

INSPECTION REPORT

SUTTON OAK CofE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Sutton

LEA area: St Helens

Unique reference number: 104791

Headteacher: Mrs S A Wilkinson

Lead inspector: Mr A Markham

Dates of inspection: 26 – 28 January 2004

Inspection number: 258069

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:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	323
School address:	Goodban Street Sutton St Helens
Postcode:	WA9 3QD
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr W A Hunter
Date of previous inspection:	15 June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This larger than average size Church of England school is situated in Marshall's Cross in St Helens. There are 302 pupils on roll in the main school who are taught in eleven classes. In addition there is a nursery class for 50 children who attend part-time.

The school faces a number of barriers to learning. It is located in a socially deprived area, and the number of pupils claiming their entitlement to free school meals is above average (29 percent). Although a few pupils are from other than White British backgrounds none speaks other than English at home, but a high proportion of pupils start school with well below average attainment. An above average number of pupils have special learning needs (28.8%). Their main difficulties are moderate learning difficulties and social/emotional/behavioural problems. Ten pupils have a statement for special educational needs. There are five traveller children supported by a teacher funded by the local authority. The rate of pupil mobility is around average.

The school has gone through a difficult period in the last three years, with a number of staffing changes resulting in some instability. This situation was rapidly remedied by the new headteacher who was appointed one year ago and the school is moving forward in a determined manner.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1390	Mr A Markham	Lead inspector	Mathematics Art and design Personal, social and health education Physical education English as an additional language
9843	Mrs S Drake	Lay inspector	
28320	Mr B Willey	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Music Special educational needs
33110	Mrs S Offord	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Foundation stage
17767	Mrs S Power	Team inspector	Geography History

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an effective school that provides good value for money. After a period of instability the school is making good progress and is set to continue to improve. Pupils' achievement is good because the teaching is good. The new headteacher leads the school very well and has quickly created a committed, hard working team who care for the pupils well. They all work hard to overcome the barrier to learning caused by many pupils' well below average attainment on entry.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher has a very clear educational vision and a determined approach to raising standards.
- Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and develop a very positive learning ethos throughout the school.
- Children get a very good start in nursery and reception classes.
- Pupils achieve well, particularly in mathematics, information and communication technology and art and design, but more could be done to improve their skills in reading and in speaking and listening.
- Provision for pupils with special learning needs is good.
- Not enough attention is given to developing pupils' awareness of other cultures in order to prepare them for life in a multi-cultural society.
- Attendance levels are well below average and too many pupils arrive late at school.
- Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good.

The school has made satisfactory improvement overall since the last inspection. Most of the main recommendations in the previous report have been successfully tackled and improvement is now accelerating under the very strong leadership of the new headteacher. Teachers' skills in the teaching of English have been improved and determined action has been taken to raise standards in writing, but there has not been enough improvement in the reading standards achieved by pupils. The teaching of music has improved and standards are now around those expected. Good use is now made of information and communication technology across the curriculum and by the end of Year 6 standards are good. Procedures for assessing the progress made by pupils are good and teachers use the information well to plan their lessons, as a result, the quality of teaching has improved.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Overall pupils achieve well. Children in nursery and reception classes make very good progress from a low starting point. However, by the time they enter Year 1, many attain standards that are still below those expected in all areas of learning apart from physical development. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well. Performance in the end of Year 2 tests over the last four years has generally been above or well above national averages. Inspection evidence indicates that the current Year 2 pupils are achieving standards that are around the national average in writing and mathematics, but below average in reading and speaking and listening. In Years 3 to 6 pupils' achievement is good. By the end of Year 6, standards over the last three years have generally been below or well below national

averages and have not compared well to those in similar schools. The present Year 6 pupils are on track to achieve standards that are close to average in mathematics and science, but standards in English are below average. Whilst pupils are achieving well in writing, standards in reading need to be improved. Standards in information and communication technology have improved and by the end of Year 6 are above average. Standards in art and design are also above those expected.

Pupils' personal development is good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Pupils have good attitudes to work and the majority behave well. Attendance levels are well below average and punctuality is unsatisfactory and more needs to be done to tackle this.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall quality of education is good. Teaching is good throughout the school. It is very good in the nursery and reception classes and this gives the youngest children a good start to their learning. Teachers give close attention to developing the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. They have good relationships with pupils and know them well. They use an effective range of teaching strategies and lessons are interesting and activities challenging so that pupils enjoy their learning and work hard. Support staff make a significant contribution to the quality of teaching and learning for children with learning difficulties.

The curriculum is well organised and provides a broad range of learning opportunities, but not enough attention is given to developing pupils' awareness of other cultures. A good range of extra-curricular activities enhances the curriculum. Pupils are well cared for and their progress in learning is carefully monitored in order to plan appropriate support and guidance. Effective use of support staff ensures that pupils have good access to all areas of the curriculum.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher leads the school very well. She has a clear vision for the school's advancement and has successfully created a committed approach to improvement within the staff, who work well together as a team. She is well supported by the deputy headteacher and other senior staff. There are clear procedures for school self-evaluation and information is used well to inform strategic planning. The governing body supports the school effectively. Governors have a good awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and fulfil their responsibilities well.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have positive views about the school and the provision made for their children. Most pupils have very positive views about the school and enjoy taking on responsibility.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in reading throughout the school, particularly pupils' decoding and comprehension skills, and develop their enjoyment of reading.
- Raise standards in speaking and listening throughout the school.
- Raise pupils' awareness and appreciation of other cultures to equip them for life in a multi-cultural society.
- Improve pupils' levels of attendance and punctuality.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Performance in national tests has fallen in recent years. Standards attained at the end of Year 6 are **well below average** compared with those expected nationally and **below average** compared with similar schools, but pupils make good progress from a low base and achieve well. There is no significant difference in levels of achievement of boys and girls.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in nursery and reception classes get a good start to their learning.
- The school works hard to enable all pupils to achieve well, but they could do better in reading and speaking and listening.
- In Year 2, performance in tests is well above average in writing and mathematics compared with similar schools.
- Standards in ICT have improved and are above average by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils with specific learning needs make good progress.
- Standards in art and design are above average.

