overall, the quality of provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of attainment are very good.
- Teachers are good role models and provide good opportunities for pupils to read aloud, resulting in fluent, accurate and very expressive reading.
- Many opportunities are provided for pupils to speak in public, making them confident and articulate.
- Pupils listen very carefully in lessons and respect the views and opinions of others.
- The effective teaching of spelling in Year 2 has a good impact on pupils' standards.
- Teachers' marking is used effectively to show pupils how to improve.
- Teachers miss opportunities for demonstrating different ways of writing.
- There is no consistency in the quality of pupils' handwriting and expectations for the presentation of pupils' written work are too low, especially in history and geography.

Commentary

64. As at the time of the last inspection, pupils' attainment is well above average by the end of Years 2 and 6. Test results have been rising steadily in line with national trends. Differences between the attainment of girls and boys are not significant. Writing has been a focus for whole school development and recent improvements have had a good impact on 2003 National Curriculum test results in Year 2, which are significantly higher than they were in 2002.
65. Most pupils achieve well throughout the school, with pupils with special educational needs continuing to make very good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. The small number of pupils with English as an additional language make good progress in lessons, with their needs met well by teachers. Equality of opportunity is very good with teachers working hard to ensure that nobody is excluded from any activity.
66. Throughout the school, pupils' achievement is better in speaking, listening and reading than in writing, where the number of pupils attaining the higher levels in tests is average. Whilst writing is improving, there are weaknesses in pupils' handwriting because there is no consistency in style and pupils make limited use of their extensive vocabularies to make writing interesting. Pupils in Year 2 are developing strategies for spelling particularly well. Parents are especially pleased with the way pupils develop reading skills.
67. The quality of teaching is good overall and strengths found at the time of the last inspection, such as the use of probing questioning and the provision of interesting activities, have been maintained. In Years 3 to 6, teachers make effective use of the white board to collect and share pupils' ideas. All teachers use the information they collect on pupils' progress effectively to help them plan future work. For example, in a lesson in Year 5 the teacher used individual white boards effectively to help pupils practise the correct positioning of a question mark when using speech marks. Teachers ensure that pupils with special educational needs are planned for separately when necessary and are supported fully so that they are able to

take an active part in all activities. In some lessons, teachers spread their support too thinly, by missing opportunities to work intensively with one group. In contrast, in one lesson in Year 3, where pupils were writing descriptions of fairgrounds, the teacher worked with a lower attaining group, enabling them to improve the content of their writing well. The lesson ended with a valuable opportunity for all pupils to extend their understanding by evaluating some samples of work. In Year 1, homework diaries are used particularly well to make clear to parents how they can support their children at home.

68. Pupils have good attitudes towards learning and respond very well to the teachers' high expectations for good behaviour. However, pupils do not always do their best work when writing. Older pupils have good opportunities to consolidate their learning by supporting younger pupils. For example, in Year 4, pupils helped pupils in Year 2 make information booklets and completed mature and sensitive evaluations of the completed work. Activities such as this make a very good contribution to pupils' personal development.
69. Good leadership in the subject and very thorough monitoring of test information has ensured that very clear areas for development have been identified and programmes to bring about improvement are in place. However, the recently developed school library is underused as a resource for research work.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

70. There are good opportunities for pupils to extend and use their speaking, listening and reading skills in other subjects. The use of writing to support learning is underdeveloped in history and geography in Years 3 to 6 and is not as good as at the time of the last inspection.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attainment is very good.
- Setting arrangements help to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met very effectively, especially in Years 3 to 6.
- There is very good challenge for more able pupils enabling them to achieve very well.
- Pupils' number skills are very well developed.
- Pupils with special educational needs are given very good quality support.
- Pupils do not always present their work neatly enough, leading to careless errors.

