

INSPECTION REPORT

STIPERSTONES C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Snailbeach, Shrewsbury

LEA area: Shropshire

Unique reference number: 123519

Headteacher: Mr M Klekot

Lead inspector: Joan McKenna

Dates of inspection: 15 - 16 September 2003

Inspection number: 258032

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	5 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	36
School address:	Snailbeach Shrewsbury
Postcode:	SY5 OLZ
Telephone number:	01743 791207
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Pamela Bickley
Date of previous inspection:	6 – 8 July 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is a very small rural primary school with only 36 pupils on roll. The year groups vary considerably in size, and most have five or fewer pupils in them. There are two classes, one with pupils from Reception to Year 2, and the other with pupils from Years 3 to 6. All of the pupils are white and speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is average; those with the most severe need have dyslexia. Pupils are from a wide range of backgrounds, although the area experiences some rural deprivation and has attracted social deprivation funding. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school can vary from one year to another because of the small size of the year groups. Overall it is broadly average. There is independent pre-school provision on the same site, which most pupils attend before entering Reception, and with which the school has very close links.

The school is a Beacon school and works extensively with other schools and organisations both locally and beyond to share and develop good practice.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2485	Joan McKenna	<i>Lead inspector</i>	English French Science Music Physical education Personal, social and health education
19366	Bill Walker	<i>Lay inspector</i>	
23494	David Whatson	<i>Team inspector</i>	Foundation Stage curriculum Mathematics Information and communication technology Geography History Religious education Art and design Design and technology Special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	1
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	3
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	6
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	11
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	13
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES ONE AND TWO	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	24

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Stiperstones is a very successful school. The quality of education it provides is very good in all areas. As a result, pupils attain high standards, achieve very well, and develop into mature, responsible, caring and confident individuals. The inspirational leadership provided by the headteacher is pivotal to the school's success. He has a rigorous, inclusive and innovative approach which results in increasing effectiveness. The school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils of all ages and prior attainment achieve very well and standards are high.
- The leadership of the headteacher is excellent. He inspires the entire school community and shows an absolute commitment to continual improvement.
- Teaching is consistently very good and as a result pupils learn very well.
- A broad, rich and innovative curriculum is provided. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) is particularly good.
- Teachers know pupils extremely well and give them excellent personal and academic support and guidance.
- Pupils' attitudes and relationships are excellent and they behave very well.
- Links with parents and the community are very strong and the school works extensively with other schools to share and develop best practice.
- There are no significant weaknesses in any aspect of the work of the school.

Improvement since the last inspection has been excellent. All of the key issues identified then have been effectively tackled. Strengths have been maintained and developed further. Standards, achievement, the quality of teaching and leadership and management are all better now, and virtually all areas of the school's work are very good or better.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils of all ages and levels of prior attainment **achieve very well**. They enter school with standards that are broadly average. Test results at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics have been in the top five percent of schools nationally for several years. At the end of Year 6, test results in English, mathematics and science have improved over the past two years and are now well above the national average. The school's results compare very well with those from similar schools. Results in 2003 at both Years 2 and 6 were again high.

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

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals.*

Children in Reception are likely to meet the early learning goals specified for pupils of this age by the end of the year. Current standards are above average for pupils in Years 1 to 6. The high quality of practice, and the fact that the inspection took place in so early in the academic year, suggests standards are likely to be well above average by the end of the year.

Pupils' **personal development**, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. Their **attitudes** towards school and their learning are **excellent**. They **behave very well** and the **relationships** they form are **excellent**. Their **attendance** is **good**.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The **quality of education provided by the school is very good**.

Teaching is very good. Lessons are extremely well planned, skilfully delivered and captivate the interests of pupils. Teachers meet pupils' needs very well and so learning is very good.

The curriculum is **very good**. It is exceptionally well planned, developed creatively, with very good enrichment activities.

Excellent support and guidance is provided for pupils. Pupils' views are actively sought. Procedures for the health, welfare and safety of pupils are **very good**.

Relationships with **parents and the community** are **very good**. There are **excellent** links with other schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of **leadership and management** are **very good**. The leadership of the headteacher is **excellent**. The management of the school is **very good**. Governance is **good**.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Virtually all **parents** consider that the school provides **very well** for all aspects of their children's education. **Pupils** agree. Their views are fully justified.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

There are no significant weaknesses in the school's practice. Any areas for development are minor, well known to the school and are being effectively tackled.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects.

Pupils' achievement throughout the school is **very good**. Standards in all of the core subjects are high.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- At the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are consistently very high.
- Standards at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science have improved considerably over the past two years and are now well above average.
- Pupils of all ages and levels of prior attainment achieve very well.
- Pupils' very good literacy, numeracy and ICT skills help them to progress well in all subjects.
- The school continually tries to raise standards even further and challenging targets are set

- There are no significant weaknesses.

Commentary

1. Pupils achieve very well at Stiperstones School. They enter with standards that are broadly average, attain very high standards by the end of Year 2 and high standards are maintained throughout Years 3 to 6.

2. The number of children entering Reception each year varies considerably, but is often small. Attainment on entry covers a broad range, but is generally average overall. Records indicate that virtually all children meet the early learning goals specified for pupils of this age by the end of the Reception year and that they achieve very well in the Foundation Stage. Currently, there are just two Reception-aged children at the school, both of whom started only two weeks before the inspection. There is not enough evidence to make firm judgements on standards yet. However, the evidence that is available indicates that the provision for children's personal, social and emotional development is excellent and provision is very good in all of the other areas of learning. As a result, children are achieving very well.

3. At the end of Year 2, results in reading, writing and mathematics have been very high, in the top five percent of schools nationally, for several years. The 2002 results, the latest for which national comparisons are available, were also well above those from similar schools. The 2003 results are again high, with all pupils gaining the level expected for pupils of this age. The proportion gaining the higher Level 3 is lower, but is in line with the predictions made for the particular small group of pupils. Because the inspection took place in just the third week of term, there was little evidence from the current pupils to look at in any of the subjects. However, that available in English, mathematics and science indicates the standards currently being attained by pupils in Years 1 and 2 are above average. Given the high quality of practice observed in these subjects and the fact that the inspection took place in so early in the academic year, standards are likely to be well above average by the end of the year.

