

INSPECTION REPORT

ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Guildford

LEA area: Surrey

Unique reference number: 125291

Headteacher: Mr K Gawley

Lead inspector: Mrs J Coop

Dates of inspection: 8th - 11th March 2004

Inspection number: 257984

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:	360
School address:	Horseshoe Lane West Merrow Guildford Surrey
Postcode:	GU12SX
Telephone number:	01483 888388
Fax number:	01483 888385
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs K Sarama
Date of previous inspection:	18 th March 2002

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This larger than average school is situated in Merrow, a suburb of Guildford. It is a voluntary aided Catholic primary school and, mainly because of its status, serves a wide area. There are 360 pupils on roll between the ages of four and 11. There is an unusually high rate of mobility of pupils starting and leaving the school at other than normal times during the school year. This is partly due to local employment conditions, the school's location near to the centre of Guildford, and because of its improved reputation in the community. During the last school year, a very high percentage of the pupils in Years 2 and 6 started at other than the usual time. There is a similar pattern in these classes this year. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds and the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is average, as is the school's socio-economic circumstances. Most pupils are of white ethnicity, but there are many nationalities represented in the school. As a result of the school's very strong emphasis on social and educational inclusion, the profile of the pupils attending the school has changed in the last two years. Assessment data shows that pupils' attainment on entry has declined and is now average. Nineteen per cent of pupils are new to speaking English, with seven per cent at the early stages of learning the language. This is higher than many schools. Twenty per cent of pupils have been identified as having learning difficulties, which is above the national average, and nearly three per cent of the pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs, which is also above the national average. The school received an achievement award in 2003 and an Investor in People award in the same year.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
31862	Mrs J Coop	Lead inspector	Science Music Physical education
9614	Mrs C Webb	Lay inspector	
12997	Mrs C Cheong	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History
32136	Mrs L Brookes	Team inspector	Foundation Stage curriculum Information and communication technology
23056	Mrs T Manzi	Team inspector	English Art and design Design and technology Special educational needs English as an additional language Personal, social and health education

The inspection contractor was:

Altecq Education
102 Bath Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL537JX

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good** and rapidly improving school, with some very good features. Very good leadership by the headteacher and very good teaching ensure that pupils achieve very well. Very good attitudes to learning are nurtured within a strong Catholic community and a very caring family atmosphere. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher provides inspirational leadership. He is very effectively supported by an informed and supportive governing body and a committed team of staff.
- Children have a very good start to their education in the Foundation Stage, where they are provided with an outstanding range of learning opportunities.
- Standards are above average in English, mathematics, science and physical education, and well above average in music by the end of Year 6.
- Teaching and learning are good in Years 1 and 2, and very good in Years 3 -6, but teachers' marking does not consistently focus on how pupils could develop their work or make links with pupils' targets.
- Spiritual development is excellent, and sets the tone for the Christian ethos of the school. Provision for social, moral and cultural development is very good.
- The school ensures that pupils of all abilities and backgrounds have every opportunity to benefit from all that the school offers.
- Pupils are very happy in school, behave very well and have very good relationships with their teachers and with one another.
- A good curriculum is significantly enriched by a very wide range of activities.
- Assessment procedures are good in English, mathematics and science, and very good in the Foundation Stage, but are not yet fully developed in other subjects.
- The school has established very good links with parents, the community and other schools which add much to the quality of education in the school.

As a result of the hard work of the headteacher, together with the governors and staff, very good improvement has been made in the short time since the last inspection. All issues identified in the last report have been fully addressed. Standards are rising, and pupils are making much better progress than they were because the quality of teaching and the curriculum have significantly improved. The school now monitors and evaluates its work very effectively, so that it is very well placed for continued and further development.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	All schools ¹			Similar schools ²
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	C	B	C	B
Mathematics	A	A	B	B
Science	B	B	B	A

¹ Year-on-year comparisons of the school's national test results need to be treated with caution as the number of pupils with special needs and those new to speaking English varies considerably from one year to the next.

²As 35 per cent of pupils in this year group joined the school during Key Stage 2 and earlier results are not available, the similar school comparison is based on free school meal entitlement.

Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average

Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds achieve **very well** overall by the end of Year 6. Children start in the reception class with average skills. Their achievement is very good overall because of highly effective teaching based around an exciting range of learning opportunities. By the time they start in Year 1, most are likely to exceed the standards expected in their communication and mathematical skills, and far exceed expected standards in all other areas of learning. Pupils achieve well by the end of Year 2. In the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 2, standards were average in reading, well above average in writing and above average in mathematics. Inspection findings show that current standards are average in reading, and above average in writing, mathematics and science. The school's initiatives to close the gap between reading and writing have not been in place long enough to have had an impact on overall standards. In the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 6, standards were average in English, and above average in mathematics and science. Inspection findings show standards are above average in all three subjects. The school is now successfully challenging more able pupils, many of whom are attaining very high standards, because teachers' expectations have been raised. Standards in music are well above average, and standards in physical education are above average. Standards in information and communication technology have improved and are average, as are standards in geography.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are **very good** overall and their spiritual development is excellent. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and behave very well. Pupils really enjoy coming to school, they are very punctual and their attendance is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **good**. The quality of teaching and learning is **very good** overall. It is good in Years 1 and 2 and there are significant strengths in the reception class and in Years 3 to 6. In all classes, relationships are very good; pupils respect their teachers and always try their best. All teachers make the best use of available resources to make learning interesting, and teaching assistants provide additional good quality and invaluable support. The marking of pupils' work is effective in English, so that pupils have a good understanding of what they need to improve. Teachers successfully help pupils in class, but the marking of pupils' written work in other subjects is not consistent or as supportive of learning. Assessment procedures are good in English, mathematics and science, but are not fully developed in other subjects.

The curriculum is good with an excellent curriculum in the reception class. The range of additional activities is very good and is one reason why pupils enjoy coming to school. The care of pupils is very good and the school guides and supports them well. Pupils new to the school, those with special educational needs or new to speaking English receive relevant and sensitive support, which has a positive impact on the progress they make. Partnerships with parents, the community and other schools are very good and these make a very successful contribution to the life of the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **very good**. The leadership of the headteacher is very good with some excellent features. The headteacher has worked very successfully to inspire and motivate staff during a time of considerable change. He welcomes pupils whatever their problems and is very sensitive to the difficulties they may have. Consequently, all pupils are valued members of the school community. He is very well supported by the senior management team which provides very good leadership, and well

supported by all other staff. Together they form an effective and hardworking team. The management of the school is very effective. There are very well developed systems for establishing the school's priorities and for monitoring its work. As a direct result, much has been achieved in a short time. Governance is very good. The governing body shares the headteacher's vision, and is very supportive and influential. Governors fulfil all their statutory duties well.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very pleased with the Christian values the school instils and share its aims and ambitions for their children. They appreciate the hard work undertaken to improve communication with them and to make learning more interesting for their children. Pupils share their parents' very positive views. Their views are summed up by one pupil who stated, "I like the way we have fun and don't realise that we have learnt a lot of things".