Commentary

71. Standards of attainment are well above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils make good progress throughout the school and, in relation to their capability, they achieve well. There are no significant differences between the attainment of girls and boys or pupils from different backgrounds, including those who have English as an additional language. Inspection findings are supported by National Curriculum test results in 2002 at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Test results are higher than at the time of the last inspection and for 2003 they show a continued improvement with pupils benefiting significantly from setting arrangements that ensure that individual needs are met very effectively.
72. A strength in attainment is the very good number skills shown by pupils. In this aspect of the curriculum achievement is very good. Throughout the school, pupils are confident about carrying out calculations in their head. Older pupils clearly explain the strategies that they have used, helping the teacher to identify areas for improvement. Pupils have a good understanding of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division and they apply these concepts well to practical applications. Teachers make learning purposeful by putting

activities into practical contexts. Pupils respond well to this, showing good levels of motivation and interest in the subject. However, on occasions, work is not presented carefully enough, leading to pupils making some careless errors in their calculations. The school has already identified this as an area for improvement and is working to introduce a more consistent approach to the presentation of work throughout.

73. The quality of teaching is good, with the key factor in pupils' good attainment being the detailed assessments of pupils' capability to help decide what they need to learn next. Throughout the school, pupils are grouped according to prior attainment (setting) for part of each week for mathematics lessons. These groupings are most frequent in Years 3 to 6, where all but one lesson each week is set. The setting of pupils is very effective because it means that teachers can plan work that is closely matched to individual needs. As a result, there are very good levels of challenge for more able pupils, especially in Years 3 to 6, leading to a good number of pupils achieving higher levels in end of year tests. Groups for less able pupils or those identified as having special educational needs are deliberately kept small so that pupils can be given individual attention when it is needed. This is a very good feature of the school's inclusiveness and it helps to ensure that progress is good, with most lower attaining pupils achieving at least the levels expected for their age by the end of Year 2 (Level 2) and the end of Year 6 (Level 4). Planning takes good account of the needs of the small number of pupils with English as an additional language, identifying key vocabulary where necessary.
74. There is a broad and balanced curriculum, with parents given good opportunities to help their children at home. Homework is carefully planned and monitored and makes a good contribution to standards of attainment.
75. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The quality of leadership has improved significantly since the last inspection. The subject leader has a very clear understanding of strengths and weaknesses in her subject. Monitoring by the headteacher and subject leader is thorough and effective. Areas for improvement have been identified and a detailed action plan shows clearly how the subject is to be further developed. Test data is analysed carefully to identify trends or aspects of the subject that are weaker. When necessary, effective action is taken to remedy weaknesses. This can be seen clearly in the reaction of the school to perceived weaknesses in the group of pupils who left the school at the end of Year 6 in 2003. The school's analysis of test data showed that this group was potentially weaker than in other years. As a result, they were given additional support to help them fulfil their potential. This support, which focused largely on the introduction of setting, was very effective, with test results indicating that most pupils achieved or exceeded the predicted levels of attainment, based on their test results at the end of Year 2.

Mathematics across the curriculum

76. Pupils are given appropriate opportunities to use their mathematical skills across the curriculum. In samples of pupils' work seen this was most evident in ICT, where there are very good links made between skills in the two subjects. For example, pupils in Year 6 used numeracy and ICT skills to make a number of complicated calculations in comparing the success of two pop groups.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well, with investigative work a strong feature of attainment.
- There is very good provision for more able pupils in Years 3 to 6.
- Pupils concentrate well and work well collaboratively.

- A lack of differentiation of recorded work in Years 1 and 2 means that the more able children are not always sufficiently challenged.