4. At the end of Year 6, test results in English, mathematics and science have improved over the past two years due to the improvements in practice within the school. In 2002, results were well above the national average. These results are shown in the table below.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.4 (25.5)	27 (27)
mathematics	29.4 (25.5)	26.7 (26.6)
science	30.6 (27)	28.3 (28.3)

There were 11 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

5. These results compare well with those from similar schools.
6. The 2003 results are also high, although there are not yet any national figures to compare them to. All pupils gained the expected levels for their age in English and science, and almost all did in mathematics. At higher levels, results in science and reading in particular were very good, but in writing were lower than anticipated by the school. The school believes the results to be inaccurate, and is awaiting the outcome of an appeal into them.
7. Again, given the timing of the inspection and the very small number of older pupils, there was little evidence to look at. However, from that available, the standards being attained by pupils are above average in English, mathematics and science. The high quality of practice suggests standards are likely to be well above average by the end of the year.
8. Pupils' very good literacy and mathematical skills enables them to have full access to the whole curriculum and to make good progress in all subjects as they move through the school. Their competence in the use of ICT accelerates their learning in all areas.
9. Pupils of all ages and levels of prior attainment, including those with special educational needs (SEN), are achieving very well across the school. They are making systematic and quick progress in all aspects of their learning. This is due to several factors. Teaching is consistently very good, as is the quality of the curriculum provided and the detail with which it is planned. Pupils are assessed very thoroughly and receive detailed feedback on how to improve their work. Above all, there is a constantly striving to improve standards even further and in this way, pupils' progress is maximised. Challenging targets are set and are usually met.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes towards school and their learning, and the relationships they form, are **excellent**. They behave **very well**. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. Attendance is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils show much interest in all that the school has to offer, and are very well motivated. They are good at exercising responsibility and acting independently.
- Pupils relate to their peers and adults with ease and confidence and everyone treats each other with great respect.
- The very good standards of behaviour help to create an environment in which pupils learn well and achieve their best.
- There is a strong sense of community. Pupils quickly develop an understanding of what is right and what is wrong, and they are very sensitive to the need of others.
- The level of attendance is above the national average.
- There are no significant weaknesses.

Commentary

10. Pupils are proud to be pupils at Stiperstones School and show tremendous commitment to it and to their own learning. They participate enthusiastically in all that is offered. A notable feature is the degree of independence they show in school generally and the responsibility they take for aspects of their own learning and school organisation. The youngest children can make decisions for themselves, and older pupils are often to be seen using ICT independently in their work. As pupils move up the school, they act increasingly maturely and responsibly, showing initiative and sensitivity.

11. Stiperstones is a very inclusive school. The relationships that pupils form with each other and with their teachers are excellent. A consequence of being taught in mixed-age classes is that pupils can relate to others across the age range with ease and confidence. There is a great sense of community and pupils are very sensitive towards each other. All adults treat pupils within the school with great respect, and this is mirrored in the way that pupils treat each other. The atmosphere is friendly and relaxed, but very purposeful. Pupils know that they are there to work and they respond very well to the high expectations that teachers and other adults have of them.

12. Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school, and this helps to create a positive environment for learning. Routines are clear and help to ensure the smooth and orderly running of the school day. Pupils have no concerns about bullying; they have absolute confidence that they can approach an adult with any concerns and receive a sympathetic hearing. There have been no exclusions at the school in recent years.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
45	0	0
1	0	0

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

13. Pupils' personal development is very good, and their social skills and understanding of moral issues are both excellent. Pupils work together in class in a wide range of different groupings and do so successfully and with very good cooperative skills. They care for each other and seek to provide support where it is needed. They are able to distinguish right from wrong extremely well and take an active part in drawing up codes of behaviour. Their knowledge of the wider world is inevitably restricted by the geographical location of Stiperstones. The school is very aware of this and is implementing plans to improve this. For example, pupils learn of the customs and celebrate the principal festivals of world religions. Visitors are coming to the school to speak to the children about different ethnic cultures. This helps to give pupils an insight into the beliefs and values of those who follow a different tradition to their own. Very good use is made of the curriculum, such as in music, art and geography to broaden pupils' perspectives. Overall, the school provides well for pupils' cultural and spiritual development.

14. Stiperstones is a very happy school, and pupils greatly enjoy their time there. This is reflected in the pupils' attendance, which has improved significantly over the last year. The overall level is now above that found in most primary schools nationally. The great majority of pupils arrive in good time, most with a smile on their faces. They settle down very quickly, ready for a prompt start to the day. Some lessons even begin early because pupils are so keen to get started. There is no unauthorised absence.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	3.9
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0
National data	0.5

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The **quality of education** provided by the school is **very good**. The **quality of teaching and the curriculum provided are both very good and, overall, the quality of care and guidance given to pupils is excellent**. There are no significant weaknesses in any area.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching of teaching is **very good**, and as a result, **pupils learn very well**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching focuses on meeting the needs of individual pupils and making sure that all make maximum progress in their learning.
- Teachers use a wide variety of teaching styles to engage pupils' interest and secure their full attention in lessons.
- Teachers' questioning skills are excellent, involve all pupils and extend and develop their understanding very well.
- A consistent feature of the teaching is the promotion of pupils' independence, thinking skills, and the ability to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Information and communication technology is very effectively used by both teachers and pupils to improve learning.
- Teachers assess pupils' progress very thoroughly, know their individual strengths and weaknesses very well and give them detailed feedback on how they can improve their work.
- There are no significant weaknesses in teaching.