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Make more effective use of marking and target setting to improve pupils' knowledge of their own learning.
- Press ahead with the planned development of assessment procedures, particularly in the non-core subjects, to ensure that pupils' skills are consistently and progressively developed in all subjects.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is **very good** overall. Achievement is very good in the Foundation Stage and Years 3 to 6 and good in Years 1 and 2. Standards are **above average** in English, mathematics, and science at the end of Years 2 and 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the reception class achieve very well and make very good progress overall.
- Standards in writing are above average throughout the school.
- Pupils' investigational skills in science are less well developed at the end of Year 2.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those learning to speak English as an additional language achieve very well and make very good progress overall.
- At the end of Year 6, standards are well above average in music and above average in physical education.
- There is potential for standards in some non-core subjects to be higher, but subject skills are not always progressively developed.
- The school has successfully raised standards in information and communication technology despite limited resources.
- Standards have risen in line with the national trend, despite a high mobility rate and a significant and increasing number of pupils with special educational needs, or who speak English as an additional language.

Commentary

1. Since the previous inspection, the profile of the school has changed. The number of pupils attending the school has started to rise and well above average numbers of pupils start at times other than in the reception classes. In addition, the number of pupils with general and more complex special educational needs has risen significantly. Similarly, the school has seen a marked increase in the numbers of pupils who are new to speaking English. This means that any year-on-year comparison of standards should be treated with caution. The school welcomes all pupils, whatever their individual needs, and because individual progress is carefully monitored and teaching is adapted well to meet their needs, their progress and level of achievement is the same as their friends in class. Standards overall have risen in line with the national trend during the past five years, but due to determined leadership and a committed team of staff, standards are now rising more rapidly. As a result, taking the last three years together, pupils' performance in English, mathematics and science has exceeded the national average at the end of Year 6. Through much improved teaching, monitoring and planning, this is reflected in good achievement for all pupils at the end of Year 2 and very good achievement for all groups of pupils by the end of Year 6.

Foundation Stage

2. The attainment of children on entry to the Foundation Stage varies each year, but is average overall. Children make consistently good and more often very good progress whilst in the reception classes. Children are taught in a stimulating learning environment, where they are provided with a rich and varied range of challenging

activities that are very well matched to their abilities and interests. This ensures that they achieve very well overall. Most children 'blossom' in this high quality environment, and are likely to far exceed the expected standards in their physical, creative, and personal development and also in their knowledge and understanding of the world by the time they start in Year 1. Most are likely to exceed the expected standards in communication and mathematical skills. Many children are already working well within National Curriculum levels. Overall, the quality of the provision for children in the reception class is a strength of the school and provides a highly effective platform for the children's start to more formal education in Year 1.

Key Stage 1

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.2 (16.1)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	16.0 (14.5)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	17.3 (16.8)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 55 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- Results in the 2003 national tests, at the end of Year 2, were average in reading, well above average in writing and above average in mathematics. Since the last inspection the school has successfully begun to challenge more able pupils, so that the number of pupils attaining the higher level in the national tests was above average in writing and well above average in mathematics, but more able pupils did not do as well in reading. Compared with schools with similar socio-economic circumstances, results were average in reading, above average in mathematics and well above average in writing. Inspection findings show that current standards are average in reading, and above average in writing and mathematics. The school has re-evaluated the approach it takes to teaching reading and introduced a number of new initiatives, but it is too soon for them to have successfully influenced reading standards overall. Inspection evidence shows that all groups of pupils, whenever they start in the school, make good progress and achieve well in relation to their capabilities by the end of Year 2.
- The inspection findings show that standards in science are above average. This mirrors the results of teacher assessment in 2003. However, the school is not as successful at pushing on more able pupils in this subject. This is because despite the pupils' good grasp of key subject facts, their independent investigational skills are not consistently developed.

Key Stage 2

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.4 (28.5)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	28.0 (28.4)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	30.0 (29.5)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 64 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

5. In the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 6, standards were average in English, and above average in mathematics and science. Standards in English and mathematics were above those of similar schools and standards in science were well above similar schools. Inspection evidence shows that those pupils who started in the school at the usual time made very good progress and achieved very well in relation to their capabilities in all three subjects. This is due to the dedication of the headteacher and staff who have worked very hard to improve the quality of education in the school during the past two and a half years.
6. Inspection evidence shows that standards are above average in all three subjects by the end of Year 6. This represents very good progress and achievement for all groups of pupils. The school is very successful at challenging more able pupils, many of whom who are attaining very high standards. Both boys and girls are excited and challenged in lessons, and additional 'booster' classes, together with very good teaching and monitoring have all played their part in improving the progress and achievement of pupils. Equally, pupils with special educational needs are provided with relevant, high quality additional support, so that they also make very good progress and achieve very well. Similarly, pupils new to speaking English, or those who have recently started in the school, are supported very well by teachers and their new friends in class. Key subject vocabulary is always carefully explained so that pupils not familiar with English quickly catch up and make very rapid progress. The school recognises individual skills very well so that many of the pupils new to speaking English are included in the more able groups, where they can work to their potential in particular subjects and are not held back because of their limited grasp of the language. This is a key factor in their very good achievement.
7. The school is very keen to develop 'all round' pupils and ensures that all pupils have a wide range of opportunities to excel in other, more creative subjects. Consequently, standards in physical education are above average and standards in music are well above national expectations at the end of Year 6. There are some extremely talented pupils in the school who attain exceedingly high standards in both subjects. Drama, music and art are used well to develop pupils' creative skills and are beginning to be used successfully as a vehicle to enhance pupils' knowledge in history, for example. It is likely that standards in history are above average as a result. Standards in geography are in line with national expectations and, based on limited evidence it is likely that standards in design and technology and art and design are also average. There is the potential for standards to be higher in some non-core subjects. Although topics are covered in depth, the school has not developed assessment systems in these subjects to enable teachers to plan systematically for the progressive development of subject skills. This shortcoming in planning puts a limit on the overall standards pupils attain.
8. At the time of the last inspection two years ago, standards in information and communication technology (ICT) were reported to be well below average. Despite limitations in terms of resources and lack of a dedicated ICT suite, the school has made a significant investment in making improvements and developing staff skills. As a result, standards are rising quickly and inspection findings indicate that they are in line with the national average. The school's links with its local Catholic secondary school have been fruitfully developed, and the use of its ICT suite, together with the support from its staff, has had a significant impact on the rapid progress that has been made.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **very good**. Provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. Their attendance is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's very welcoming, caring, and supportive atmosphere provides the basis for very good behaviour and relationships throughout the school community.
- Spiritual development is outstanding and forms the foundations of school life.
- Very good personal development ensures that pupils are mature and responsible young people, who have a very strong moral, social and cultural awareness.

Commentary

9. Strong Christian values and a philosophy based on valuing all pupils, whatever their background or ability are at the heart of the school's philosophy. All pupils are welcomed, supported and encouraged to do their best. Bullying and racist behaviour is not tolerated. Pupils respect this philosophy, and behave very well as a result. They are very polite to visitors, have very good attitudes, and have formed very good relationships with each other and with staff. Pupils arriving mid-term or later than the others are warmly welcomed. They have a special friend appointed to help them, so they too quickly settle into the school routines and quickly become valued members of the school community. Interested in their lessons, pupils try hard to do well. They know the rules and value their rewards for achievement in all spheres. This has a very positive influence on the standards that pupils achieve and the very good progress that they make.
10. Pupils' spiritual development is excellent as the school nurtures and continually promotes pupils' spirituality. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to sit quietly to reflect on and to marvel at, the wonders in the world around them and their place in it. Prayers form an important part of the day and pupils' inner peace and quiet is evident as they close their eyes. Throughout the curriculum, spiritual awareness is very well planned for and, for instance, very evident in music, where pupils sing with genuine enjoyment. They 'feel' the music and mean the words, so that the music is joyous and moving to all who hear it.
11. Moral and social development is very good. Understanding the difference between right and wrong, and the need for forgiveness are the basis of school life. Very quickly younger children know what they should do and try hard to keep to the rules. Pupils are very aware of those less fortunate than themselves, are very caring and supportive of those pupils with complex learning or physical difficulties, and collect money for many different charities, including one in Zambia, as pupils are very keen to make a difference to the lives of others.
12. Cultural development is very good and has improved since the last inspection. Discussions in lessons are wide ranging, and no pupils are afraid of speaking out because they know their views are taken seriously. As a result, pupils develop a very good understanding of Britain's multi-cultural society. Visiting speakers and educational visits also make a valuable contribution to their very good cultural development. Pupils' own faith and cultures are valued and celebrated so that the school is an exciting multi-cultural community as a result.

