

INSPECTION REPORT

ALL SAINTS VA COFE LOWER SCHOOL

Clifton, Shefford

LEA area: Bedfordshire

Unique reference number: 109616

Headteacher: Mrs Maureen Gravell

Lead inspector: Mr R Heath

Dates of inspection: 21st – 23rd October 2003

Inspection number: 259791

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First school
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	152
School address:	Church Street Clifton Shefford Bedfordshire
Postcode:	SG17 5ES
Telephone number:	(01462) 628 444
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev Kenneth Dixon
Date of previous inspection:	21 st September 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

All Saints VA C of E Lower School is situated in a pleasant rural village a few miles south of Bedford. Most of the housing is owner-occupied. It is a popular choice for parents in the parish and the wider community. There are 123 boys and girls aged five - nine, together with 29 children in the reception class, 18 of whom are aged four and attend part-time. There is very little pupil mobility. For example, during the last school year, four pupils left the school and three arrived other than at the usual times of admission or transfer.

The school is smaller than the average primary school. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average but the number is growing. Almost all pupils are white. At the time of the inspection, no pupils were at an early stage of learning English. About one in five pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs (which is a little below average). This includes eight pupils with specific learning difficulties, each requiring an individual education plan; most of these have learning difficulties, including a few with emotional, behavioural, speech or hearing difficulties. One pupil has a statement of special need. The school is involved in a partnership with a local college in the training of teachers. It has received the award of Investor in People and is part of the Healthy Schools Initiative. Children enter at the age of four with a wide range of attainment that is above average overall.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1262	Mr R Heath	Lead inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology English as an additional language
9942	Mrs S Stevens	Lay inspector	
22790	Mrs J Pinney	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Geography History Physical education
2041	Mrs D V Reid	Team inspector	English Science Art and design Design and technology Music Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very effective school. Standards are high in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. A strong sense of family pervades the very inclusive ethos of the school. Pupils come to school eagerly, get on well with each other and their behaviour is very good. The quality of teaching is such that it leads to very effective learning. The school serves its parish and the wider community extremely well and provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Governors and staff work very well together in focusing their efforts on improving pupils' learning.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher are very good.
- The teaching in Years 3 and 4 is of high quality and leads to high achievement.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning and their personal development are very good. Their relationships with others are excellent.
- Learning support assistants and parents play a key role in pupils' achievements, especially pupils with special educational needs.
- There are not yet enough challenging opportunities for high attaining pupils.
- Assessment information on pupils' progress is not used consistently enough to enable pupils to know how they can improve.

The school has improved significantly since the last inspection in September 1998. High standards in reading have been maintained and writing has improved in that more pupils attain high standards. Pupils make much better progress in mathematics and science and attain high standards. Above all, the quality of teaching has improved; the weaknesses evident in the previous inspection have been eradicated. The overall quality of provision has risen further. Pupils' spiritual development is now very good. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) allows pupils to achieve well; music provision is better but in physical education, the school still lacks sufficient expertise to teach all aspects of this subject competently.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
reading	A	A	A	A
writing	B	A	A	A
mathematics	B	A	A	B

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average.
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals.*

All pupils achieved the basic standard in each of reading, writing and mathematics in the 2002 national tests and many achieved the higher Level 3 (the yardstick for nine-year-olds). The unvalidated results for 2003 are expected to be of similar high standards.

Pupils achieve very well as a consequence of very good teaching, particularly in Years 3 and 4. The standard of attainment relative to what is expected of Year 2 pupils is well above average in the core subjects and in line with what is expected of them in other subjects. Reading is particularly strong. By Year 4, pupils' attainment is well above average in the core subjects and above what is expected of them in history, art and design, design and technology. In the remaining subjects, attainment is in line with what is expected of nine-year-olds. Children get off

to a good start in the Foundation Stage (in this school, children in the reception class); they make good progress and are well on target to reach the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception. They achieve particularly well in literacy and in developing their social skills.