Commentary

15. The consistently high quality of teaching is a significant strength of the school and makes a major contribution to the very good achievement of all pupils. Although good at the time of the previous inspection, the quality of teaching has improved since then and is now very good in almost all lessons.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 15 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1	13	1	0	0	0	0

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

16. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and professional expertise and this is evident in all aspects of their teaching. Lessons are planned extremely thoroughly, with very careful attention paid to ensuring that the wide range of needs of pupils in the mixed-age classes are met. The focus at all times is ensuring that all pupils make maximum progress. Work builds well on prior learning, and the teachers' high expectations are evident in the degree of challenge provided. A wide variety of teaching strategies and tasks are used which successfully engage and motivate pupils. Learning is fun, such as when the teacher of younger children placed imaginative clues - giant paw prints and fish - around the classroom to help them guess the theme of the book 'We're going on a Bear Hunt'. Children were absolutely captivated and were desperate to join in the resulting discussion.

17. Teachers are extremely skilful in using questioning to involve all pupils in discussion and help them to develop a deeper understanding. Pupils' one-word answers are met with the response: 'Tell me more' or 'Explain what you mean'. Another notable feature is the emphasis that teachers place on promoting pupils' independent learning and developing their thinking skills. This is evident across the whole age range. Pupils are not just told facts, but are constantly challenged to work things out for themselves and to experiment and in doing so become confident, motivated learners who relish problem solving. Teamwork is strong, and the learning assistants supporting the younger pupils make a particularly valuable contribution to pupils' learning. Teaching is well resourced. Teachers use ICT extremely effectively to enhance aspects of their work, such as making whole class teaching and presentations lively and interactive. Pupils of all ages, and especially the older ones, are adept at using ICT both in lessons and independently to help their learning.

18. Teachers assess pupils extremely thoroughly in lessons, in many cases making very detailed notes of how pupils are progressing and noting strengths and weaknesses in their knowledge, skills or understanding. Teachers use this to inform their teaching, and also to give feedback to pupils, often in the form of individual targets, so that pupils know how they can improve their work. Although assessment is already very good, especially in English and mathematics, the school is taking steps to improve it further in other subjects.

19. There are no significant weaknesses in teaching or assessment. On the contrary, there is a constant striving to develop and improve practice further, and pupils benefit enormously from this culture of learning amongst the teachers.

The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a broad and innovative curriculum for pupils.
- Curriculum planning is extremely thorough, ensuring that the needs of all pupils are met very well.
- The school is especially good at promoting pupils' creativity, independence and skills in thinking.
- The use of ICT across the curriculum is very strong.
- Very good enrichment activities, such as visits out of school, are provided.
- Pupils' learning is well supported by a very good range of resources.

- There are no significant weaknesses.

Commentary

20. The school provides a very broad and rich experience for all pupils. All the requirements of the Foundation Stage Curriculum, the National Curriculum and the local Agreed Syllabus for religious education are met well. French is also taught to all of the pupils in Years 3 to 6. Teaching time is above the nationally recommended minimum for pupils of primary age and the extra time is well used.

21. The curriculum is planned in great detail, with very careful attention paid to ensuring that it meets the needs of pupils of all levels of prior attainment and ages. This is particularly the case in English and mathematics, where clear, appropriate and separate objectives have been identified for all groups. It is also good in other subjects. These curriculum plans are a superb basis from which to plan individual lessons. Another strong feature is the way in which assessments on individual pupils are incorporated into the planning format, forming a simple, but highly effective way of keeping track of how individual pupils are performing in relation to specific curriculum objectives. The fact that all of this planning is computerised makes this format manageable for teachers.

22. A great strength is the creativity with which the curriculum is developed within the school. Building on the National Curriculum, the school works hard to promote the joy of learning and the ability of pupils to reason and to learn independently. These features are seen across the curriculum, but especially in such subjects as science and design and technology, where the approach of teaching through problem solving and letting pupils make mistakes in order that they learn from them, is highly effective. Information and communication technology is used extremely effectively in all subjects of the curriculum as a tool to deepen pupils' understanding. The innovative way in which the school develops the curriculum is seen in the variety of projects in which it participates with external bodies, such as one on promoting creativity in design and technology.

23. The curriculum is enriched further through the many trips that are arranged for pupils and the contributions made by the frequent visitors to school. The trips link well to the subjects and topics that pupils study and the way pupils both prepare for them and build on them enhances their learning. The school is isolated geographically and has a very small number of staff, and this inevitably restricts the number of extra-curricular activities that can be offered. The school is dealing with this by arranging for other people to come in to run activities, some of which the school subsidises. For instance, pupils were seen enjoying a percussion workshop during the inspection. The school plans to develop this aspect further.

24. The school makes good use of its accommodation for the purposes of teaching and pupils' recreation. For instance, a small library with a computer in it has been established, which pupils use both in lessons and independently at other times. An attractive seating area in the playground enhances the range of options open to pupils at playtimes. There are some limitations caused by the school being so small. For example, there is no area for Reception children to learn through playing in sand and water. Some shared use of the pre-school resources help to counter this, especially for outdoor learning. The good range of high quality resources, which are well used, enhances pupils' learning. Information and communication technology equipment and resources, in particular, are excellent.

25. The very good, well planned, curriculum plays an important part in the very good achievement of pupils.

Example of outstanding practice

The powerful benefits that the imaginative use of ICT can bring a school

There is a clear vision within the school of the potential of ICT to improve pupils' learning. This has been turned into reality through imaginative planning and prudent financial decisions. The excellent resources include a wide variety of programs which are used regularly across all subject areas, and items such as interactive whiteboards that are now common teaching tools and which make whole class discussions and presentations much more lively and interesting than they would otherwise be. A unique and excellent feature of the ICT provision is that each pupil in Years 3 to 6 has their own personal digital assistant (PDA). These hand held computers are used well for curriculum purposes. For example, pupils use their PDAs during registration each morning to record their ideas ready for their English lesson. The school also has plans to use them for assessment. The targets for each pupil will be entered onto their PDA, along with assessments of the progress they make. These can be easily connected to the whole school computer system, so that central records can be updated, thus reducing administration and saving valuable time. The PDAs will provide an efficient mechanism for keeping parents updated about their child's progress.