Commentary

77. Only one science lesson was seen in Years 1 and 2 but inspectors looked at a sample of pupils' work. Three science lessons were seen in Years 3 to 6 as well as a sample of pupils' work.
78. Standards of attainment are above average by the end of Year 2 and well above average by the end of Year 6 with pupils achieving well in relation to their capability. National Curriculum tests in science in 2002 and 2003 confirm inspection findings. Pupils' attainment is similar to that found at the time of the last inspection. There are no significant differences between the attainment of girls and boys or pupils from different backgrounds, including those who have English as an additional language.
79. By the end of Year 2 pupils are able to carry out a fair test with guidance and compare their results with the prediction they have made. They confidently carry out investigations on materials to test insulation, absorbency and stretch, they experiment with ramps of different heights to test how far a toy car goes and they plant cress seeds under different conditions to understand the effects of deprivation of water, light and warmth.
80. By the end of Year 6 pupils show very good skills when devising investigations. They understand the importance of maintaining all other constant factors, when a variable is being changed and of having a control experiment. They can use equipment, such as Newton meters, to measure the changes in upthrust when objects are placed in water. They are able to use scientific vocabulary to explain their findings and to record the results on an appropriate chart, graph or diagram.
81. In the end of Year 2 teacher assessments in 2002 the percentage of pupils attaining the higher level (Level 3) in science was only average when compared with other schools nationally and below average when compared with other similar schools. The 2003 results indicate an improvement, but the work seen in books and the lesson observed still indicate insufficient differentiation for the more able pupils.
82. In the Year 6 tests in 2002 the percentage of pupils attaining the higher levels (Level 5) was well above average when compared with other schools nationally and average when compared with similar schools. The 2003 results show an increase, with 70 per cent of the pupils attaining the higher level.
83. Teaching was good in Year 1 while very good and excellent teaching was seen in Years 3 to 6. The very good and excellent teaching in Years 3 to 6 challenged all pupils, including the most able. Teachers made their lessons very interesting and good subject knowledge enabled them to challenge their pupils confidently through effective questioning. Pupils responded with very good attitudes to their work. In an excellent Year 6 lesson the teacher used her own power-point presentation to revise how plants get their nutrients and how they make their food. Pupils compared apples grown with and without fertiliser and, with effective questioning by the teacher, pupils were able to use their knowledge of plant structure to understand how the fertiliser could enhance the fruit. Finally the more able pupils were encouraged by the teacher to consider the arguments for and against the use of fertilisers and the class listened attentively as pairs of pupils 'went live' with their debate.
84. The leadership of science is good. Under the guidance of the science co-ordinator a nationally recommended scheme of work has recently been adopted. ICT is well used to reinforce learning. Teaching assistants are well deployed to support science lessons and the school grounds are used effectively for environmental work.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan an interesting range of activities that help to make learning purposeful.
- Teachers are very good role models in the use of ICT.
- A specialist teaching assistant gives very good support to pupils and staff.
- Pupils are confident about using their ICT skills across the curriculum.
- During the inspection, there was limited use of the ICT suite other than for specific ICT lessons.

Commentary

85. Only a small number of lessons were timetabled in Years 3 to 6 during the inspection. Evidence has been supplemented by sampling pupils' work and talking to pupils and members of staff.
86. Standards of attainment are above national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, with pupils achieving well. Pupils have a good range of basic skills and they benefit from the good opportunities that they are given to apply these skills in lessons. Pupils have a good understanding of the many applications of ICT, with teachers acting as very good role models by making very good use of ICT as a teaching-aid. This is particularly evident in Years 5 and 6, where power-point presentations are used to bring topics alive.
87. The school makes good efforts to ensure that pupils who do not have computers at home are not disadvantaged. A club is provided specifically for these pupils so that they can practise skills at school. Planning takes good account of the differing levels of attainment of pupils, with teachers assessing learning carefully to help them in their planning.
88. The quality of teaching is good. The school is fortunate to benefit from a well-resourced ICT suite. This is used well to teach specific skills, although there was little evidence, during the inspection, of the suite being used for more than timetabled lessons, of which there is one each week for every class in the school. This means that a very important resource is underused. Nevertheless, lessons in the ICT suite are well organised, with a very skilful teaching assistant giving excellent support. This was seen to good effect in a Year 2 lesson, where the teacher and teaching assistant worked together, supporting each other and identifying areas for development for individual pupils.
89. Leadership and management are good. There have been significant improvements in provision since the last inspection, with attainment higher because of the improved resources, teaching and leadership. The headteacher and subject co-ordinator have worked through a carefully considered plan for the improvement of provision, with funds allocated wisely. Training of staff and the appointment of a very skilled ICT technician/teaching assistant have been key factors in the improvements that have taken place.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