Attendance

13. Keen to enter a caring, purposeful and vibrant school, pupils arrive very punctually in the mornings. As a result of the school's high expectations, their attendance is above the national average, with very few instances of unauthorised absence.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.7	School data	0.1
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

Exclusions

There has been one, very short fixed-term exclusion, during the past school year. This was justified and handled well, so that the pupil is now happily settled back in school.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	285	1	0
White – Irish	4		
White – any other White background	40		
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2		
Mixed – White and Black African	1		
Mixed – White and Asian	4		
Mixed – any other mixed background	2		
Asian or Asian British – Indian	5		
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	3		
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1		
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1		
Black or Black British – African	1		
Chinese	7		
Any other ethnic group	2		
No ethnic group recorded	2		

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 **good** with some very good features. This judgment is based on very good teaching overall, the good curriculum, with very good opportunities for enrichment, good support and guidance offered to pupils and very effective standards of care. Taken together with very good links with parents, the community and other schools, these features foster very good attitudes to school.

Teaching and learning

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 53 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3 (6 %)	15 (28 %)	18 (34%)	17 (32 %)	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.

The quality of teaching is **very good** overall. It is very good in the Foundation Stage and Years 3 to 6 and good in Years 1 and 2. Assessment procedures are **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff in the reception classes understand the learning needs of young children very well.
- Pupils try hard in lessons and this makes a significant contribution to learning.
- Planning is thorough in most classes, but on occasions the pace of lessons is a little slow.
- Well-qualified teaching assistants are used effectively to meet the differing needs of pupils well.
- Teachers handle misconceptions well in lessons, but their marking does not consistently focus on showing pupils how to improve.
- There are good assessment procedures in English, mathematics and science, but these are not fully developed in other subjects.
- The school monitors and supports pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language well, but individual learning targets are not sufficiently specific.

Commentary

14. In the reception classes, very good teaching and a wide variety of carefully planned activities encourage children to use all their senses, when they are introduced to a world of meaningful experiences, which they enjoy immensely. A particular strength is the way teachers bring learning alive and make links between all activities. This means children delight in learning that is 'seamless', so that they make very good progress and achieve very well overall. Teachers continually promote learning through experiences that are very well matched to the children's abilities and interests. As a result, children's confidence is developed, and because they feel safe and secure, children try very hard to win the praise of staff. This has a significant impact on the progress they make. Parents are delighted by the progress their children are making and value the recent improvements made to the classroom environment. They appreciate the hard work of all the staff who work very effectively as a team, and recognise their children have a very good foundation for their future learning.

15. Teaching is good in Years 1 to 2, and very good in Years 3 to 6. This is much improved since the last inspection. A particular strength across the school is the teachers' very good management of pupils. Teachers use praise and rewards very effectively to motivate and encourage pupils. In addition, relationships are also a significant strength and all these factors ensure that pupils want to work hard to please their teachers, and they are not afraid to 'have a go' and to make mistakes. This has a positive effect on the effort that pupils make and the progress and achievement of all groups of pupils.
16. In general, the planning of lessons is very detailed, and all teachers take great strides to ensure that activities are well matched to the pupils' levels of ability. As a result, more able pupils are provided with additional challenges, while less able or average attaining pupils have just the right level of challenge to ensure that they, too, improve or consolidate their learning. This is a key factor in pupils' improved progress and levels of achievement since the last inspection. Often, teachers ensure that pupils of differing abilities work together, and not only is this a highly beneficial way to motivate pupils and enhance learning, but when working together to solve problems, this approach also nurtures pupils' social skills very well.
17. Where teaching is good rather than very good, particularly in Years 1 and 2, it is generally because the pace of lessons is sometimes a little slow. Although lessons are planned in detail and the purpose of the lesson is carefully explained, some teachers sometimes take too long to explain key concepts or tasks. Consequently, pupils become a little over excited when the practical tasks start and take time to settle. This affects the time they have to complete tasks, which has a 'knock on' effect on the progress they make in the lesson.
18. The work of teaching assistants is good. They work as a team with the teachers and make an effective contribution to learning in lessons. They work quietly and unobtrusively within class, supporting pupils who require additional help, without making them feel different from their friends. They are well briefed by teachers and, in particular, ensure that pupils with more complex learning needs or those new to speaking English, receive relevant support so that they make the same progress as their classmates in lessons. They often take responsibility for small teaching groups and deliver these sessions carefully and successfully. Consequently, pupils are able to work at their own pace, develop confidence and make secure progress in consolidating their skills.
19. Teachers provide good verbal support in lessons and generally handle misconceptions clearly and sensitively. There are also some good examples of pupils' work being marked in a constructive manner, which leads to an improvement in pupils' work or level of presentation. However, this is not consistent in all year groups or subjects. In some cases, marking is cursory and opportunities to reinforce pupils' knowledge of their learning or progress towards individual targets are not fully or effectively exploited.
20. The school has improved its systems for assessing pupils' academic progress since the last inspection. Assessment procedures are good in English, mathematics and science and are of a very high standard in the Foundation Stage. When assessing pupils' work, teachers are now linking their judgements better with National Curriculum levels. They are using the considerable volume of data being produced to monitor very closely the progress of all groups of pupils and this information is used successfully to plan activities in lessons. However, although teachers now have a clear overview of pupils' knowledge and understanding of the topic areas covered in other subjects, they have yet to develop consistent ways to assess the development of pupils' skills. As a

result, they have a patchier picture of what pupils can do and this makes it more difficult for them to plan the subsequent steps in pupils' learning.

21. Pupils with special educational needs are assessed carefully and satisfactory individual education plans produced. These are reviewed regularly, but they do not identify sufficiently small steps in learning to help pupils and teachers judge progress and celebrate success. The way that the school supports pupils who speak English as an additional language has improved well since the last inspection. These pupils are now regularly assessed and their progress carefully tracked so that teachers are quickly alerted to those who need extra help and to those who are doing particularly well. This is very important with so many new pupils starting in the school at other than normal times who may require additional support.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **good**, and enhanced by a **very good** range of additional activities. The accommodation is **good**. Resources are **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is highly stimulating with all areas of learning very effectively linked.
- Curriculum planning has improved, but there is the potential for further development to ensure that subject skills are progressively developed.
- All pupils have equal access to the curriculum and provision for pupils with special educational needs and those new to speaking English is good.
- There are very good opportunities for enrichment, which successfully enhance learning.
- Good use is made of the improved accommodation.