Care, guidance and support

Procedures for the health, welfare and safety of pupils are **very effective**. Teachers have a very good knowledge of those in their charge and the support and guidance provided for them is **excellent**. Pupils have very good opportunities to express their views and are confident that they will be given proper consideration.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have a very detailed knowledge of pupils' academic and personal needs and use this to provide excellent guidance and support for individuals.
- Systems for monitoring pupils' progress are very thorough.
- Procedures for health and safety are very good.
- The school places great importance on the views of pupils.

- There are no significant weaknesses.

Commentary

26. A very high quality of care is provided for pupils at Stiperstones. Teachers have a remarkably good knowledge of their pupils' capabilities, strengths and weaknesses, and their personal needs. So much preparatory work is carried out before pupils even enter the school, once they do, teachers can immediately provide the reassurance and guidance appropriate to each individual child. Thereafter, teachers and other classroom staff maintain meticulous records for each pupil so that they are able to give support and guidance of the highest quality. Such records, and the data within them, are carefully analysed in order to identify issues or trends that the school needs to know about to bring greater precision to its work. For example, it sets additional targets for performance in addition to the statutory ones in order to try to ensure the highest possible standards. The provision of guidance and support for pupils with SEN is first rate.

27. Provision for pupils' health and safety is very good. Both governors and staff have a very responsible attitude to these matters. Procedures for risk assessment are regularly reviewed and rigorously implemented. Proper arrangements for child protection are in place. The curriculum is used very effectively to promote healthy and safe living.

28. When asked during the inspection to identify the best feature of their school, many pupils without any hesitation nominated their teachers. Virtually all the pupils indicated in their questionnaires that they considered their teachers to be helpful, fair, approachable and sympathetic. Parents expressed similarly positive views, and these are entirely justified. The involvement of pupils in the school's work and development has been a feature of the school's practice for some time. Comments which pupils are invited to make in their annual reports are used by teachers as a matter of routine to improve the learning environment in the classrooms. Pupils are becoming more involved in the target-setting process and in compiling portfolios of their work. Thus, despite the absence of formal arrangements, such as a school council, pupils' views are actively sought and acted upon and pupils know that their voice is heard and taken seriously. This is very good for their personal development. All these procedures, like other good practice in the school, are constantly reviewed and evaluated in order to promote further improvement.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school enjoys a very friendly and constructive relationship with parents and the community. This contributes much to the attainment and progress of pupils. As a Beacon school, it works very extensively with other schools to share and develop good practice.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school ensures that parents are very well informed, including information about the standards achieved and the progress made by their children.
- The views of parents are regularly sought and valued.
- The school works closely with the community to enrich the curriculum for its pupils.
- The school takes a strong lead in sharing and developing good practice with other schools.

- There are no significant weaknesses.

Commentary

29. Virtually all parents consider that the school provides very well for all aspects of their children's education. The near unanimity and strength of opinion bear testimony to the imaginative efforts made by the school to build a partnership with parents. Very good efforts are made to keep parents informed about their children's progress and the work of the school. The quality of pupils' annual reports is exemplary. The weekly newsletters are models of good practice. Regular meetings are effective in providing information and skills for parents to help them support their children's work in the home. These are well attended. An electronic system of communication with parents is being developed by providing older pupils with hand held computers called personal digital assistants (PDAs), through which parents can access curriculum and assessment information about their children. This very imaginative initiative is in its early stages but appears to have much potential for developing communication with parents in the near future. It is a further indication of a school seeking excellence in its provision.

30. In the school prospectus the headteacher makes an explicit commitment to 'consult closely with parents at all times'. The opinion of the parents and the evidence of the inspection is that he does so very effectively. Recent formal opportunities for comments for parents include surveys on the provision of homework and the work of the governors. Parents were also invited to contribute to the school improvement plan. The headteacher makes himself available to discuss any matters of concern with parents, and he is addressing the request of a very small number of parents who would like to communicate with their child's teacher on a more regular basis.

31. The school makes very effective use of resources in the community to enrich its curriculum and broaden the educational opportunities for pupils. Visits are made to local churches, museums, parks and places of entertainment, whilst visitors talk to the pupils about religious faiths, foreign cultures, health matters and the flora and fauna of their local environment. Sport is a focus for much contact with local schools and pupils are able to take part in many competitive events, representing their school or the district. The community has also been generous in supporting, and sometimes sponsoring, fund-raising events for the school.

32. The award of 'Beacon Status' has enabled the school to develop educational links and work extensively with a wide range of schools both within the local education authority (LEA) and in others. This has resulted in excellent opportunities for the teachers at Stiperstones to reflect upon and develop their own practice and performance, while sharing their expertise and promoting good practice elsewhere. The headteacher has set up a web site specifically for small schools in order to share experiences and discuss solutions to problems common to such schools, to the benefit of all involved. This is an outstanding initiative. The school also works with other educational organisations in order to be at the forefront of educational development and thinking, and the benefits of this are reflected in the innovative practice seen within the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, the quality of **leadership and management** is **very good**. The leadership of the headteacher is **excellent**. The management of the school is **very good** and governance is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The inspirational leadership provided by the headteacher is pivotal to the school's success.
- There is a shared vision, based on a strong commitment to all pupils, which provides a clear direction for the school.
- There is a total commitment to continual improvement, and practice is regularly and rigorously evaluated.
- There is effective teamwork, and all staff are committed to their on-going professional development, creating a learning culture within the school.
- The school uses the resources available to it very well to further its educational aims.
- There are no significant weaknesses in leadership and management.

Commentary

33. The headteacher inspires the entire school community with his commitment to the pupils and his vision of how the school can foster a love of learning through providing a rich and successful experience for all, whatever their background, capability or gender. The successful communication of this has heightened the expectations of all concerned, providing a clear direction for the work of the school, and helping to escalate the rate of improvement. The headteacher leads by example. He is a teaching head and his own modelling of good practice has resulted in a significant improvement in the quality of teaching. He has an in-depth knowledge of the National Curriculum subjects, and an understanding of how they can be delivered in a way that successfully promotes pupils' creativity, independence and thinking skills. Based on this, the headteacher has taken careful and calculated risks that have resulted in an innovative curriculum that very effectively fulfils the schools aims. Equally important, he has provided the very good support and guidance necessary to ensure that others share the same vision.