90. Pupils are given good opportunities to use ICT across the curriculum. During the inspection, there were many examples of ICT being interwoven into different lessons. Teachers' planning generally identifies ICT links, helping to make sure that when ICT is used in lessons it is purposeful and is linked to the work being done by the rest of the class. The ICT teaching assistant gives excellent support in this area, advising teachers of suitable software so that clear and effective links can be made.

HUMANITIES

History and Geography

Overall, the quality of provision is **satisfactory**, with weaknesses in Years 3 to 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment is good in the written work seen in Years 1 and 2.
- Throughout the school, effective use is made of visits and visitors to bring the subjects to life.
- There are some effective links with other subjects.
- Achievement is unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 6 because insufficient time is allowed for all topics to be studied in sufficient depth.

Commentary

91. Pupils' attainment is above national expectations by the end of Year 2, with pupils making good comparisons between modern day and life in the past and between children living in their own town and those living in Bangladesh. Good attainment has been maintained since the time of the last inspection. Attainment by the end of Year 6 is broadly in line with national expectations, although some topics are covered in more depth than others. For example, pupils remember several interesting facts about the ancient Egyptians learned in Year 5 and understand that evidence can be gathered from different sources. However, attainment in Years 3 to 6 is not as good as at the time of the last inspection when it was judged to be very good overall.
92. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 with pupils extending their knowledge at an appropriate rate. By the end of Year 6 there is some underachievement, with some topics being studied superficially. For example, in Year 6 there are four, short pieces of written work about the Victorians. There is insufficient evidence to judge how well pupils of differing capability achieve although pupils are often given the same tasks to complete with the quality of their response being the only difference in outcome. Pupils' written work in history and geography is not as good as it is in other subjects.
93. There is insufficient evidence to form an overall judgement on the quality of teaching. The one humanities lesson on the timetable during the inspection, a Year 3 history lesson, was good. In this well-planned lesson, the teacher started from the pupils' own experiences of moving home before exploring the reasons for the Roman invasion. Visits to places of historic or geographic interest and role-play dressing-up days at school, provide an interesting and imaginative insight into different periods of history or features of the landscape and local area, contributing to pupils' cultural development well. However, a scrutiny of pupils' work shows that teachers' expectations for written work are often too low, with work being presented untidily, often unfinished, or consisting of drawings and worksheets rather than pieces of quality, independent writing. There is an overuse of questioning and answering as a method for recording what pupils have learned.
94. History and geography have not been recent areas of focus in the school development plan. The limited evidence available and low allocations of time allowed indicate that older pupils have too few opportunities to record what they have learned or to carry out their own research.
95. The co-ordinator for history and geography has been reviewing provision for these subjects and is aware of the need to raise their profile on the school curriculum. There have been no opportunities to monitor teaching, learning or standards to ensure consistent coverage of the curriculum and provision is weaker than at the time of the last inspection.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

These aspects of the curriculum were not an area of focus for the inspection and only a limited range of evidence was sampled. This means that there is insufficient evidence to make overall judgements on the quality of provision in these subjects.

Design and technology

96. No lessons were timetabled during the inspection. As a result, no judgements can be made about teaching, learning or standards within design and technology. In Years 3 to 6 there is evidence of designing, making and evaluating, with good quality models of ships in Year 3 and moving vehicles in Year 5.

Art and design

97. One lesson was seen and the teaching was very good. Using good explanations and questioning skills the children were introduced to the techniques they would use in a still-life drawing. This led to the pupils being highly motivated. They collaborated well and sustained concentration to produce work of a good standard. The standard of work displayed in classrooms in both Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 to 6 is also good. There are good examples of artwork on display showing a variety of media used including textiles, collage, printing, pastels, charcoal, paint and sculpture.