Pupils' personal development is very good. They respond very well to the **very good overall provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**, but there is insufficient appreciation of other cultures. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive and behaviour in classrooms and outdoors is equally very good. Attendance is very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a very good education. Teaching is very good overall. Pupils make good progress and in Years 3 and 4 they make very good progress. They learn effectively because teachers plan interesting activities that generally match pupils' individual needs. Basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT are thoroughly taught throughout the school and this provides a strong platform on which pupils effectively build further learning. Other strong features of provision are the very good care, guidance and support for pupils and the very firm links with parents, the Church and the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are each very good. The headteacher has high aspirations for the school and steers school improvement very clearly. The school's self-evaluation is completed thoroughly and critically. Very good use is made of evaluations arising from the systematic monitoring of standards and teaching. The work of the governing body is very effective in shaping the strategic direction of the school. It is based on a clear understanding of the strengths and of how to improve the weaknesses of the school.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils have high levels of satisfaction with the school. The concerns expressed by a small minority of parents were: that they were not sufficiently well informed of how their child is getting on; the school does not provide appropriate homework; and lack of sufficient provision of competitive sport. Inspection findings, however, do not support these claims.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Increase teachers' competence in physical education so that pupils attain similar standards in other physical activities as they do in dance.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to apply their skills and knowledge creatively, for example, in writing for different purposes, in using and applying mathematics and in the traditionally creative subjects.
- Refine the already good assessment procedures for tracking pupils' progress towards their targets so that they know how they can improve their work.
- Increase the provision of challenging work for very high attaining pupils yet further to ensure that their achievement is consistently high.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils' achievement in Years 1 and 2 is good and in Years 3 and 4, it is very good. Overall, it is very good. Standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are well above average. As a result of good quality guidance from learning support assistants, pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well the goals expected of them in all areas of learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- High standards have been maintained, or improved even more, in the national tests taken in Year 2 during the last few years.
- Pupils make very good progress in Years 3 and 4 and attain high standards in the optional national tests taken in Year 4.
- Reading is a strength of the school.
- Writing has improved in that many more pupils reach high standards.
- The high quality of speaking and listening helps pupils to learn effectively.
- Pupils achieve very well in mathematics and in science.
- Standards in art and design, geography, music and parts of physical education are at the levels expected but could be higher.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	18.0 (17.9)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	16.5 (15.8)	14.4 (14.3)
mathematics	18.0 (18.1)	16.5 (16.2)

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

1. The table above indicates that standards in reading, writing and mathematics are well above the national averages. Each pupil attained at least the basic standard of Level 2 in each of these assessments; in reading and mathematics, half the pupils achieved the higher Level 3 (the standard normally expected of nine-year-olds). The proportions of pupils who achieved Level 3 in each of the three assessments were also well above average. During recent years, high standards have been maintained or raised further. When the school's results are compared with those of similar schools (with similar numbers of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals) they are also well above average in reading and writing, and are above average in mathematics. Girls and boys do equally well except in writing, where girls perform a little better than boys. Unvalidated results for 2003 are equally high and, overall, pupils' average points scores have increased. The optional tests taken in Year 4 indicate very good progress was made during Years 3 and 4.

Inspection findings

2. When children start school in the term following their fourth birthday the skills, knowledge and understanding they bring with them are wide ranging but, overall, are above what is expected at this point in the Foundation Stage. They make good progress in their learning and are firmly on course to attain above the expected goals by the time they leave the

reception class. In personal, social and emotional development and in communication, language and literacy, however, they are on course to attain well above the expected goals. Children achieve as well as they can.