34. As it is such a small school, no one member of staff has a specific management responsibility. Instead, there is a deeply embedded commitment to corporate responsibility and teamwork that ensures a consistency in teaching and other aspects of practice, as well as an acceptance and enthusiasm that everyone has a part to play in school improvement. The headteacher is very adept at developing individual people's commitment and skills so that all aspects of practice, ranging from

taking the register to working with other schools through 'Beacon Status', are undertaken with great professionalism. The school improvement plan has been produced after seeking the opinions of the whole school community and it is an effective management tool. Its implementation is instrumental in the development of the many very good and sometimes exceptional practices that exist within the school. A very significant element in the school's success is the absolute commitment to continual improvement. Current practice is carefully and rigorously evaluated, not only to identify areas that need improvement, but equally importantly to understand what makes some aspects so successful in order that relevant factors can be applied to other areas. The entire school is a learning community, with staff committed to their on-going professional development, and pupils benefit enormously from this culture.

35. The school has used its available resources very well to further its educational aims. The potential impact on pupils is at the centre of all financial decisions and the school seeks best value for money in its spending. Although, as a very small school costs are very high, given the effectiveness of its work the school nevertheless provides very good value for money.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	143,646	Balance from previous year	11,490
Total expenditure	149,766	Balance carried forward to the next	5,350
Expenditure per pupil	3,566		

36. The governing body is effective in supporting the school in its work. There is an open and trusting relationship between the school and the governors. Through regular meetings and visits governors are kept abreast of its most pressing issues, its strengths and the areas it wishes to develop further. They ask some questions to hold the school to account and to monitor its effectiveness, but are in the process of strengthening these procedures and those for measuring the value added to the school by spending decisions. All statutory responsibilities have been fulfilled.

Example of outstanding practice

The impact of excellent leadership of the curriculum on standards

The headteacher has an exceptionally clear vision of how pupils can and should be active, independent learners who enjoy intellectual challenge and has turned this vision into reality. He has very good knowledge of National Curriculum subjects, which he uses as a basis upon which to build. His approach is very creative. In subjects such as science and design and technology, he promotes a problem solving approach, through which pupils experiment, make mistakes, learn from them, try again, and ultimately develop a deep understanding of the issues involved, whether this be designing a package or carrying out an investigation. The headteacher ensures that ICT is very well used, and pupils are adept at using it to assist them in their endeavours. As a result of this approach, pupils' thinking skills are of a high order and they learn very successfully and achieve high standards. Significantly, the headteacher has communicated this vision effectively to other staff and to the pupils themselves, and even the youngest pupils in the school tackle tasks independently with confidence and enthusiasm.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Currently, there are just two Reception-aged children at the school, both of whom started only two weeks before the inspection. There is not enough evidence to make firm judgements on standards yet. Nevertheless, teaching of Reception children was observed, planning and assessments were looked at, and discussions with staff took place. This evidence indicates that the overall provision in the Foundation Stage is **very good**. The provision for children's **personal, social and emotional development** is excellent and provision is **very good** in all of the other areas of learning. Children are achieving **very well**.

Main strengths and weaknesses drawn from across all areas of learning

- Teaching is very good, engages and enthuses children, and enables them to learn very well.
- The excellent ratio of adults to children and the very good teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants ensures that each child enjoys a superb level of supervision with a high level of care and support.
- Children's prior learning is built on very well because of the high quality links with the pre-school provider.
- Very detailed planning ensures the needs of the children in the mixed-age classes are very well met.
- The needs of each child are very well known because of the frequency and depth of assessments undertaken.
- The range and quality of both indoor and outdoor resources is very good.

- There are no areas of significant weakness.

Commentary

37. The provision for **personal, social and emotional development** is excellent. In one session, the teaching assistant, working with a group of three children, provided very good help and guidance through concentrating specifically on each child's individual learning target. The very trusting and warm relationships ensured that each child achieved well. The children can follow instructions well. They sit and concentrate in whole class sessions, and are learning to cooperate with others and work independently at other times. They have positive relationships with other children. Through the good and sensitive attention paid to their individual needs, they are increasing in confidence and settling into school well. The provision for the development of **communication, language and literacy** is **very good**. All lessons are planned in exceptional detail and linked to the Early Learning Goals (ELGs). With this sharp focus, the children have their needs very well met, even when in a mixed-age lesson. In an English lesson the children listened with rapt attention to the teacher's imaginative introduction of a book and in some cases volunteered answers to questions, in one case showing prior knowledge of the book. They were then well supported by the classroom assistant who successfully challenged them to sound out and write individual letters or words. The provision for **mathematical development** is **very good**. In one lesson observed, children achieved well in the recognition of numbers and ability to count because of the very good range of resources used and the teacher's very good questioning. The provision for **knowledge and understanding of the world** is **very good**. In a science lesson, children developed a good understanding of simple forces by working out whether toys moved by pushing and pulling. They went on to carry out a simple experiment about factors that affected the toys' movement and thus developed their questioning skills. The provision for **creative development** is **very good**. In a music lesson, children achieved very well because of the musical ability and specialist knowledge of the teacher, and the very good range of activities used to improve their singing and ability to play simple rhythms using hands and instruments. The small size of the

accommodation places some limitations on the curriculum. Some shared use of the pre-school resources help to counter this. The provision for **physical development** is **very good**. Out door play sessions are well structured. Due to the frequent access to outside space and a good range of large equipment, children achieve well.

38. There is no one person with overall responsibility for this stage in a child's learning, although one teacher takes the lead, and the provision is very well managed. At the time of the last inspection there were no children in the Foundation Stage, although records showed that a broad curriculum was offered. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English was seen being taught to pupils of all ages. Pupils' work was looked at, although as the inspection was in only the third week of term, only a limited amount was available. Planning and assessment records were also looked at. No French was being taught during the inspection but the planning for French was examined.

English

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' planning is extremely detailed and helps to ensure that all pupils' needs are met.
- The quality of teaching is very good; it stimulates, challenges and supports all pupils, and so they learn very well.
- Pupils' progress is assessed very thoroughly, and they are given detailed feedback on what they are doing well and how they can improve their work.
- Information and communication technology is used very well in the teaching of English.
- There are no significant weaknesses.