Commentary

1. Results of national tests have fallen in recent years, particularly at the end of Year 6. Performance in the end of Year 2 tests has been better. In the 2003 tests for Year 2 pupils, results were above the national average in writing and mathematics, but below average in reading. Compared with results in similar schools the results in writing and mathematics were well above average. Year 6 test results were below the national average in mathematics and well below the national average in English and science. Overall performance does not compare well with similar schools, but there are clear signs that standards are improving. In 2003 the school successfully achieved the rather low targets it had set for attainment at the end of Year 6. The present targets are far more challenging and the school looks to be on track to achieve them.
2. The majority of children enter the nursery with levels of attainment well below what is expected. Because of the teaching they receive they make good progress in the nursery and reception classes and achieve well in almost every area of learning but, because of their low level skills in speaking and listening, overall they are still working at below average levels at the start of Year 1. The exception to this is in their physical development where children achieve expected standards.
3. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 continue to make good progress. Inspection evidence indicates that the present groups of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils are achieving below average standards in English, but average standards in mathematics and science. This is the consequence of the determined leadership of the new headteacher and the good teaching and support given to pupils. Pupils are achieving well in English overall. A strong focus on improving writing skills has resulted in a good rise in standards in this area and throughout the school most pupils are attaining the standard expected. Although there have also been improvements in reading, this is a weaker area and present standards are below average. Pupils' ability to decode pieces of text and interpret meaning is under-developed. The situation is similar with regard to pupils' speaking and listening skills. Whilst there has been an emphasis on developing pupils' skills in this area, they are still below average.

4. In mathematics, pupils achieve well, particularly in numeracy. Throughout the school the subject is taught well and there are high expectations of what pupils might achieve. Children get off to a good start in nursery and reception and by the end of Year 2 most pupils attain expected levels. Pupils continue to make good progress through the school and the work of the present Year 6 indicates that standards are set to rise. A high proportion of pupils are on track to achieve expected or above average levels by the end of the year.
5. In science, by the end of year 6, standards are around average overall. Teachers place due emphasis on teaching practical elements of the subject and pupils' skills in investigative and experimental aspects are satisfactory. However, the work presented to more able pupils sometimes lacks challenge and this limits their ability to interpret the results of investigations and convey their ideas clearly.
6. By the end of Year 6, pupils achieve standards that are above average in ICT. They are given a good range of opportunities to apply their mathematical skills and skills in information and communication technology to other subjects. Standards in design and technology, geography, history, music, physical education and religious education are average. Pupils achieve particularly well in art and design and standards are above those expected.
7. Although the majority of pupils with special educational needs attain below average standards they achieve well. Work is well planned to meet their needs and the additional support provided for them ensures their good progress. Close attention is paid to the development of basic skills in English language and literacy. This enables pupils to access the wider curriculum and make good progress.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.7 (15.0)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.9 (14.2)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	17.0 (15.9)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 42 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.9 (24.0)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	25.8 (25.1)	26.8 (26.7)
science	26.4 (27.6)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 38 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' personal development is **good**. Their attitudes to school and learning are **good**, as is their behaviour. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good overall**. Pupils' levels of attendance and punctuality are **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy school and are keen to learn.
- Staff manage pupils' behaviour very well with the result that the school operates as a happy, orderly community.

- The good quality of relationships has a positive impact on pupils' learning.
- The school promotes pupils' social and moral development effectively, but does not prepare them sufficiently well for life in a multi-cultural society.
- The school's efforts to improve pupils' attendance are not having a good enough effect.

Commentary

8. Pupils say that they like coming to school because the teachers are kind, helpful, make lessons interesting and have a good sense of humour. This appreciation for their teachers' skills means that, from the youngest children upward, pupils settle well at the beginning of sessions. They pay good attention to what teachers say, take care with the presentation of their work and generally persist when they encounter difficulties. Pupils have confidence in the adults in school, which makes for a good learning environment.
9. Although a relatively large percentage of pupils and parents who responded to the inspection questionnaires consider that pupils' behaviour is a problem, the great majority of pupils behave well both in and out of the classroom. Adults connected with the school confirm that pupils' behaviour has improved greatly over the past year as they have responded to the new behaviour policy and practice. Most staff are very quick to nip potential problems in the bud, making effective use of praise rather than censure, which means that pupils are brought back on track swiftly and smoothly. The school's recent introduction of Year 6 play leaders and new playground resources keep pupils well occupied at break-times, and well-structured lessons keep them interested in the classroom. In the past year the school excluded pupils for a short period of time on an unusually large number of occasions but the exclusions involved very few pupils and were fully justified on the grounds of the health and safety of others in the school.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
211	8	0
3	0	0
1	0	0
2	0	0
33	0	0

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

10. The school places much emphasis on promoting pupils' social and moral development, to good effect. Assemblies are used well to develop pupils' understanding of how best to work with others and in their discussions during circle time¹ pupils demonstrate helpful, caring attitudes towards others' difficulties and a clear awareness of the difference between right and wrong. They are generous in their charitable fund-raising activities. Teachers use dance lessons well to encourage pupils to respond to music, but there are relatively few occasions when pupils are actively led to reflect on life or wonder at its special qualities. There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities, which they do with relish and commitment, and staff will always find something to do for those who volunteer their help. Although the school has taken some steps towards widening pupils' horizons, for instance celebrating Chinese New Year in reception classes or setting up pen pals with children in Belarus, it does not yet do enough to help its pupils who live in a very mono-cultural community to appreciate the richness of other cultures in the multi cultural society that is modern Britain.

¹ A time when pupils sit together in a circle and discuss issues and concerns.

11. The school has given a high priority to improving pupils' levels of attendance and punctuality in its development plan but, as yet, its efforts are not having sufficient effect. More than a quarter of pupils of statutory school age have attended for less than ninety percent of possible time so far this year and almost one in ten has had the equivalent of one day's absence a week. Each class has at least two pupils who regularly arrive late in the morning and a number of others who are intermittently late, sometimes by more than an hour. The school has a few pupils whose medical condition has a negative impact on their attendance but there are too many others who are absent for inappropriate reasons. The attendance of traveller children is as good as that of other pupils in the school.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	5.1
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	1.9
National data	0.4

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 is **good**. The school successfully provides for the needs of all its pupils in a very caring environment.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is **good** across the school and very good in the nursery and reception classes. Pupils' learning is **good**. Teachers' assessment of pupils' work is **good** and the information is used well to plan work that meets their needs.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are well planned. Teachers set tasks that match the differing needs of pupils well and challenge and interest them.
- Teachers manage their classes well and have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour.
- Teachers ensure equal opportunity by using learning support assistants effectively to support different groups of pupils and ensure that they make good progress.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good.
- Pupils behave well, work hard and learn the basic skills well.
- In a few lessons the pace of learning slows.