3. As a result of very good provision in English, most pupils achieve very well and attain high standards in reading, writing, speaking and listening measured against what is expected by Year 2 and by Year 4. Pupils are articulate and confidently express ideas. Teachers use discussion as a way of learning very effectively, consequently pupils achieve well the skills of asking clear questions, providing thoughtful answers and expressing their point of view. In doing so, they clarify their own understanding of the subject under discussion. As a result of good planning to provide an extended range of experiences, pupils' writing has improved; more pupils are motivated to try harder and improve their skills. There are no discernible differences in the performance of boys and girls. Reading is strong in the school. Pupils are encouraged to read a range of texts, both for information and pleasure. They are well supported in this by their parents. They are taught effective strategies for improving their reading, such as, using their knowledge of letters and the sounds they make to build the whole word. Pupils use their skills in literacy to good effect in other subjects. Nevertheless, high attaining pupils lack sufficient opportunities to be creative in using their skills and knowledge to write at length in both English lessons and other subjects.
4. The very good provision in mathematics ensures most pupils achieve highly and reach standards well above what is expected of seven and nine year olds. In Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 and 4, pupils practise basic skills thoroughly and improve their swift recall of number facts and their confidence in mental methods of calculation. The grouping arrangements in Years 3 and 4 enable pupils to work at appropriate mathematical tasks that ensure all achieve as well as they can. In particular, the smaller group has more individual support that helps them to learn similar work as their classmates. Higher attaining pupils in the other two groups work at a faster pace and tackle more challenging problems. Pupils increase their confidence and accuracy in solving problems described in everyday contexts, using their skills of calculation and their knowledge of metric measures. They use their knowledge of mathematics confidently in other subjects, such as, measurement and shape in design and technology and graphs in science.
5. The proportion of pupils who attain the standards in science expected of seven and nine year olds is well above average. Many attain the higher levels in both Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 and 4. Pupils enjoy science lessons and tackle practical work with enthusiasm and use resources effectively when finding information. They have an eagerness to learn and achieve highly. The skills of observation, enquiry and prediction, for example, are acquired systematically as they move through school. They learn to collect and explain evidence, and to record their findings in a variety of ways including graphs, tables and text.
6. In ICT, standards are satisfactory and pupils' achievement is good. Well-trained teachers and learning support assistants help pupils to learn the skills of handling the new resources very effectively. Pupils throughout the school show commendable mastery of managing their work on a sophisticated network of computers, using commercial software. Equally, they increasingly use computers to assist their learning in other subjects, for example, pupils with special educational needs build speed and accuracy in number and language skills. Others use a CD-ROM to find information. Such uses, however, are not as yet frequent enough.
7. In other subjects, pupils in Years 1 and 2 generally make satisfactory progress and attain the standards expected of seven-year-olds. In Years 3 and 4, progress is good and most pupils achieve standards above those expected of nine-year-olds. Good teaching enables pupils to gain a broad base of skills and knowledge from a range of art, design and technological activities and from their studies of people and places, past and present.

High attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are generally equally nourished and broadly achieve as well as they can. Nevertheless, those whose attainment is very high lack sufficient opportunities to apply their skills and knowledge creatively in several subjects. In history and geography, for example, they do not write for different purposes or at length sufficiently. Equally, in art and design and in design and technology they do not use their skills in these subjects creatively with sufficient regularity.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance is very good. Pupils come to school promptly with very positive attitudes towards learning and behave very well. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. These features have improved significantly since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils try hard and do their best.
- Encouragement, the quality of interesting activities and teachers' high expectations of pupils' behaviour ensure lessons flow smoothly.
- Pupils develop interest and enjoyment in learning.
- The very few pupils from other cultural backgrounds are successfully included in the life and work of the school.
- The relationships between pupils themselves and with adults are excellent.
- Pupils are free from harassment.
- Pupils' appreciation of the beliefs and traditions of other cultures, although satisfactory, could be better.

Commentary

8. Children in the Foundation Stage are firmly on course to attain the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development by the end of reception. Pupils enjoy their time in school and are enthusiastic about their learning; a view shared by pupils themselves. Their behaviour reflects their consideration for others and a strong awareness of the need to be sensible and kind. Parents confirm that the school effectively helps their children become mature and independent individuals who are keen to attend, persevere with their work, enjoy school and achieve high standards.
9. The school is committed to its policy of including each pupil in what it provides; the quality of the support given to pupils with special educational needs, for example, enables them to take a full part in lessons and achieve well. When working in groups or individually, pupils are increasingly confident, happy and concentrate well on the task in hand. Behaviour during assemblies and at break times is equally very good and contributes to the family ethos that prevails in the school. Pupils' positive attitudes and sensitivity to the needs of others are clearly evident in the 'buddy bench' arrangement whereby pupils provide others with help and support at times of need.
10. In addition to lessons in religious education, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is successfully enriched by the values embedded in the school's ethos and the broad curriculum it provides. For example, the school embraces teaching methods that value pupils' questions and contributions to discussions, helping them to develop respect for others and themselves. Well-planned lessons help pupils to learn successfully and experience spirituality through, for instance, their growing sense of self-esteem. Equally, their very good moral and social development is effectively encouraged by all staff because they set good examples of desirable conduct and courtesy. Pupils are expected to take responsibility and to recognise the consequences for their own and others' actions by, for instance, formulating their own classroom rules. This helps them to distinguish right from wrong. Pupils' cultural development reflects a strong

appreciation of their own cultural heritage but, other than an awareness of other cultural traditions, lacks sufficient in-depth appreciation of living in a multicultural society.