Commentary

39. The evidence available in English indicates the standards being attained by pupils are above average. Given the high quality of practice observed in English, and the fact that the inspection took place in so early in the academic year, standards are likely to be well above average by the end of the year.

40. Pupils in Year 2 all recognise groups of letters and common words, sounding them out and reading them correctly. They understand the differences between fact and fiction. They can make accurate guesses about what a book may be about from its cover. Pupils answer questions about the use of particular words well, for example linking 'splishy, sploshy' with the sounds made when wading through water. Some are able to read texts independently. Most write sentences correctly, and simple conventions of grammar such as full stops are understood. Most handwriting is legible and some is correctly joined. Pupils are able to listen well, following a story, for example, with rapt attention, and able to answer questions about it correctly as a result. All are confident at answering questions although not all yet give extended responses.

41. The oldest pupils read very fluently. This enable them to access a wide range of both fiction and non-fiction texts and to understand the information gained well. They can analyse stories, and they understand writing conventions and styles very well. Pupils write at length, with mainly accurate spelling and grammar. Speaking and listening skills are of a high order and the quality and depth of discussion is very good.

42. Pupils' achievement in all aspects of English is very good. Pupils of all ages and levels of prior attainment make very systematic progress due to the high quality of planning, teaching and assessment.

43. Teaching is very good. Lessons are extremely well planned, totally focussed on enabling all pupils to make maximum progress, skilfully delivered and captivate the interests of pupils. Stimulating approaches are used, such as the very imaginative use of resources by the teacher in the Reception/Year 1 class, which resulted in even the youngest children being totally engrossed and desperate to contribute to the discussion. Teachers are very skilled at questioning pupils in an appropriately challenging, but supportive, way and in doing so very effectively deepen pupils' understanding. Pupils enjoy their lessons, concentrate extremely well and learn very effectively. Information and communication technology, such as interactive whiteboards, is used very effectively by teachers.

44. The quality of teachers' planning in English is exemplary, and caters very well for the needs of pupils of all levels of prior attainment and the mixed age groups. Assessment is extremely thorough. It results in teachers having a very good understanding of pupils' strengths and weaknesses, which is then used to help them make further progress.

45. English is managed and developed through a team approach, which is very effective. There is regular analysis of the outcomes in English and rigorous evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of practice, in order to continually improve provision. At the previous inspection, standards were average, and teaching of the younger pupils was only satisfactory. Improvement since then, therefore, has been excellent.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

Pupils' high standards of reading and writing enable them to have full access to the whole curriculum. The younger pupils have the language skills to be able to talk confidently about issues ranging from the movement of toys cars in their science experiments to the qualities of their friends in personal and social education lessons. They can read simple texts and write related sentences well. Older pupils read a wide variety of texts fluently and with precision to gain information. They present information and their own ideas in appropriate ways and many can write extended pieces when required.

French

46. French is taught to pupils in Years 3 to 6. No lessons were taking place during the inspection, and there was no work to look at as lessons are mainly conducted orally. It is not possible, therefore, to comment on standards, achievement or teaching. Teaching is based on a commercially produced scheme, which forms a good basis for lessons. The provision of French broadens the curriculum for pupils, and its impact can be seen in the way French words are used spontaneously on occasions around the school, even by the younger children who learn them from older pupils.

MATHEMATICS

Judgements are based on two lesson observations, assessment records, teachers' planning and discussions with staff and pupils.

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is very good and provides appropriate work for pupils of different ages.
- Pupils are regularly assessed and this information is used well to target support so that each fulfils his or her potential.
- Teachers ensure that pupils know their targets and they give pupils clear information on how to improve their work.
- The National Numeracy Strategy has been carefully modified to meet the needs of a small school with mixed-age classes.
- Mathematical expertise within the teaching team is used very effectively to inspire and guide.
- There is a constant striving to raise standards while maintaining pupils' enjoyment and interest.

- There are no significant weaknesses.

Commentary

47. It was not possible to make an overall judgement about standards in all areas of the mathematics curriculum, but in the areas for which there was evidence, the standards attained by pupils are above those normally expected for pupils of in all age groups. Given the high quality of practice observed in mathematics, and the fact that the inspection took place in so early in the academic year, standards are likely to be well above average by the end of the year.

48. Most of the pupils in Year 2 are competent in use of numbers to 10, and some to 20. They have a good understanding of addition and articulate well the different strategies that they use. The speed of their mental calculations is faster than is normally expected for pupils this age. The ability of the older pupils to understand numbers, including thousands and decimals, is at a higher level than expected for their age.

49. The teaching of mathematics is very good. In the lesson with the younger pupils, the teacher provided a number of interesting games that tested and extended their understanding of addition and subtraction, and they achieved very well as a result. At the end of the lesson, there was an exemplary plenary when learning was reviewed. By returning to the lesson's objectives the teacher involved pupils very effectively in assessing their own efforts. She then used her insights, and the interactive white board, to speed up the rate of the pupils' mental calculations to an impressive speed. The teacher's very good subject knowledge was also evident in how she then challenged pupils to devise and explain strategies that would help them in the mental addition of numbers up to 20.

50. In the lesson observed with pupils in Years 3 to 6, all pupils, irrespective of age, gender or capability, achieved very well because it was very well crafted and based upon a very good assessment of pupils' prior learning. The mental/oral session of the start at the start of the lesson related to the pupils' learning from the previous week. The very good assessment of this enabled the teacher to remind pupils of their individual targets, while also directing specific questions to individuals related to their personal weaknesses and strengths; this consolidated and extended their learning. This approach was reinforced with good humour and a variety of teaching styles. These alternated between demonstrations, visual representations and oral and written work, so that pupils' different learning styles were very well catered for.

51. Through a constant process of reflection and the detailed analysis of data and regular discussions, the team manages mathematics very well. The individual strengths of the teachers are very well used to sharpen this process and provide inspiration to others. The leadership of the subject is extremely good. At its core is the constant drive to achieve the highest of standards while encouraging pupils to enjoy their learning.