Commentary

22. The quality and range of learning opportunities are good and have improved since the last inspection because curriculum planning has been re-designed. Consequently, all pupils in Year 6 learn French, specialist topic weeks are now regularly held, and recommended schemes of work have been adopted and in some instances have been adapted by the school to better meet its own requirements. This has proved successful in literacy where writing standards have improved. The strong creative arts curriculum is being used successfully to enhance learning in other subjects through a topic-based approach. This is successfully creating a more exciting range of learning activities that make learning more meaningful for pupils. The recently revised whole-school curriculum plan ensures that pupils study subjects in depth, history and geography being a good example. However, the building of skills step by step in these subjects, and in design and technology, is not well developed. This is because too long is left before some subjects are revisited. The school recognises that the timetable and whole-school curriculum plan are not yet 'quite right' and need further refinement.

Example of Outstanding Practice

The Foundation Stage curriculum is excellent. It is stimulating and lively. Highly effective links between areas of learning entice children to learn. Skills and knowledge gained in one area of learning help them develop in others. The area of 'knowledge and understanding of the world' is particularly strong in this respect.

The children are invited to explore a rich, varied and enticing learning environment in which they blossom. The holistic approach to planning is a highly effective means of introducing the children to the wonders of the world. Topics and themes such as the 'mini-beast world' extend seamlessly into all areas of learning and provide an exciting vehicle for pupils to explore learning and develop all of their skills. The outdoor area includes a wormery and a formicary, as well as tanks of woodlice and snails. Magnifying glasses aid close inspection and children buy tickets to visit the 'zoo'. The occupants move into the Mini-beast Hotel as they mature. In the classroom, children feed caterpillars and await their change to cocoons with impatience. A covered table, cunningly disguised to look like a small hill, encourages exploration, with children invited to lift the flap and inspect with a torch what happens 'underground'. Children talk, sing, write and create dances, pictures and music about their discoveries. They make mini-beast biscuits discussing shapes and the number of legs. Using a programmable toy, disguised as a caterpillar, they programme its movements to play a game based on the story of the *Very Hungry Caterpillar*. Children delight in this stimulating learning environment and make exceptional progress, so that one child confidently chastised an inspector for not recognising he was making an 'aphid biscuit'.

23. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and well managed. Their needs are identified early and relevant, good quality support is provided. The needs of the more able pupils are met very well in lessons, particularly in Years 3 to 6, where work is designed to challenge them. Before school, classes are held to enable pupils of all abilities in Year 6 to enrich and enhance their literacy and numeracy skills. Gifted and talented pupils are also offered lessons before school to help them develop their reasoning skills. Pupils are so keen that many participate.
24. The provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language is also good, and has improved due to the dedication and hard work of the school. Specialist staff are used well to target additional support where it is most needed. Recently, for instance, teachers sent home technical words connected with the topic being studied to support parents in helping their children. Thus, all groups of pupils are included very well and benefit from the good quality curriculum.
25. The curriculum is enriched very effectively by a very wide range of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors. Every class visits places of educational interest at least twice each year and every onwards year from Year 4, pupils participate in residential trips, culminating in a five-day residential trip to France in Year 6. Links with the community are an invaluable source of enrichment activities, and the very wide range of activities offered makes a significant contribution not only to learning, but also to pupils' social and cultural development.
26. The accommodation is good. Recently completed work to unite the two main buildings has been very successful and helped to develop a whole-school ethos. Disabled access within the split-level buildings has been improved, and the school now provides specialist personal hygiene facilities, which parents and pupils alike greatly value. The school has improved the resources available to support teaching and learning, despite limitations in terms of finances. The school owes much to the hard work of parents and the community who have raised the necessary funds and, consequently, plans to build

a computer suite can go ahead shortly. This has the potential to improve the quality of the curriculum further.

Care, guidance and support

Procedures for pupils' health, safety and welfare are **very good**. Pupils are provided with **good** support and guidance overall. The school involves pupils **very well** in its work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Health and safety are given a very high priority.
- Pastoral care is very strong, and is the foundation of school life.
- There are very good induction procedures for new pupils.
- Pupils are not yet fully aware of their academic targets.

Commentary

27. This is a very caring school where the health and safety of pupils are at the heart of the school's philosophy of looking after the pupils in its care. Security is regularly reviewed, risk assessments take place frequently, and the site manager deals promptly with any issues arising. First aid is administered by trained personnel, but not all incidents are recorded. Annual training ensures all teaching staff know how to deal with child protection concerns. There is a very close relationship with outside agencies and the school is very quick to act upon any advice received. In this way, pupils with more complex learning needs or more vulnerable pupils are welcomed, very well cared for, and successfully included into the life of the school.
28. Pastoral care is an equally high priority for the school. Very good relationships throughout the school ensure all pupils have someone to turn to if they need help or advice. Pupils with special educational needs and those recently arrived in the school or country are treated with sensitivity, and staff build self confidence through praise and very good relationships. The school chaplain is a trusted visitor, and teachers know pupils' personal qualities very well. Pupils say adults listen to them and value the personal advice and guidance that they receive. Through the school council and other regular consultations the school makes sure that any pupil concerns are voiced, recognised and, where possible, acted upon.
29. Individual academic targets are set in literacy and numeracy. These are shared with parents at consultation meetings and regularly reviewed, but pupils are not yet following them closely when they work. This is because they are not quite sure what they are, and because teachers do not regularly make reference to them when marking, this is a missed opportunity to guide pupils and ensure that pupils have ownership of their own learning.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Parents and school enjoy a **very effective** partnership. Links with playgroups, nurseries, other primary and secondary schools are **very good**. Links with the church and local community are also **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents' support for the school is very strong and makes a very effective contribution to school life.

- Improved links with other schools and the community significantly enrich learning opportunities.
- The communication with parents is very good.

Commentary

30. Although its partnership with parents has improved since the last inspection and is now very good, the school continues to work at developing this relationship. Quick to respond to parents' concerns, information is now more detailed, although the wording in some of the children's annual reports could be more 'parent friendly', and a small minority of parents would still like further improvements to be made in the way in which the school communicates with them. However, inspection evidence shows that the contact books are very well used for communication between home and school, and teachers are very approachable. Class newsletters and fortnightly school newsletters give parents very good information about events, dates and general information about school life. The parent teacher association, run by a very enthusiastic committee, raises considerable amounts of money annually which adds much to the quality of the education provided by the school. Parents of children with special education or other needs are well informed about their children's individual education plans and involved in their reviews. The school makes sure that parents who speak English as an additional language understand any communication, and friendly office staff are always willing to help.
31. Links with the local and wider community are very good. Those with the local church are very strong, fostered by the school chaplain and parishioners. This is their school and they are interested in what is happening. Links with other schools are now very good and well used. Joint teaching units for science, design technology, information and communication technology and physical education take place in a local secondary school and are well planned and managed. Pupils enjoy and benefit from being taught by older students. Pupils use some of the local secondary schools' facilities, which not only enhances their education but also ensures they approach their secondary education with confidence. The very many community links fostered by the school add a great deal to the quality of learning in the school, and helps to widen pupils' horizons.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **very good**. The quality of the headteacher's leadership is **very good**, with some excellent features and he has formed an effective team. The governance of the school is **very good**. The management of the school is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The head teacher's clarity of vision, sense of purpose and high aspirations are of very high order, as is his ability to steer the school forward strongly through motivating both staff and pupils.
- The school monitors its performance very well.
- The delegation by the headteacher to curriculum co-ordinators is effective, leading to good development within individual subjects.
- The governing body is very well informed about the strengths and weaknesses of the school and plays a large part in strategic and budget planning.
- The school's finances are managed very effectively.