Commentary

12. Teaching has many good features. Teachers present lessons in an imaginative manner that develops an enthusiastic response from pupils. Lessons are planned well and, in the majority of cases, the objectives of the lesson are explained to pupils. Teachers in the most effective lessons develop pupils' learning in sequence. They do this by reviewing with pupils, at the start of lessons, their previous work, and then checking at the end of the lessons whether the pupils have learned what was planned. These well-organised approaches result in pupils developing a good understanding of the topics being taught.
13. All staff working in the nursery and reception year have a good understanding of how young children learn. A wide range of activities is presented to children, with a good balance between adult-led activities and opportunities for children to make choices and to explore and learn independently. Activities are made exciting and interesting so that children are keen to try new

experiences and to gain confidence as learners. Adults work hard to overcome the difficulties in speaking and listening experienced by many children.

14. Teachers' explanations are clear as a result of their good knowledge of subjects. The basic skills in literacy and numeracy are given a high emphasis, with teachers enabling pupils to develop and extend these skills across the curriculum. They make good use of resources to ensure that tasks are interesting and challenging and generally demonstrate a confident approach to the teaching of ICT, using it well to support learning across the curriculum. Most lessons are delivered at a lively pace, but occasionally the pace slows, for example when the class sits for some time watching two pupils in a small game situation in physical education.
15. Teachers use assessment effectively. They mark pupils' work carefully, making good use of positive and developmental written comments to improve pupils' self-esteem and aid their understanding. The information this gives is used well to ensure that activities are interesting and well matched to the differing capabilities of pupils. Support staff are used well to ensure that pupils with learning needs understand their tasks and maintain a satisfactory work rate. As a result pupils are well motivated, maintain attention and stay focused. Pupils consequently make good progress in their learning and achieve well.
16. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is good. Specific areas for improvement and clear targets are identified so that pupils are clear about what they need to achieve. Teachers make good use of these targets when planning lessons. Teachers work closely with their support staff so that pupils make good progress. Knowledgeable teaching assistants support the pupils well in their work. They explain to pupils in their group what they have to do and often support them through the small steps of learning that these pupils require; consequently their learning is good.
17. Pupils' behaviour is good because teachers' know their pupils well, have high expectations of them and effective techniques for maintaining order. The emphasis given to raising standards of behaviour has resulted in teachers concentrating on maintaining tight control in lessons. On occasion this limits opportunities to develop pupils' ability to cooperate and work in pairs and groups in lessons such as science.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 41 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	10 (24%)	22 (54%)	8 (20%)	1 (2%)	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 curriculum

The curriculum is **good**. The quality and range of curricular experiences cater very well for the interests, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. The curriculum is enriched by a **good** range of extra-curricular activities. Accommodation and resources are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Curriculum planning is well organised with clear guidance for teachers.
- Equality of access and opportunity for all pupils is very good.
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good.
- Insufficient attention is given to pupils' cultural development.
- Staffing levels are good.

- The accommodation is generally good, but the ICT suite is small and sound from other classes sometimes affects learning.

Commentary

18. The curricular opportunities offered to pupils are good. The school fulfils the statutory requirement to teach all subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education and sex and relationships education. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy are implemented effectively. Good attention is given to developing the basic skills across the curriculum. Information and communication technology is used effectively in other subjects, especially in English, mathematics and science.
19. Curriculum planning gives careful attention to catering for the split age classes by ensuring that topics are covered over a two-year programme. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social education is good overall, but insufficient attention is given to developing pupils' awareness of other cultures in order to prepare them for life in a multi-cultural society. Pupils' personal, social and health education is developed well both in specific lessons and through work in other subjects.
20. Close attention is given to ensuring that all pupils, whatever their needs, have the same opportunities to take part in every aspect of school life. Pupils feel they are treated well by thoughtful staff. The school pays particular attention to ensuring that the curriculum matches the needs of those pupils identified with special learning needs. Careful assessment of progress and effective use of support staff are key factors in the school's approach. The targets set for these pupils are clear and the support and learning experiences provided for them are good. The provision for pupils with special learning needs is effective in enabling them to make good progress towards achieving these targets. Travellers' children are welcomed into the caring school environment and are well supported by teachers, classroom assistants and a local education authority teacher who works with them for one day per week. This enables them to be fully integrated into the school community.
21. The school provides a good range of activities outside lessons. Pupils have the opportunity to participate in local inter-school sporting events, music and dance presentations. These opportunities not only contribute to the taught curriculum, but also give valuable opportunities for pupils to learn the necessary interpersonal and social skills.
22. The quality of accommodation and resources is satisfactory overall. Attractive classroom displays enhance the learning environment. The split site results in spacious accommodation with two halls and good outdoor areas. However, the open plan design results in noise from other classes sometimes affecting lessons. The present ICT suite is small and cannot accommodate a whole class, but there are plans improve this provision. The school has a good number of teaching staff and support staff. They work effectively so that pupils are supported well to ensure they have equal opportunity to access the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Staff provide **good** quality care and support for pupils, who are **satisfactorily** involved in the school's work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff know pupils well as individuals and pupils are confident to approach them if they have difficulties.
- Good arrangements help pupils to feel settled and happy in school.
- The school monitors pupils' progress well and staff use the information gained to offer good quality advice.

Commentary

23. Staff make time for pupils and they are good at listening to their concerns and helping them find solutions. Teachers use the school's good assessment procedures well to monitor pupils' academic progress, especially in English, mathematics and science. They use the information this provides both to highlight any extra support that they should offer to individuals and to provide pupils with good guidance on what they need to do next.
24. The headteacher closely monitors the behaviour of those who find self-discipline difficult and, through supportive questioning, helps pupils to understand how they can improve and, importantly, that they can put their mistakes behind them. The learning mentor works closely and effectively with a small number of pupils who find it hard to concentrate and show aggression towards others. Teachers show great patience towards those whose behaviour can be challenging, and support staff are skilled at helping those with special learning needs to feel good about themselves. The midday assistants supervise pupils well and encourage them to play games and build good relationships with each other.
25. Overall, the school has good procedures in place to ensure health and safety. There are also good procedures for child protection, including the support of those who are cared for by the local authority and of traveller children. Comprehensive healthcare plans ensure that pupils with specific medical needs are given suitable treatment when in school. Infant pupils receive free fruit to help them establish good eating habits, while the personal and health education programme offers pupils of all ages good support and advice on a wide range of issues.
26. The arrangements to help children move from one stage of education to the next are good. The arrangements for children moving from nursery to reception are particularly good. Parents and children visit their new class on a number of occasions, become familiar with the staff, take part in activities together and receive a pack of resources to use at home. Older children are also suitably prepared for transfer to the next stage of their education.
27. Although there is currently no formal means through which the school seeks pupils' views, they do help to create their classroom rules and the good quality of relationships means that pupils feel able to express their opinions. There are firm plans in place to introduce a school council in order to strengthen this area of pupil participation.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's partnership with parents, other schools and the wider community is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are responding increasingly positively to the school's efforts to involve them in their children's education.
- Most parents consider that the school helps their children to work hard and make good progress.
- The written information for parents could be improved.
- Partnership with the wider community does not yet have a strong impact on the school's provision.