52. At the time of the last inspection standards at the end of both Years 2 and 6 were in line with national expectations and the provision was judged as adequate. Improvements since the last inspection have, therefore, been excellent.

Mathematics across the curriculum

53. The pupils' ability to use mathematics across the curriculum is **good**. They are provided with numerous opportunities to use their mathematical skills in other subjects, notably in ICT, design and technology and geography. Pupils' ability to apply their mathematical skills enhances their learning in these subjects.

SCIENCE

Science was seen being taught to all pupils in the school. Teachers' planning, assessments and records were looked at.

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' planning is very detailed, and caters very well for the needs of all pupils.
- Teaching is very good, and pupils learn very well as a result.
- The assessment of pupils is very well done and teachers understand their strengths and weaknesses very well.
- Pupils' skills in reasoning are promoted particularly well.

- There are no significant weaknesses.

Commentary

54. The evidence available, in science indicates that the standards currently attained by pupils are above average. However, the quality of provision in science is high, and, given the fact that the inspection took place in so early in the academic year, standards are again likely to be well above average by the end of the year.

55. Pupils in Year 2 carry out simple investigations very well, and show a good degree of independence in their thinking. During the inspection, for example, pupils could apply their basic understanding of forces – 'pushes or pulls move a toy' to the question 'what will alter the movement of my toy?' They designed appropriate experiments, using different surfaces or ramps to see what happened, and were able to talk about their findings. All were able to grasp the basic concepts involved and the higher attaining pupils were beginning to use simple scientific explanations, one boy using terms such as force.

56. Older pupils are also able to utilise their scientific knowledge well to think of scientific questions and how they might be tested. In an investigation observed, although not all of the pupils' biological knowledge was fully accurate, the process of them designing their own experiments developed their investigative skills well and their understanding of the need for evidence. Pupils build on their prior knowledge well and extend it further when researching on the Internet.

57. All pupils achieve very well in science. They make systematic progress in their knowledge and understanding of scientific facts, and their investigative skills are well developed.

58. The teaching of science is very good. The planning is very thorough and lessons are taught in a way which captures the interest of pupils. A particular feature of the teaching is the way that pupils are encouraged and enabled to think for themselves in a scientific context. By doing so, teachers promote a deeper degree of understanding.

59. The planning of science is very thorough and promotes good learning in all areas of the science curriculum. Assessment is also very detailed and pupils receive very specific and focussed feedback on how to improve their work. The school has recently prioritised improving pupils' investigative skills, and the evidence demonstrates a good degree of success. As standards at the last inspection were only average and progress was satisfactory, there has been excellent improvement since then.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

As the inspection took place in the third week of a new academic year and no direct teaching of ICT was observed during it, there was not enough evidence to make overall judgements about standards and the quality of teaching and learning. However, pupils were observed using ICT frequently during the course of the inspection, and some work by pupils in ICT was looked at.

Provision in ICT is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the subject is both creative and inspiring. Staff are encouraged to use ICT to improve their teaching, and pupils are encouraged to use it to improve their learning.
- The innovative curriculum has both enjoyment and excellence at its heart.
- The quality and availability of resources are excellent and result in ICT permeating all curriculum areas.

- There are no significant weaknesses in ICT.

Commentary

60. The headteacher's excellent subject knowledge and understanding of how ICT can be used has resulted in an excellent ICT curriculum. It is regarded as a tool that is to be used to facilitate learning in all areas of the curriculum, and is an integral part of the repertoire of strategies and resource used for teaching. He has inspired teachers to use ICT very regularly and has supported them in developing their own skills and confidence to make this possible. All teachers use interactive whiteboards very competently, for example, and they were seen put to good use in the large majority of lessons observed. The use of the whiteboard in whole class teaching sessions enhances the presentation of topics and issues and helps pupils to understand what is being taught better. The teaching of ICT, although through other subjects rather than being a specific focus in its own right, is clearly very effective in that it results in pupils having the knowledge and skills to be able to use it to improve their learning across the curriculum.

61. On the basis of the few examples of work seen, pupils across the school are performing at levels well above those expected for their age in those parts of the ICT curriculum for which there is evidence. By the end of Year 2 pupils are very familiar with and confident in using, a programmable floor robot. Last year pupils in Year 4 created in detail, and with great skill, their own still life animation video clips that told the story of 'Little Red Riding Hood'. There is evidence of numerous multi-media presentations, for example, an informative one on human skeleton and a stunning art assessment on Matisse. In a music lesson, pupils in Years 3 to 6 used computers to compose pieces of music very effectively.

62. The school has an excellent range of ICT equipment. This includes an excellent number of computers and lap tops and a wide variety of programs. Furthermore, all pupils in Years 3 to 6 have an individual personal digital assistant, a hand held computer. Pupils, therefore, have access to technology whenever they want it or need it. This greatly enhances their skills and confidence with using all forms of technology.

63. At the time of the last inspection standards in both Year 2 and Year 6 were in line with national expectations and the provision was judged as adequate. Improvements since the last inspection have, therefore, been excellent.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

64. The use of ICT across the school is **very good**. In the class with the youngest pupils the interactive white board was used very well to increase the speed of pupils' mental calculations, and in science, geography and history, photographs and spread sheets have been imported from the World Wide Web into desktop publishing programs and multimedia presentations. The headteacher is inspirational in his use of ICT, using it constantly and imaginatively in his teaching and the pupils' learning. The exemplary role model that he offers provides both the training and the support to colleagues to follow his example. This has ensured a consistent approach to the use of ICT across the school that ensures that pupils achieve very well.

HUMANITIES

No history or geography lessons were observed during the inspection, although teachers' planning was looked at. There was little evidence of current standards and therefore, no overall judgement about the provision can be made.