Commentary

32. The headteacher was appointed two and a half years ago, at a time of great difficulty for the school. Since then, under his quietly inspirational guidance, staff have focused strongly on improving the school and its standards, especially in the core subjects. At the same time, they have maintained a happy, supportive, yet strongly developmental atmosphere for pupils and staff, within a clear Christian ethos. The headteacher is very committed to all pupils fulfilling their potential. He has ensured very good improvement since the last inspection. His excellent sense of purpose and the very effective methods he employs have led to much recent development, both in the environment and in teaching.
33. The management of the school is confident and very well informed. This is better than at the time of the last inspection. There are very good systems and structures in place to ensure that staff and governors play a very successful part in managing and monitoring the work of the school and its performance. The headteacher has been particularly successful in developing and deploying the very good senior management team to help in both moving the school forward and in managing day-to-day events. Good structures are in place for the induction and support of new staff and to contribute to teacher training, which add much to the quality of the education provided. Very good use is made of the school's own expertise to develop good practice, and despite financial constraints limiting the staff's access to external training, 'in house' staff training is well used to support the school's aims, as well as to cater for the needs of individual staff. As a result of these initiatives, standards are rising because staff are now more confident, skilled and better informed about the school's development.
34. Leadership and management of the curriculum by staff other than the head teacher are good overall. Target setting and monitoring of each subject is undertaken, but because of recent budget constraints, little monitoring of teaching has been undertaken in subjects other than English, mathematics and science. Development plans are in place for each subject and are of good quality. Staff are clear about priorities within their subjects and are able to contribute successfully to the school development plan. They do not currently fully cost their time into these plans, to aid the monitoring of best value.
35. Governors are fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They meet with school staff regularly and have very good systems and regular meetings within the governing body. These factors together ensure that governors are able to make a major contribution to the leadership and strategic planning of the school. They have access to good quality information and are therefore able to challenge the school and ask difficult questions when necessary. The governing body ensures that the school fulfils its statutory duties well.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	789 636
Total expenditure	850 349
Expenditure per pupil	2 557

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	39 867
Balance carried forward to the next year	(20 846)

36. The headteacher and governing body inherited a school that was in severe financial difficulties. The governing body has decided to try to increase pupil numbers rather than cutting staff, as a way out of the negative budget. This decision was based on a desire to maintain the rise in standards, by ensuring that teachers do not have to teach mixed age classes. As a consequence, without local education authority assistance, they have plans to reverse their negative balance slowly over a number of years. They have been highly proactive in this mission, employing a consultant to raise the profile of the school and attract new parents. Pupil numbers are now rising as a consequence, but they are wisely keeping a close eye on the situation.
37. In the meantime, the school's budget is managed very well and the school seeks to ensure that the money it receives is spent in the best way possible to benefit the current pupils in the school. Through astute financial management the school budget has been very tightly costed and evaluated. The finance committee of the governing body works closely with the headteacher to provide the best value for money. Day-to-day finances are managed effectively by the school bursar. The most recent auditors' report was very favourable, and minor adjustments have been made as recommended.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The overall provision for the children in the Foundation Stage is **very good**.

38. The children in the reception classes receive a very good start to their education. Teaching is very good overall, with an example of excellent practice seen. Very good planning that is adapted very well for children of all abilities, including those with special educational needs or those who are learning English as an additional language, together with very good assessment systems contribute to the effectiveness of these early years of education. The accommodation has recently been improved to provide a well-resourced and attractive unit, further complemented by good quality outdoor space, which adds a further dimension to learning. All staff work very effectively as a team and relationships with parents are very strong, with many working alongside staff. Children start in the reception classes with average ability. As a result of very good leadership, very effective team work and an excellent curriculum, children settle very quickly and make very good progress overall. Good improvement has been made since the last inspection.

Personal, social and emotional development

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are developing their levels of personal independence very well.
- They behave very well for their age.

Commentary

39. High expectations of the children's attitudes and behaviour are supported by very good teaching, and children's learning and their very good achievement reflects these high teaching standards. Children quickly develop their confidence in this highly supportive learning environment performing with aplomb to the whole school, parents and relatives in their class assembly. They work and play co-operatively and a strong rapport has developed between them, their class teachers and the classroom assistants. The high quality of the general ethos and environment, together with effective teamwork and supportive relationships, contribute to the strength of this area of learning. As a result, children who started with average skills are making very good progress and are likely to far exceed the expected goals when they start in Year 1.

Communication, language and literacy

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children's early writing skills are promoted and fostered effectively.
- Good use is made of classroom computers to support children's early reading and writing skills.

Commentary

40. Teaching and learning are good. Many opportunities are provided for children to develop their communication skills through a wide range of activities so that children make good progress and achieve well. Children enjoy listening to stories and sharing books, and because staff interact purposefully with them, many can predict or suggest how a story will develop. All have reading books and the most able children are beginning to read with developing fluency and understanding. Because of the many opportunities provided, all children can write their names with increasing legibility and most are beginning to write phrases and sentences. More able children's writing skills are well-developed, and they can write two or more sentences unaided. As a result, most children are on track to exceed the expected goals for their age.

Mathematical development

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's mathematical vocabulary is developing well.
- Most children count and calculate with confidence.

Commentary

41. Due to good teaching, most children are making good progress in their early understanding of number, shape and measure and achieve well. Most can handle simple calculations with numbers to five and ten, and the more confident work with higher numbers. The staff use games and activities effectively to support number work and, as a result, children are enthusiastic about their lessons. This has a positive impact on their achievement. The use of a range of materials including home-made resources, such as 'Lawrence, the ladybird', is planned and organised well. In an excellent lesson, children used 'Lawrence' as a stimulus for forming number sentences and, in addition, because of the way that good quality learning opportunities are effectively linked with other activities, their use of mathematical vocabulary is promoted effectively. As a result, many are likely to be working within the National Curriculum levels by the time they start in Year 1, and most are on target to exceed the expected goals.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A wealth of stimulating learning activities introduces children to the wonders of the world.
- Teachers make very good use of different themes to support children's learning.

Commentary

42. Children make very good progress, and achieve very well in this area of learning because they have plenty of opportunities to experience a wide and stimulating range of activities. The children are very interested in everything that is presented to them, because teaching is very good. As a result, children quickly learn to use programmable

toys and computers, and are skilled in their use of digital cameras and other technological equipment. The children delight in learning about their world by observing, handling and discussing a variety of objects. Adults use questioning very well to extend the children's vocabulary, to explain their thoughts and ideas, and to encourage children to think about their world. As a result of this high quality teaching and learning environment, most children are already working within national curriculum levels in the associated subjects, and are likely to far exceed the expected goals when they start in Year 1.

Physical development

Provision in physical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have good opportunities to develop their physical skills on a range of large exercise equipment.
- They are developing their expertise rapidly in the use of pencils, scissors and other small tools through a wide range of activities.

Commentary

43. Teaching and learning in this curriculum area are very good. Fine hand movements are developed very effectively because children have very good opportunities to manipulate a varied range of small equipment and construction apparatus. Links with other areas of learning are also used very effectively. For example, children learn to use old fashioned quill pens with alacrity, one commenting "I am glad I'm not a little girl in the olden days". The use of the outdoor environment is very well planned to enhance physical development, and a wide range of indoor activities, including gymnastics, dance and drama support learning very well. As a result, children achieve very well, become very confident at moving in large spaces and most are likely to well exceed the expected goals when they start in Year 1.

Creative development

Provision in creative development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Easy access to a very wide range of resources for creative work promotes freedom, independence and creativity.
- Their musical ability is fostered and developed very well.