Commentary

28. All the parents spoken with during the inspection are positive about the school's provision for their children; they consider that staff are approachable and try hard to deal with any concerns and they particularly appreciate the good arrangements to help their children settle into school. Whilst a significant minority of parents had concerns over communications with the school, the

information given to parents about their child's progress is satisfactory overall. Parents have two opportunities a year to discuss their children's progress formally with staff, pupils' progress reports contain clearly written information and the school provides regular newsletters to keep parents up to date with its activities. However, apart from in the reception classes, parents are not told what their children will be learning in the coming weeks in order that they might help them at home. The governors' annual report is a very dry document that does not invite reading.

29. The school has introduced a number of initiatives to involve parents. In collaboration with St Helens College family learning courses for parents of younger children have been held and the *Inspire* project has supported parents of children transferring into the reception classes. Both projects have attracted a good number of participants. Parents have also helped with road safety training and are now being invited to act as reading 'listeners'. Although there is no parents' association, they do raise funds to augment resources, which have recently helped to furnish the junior library. Most parents willingly work with the school if there are concerns about, for instance, their child's behaviour or effort.
30. Links with local schools are satisfactory overall. An effective partnership with the local sports college enables pupils to have access to good facilities and a range of inter-school sports activities. Headteachers meet regularly to discuss items of mutual interest but, although Year 6 pupils do begin topics at their primary school which are completed once they reach Year 7, there has been no involvement of subject coordinators to examine curriculum continuity. The school is beginning to rebuild its links with the local church after a period of little communication. It is also trying to capitalise on the wealth of learning opportunities presented by the wider community, for example, pupils participate in Crucial Crew activities relating to personal safety.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good**. The headteacher's leadership of the school is **very good**. School governance and the management of the school are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Governors have effective systems in place to oversee the work of the school and fulfil statutory duties.
- The headteacher has a clear, shared vision for the school's development and has the skills and determination to put it into effect.
- The headteacher is well supported by the deputy headteacher. Together they form a strong team.
- Management procedures are good but have still to be firmly embedded in practice.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good because resources are well managed.

Commentary

31. The governing body has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This enables governors to help shape its future. Their good support for the school is reflected in the encouragement and guidance they have given to the new headteacher. They have established well-informed monitoring arrangements to enable them to fulfil their statutory duties.
32. The headteacher has been in post for one year and has quickly established herself as a very good leader. She has conducted a full audit of the school, evaluated its strengths and weaknesses and given clear direction in terms of how the school can improve. Determined action is being taken to raise the achievement of pupils and overcome the barriers to learning

presented by the pupils well below attainment on entry and poor speaking skills. Her pro-active style of leadership has successfully developed the staff into a committed team and enabled all to share a vision for the school that is clear, corporate and attainable. This has promoted a very good ethos and climate for learning within the school. She has retained the good practices she has found, introduced rigour into performance management and established new, well-considered systems to improve the management and monitoring of the curriculum. She is supported very well by a recently appointed deputy headteacher whose skills complement her own. Together they form a vigorous and motivated team.

33. The management of the nursery and reception classes is very good. The coordinator is helping to make sure teaching is consistently very good and that teachers and support staff work closely as a team. Shared planning and assessment systems make sure that each teacher builds on what has gone on before. There is a very good level of staffing and close attention is given to ensuring that provision matches the differing needs of the children.
34. There are good management systems in place for the school to monitor its own performance and reflect on areas needing development. An effective management structure has been created and channels of communication improved. This is enabling staff to be involved in decision making and a cohesive team approach is consequently being developed. The role of subject coordinators has been reviewed and more clearly defined. They monitor pupils' work and teachers' lesson planning but most have not been given time to carry out lesson observations, although there are plans for this in the future. Assessment and tracking procedures to monitor pupils' achievements in English, mathematics and science are good and individual target setting for pupils has been introduced in English. The school's improvement plan is also focused on raising standards. It is well organised, detailed and costed and provides a clear tool for the way forward. The school recognises that the close attention given to raising standards in pupils' writing now needs to be duplicated for reading. Whilst these innovations have not been established long enough for their impact to be fully realised, they are all successfully supporting the school's drive to raise the standards pupils attain.
35. The management of provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. There are clear structures in place for early identification of need and reviews. The new coordinator works closely with the headteacher and designated governor to ensure that the school complies fully with the Code of Practice for special educational needs and makes best use of available funding. The quality of pupils' individual education plans is good. Learning assistants are deployed well to provide good support to pupils and are fully involved in all aspects of special educational needs provision. This demonstrates the headteacher's commitment to equality of opportunity for all and is testimony to the appropriateness of the school's "Investor in People" award.
36. Financial management is good. A highly efficient finance officer ensures that day-to-day budgetary matters are carefully addressed. She reports directly to the finance committee of the governing body and works closely with the local education authority's finance officer. The most recent full audit in 2002 stated that the financial arrangements of the school were good and the few minor issues have been resolved. The governors fully understand the principles of best value and take great care to ensure that quality resources match educational objectives.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	863,900
Total expenditure	840,203
Expenditure per pupil	2,768

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	42,192
Balance carried forward to the next	23,696

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

37. The majority of children enter the nursery with standards well below average in all the areas of learning. A significant number have very poorly developed speaking and listening skills and their personal, social and emotional skills are weak. They make very good progress during the two years in the Foundation Stage. Some achieve the standards expected by the time they leave the reception class, but the majority are still below. The exception to this is in their physical development, where most children achieve national expectations.
38. The Foundation Stage is very well led by the capable and conscientious nursery teacher. She has created a highly effective team, who plan and evaluate their work together well. The children's very good progress in learning is due to the high quality of teaching in the nursery and both reception classes. The provision in the two reception classes, where children can move freely between the two classrooms at certain times, is particularly good. It offers children a wider range of activities than is often the case. Teachers and teaching assistants plan carefully and work diligently to ensure that children have happy and exciting experiences. The classrooms are bright and stimulating and good use is made of the outdoor play area to offer a wide range of activities. The staff are skilled at supporting children, encouraging them to talk and to play well together and to become more independent. They assess children's progress systematically, even in their personal and social development, which allows them to be clear at all stages about the progress that is being made.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many pupils are immature for their age.
- Teachers expect good behaviour and children respond to this very well.
- Staff care for the children sensitively and children feel secure.
- Children with special educational needs are encouraged particularly well.