Geography and History

Commentary

65. Teachers' short and medium term planning for history and geography is very detailed. It covers the National Curriculum thoroughly, while focusing on the school's emphasis of developing pupils' skills in thinking. In history, for example, pupils are encouraged to become detectives to seek out evidence so that they fully understand concepts of fact, fiction and opinion in relation to Henry VIII. The local community is used extensively to enrich pupils' learning. Visits to local mines and farms form the basis of much work. These subjects contribute positively to pupils' personal development. For example, the use of the local community adds to pupils' understanding of their own heritage, while the study of villages in India adds to a wider appreciation of the world beyond their own village. Assessment procedures, although judged to be an area to be improved by the school, are nevertheless good. Assessment often involves pupils assessing their own efforts, and teacher assessment is on the same planning sheet, thus linking the two together. Pupils' mathematical skills are used well in these subjects. In geography, for example, pupils collected, represented and interpreted data during an investigation on water consumption. Good use is made of pupils' literacy skills. They have many opportunities to write for different purposes, for example report writing in newspaper articles relating to the Tudors or persuasive writing on the merits of recycling. Information and communication technology is used well with opportunities to use the World Wide Web to research to undertake research into physical features such as rivers.

Religious education

No religious education lessons were observed during the inspection. There was little evidence of current standards due to the fact that the inspection took place in the third week of a new academic

year and the very small size of some of the year groups. However, teachers' planning was scrutinised and staff were interviewed.

The provision made for the teaching of religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Detailed planning promotes the systematic development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in religious education.
- Very good leadership provides religious education with a high profile.
- There are no significant weaknesses.

Commentary

66. Although the school is awaiting the publication of a new locally Agreed Syllabus, its own planning is very detailed. It provides a great deal of very useful factual information on which to base lessons and suggests teaching methods. This is likely to promote consistency and good teaching throughout the school. The level of planning demonstrates that pupils have regular religious education lessons that extend their knowledge of religious signs, symbols and customs. Several major world religions are studied. This adds to pupils' spiritual development as well as their understanding of the wider world. As with other subjects, no one person has responsibility for coordination, rather the whole team takes responsibility for it. As this team is very cohesive and exceedingly well led by the headteacher, this subject and its development is kept under constant review. This helps to give religious education a high profile in the school while incorporating the latest ideas on its delivery and assessment.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Two lessons in music were observed, one with the older pupils and one with the younger pupils. One lesson of art was seen with the Year 1 and 2 pupils, and one design and technology lesson was seen with the Year 3 to 6 pupils. No lessons in physical education were observed. There was little recorded work to see because the inspection was in only the third week of term. It was not possible, therefore, to make overall judgements about the quality of provision, teaching and learning, or standards attained by pupils in these subjects. Teachers' planning was scrutinised.

Art

67. Planning is detailed and indicates that the art curriculum is covered in full for pupils. In the one lesson observed, the quality of teaching was excellent. The teacher has a very good knowledge of art and how to teach it well. As a result, very imaginative approaches were used that captured pupils' interests. The teacher and classroom assistant performed an exemplary role-play. They took on the role of two pupils discussing the arranging of a composition using teddy bears.

Through this, they not only helped pupils to understand the difficult concept of creating and drawing a composition better, but also expertly demonstrated how pupils should behave when working in pairs. As a consequence, pupils moved enthusiastically to their tasks, creating interesting compositions and sketching them with an impressive degree of detail.

Design and technology

68. The planning for design and technology indicates a creative approach to the teaching of the subject, which involves pupils learning through problem solving. In the lesson seen, the teacher's very good subject knowledge, and unconventional but imaginative approach was very successful. When clearly setting the task of making a push and pull mechanism for a pop up book, he did not give a great deal of instruction. He used his time to assess the needs of individuals and groups and give very carefully considered support when it was necessary, so that pupils' independence and creativity was not compromised. Pupils, therefore, had the freedom to think for themselves and learn from their mistakes. This meant that their understanding of designing was greatly increased and all achieved well. Information and communication technology is used well in design and technology. Examples of pupils' work demonstrate how they have developed their ideas using computer-aided design programs as well as control technology in their toys and models of fair ground rides.

Music

69. The teaching in the two lessons seen was very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, and use this well to provide tasks appropriate to the age range of the pupils. In the lesson with the younger pupils, which was conducted almost exclusively in song, the teacher used a very good variety of activities gradually elicited greater degrees of precision from the pupils in their singing and playing of simple rhythms. The lesson was great fun, and was met with a wonderful response from the pupils. In the lesson with the older pupils, the teacher developed their appreciation skills well, which enabled them to apply their knowledge well when creating their own compositions. Information and communication technology was used very well in this lesson as the medium for composition, and this not only improved the quality of the compositions, but also resulted in a greater understanding of musical terms such as pitch, tempo and rhythm. Pupils achieved very well in these lessons.

Physical education

70. Planning shows that the curriculum for physical education is delivered in a way likely to develop pupils' skills and abilities appropriately across all aspects. Further opportunities for pupils' physical development are created through extra-curricular activities in various sports and cross country running. Pupils are able to take part in competitive events, representing their school or the district.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Only one lesson of personal, social and health education (PSHE) with the younger pupils was seen. Because of this it is not possible to make an overall judgement about the quality of provision. Teachers' planning was scrutinised.

Personal, social and health education

71. Pupils' PSHE is promoted well in a variety of ways within the school. Most importantly, it permeates the culture of the school and the development of pupils' self-esteem and self-confidence is paramount in all of the school's work. In this it is successful. Pupils' are treated with great respect by all adults and, learning by example, they respect each other. The relationships between adults and children in the school and the role models they provide for pupils are excellent and the relationships that pupils develop are similarly positive.

72. Pupils also have a formally taught lesson of PSHE each week. These lessons cover a good range of topics, and include sex education and attention to drugs misuse. Only one lesson was seen during the inspection. In this lesson the teaching was very good. Discussion focused on friendship: what they like about their friends and what would make them a good friend. This was very sensitively and effectively handled and resulted in the pupils developing a greater understanding of appropriate ways of behaving towards each other.

73. The PSHE curriculum within the school is supplemented by the involvement of outside agencies. A recent one, in which the oldest pupils and their parents had participated in workshops to raise awareness of the danger of drug misuse, had been judged very positively by all concerned.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	1
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	3
Attitudes	1
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	1
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	1
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
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).