Commentary

44. Children have an extremely good range of opportunities to develop their creativity. Planning of this area is carefully thought out, giving children a very broad range of experiences. Very good teaching is matched by children's learning and support from parent helpers means that a wide range of different activities is on offer during creative sessions. As a result, most children are already working within National Curriculum levels and most are likely to far exceed the expected goals when they start in Year 1. The children are confident to use a wide variety of tools and materials to create all sorts of different images. Work of a very high quality was on display that wouldn't disgrace a

Year 2 class and their class assembly featured some very tuneful singing as well as expertise with musical instrument that was a joy to watch.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many opportunities are provided to develop speaking and listening skills, so that pupils become confident and achieve very high standards.
- Writing and reading standards are improving, but many pupils are not confident to read and spell unfamiliar words.
- Most teachers have very high expectations, so that the achievement of all pupils is very good by the end of Year 6.
- The quality of teachers' marking is good and ensures that pupils understand what they need to do to improve, but does not always make links with pupils' individual targets.
- Lessons are generally lively and interesting, but on some days a few classes have a high percentage of time allocated to English, which makes it difficult for pupils to maintain their enthusiasm.
- Reading resources have improved, but the new library needs more books.

Commentary

45. There has been a very good improvement since the last inspection due to more rigorous monitoring and improved teaching. Inspection evidence shows that overall standards of work are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The school is successfully challenging more able pupils and supports less able pupils and those new to speaking English effectively. Inspection evidence shows that all groups of pupils achieve well by the end of Year 2, and very well by the end of Year 6. Those pupils who have remained at the school since the start of their education have made very good progress and are generally attaining very high standards.
46. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are well above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 by which time they have learned to structure a debate. Generally, pupils have a very good vocabulary and due to the school's very good ethos, have the confidence to speak in front of the whole class or school during Assembly. The standard of reading is average across the school with some pupils reading very well. Previously, the teaching of reading was not well thought out, and uninteresting reading resources did not inspire pupils, nor did they aid teaching. As a result, some younger pupils and less able older pupils have trouble using the sounds of letters to tackle new words, and this impacts on overall standards attained. The school is working hard to close the gap between reading and writing. Evidence indicates that recently standards have begun to rise and teachers are more confident, but the new initiatives have not been in place long enough to have raised standards.
47. Standards of writing are above average across the school. More able pupils and those with special educational needs make particularly good progress in this area of English

because teachers are more confident at developing these skills than those of reading. However, while pupils make good attempts at spelling and correct words for themselves, this is a weaker area that is linked to pupils' lack of confidence to recognise and use sound patterns when reading. The school has rightly identified spelling as being a comparative weakness and has recently introduced specific spelling lessons, which are beginning to improve pupils' confidence and ability.

48. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. It is particularly strong in the oldest classes where teachers use a lively style and humour to keep pupils interested, for example, the use of drama helps pupils delight in words, such as 'ponder or pondering.' All teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and most have high expectations. They expect and get a good quantity of quality work. Through good marking, teachers in all year groups help their pupils know what they need to do to improve and this is influential in the very good progress that pupils make overall. However, marking does not consistently make reference to the pupils' individual learning targets, so that this is a missed opportunity to involve pupils more in their own learning. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 1 and 2, but a few lessons lack pace and, although pupils make good progress, they are not as motivated compared to the older pupils. Teachers are more confident to teach reading, and new resources and separate teaching sessions are beginning to improve pupils' skills, but in some classes, speaking and listening activities, reading and the literacy hour occur simultaneously on the timetable. This timetabling arrangement makes it difficult for teachers to maintain the pupils' interest. As a result, many pupils find it hard to concentrate on one subject for so long, and this does not aid learning.
49. Leadership and management are good. The two co-ordinators have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses across the school and have taken the right steps to improve standards. These have proved successful in the most part, and have resulted in very good improvement since the last inspection. Resources overall have been improved, especially reading materials. With limited finances, the school has done well to restock the new non-fiction library, but there is still a need for a greater range of books to motivate pupils to read a wider range of books.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

50. There are good and well planned opportunities for pupils to use and develop their language and literacy skills in other subjects. Pupils produce a good quantity of well-structured written work, such as notes, stories and reports that help improve their skills and enhance learning in other subjects. Opportunities to debate and act in role play are also used effectively to enhance pupils' spoken skills.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good overall, with very good methods being used to challenge and support all groups of pupils.
- The system for individual target setting with pupils is not working as well as it might, and as a consequence many pupils are not sufficiently clear what they need to do to improve.

- Assessment and record keeping are good, but marking does not consistently give clear guidance for pupils to improve.
- Good monitoring by subject leaders has led to a much improved quality of teaching and learning.

Commentary

51. Evidence shows that the attainment of pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is above the national average. All groups and abilities of pupils make good progress and achieve well by the end of Year 2. They make very good progress and achieve very well by the end of Year 6, as a result of very good teaching and the good curriculum that the school provides. Standards overall are not higher because many pupils have special educational needs or have recently arrived in the school, many new to speaking English. Teaching and standards have improved since the last inspection. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of all aspects of mathematics, and because of an increased emphasis on problem solving are improving their ability to use their known facts to solve problems.
52. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall and has improved since the last inspection. Much of the strongest teaching is in Years 3 to 6, where teachers are more confident in their subject knowledge to make learning fun. In all classes, teachers' very good behaviour management ensures a calm, productive atmosphere and, as a result, nearly all pupils are attentive and work hard. In Year 6, pupils whose knowledge is less secure attend early morning booster and breakfast classes. Here, their self confidence is worked on as much as their ability to understand the mathematical concepts, with very good results. Most teachers have a very good command of the curriculum and very high expectations. In all classes, basic skills are taught clearly and, as a result, pupils of all abilities generally demonstrate a good knowledge of number facts and methods, and some pupils demonstrate a very good knowledge. Pupils are given good opportunities to develop methods for working out answers in their minds, to solve problems and investigate for themselves, and this successfully challenges pupils to use their mathematical skills in meaningful ways.
53. The teachers are aware of the very varying capabilities of their pupils. They provide suitable tasks and learning materials for pupils with special educational needs. These pupils are well supported by teachers and teaching assistants. More able pupils are also catered for particularly well. A little teaching is only satisfactory. In these instances, teaching lacks pace and teachers' instructions and explanations sometimes lack clarity, then the needs of the majority are not as well catered for as the above average pupils and the pupils lack concentration. Across the school, the marking of pupils' work does not consistently explain clearly what they need to do to improve or make links with pupils' targets.
54. Leadership and management are good. The two responsible teachers are clear about standards and areas for improvement as a result of monitoring and good analysis of test results. There is a good assessment and record keeping system. The school has a system in place for individual target setting with pupils, but the use of this system is inconsistent and does not ensure that all pupils are really clear as to what they need to do to improve.

Mathematics across the Curriculum

55. There are good opportunities for pupils to use and develop their mathematical skills as part of their work in other subjects. These links are planned into the curriculum well.

Consequently, pupils develop an appreciation of the practical uses of mathematical skills.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' independent investigational skills are very well developed, in Years 3 to 6, but are less well developed in Years 1 and 2.
- In Years 1 and 2, pupils' written work in science is undemanding and mixed with other subjects, so that pupils are not able to see clearly how their learning is progressing.
- Pupils of differing abilities often work together and this has a positive effect on their progress and self confidence.
- Planning for future development is very good.
- The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent, so that pupils are not always sure about how they can improve.