Commentary

39. Teaching of this area of learning is very good and successfully promotes the children's personal, social and emotional development. Children achieve well, but by the time children enter year 1 their attainment is below average. In the nursery class, children often play in a solitary fashion and do not communicate readily with each other. The teachers work hard to encourage them to talk more, in a very happy and relaxed atmosphere. Particularly good encouragement is given to those children with special educational needs. The welcoming nursery classroom encourages children to approach the prepared activities with confidence. By the time they reach reception, children know school routines well and are happy and secure when working. The relationships in the two classrooms are good and children approach activities readily and confidently, asking for guidance when necessary. They are beginning to respond to each other and communicate more freely and show a reasonable degree of independence when selecting activities and some are becoming aware of the feelings and needs of others.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good range of activities to develop early reading skills, letter sounds and names.
- The good opportunities for children to improve their skills in speaking and listening.

Commentary

40. Teaching in this area of learning is very good. Teachers work hard to develop children's communication skills. Staff are generally good at encouraging children to describe or explain what they have been doing. They provide many opportunities for the children to speak and listen during discussions on the carpet and story time. Children make good progress, but by the end of the reception year standards of attainment are below average. Children join in with familiar songs and actions with enjoyment and some will talk about things that have happened to them. However, many have very limited vocabulary and their speech is often hard to understand. Teachers develop an understanding of the written word by teaching children coming into the nursery to find their own names and post them in a box. At the start of the school year few could do this, but half way through the year, most can now manage it. Children are given plenty of opportunities to write and draw and many can make recognisable letter shapes, but overall their skills are below those expected.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teachers' good knowledge of how children acquire mathematical concepts.
- The planning of activities to meet the needs of all the children at their different stages of learning.

Commentary

41. Little direct teaching of mathematical skills was observed, but teachers' planning makes full provision for the different learning needs of all the children and children achieve well in this area. However, by the time the end of the reception year the standards attained by children are below those expected. Teachers incorporate number songs and rhymes well in their lessons to reinforce the knowledge children have of counting and using numbers. The nursery children learn to match and sequence different sizes and shapes when tidying the Three Bears' cottage. They listen to number rhymes and some join in with confidence. Counting games and action rhymes abound in the reception classes, and children join in with pleasure and increasing success.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children have very limited experiences on entry to the nursery.
- The stimulating range of activities which enable pupils to progress very well.

Commentary

42. All staff pay very good attention to extending children's knowledge and understanding and the quality of teaching is consequently very good. Many children have much more limited experiences of the world around them than is usual for their age when they first come into the nursery. They make good progress in the two years of Foundation Stage, because they are offered a very wide range of experiences. They sign up their names on investigation boards and make marks to show what they find using magnifying glasses and magnets. They develop an understanding of the work of nurses when playing in the 'hospital'. They explore texture, colour and shape using a range of objects provided. Some show good mouse control when using the computer. Although their attainment is below that expected by the end of the reception year they achieve well.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make particularly rapid progress in this area of learning, due to the targeted opportunities provided for them and by the end of the reception classes many attain average levels of physical development.

Commentary

43. Teaching in this area of learning is very good. Teachers' records show that many nursery children start in September with limited ability to run, jump, balance, ride bicycles and throw and catch. Children make rapid progress in this area, under the very good guidance of the staff, so that six months later they are doing this with ease. They pedal bikes fast, turn corners successfully and avoid bumping into each other, showing respect for other people's personal space. Teachers recognise the importance of incorporating activities to exercise children's manipulative skills. In class, children have well prepared materials such as playdough and small construction equipment to improve these skills. Their skills in cutting and pasting are limited but they concentrate well and are encouraged to persevere. By the time they leave the reception class, their coordination is generally good in both large and small movements and their achievement is good.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strength sand weaknesses

- The very good range of activities available.
- The good quality of adult support for creative activities.

Commentary

44. Teaching of this area of learning is very good. Teachers present a wide range of activities, which develops the children's ability to paint, draw, act, sing, make music and to dance, but by the time they enter year 1 the majority of children do not attain the standards expected. Their ability to recognise colour names is limited in the nursery. By the time they are in the reception classes, they are beginning to be interested in what other children are doing and to join in with each other. They copy the teacher's movements in a dance lesson and pick up a musical instrument and beat out a rhythm independently. They name shapes and colours as they stick scales on a fish, and particularly like the shiny textures. They paint enormous cardboard tubes

with big brushes in outdoor play, and manipulate small beads to put jewellery on play-dough faces.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English are below average by the end of year 2 and year 6. Standards in writing are close to average and have improved significantly since the last inspection but they remain below average for speaking and listening and reading.
- There is no consistent policy to develop speaking and listening skills across the curriculum.
- The quality of teaching is good. This promotes positive attitudes to the subject that enhance learning, and as a result achievement is also good.
- Recently introduced assessment procedures are good and beginning to be used well to address weaknesses in the subject.
- Subject leadership is good although restricted by the lack of release time to monitor others teaching.