Music

98. One lesson in each key stage and one whole school music assembly were seen during the inspection. The standard of attainment in both lessons was good, with pupils in Years 1 and 2 being able to sing in tune, change pitch and perform simple rhythms. In Years 3 to 6 they had progressed further by singing in two parts and by using more complex rhythm.
99. Teaching was very good in a lesson in Year 6 and excellent in a Year 2 lesson. A music specialist takes all lessons and this has a very good impact on pupils' learning, with the teacher exciting and motivating the pupils with her obvious enthusiasm. The very good subject knowledge of the teacher and her repertoire of enjoyable activities mean that pupils are very focused and always engaged. The main objective of the lessons observed was to improve singing, but pupils were introduced to instruments of the orchestra and to a range of music including examples from Africa and South America. This provided very good cultural links.
100. There is a recorder group and pupils who play the recorder often accompany the singing at assembly time. Pupils learn to play a range of individual orchestral instruments and many pupils play in the school orchestra.

Physical education

101. Two lessons and a range of clubs were observed. In lessons seen, pupils showed a good level of enthusiasm for the subject. They worked hard and responded well to the teachers' prompting. Levels of skills varied. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils' catching and throwing skills were satisfactory. They caught and threw with reasonable accuracy, with more able pupils throwing greater distances and catching with one or both hands. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils showed good ball skills.
102. There is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching. The quality of teaching in the lessons observed was good. Teachers explained tasks clearly and there was a good pace to learning. Behaviour was managed effectively and good use was made of examples of pupils' work to show key skills. Learning was made fun and pupils were given good opportunities to work individually or in pairs.

103. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities, with participation levels high. These activities contribute well to a good overall curriculum. Pupils in Years 2 to 6 take part in weekly swimming lessons. The school's records of swimming awards show that by the end of Year 6 all pupils can swim at least 25 metres, with many swimming far greater distances. This is a strength in pupils' attainment, although the amount of time allocated to swimming is very high, with each lesson taking up most of an afternoon. This has a negative impact on the rest of the curriculum.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Overall the quality of provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Personal, social, health education (PSHE) and citizenship have a high profile in the school and many whole school displays are dedicated to promoting issues such as being eco-friendly.
- Pupils respond in a very mature way to the very good opportunities provided for taking part in decision making.
- All members of the school community take part in writing school rules providing ownership and joint responsibility for keeping them.
- Members of staff provide very good role models for being responsible citizens.

Commentary

104. There is very good provision for pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education, including sex education and drugs education. The school has clear policies and the detailed schemes of work have been the subject of wide consultation with interested parties, especially parents and reflect the caring ethos of the school. Aspects are taught as discrete topics or alongside other areas of the curriculum like science and religious education.
105. No specific citizenship lessons were on the timetable during the inspection. Other evidence shows that the school provides very well for this aspect of the pupils' education and citizenship issues are explored and promoted throughout the school week in lessons, circle times, assemblies, council meetings and incidentally at other times. Pupils are given plenty of opportunities for sharing their views and issues raised are considered sensitively and often followed up by members of staff. Pupils of all ages show a very good awareness of how to behave in a community and they work together very well in a supportive and caring way.
106. Younger pupils consider issues important to them. For example, pupils in Year 1 completed some work on 'people who help us' and 'having a baby in the family' increasing their awareness and understanding of the impact other people have on their lives. In Year 3, pupils keep notes during their class council meetings and raise important issues about health and safety and how to improve facilities at the school. Older pupils carry out many responsibilities very sensibly. For example, pupils in Year 5 support children in the Reception class with their reading as part of a very worthwhile 'buddy' scheme.
107. Throughout the school, members of staff are very good role models, treating all pupils and each other with care and respect. Lesson planning for other subjects includes many additional opportunities for promoting citizenship.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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