Commentary

56. At the end of Year 2, inspection findings indicate that standards are above average. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and are achieving well. At the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is also above the national average. This represents very good progress and achievement for all groups and abilities of pupils. Overall standards attained at the end of Year 6 are not higher because a significant number of pupils have special educational needs, are new to speaking English or have just arrived in the school. Overall standards and the progress that pupils make have both improved since the last inspection. This has been due to major improvements in the curriculum, the improved quality of monitoring of teaching and learning and the development of teaching skills.
57. By the end of Year 2, all groups of pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of most aspects of science, including electricity, forces, materials and living things, but their investigational skills are no more than satisfactory, and this prevents overall standards from being higher. This is because in some, but not all classes, teachers assume too much control over what pupils do, and do not encourage pupils to plan, investigate and record their own simple lines of enquiry. Pupils state they really enjoy science and these positive attitudes help to spur learning on. In addition, the progress of all groups of pupils is enhanced because pupils of differing abilities work very sensibly together and help each other clarify their ideas. This also has a significant impact on pupils' social development. Pupils' recording of their work in topic books is very neat, but is undemanding. It does not do justice to their level of knowledge and understanding and does not help them to clarify their ideas, evaluate their learning or see how they have progressed. This also has an impact on overall standards attained.
58. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a good and secure understanding of all elements of science overall. Most pupils are confident in their knowledge of key subject facts and are able to use these to plan their own fair tests. They conduct their experiments with care and precision in order to test their predictions and extend their understanding of scientific processes. This is the main reason why pupils' progress and achievement is higher than in Years 1 and 2, and very good, by the end of Year 6.

59. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. It is good in Years 1 and 2, and very good in Years 3 to 6. This is a much better quality of teaching than found at the last inspection. Most teachers have very good subject knowledge, plan lessons in detail and ensure that pupils are very effectively introduced to the vocabulary essential to the topic. This very useful strategy also ensures that those pupils new to speaking English are effectively supported and are able to take full part in the lesson. Relationships are very good, as are the expectations of behaviour. Because of this, pupils are confident learners who are prepared to share their predictions without fear of criticism or comment. Pupils respond to this very effective teaching approach by applying themselves enthusiastically, trying their hardest and helping each other. This has a positive impact on achievement and the progress that pupils of all abilities and backgrounds make. When teaching is not as strong, particularly in Years 1 and 2, teachers do not always take every opportunity to challenge pupils' scientific thinking, either through questioning, adapting the activities, or by providing more opportunities for pupils to record their work using their own words. In addition, it is a weakness in all year groups that teachers' marking does not consistently make it clear what pupils need to do to improve. This is a missed opportunity to engage pupils in a dialogue to challenge their thinking and move learning on.
60. The subject is very well led and managed. Despite limited non-contact time, the co-ordinator has undertaken a detailed sequence of monitoring and has acted decisively to improve the quality of the provision. As a result, she has a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject and the subject action plan is a very relevant document that has already ensured that very good progress has been made in a short time. Links with other schools and local industry have been successfully forged, which also add much to the improved curriculum provision.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's resources for the subject are improving and the school copes well with the lack of its own dedicated computer suite.
- Most teachers are enthusiastic, confident and knowledgeable, but assessment is not yet used to plan activities matched to pupils' abilities.
- Pupils enjoy the subject and work well, but their keyboard skills are underdeveloped.

Commentary

61. Standards are in line with expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, and have improved significantly since the last inspection, due to improvements in teachers' subject knowledge and skills, and in the resources available. Each classroom now has at least two computers, and regular use is made of a dedicated suite at the local secondary school. The school has the additional support of regular visits by the secondary school computer technician and extra support is provided when pupils visit the school. These factors have been influential in the improved standards. Teachers use data projectors to support whole-class teaching as the school currently has no dedicated computer suite of its own, but because it makes the best use of these resources, pupils are quickly making up for lost ground. Nonetheless, although all groups and abilities of pupils are making good progress in lessons, because of past difficulties, their achievement is satisfactory.

62. By the end of Year 2, pupils are quickly gaining in confidence and work well together. Most can log on and with little fuss can use a range of tools when drawing. They use word-banks to help them write and produce text with a range of punctuation and structures. By the end of Year 6, most pupils have a satisfactory level of ability. Most know how to log on to the network, find their way through the screen menus, identify the files they need and then work confidently with different programs. More able pupils can combine pictures with text to make illustrated reports. They search the Internet with increasing precision for material for projects and cut, copy and change pictures to suit their layout and are developing their skills well to handle and process information using databases and spreadsheets. Pupils' achievement is increasing rapidly. All groups of pupils obviously enjoy their lessons and their word processing skills improve noticeably as they get older, although their keyboard skills are underdeveloped and pupils sometimes have trouble locating letters and symbols. This requires more dedicated teaching of these skills.
63. Teaching and learning is good overall, based on good planning that ensures the gaps in pupils' learning are being plugged. Teaching has improved because teachers are now familiar with the software and confident with the hardware. Teaching assistants have good levels of knowledge and are well deployed to help anyone with a problem. Teachers have a broad overview of pupils' skills, but assessment procedures are underdeveloped. As a consequence, work is generally planned for topic coverage and not to match the skills of individual pupils. The school is currently addressing this issue and has suitable plans in hand.
64. The subject is well led and managed and the whole school is committed to improvement. The co-ordinator, together with the headteacher, has worked hard to improve the quality of the provision and to develop staff skills. The budget is well managed and there are clear plans for development which include a new ICT suite with seventeen work stations which has the potential to make a significant difference to the quality of the provision and standard attained. The co-ordinator provides expertise and is a confident role model for other teachers.

Information and Communication Technology across the curriculum

65. The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is satisfactory, but developing well. Pupils show more confidence when using their word processing skills and produce some good quality reports using text and graphics for projects in other subjects, such as history.

HUMANITIES

66. In humanities, work in **history** was sampled but no lessons were observed. It is therefore not possible to make judgements on teaching or overall provision. However, an indication of standards was formed by talking to pupils and by examining their work and displays. From this evidence, pupils' standards are in line with the expected level nationally at the end of Year 2 and better than expectations at the end of Year 6. For example, in Year 6 pupils construct their own "topic book" about the local area in the Second World War using some good methods, such as the bringing together of different sources of information, and they are beginning to evaluate these sources. However, the school lacks a good, school-wide assessment and record-keeping system for the subject, so teachers plan for topic coverage and not to develop pupils' skills progressively. Currently, although some exciting links have been developed with music and art and design, the curriculum lacks balance. For example, Year 3 pupils

study two ancient civilizations in quick succession. Higher up the school, the curriculum for history and geography are taught in half-year blocks. This leads to there being too long a gap before each subject is revisited and this diminishes pupils' overall level of achievement.

Geography

The provision for geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers use resources and the local area well to motivate pupils.
- Near the top of the school there is too long a gap between units of work and too much overlap of topic content.