Commentary

45. Pupils' performance in national tests at the end of year 2 in 2003 was above average in writing, but performance in reading was below average. By the end of Year 6, performance in tests in 2003 was well below the national average, but was slightly better when compared with standards in similar schools. Pupils' work seen during the inspection shows that standards are improving, but are still below average overall at the end of year 2 and year 6. Teachers plan well for the implementation of the literacy strategy and pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in lessons and throughout the school achieve well.
46. Writing has shown the greatest improvement. The school has focused on this aspect of the subject with good results. Standards are now close to average. By the end of Year 2, all pupils have experienced a good range of writing styles and average and higher attaining pupils are writing well using good sentence structure and punctuation. Lower attaining pupils still spend time on basic skills such as letter sounds and, although their handwriting is still poorly formed, their spelling and use of punctuation are satisfactory. By Year 6, pupils are given numerous opportunities for extended writing, and they plan and draft their stories to a generally good standard. Spelling and handwriting are often good and the neat presentation of their work reflects the pride pupils take in it. The punctuation of middle and lower attaining pupils remains erratic, however, as does their knowledge of grammatical terms.
47. Pupils enter school with a restricted vocabulary and only limited experience of expressing their thoughts and ideas orally. Some staff focus well on developing these skills, but throughout the school standards are below average overall. In an assembly with pupils in Years 3 to 6, good opportunities were given for pupils to explain their understanding of 'greed'. Several pupils responded with articulate descriptions of situations that illustrated it well. This, however, is not true of all staff or of all subjects. Whilst some teachers develop pupils' confidence and fluency by creating opportunities for them to talk to others about their work, most do not. Few opportunities for drama are created beyond role-play with younger pupils.
48. Progress in reading is unsatisfactory and throughout the school standards are below average overall. Pupils come to school with little experience of books, newspapers or magazines. As a result their reading skills are poor. By contrast, there are many books around school, as well as in the two library areas, and most older pupils are confident in their ability to locate books

and use the contents and index pages efficiently. Pupils in Year 2 are enthusiastic about reading but, though they all take books home regularly, there are few entries in reading records to indicate that they have been listened to at home. By Year 6, most pupils can decode text in order to access the knowledge it contains, but they display little pleasure in reading. Quiet reading sessions at the beginning of afternoon school do little to enhance pupils' desire to read. Reading records of these pupils have few entries and are not up to date and the small number of book reviews in their reading logs are often not marked, indicating that their reading is not well monitored by the school.

49. The quality of teaching is good overall. Planning is careful and considered, with work often adapted for the different abilities within the class. Higher attaining pupils are particularly well challenged and both they and pupils of average ability write confidently in a range of styles. All pupils produce a good volume of work. The pace of lessons is often brisk, ensuring that pupils' interest is maintained. Good, sharp questioning generally keeps all pupils actively involved. The school's new arrangements for recording and tracking pupils' achievements are proving effective. Older pupils have targets set for them showing them how to improve their work. Teachers take care to ensure that targets are challenging yet attainable and draw pupils' attention to them when marking work. Throughout the school, teachers mark work thoroughly adding affirming and encouraging comments. As a result the setting of targets is having a positive impact on the work of pupils and supporting the raising of standards.
50. The subject is well led and managed. The coordinator has a good understanding of the areas requiring development as a result of her monitoring of teachers' planning and scrutiny of pupils' work. She has not yet had the opportunity to observe others teaching but there are plans for her to do this later in the year.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

51. Provision for the development of speaking and listening skills is currently too dependent upon the individual approaches of teachers. There are some pockets of good practice but no consistent whole school approach. Teachers create a range of opportunities for extended writing in many subjects. Pupils report experiments in science, write thoughtfully about feelings in religious education and translate language from the Internet into their own words in geography. However, the quality of presentation, punctuation and spelling is often not as good in this work as that seen in English. Research in geography and history also helps to develop pupils' reading skills.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses.

- Pupils achieve well throughout the school.
- Teaching is effective in helping pupils make good progress.
- Good use is made of ICT.
- Effective links are made with other subjects to develop learning.
- Subject leadership gives a successful impetus to improvement.

Commentary

52. Children enter the school with standards in mathematics well below average. However, as a result of improved teaching, pupils are now making good progress throughout the school. Standards in Years 1 and 2 have risen steadily over the last four years and there are clear signs that this trend is set to continue. This improvement is evident in the work of pupils in Years 3 to 6. Whilst test results of pupils in Year 6 fell in 2001 and 2002, they improved slightly

in 2003 and the work of the present Year 6 pupils suggests that this trend will continue. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils' achievement is good and that the present group of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils are attaining standards that are around the national average.

53. Good improvement has been made in provision since the previous inspection. The quality of teaching has improved and is now good throughout the school. Teachers plan their lessons well and, because they have good subject knowledge, explain new learning clearly to pupils. The use of support staff is well planned and effective, and enables pupils with learning difficulties to make good progress and achieve well. In all lessons, the pace is brisk, pupils are well managed and teachers make good use of praise and encouragement to boost the pupils' self-esteem. The grouping of pupils by prior attainment in Years 5 and 6 is resulting in pupils being presented with work that matches their capability well and is having a positive impact on standards. Teachers' expectations of pupils are high and activities are suitably challenging. Pupils respond positively to these approaches and have good attitudes to the subject. Teachers pay particular attention to the presentation of work, with pupils being taught the importance of setting out their work neatly. Homework is used well to develop learning in lessons. Teachers carefully check pupils' work when they return it to school.
54. Teachers are effectively implementing the school's action plan to raise standards in mathematics. The National Numeracy Strategy is taught well and teachers make good use of the computers in classrooms and in the computing suite to support learning. For example, in a lesson with Year 2, pupils developed their number skills using a vending machine program, and in a lesson with Years 3 and 4, pupils showed good skills in basic control when developing their understanding of compass directions.
55. The school makes good use of information from assessments, including the National Curriculum tests at the end of Years 2 and 6, and the optional tests at the end of Years 3, 4, and 5. Pupils' progress is carefully monitored and intervention planned to enable those pupils seen to be under-achieving to be supported. Teachers mark pupils' work carefully and use constructive comments well to develop their understanding of how they can improve.
56. The subject coordinator has only recently taken over the management of the subject. However, she is very enthusiastic and has a good understanding of the areas requiring attention. An action plan has been drawn up which she is implementing well.

Mathematics across the curriculum

57. Teachers provide a satisfactory range of opportunities for pupils to use and develop their mathematical skills in other subjects. For example, they make effective use of tables, charts and graphs to show results in science and in design and technology.

SCIENCE

The provision for science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good.
- Pupils achieve well.
- Although standards in the 2003 national tests in Year 6 were well below those for similar schools, pupils are now attaining standards that are close to average.
- There is not always sufficient challenge for the more able pupils to extend their understanding and express their ideas clearly.
- The pupils enjoy science and can remember past work well.
- The subject is being led well by the new subject leader.

Commentary

58. Considering their low starting point, pupils make good progress and achieve well because teaching is effective. Performance in tests has been below or well below national averages over the last three years. However, inspection evidence shows that the standards being attained by pupils are close to average overall. The work of the present pupils indicates that the strong emphasis on raising standards is proving successful.
59. The standard of teaching is good overall throughout the school. Teachers understand the subject well and pass on their enthusiasm to the pupils, who consequently learn well. Teachers plan their lessons carefully and make good use of a wide range of resources. They teach the processes of scientific enquiry effectively so that pupils learn to predict outcomes, conduct a fair test, record their findings and evaluate the results. These processes are becoming strongly established throughout the school. For example, in a very effective lesson in Year 2, pupils were given the opportunity to explore electrical circuits in pairs and were challenged to make a bulb light up. They found this quite difficult for a few minutes, but the teacher wisely let them persevere until they were successful. This lesson worked very well because the pupils had the opportunity to discover for themselves.
60. Teachers make lessons interesting and have very good class control. This ensures that lessons are well ordered and that pupils work well. Pupils have good attitudes to the subject and most work hard to achieve. Interviews with pupils show that they enjoy their science lessons, remember facts well and talk about what they have learned with some excitement. Teachers generally explain ideas carefully and use questions to check that pupils' understand their work. However, the work is sometimes lacking in challenge for the more able learners, and as a result, these pupils' learning is not always sufficiently extended and their ability to communicate ideas is underdeveloped.
61. Teachers create effective links with work in mathematics and ICT by developing pupils' ability to record their findings using diagrams, graphs and charts.
62. The subject coordinator is new to her post, and very enthusiastic. She has a good understanding of the issues which needed to be addressed and has wisely focused on the processes of scientific enquiry. She has begun a programme of monitoring standards throughout the school and has planned how she needs to continue this.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving throughout the school, particularly in Years 3 to 6.
- The school currently has fewer computers per pupil than most other schools.
- The provision of laptops for most teachers has increased their confidence and improved teaching and learning.
- The acquisition of good software has enabled ICT to be used across the curriculum.
- Subject management is good.

Commentary

63. Standards are higher than at the previous inspection. By the end of year 2, standards are average. Pupils make good progress in years 3 to 6 and by the end of year 6, standards are above the national average. Since the introduction of the computer suite in 2000, greater exposure of pupils to ICT has ensured this rise in standards across the school. As less than a third of pupils come from homes with a computer, attainment on entry to school is low, but all

pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress as they move through the school. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

64. Despite the improvement in the school's hardware resources, the cramped conditions in the current computer suite are now impeding pupils' learning. Pupils co-operate with each other well but one computer shared between three pupils limits the time each has for 'hands on' experience. This pressure should be alleviated when the new computer suite is completed.
65. The provision of laptops for most class teachers has been very successful in raising their proficiency and subsequently their use of computers in teaching. Teaching is now generally good, as was shown in the work pupils produced last term and in the two lessons seen in the suite during the inspection. In a good lesson with pupils in Years 1 and 2, the pace was brisk, expectations high and questioning was effective in developing pupils' understanding. Pupils are well motivated, sustain concentration well and try hard, even when concepts such as branching databases challenge their understanding. They are offered a good range of opportunities to use all aspects of ICT, including sensing equipment, a digital microscope and techni-lego. Pupils respond by achieving well. Class teachers have begun to use the suite for a second lesson each week specifically to support learning in other subjects. Software to support this has been purchased following an audit by the subject leader that identified gaps in provision. Class based computers were frequently seen in use in a number of subjects during the inspection.
66. The very knowledgeable subject leader supports other staff well. He has a clear overview of the subject and has written a detailed action plan to drive the subject forward. He has established a system of record keeping that includes pupil self-assessment, and is developing a portfolio of pupils' work.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

67. ICT is used well to support other areas of the curriculum. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to use it to foster learning in other subjects.

HUMANITIES

68. Only two lessons were seen in **history** and one in **geography** and it is therefore not possible to judge the quality of provision. Inspectors looked at teachers' planning for these subjects and samples of pupils' current work and work from last year.
69. The work in pupils' books and in the two lessons seen indicates that standards in history are similar to those expected nationally. Although standards in the one geography lesson seen were below those expected, the work in pupils' books indicates that standards are broadly similar to those found nationally.
70. Inspection evidence indicates that teaching is satisfactory in both subjects and promotes satisfactory learning and achievement. Pupils throughout the school generally make satisfactory gains in their knowledge and understanding of historical events and periods. The majority of pupils achieve well when they are given appropriate intellectual challenge, for example in carrying out geographical research or writing about post-war Britain. However the use of worksheets results in some tasks lacking sufficient challenge for older pupils and, as a result, they do not achieve as well as they should, particularly in geography. In general, insufficient attention is given to the development of the required research skills.
71. Visits to relevant destinations, such as Eden Camp and Formby Point, make a valuable contribution to learning in humanities. In the history lessons observed, the great majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieved well in relation to their prior learning and showed great interest in learning about the Tudor period. ICT now makes a good contribution to learning in geography.

72. Leadership and management in the humanities are satisfactory. There is scope for greater rigour to be applied to monitoring procedures in both subjects in order to improve standards and subject quality.

Religious education

The provision for religious education is **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching is lively and interesting.
- The presentation and quality of work in many pupils' books is barely satisfactory.
- There is too little focus on faiths other than Christianity.
- The subject leader is highly committed to the subject.

Commentary

73. Standards are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus overall. This is a similar situation to that found at the previous inspection. The school provides a satisfactory programme of learning in religious education. Pupils' acquire positive attitudes to the subject and achievement is satisfactory. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' personal development.
74. Pupils' written work indicates that not enough attention is given to faiths other than Christianity. Whilst pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of the ceremonies, signs and symbols of the Christian faith, their knowledge of features of other faiths is limited. The quality of work in many pupils' books is disappointing. Too often, worksheets are stuck in pupils' books with little or no input from the pupils, or work is copied from the board. Pupils in the same class are often given the same work to do, regardless of their capability. The subject coordinator teaches all the religious education lessons in the school. She makes the explanations and stories interesting for the pupils and they enjoy the lessons. She has good subject knowledge of the Christian faith and the pupils remember details from her lessons well, such as the recent visit of a nun who talked to them about her life. In a good lesson with year 2, the pupils watched with rapt attention as the teacher re-enacted the moment when Jesus stilled the storm.
75. The subject coordinator is new to this post, but has a satisfactory awareness of the areas that require development. She has worked on the policy and schemes to ensure that they meet requirements. Resources are well organised and the coordinator has plans for further purchases. She is aware that there is a need for further training in faiths other than Christianity for herself and for other staff.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Only one lesson was seen in each of art and design and design and technology, and two lessons in music. Inspectors looked at teachers' planning, samples of pupils' work and talked with pupils, but it is therefore not possible to judge the quality of provision in these subjects.