Commentary

67. All observed lessons were in Years 3 to 6. Discussions with pupils, and an examination of their work from all parts of the school, alongside teachers' planning and records, indicate that, by the end of Year 2, pupils have satisfactory knowledge of the school's locality and know a sufficient amount about another country, China. By the end of Year 6, standards are in line with expectations. Achievement is satisfactory for pupils of all ages and abilities. No judgements were made concerning geography in the last inspection report.
68. The curriculum for the subject is unbalanced. Topics in Years 5 and 6 are centred on water. As a result, other parts of the National Curriculum syllabus are not studied in sufficient depth. In addition, teachers do not have a system by which they can assess and monitor pupils' subject skills. Consequently, although they have a broad overview of pupils' knowledge of each topic, they are not able to monitor and systematically develop specific subject skills. Taken together with the overlong gap between units of work, especially in the top two years of the school, these factors prevent skills being systematically developed over time with the direct result, for example, that mapping skills are not good enough. However, good use is made of other areas of the curriculum, such as literacy and information and communication technology, to help children learn.
69. Some good teaching was observed during the inspection, but teaching and learning over time is judged to be satisfactory because of the imbalance in planning. Good methods are being used to stimulate learning, such as using videos to bring learning alive and taking notes in order to compare employment locally with that of a farming area of India. These good teaching methods give pupils very good opportunities to cooperate and work together. This way of working in pairs or small groups gives pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, good opportunities to learn in an environment that is supportive, yet demanding. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The subject has not been a priority for development, but the school is rightly now seeking ways to develop the subject further and has good plans in hand to develop the use of the outside environment as a teaching resource.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

70. Only one lesson was observed in **design and technology**, so there is insufficient evidence to judge the quality of teaching and provision. However, this lesson and an

examination of pupils' work suggest that the standard of pupils' work matches national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils have good ideas and are creative in their designing and planning, but their skills are insufficient to help them plan ahead to take account of the difficulties that they may encounter. Also, teachers do not provide them with opportunities to revise their skills sufficiently so that they remember how to apply them when undertaking a new project. This is because teachers do not have a means to track pupils' skill development. Resources for this subject are not good enough. Some saws are blunt and some sawing boards are too unstable to help pupils cut accurately.

71. Only one **art and design** lesson was observed so it is not possible to make a judgement about the quality of the provision. However, this lesson and displays show that pupils cover the full curriculum and the indications are that their standards of work match national expectations. The subject is being used well to support subjects such as history and there are some talented pupils in the school whose drawings are of a high standard.

Music

Provision in music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' enjoyment and attainment is very effectively enhanced by a wide range of additional musical experiences.
- Very good specialist teaching is characterised by planning of the highest quality.

Commentary

72. Pupils achieve very well throughout the school and reach well above average standards at the end of both Years 2 and 6. Most pupils, especially those who have remained in the school since Year 1, achieve a high level of competence in all aspects of the subject, especially in their ability to read music, play a range of instruments, including the flute, clarinet and recorders, and when singing. Pupils' grasp of the technical language used is impressive. All pupils, without exception, state that they really enjoy all musical activities and this is evident in the effort they make to strive for improvement. The subject is a significant strength of the school and adds much to pupils' spiritual and cultural development. It is also a very successful vehicle for the development of mature and self-confident pupils. In particular, pupils with special educational needs, those who are new to speaking English or those who have just moved to the school, quickly benefit from high quality teaching, so they make very rapid progress. This is because the school makes a conscious effort to ensure that all pupils have every opportunity to shine.
73. Teaching by the specialist teacher is of a very high standard and makes a considerable contribution to pupils' enjoyment and the very good progress they make. Planning is meticulous and is based on a detailed knowledge and understanding of pupils' abilities, so that they are always challenged to achieve their best and to explore their own ideas when composing, for example. They do this with maturity and enthusiasm, respecting each other's opinions and listening carefully to each other's ideas because of the very good relationships that have been established between them and the teacher. In addition, the very wide range of additional experiences, such as visits to classical music concerts, participation in competitions and festivals, and regular school productions add much to the quality of learning, to pupils' self confidence, and to their

spiritual, social and cultural development. Parents are rightly proud of their children's achievements and the high quality of the experiences available.

74. The subject is very well led and managed by a specialist teacher. As a result, the high quality of the provision has been maintained and further developed since the previous inspection and good improvement has been made to develop the multi cultural elements of the subject. Due to the commitment of the subject leader to strive for greater success, there is a more even balance to curriculum planning so that pupils have a wider range of musical experiences and, as a result, standards are higher.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use of additional activities and specialist coaching supports learning well.
- The designated 'new' co-ordinator is an excellent role model.
- Good use is made of outside agencies to support pupils with special physical needs.

Commentary

75. No judgments were made in the last inspection about the subject. No lessons were observed in Years 1 and 2, so no secure judgments about standards can be made. By the end of Year 6, pupils attain standards that are above average overall. Pupils of all abilities enjoy the subject and try hard, and this has a positive impact on their progress and level of achievement which is good overall. All pupils' efforts are valued, and talented pupils are provided with a good range of opportunities to represent the school in competitions. Pupils' games skills have been developed to a good level through regular practice and the effective direct teaching of basic skills. All pupils have the opportunity to swim, so that most attain good standards and are safe in the water. Pupils' gymnastic skills are well developed by the end of Year 6, and in lessons pupils strive to improve because of very high expectations, skilful teaching and the very effective use of demonstrations. Dance is a weaker element as not all pupils, particularly boys, are motivated by this aspect of the subject.
76. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and during the inspection an excellent lesson was observed. In all lessons good attention is paid to ensuring that pupils warm up and cool down, and there is a good emphasis on working together safely. Activities are well matched to the pupils' abilities and good attention is paid to ensuring that less able pupils and those new to speaking English have every opportunity to flourish in lessons. A strong feature in all lessons are the very good relationships that ensure that pupils try hard to improve, even if they are finding the activity challenging. The use of teachers' particular subject strengths is also a very effective vehicle to enhance teaching and learning. When the quality of teaching and learning was excellent, teaching not only developed pupils' 'touch rugby' skills in a challenging and highly skilful manner, but the lesson was fun, so that all pupils thoroughly enjoyed the lesson and strove exceedingly hard to improve their skills.
77. The subject is currently very well led and managed by the headteacher. The school uses a range of specialist coaches well to enrich the range of learning opportunities available, and participation in local competitions and residential trips, which involve an interesting range of outdoor pursuits, add much to the quality of the provision, pupils' enjoyment of the subject and their social and team building skills. Those pupils with

special physical needs are well catered for and are valued members of the school. The school works well with outside agencies to provide them with good specialist programmes to develop their co-ordination and balance. The designated co-ordinator, due to take up the leadership of the subject when he becomes fully qualified, is an excellent practitioner and role model for non-specialist teachers, so the school is well placed to make further improvements to the quality of provision.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils are highly valued and respected.
- All pupils have wide range of opportunities to make personal decisions.
- The school develops confident and mature pupils and provides them with a very good foundation to make sensible choices.

Commentary

78. The school promotes pupils' personal development very effectively. It places a very strong emphasis on creating an environment where pupils can develop their confidence and self esteem. All pupils matter in this school, and every pupil, whatever their background, is valued for their individuality. Pupils respond enthusiastically and flourish as a result. They have many opportunities to take responsibility, carrying out their roles as class and peer mentors, playground buddies, and school council representatives with maturity and pride. They know their opinions count and have some forthright views about improving the playground, which they know will be taken seriously.
79. Pupils have regular opportunities to discuss issues, learn how best to deal with making difficult decisions and how to keep safe through the 'Here I Am' programme and through planned discussion sessions. Teachers have been well trained to lead discussions and great emphasis is placed upon developing pupils' self esteem. This, together with the very good relationships throughout the school, gives pupils the confidence to discuss their own feelings and relationships. A strength of the provision is the way that the school emphasises the development of pupils' skills in making well-informed choices, rather than telling them what to do and what to think. Thus, pupils in the school have a very well-informed basis on which to make decisions and, as a result of this high quality provision, they become sensible and responsible young citizens.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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