Art and design

76. There is plenty of evidence around the school to show that art makes a very good contribution to the ethos of the school. Work on display and photographs shows that pupils produce work of good quality and that standards are above average. Pupils make good progress in developing their skills and techniques and make use of a wide range of media. Throughout the school pupils achieve well.

77. Pupils' observational skills are developed well and exploration of the work of famous artists features strongly. For example, pupils' still life paintings of sunflowers in the style of Van Gogh are bright and attractive and their paintings in the style of Kandinsky show good attention to detail. Pupils make good use of colour when producing pictures of chairs based on the work of Gustav Klimt.
78. Pupils in years 1 and 2 use paint, crayon and pencil well to produce faces and shapes and they use a wide range of materials to make attractive collages. Older pupils are proficient in the use of a wide range of media. They develop good skills in sculpting. For example, pupils in year 6 have produced an attractive sculpture of Adam and Eve using modroc that clearly conveys a sense of movement. Work in batik is attractively displayed in the hall.
79. Good links are made with other subjects. In the lesson observed, pupils in Year 3 and 4 drew imaginative ideas in their sketchbooks when designing a chair in a lesson linked to design and technology. Effective use is made of ICT to produce pictures based on Matisse's work 'The Snail'. Work on the Tudors in history is enhanced by the pupils' paintings of King Henry VIII and Tudor houses.

Design and technology

80. Across the school, the evidence in books is varied, some being very good, some being less than satisfactory. There is little evidence that the more able pupils are being challenged, or that tasks are varied to meet the pupils differing capabilities. However, the work on display is of a good standard and shows that all classes are covering the subject. There is every indication that standards are broadly average.
81. Inspection evidence indicates that teachers plan their lessons satisfactorily. They give due attention to the correct process of design, make and evaluate. For example, in a very good lesson with Years 3 and 4, the teacher generated interesting and imaginative ideas for designing a chair, including a psychic chair that can read your mind. The pupils showed a good understanding of the design process and began the design drawings, but this was not seen completed as it is scheduled for a subsequent lesson.
82. The subject leader is new to this area. He is enthusiastic and has clear ideas of how he wants to raise standards in the subject. He has good knowledge of the work that is being done throughout the school.

Music

83. Music now enjoys a high profile throughout the school and many opportunities have been created for pupils, both in class and as individuals, to experience live music. Many visitors, such as theatre companies and volunteer teachers of instruments, bring music into school and pupils are given the opportunity to see professional productions of ballet and orchestral works. As a result, pupils respond to extra-curricular opportunities to make music, and the school has both a choir and a band. This improvement in provision is, in large part, due to the enthusiastic approach of the subject coordinator and has resulted in a raising of attainment, which is now similar to that found in most schools. Insufficient teaching was seen to comment on the standards of teaching and learning but conversations with pupils in Year 2 reflected their enthusiasm for the subject, and the singing in an assembly with pupils in Years 3 to 6 was tuneful, with good intonation.

Physical Education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have good attitudes to the subject, put a good degree of effort into their activities and most achieve well.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and deliver their lessons with confidence.
- The curriculum is good and extended well by the use of outside expertise.
- Pupils' achievement and standards in swimming are below average.

Commentary

84. The standards being attained by pupils are average overall, although pupils in a lesson with Years 5 and 6 displayed good skills in dance. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop controlled movements when running, weaving and jumping round the hall. They participate enthusiastically, putting effort into their activities and show a good awareness of the use of space. Year 3 pupils have satisfactory hockey skills, most being able to dribble a puck round a cone using a hockey stick and to hit the puck at a target with reasonable accuracy. Older pupils in Years 5 and 6 put a great deal of effort and concentration into their dance. In a lesson in which they had to learn parts of the Maori Haka war dance, they worked very hard and, by the end of the lesson, most gave very accomplished performances.
85. In the lessons observed teaching was good overall. Lessons were well planned and teachers showed good skills when demonstrating and explaining activities. Teachers ensure that pupils start the lesson with a warm up activity and finish with a cool down. They give good attention to safety and have high expectations of behaviour. Teachers have effective strategies for ensuring good discipline and as a result lessons proceed at a good pace and pupils are made to work hard. They make effective use of individual pupils to demonstrate good practice to others and continually circulate and comment on pupils' work in order to develop their learning. As a result pupils strive to improve and their achievement is good.
86. The curriculum is well planned and provides a wide range of experiences. Good use is made of external agencies to enhance the curriculum. For example, Everton Football Club has provided coaching in football, the use of New Opportunities Funding has enabled an experienced dance teacher to be brought in to the school, and a teacher from the nearby secondary school has worked with pupils in hockey, dance, gymnastics and rugby. Pupils participate in swimming lessons, but by the end of Year 6 a high proportion do not attain the expected standard of being able to swim 25 metres.
87. The subject is managed well. The coordinator has a clear awareness of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject. Resources are well organised and the school has two halls, adequate outside areas and a field. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education (PSHE) is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has a caring ethos, which develops pupils' PSHE well.
- Class discussions are used well to develop pupils' self-esteem and build relationships.
- Healthy eating is encouraged.

- Pupils' personal, social and health education is developed well through other subjects in the curriculum.
- Links with the community are used well.

Commentary

88. The school has a warm and friendly ethos with careful attention being given to ensuring that each pupil is cared for well. Teachers develop good relationships with pupils and lessons are orderly, with pupils showing good attitudes to their learning. They develop a sense of responsibility in pupils, who carry out a wide range of duties very conscientiously. Throughout the school pupils relate well to their peers and to teachers and develop a mature and sensible attitude to school life.
89. Careful attention is given to developing pupils' awareness of the value of a good diet, sex relationships and drugs education and personal health and safety. Lessons in science and design and technology are used well to support pupils' understanding of the effects a good diet has on the body. Discussions on moral issues in religious education lessons effectively develop pupils' understanding of right and wrong.
90. The involvement of a wide range of visitors, including the area nurse, dental health workers, the police and fire service, are used well to develop pupils' awareness of health and safety issues. Pupils are given opportunities to find solutions to issues in class discussions. This is having a positive effect on behaviour in the school. For example, in a lesson with Year 2, pupils showed a good understanding of what a good friend should not do, one pupil stating, "They should not fall out with you." Pupils in Years 5 and 6, provide sensible solutions to a situation where two parents may be arguing. These circle time sessions give pupils opportunities to express their views, and this develops their confidence and sense of responsibility.

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	4
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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