Attendance

11. Pupils come happily to school: they arrive punctually and their attendance is very good. A few parents book holidays in term time despite the school's best efforts to discourage them.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.1%	School data	0.0%
National data	5.4%	National data	0.5%

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

Exclusions

There were no exclusions.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides an education of very good quality overall. The teaching and learning are very good overall and consequently pupils achieve very well. The curriculum is well designed in the core subjects to include the learning needs of all pupils but occasionally, in other subjects, lacks sufficient provision for all their needs. The care and support for pupils' well-being and learning are very good. The school enjoys, and pupils benefit from, a very good partnership with parents, the Church and the community. Within the above aspects of provision, there are a few relatively minor, but important, areas for improvement that are detailed in the following sections.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall, a view shared by parents and pupils. The best teaching occurs in Year 4. In addition to the lessons observed, detailed in the table below, the extensive samples of pupils' work indicate that they make very good progress, especially in the core subjects. Pupils attain high standards in Year 2 and Year 4 and, by the time they leave the school, their achievement is also high. Additionally, their behaviour and attitudes are very good. Collectively, these factors point to very effective teaching. The assessment of pupils' work is good. Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching has considerably improved from the previous inspection.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour.
- Teachers' encouragement and motivation of pupils ensure they learn effectively.
- Learning support assistants and parent helpers increase pupils' learning very effectively.
- Teachers' knowledge of the subjects they teach enables them to ask penetrating questions and help pupils learn through discussion.
- Planning of lessons is effective, although it does not always include sufficient challenges for the highest attaining pupils (see paragraph 13).
- Teachers' assessment of pupils' work does not sufficiently help them to know how they can improve.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 36 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (3%)	11 (31%)	19 (53%)	5 (14%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

12. Teachers tackle the school's priorities very effectively. For example, the quality of pupils' writing has improved considerably. Pupils work productively on well-planned tasks set for them and learn very securely the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT. Work is thoughtfully planned for lower attaining pupils and for those with special educational needs. The needs of those whose attainment is average or above, however, (the majority of pupils) could be met more effectively, and allow them to achieve even higher standards, by planning for three further groups: the average, the above average and the high attainers. Such planning is already evident in Year 4 lessons.
13. A strong emphasis on subject-specific vocabulary ensures all pupils, including those with special educational needs, understand essential ideas and information. During literacy and numeracy lessons, for example, pupils are frequently asked to explain their ideas and thinking that helps them gain both confidence and increased understanding. Equally, pupils are challenged during science lessons, for example, by such questions as: "Who can predict what happens next?" and "Why do you think that?" Discussion as a way of learning is generally used to very good effect across the school, especially in Year 4. On a few occasions, however, teachers' questions are a little too prescriptive and almost provide the answer before the question is asked, thereby limiting pupils' opportunities to think things out for themselves.
14. Problem solving, enquiry and investigation as methods of learning are taught well over time, especially in science, design and technology and mathematics. For example, during a science lesson for pupils in Year 4, following a thorough review of earlier work, pupils used a wide range of resources, including a CD-ROM, to find information on teeth and eating. Pupils with special educational needs successfully worked with a well-briefed learning support assistant and a parent helper to learn the names of types of teeth and their purpose. High attaining pupils excitedly extended their enquiries into the design and function of teeth in animals and fish, noting carefully the similarities and differences compared with human teeth. In several subjects, however, such opportunities do not arise with sufficient frequency for the most capable pupils to extend their skills in research and writing, nor to be challenged by suitable problems.
15. Praise, encouragement and humour are used effectively to sustain pupils' involvement in lessons. Time is used very well. Lessons are conducted at a good pace, with variations to suit circumstances. The best teaching never lost an opportunity to reinforce pupils' understanding. For instance, on dismissing a class to allow them to go for lunch, their teacher reminded them of the conduct she expected by asking for adverbs that would describe their movement to the dining area. Resources, including ICT, are used well to help pupils work both independently and collaboratively.
16. Teachers assess pupils' work thoroughly and track their progress systematically. Marking is a little variable but much is done carefully. Other than in Year 4, however, it is not followed through sufficiently with pupils to help them know how they can improve. Pupils' answers in the statutory tests in Year 2, and in the optional tests taken in Years 3 and 4, are thoroughly analysed for common errors. Relevant information from these analyses is used effectively in teachers' lesson planning. Homework is set with

reasonable frequency. It largely draws parents into pupils' learning by encouraging them to help their children read and write and to consolidate aspects of numeracy.

The curriculum

The school provides its pupils with a good range of learning opportunities generally well matched to their needs. The provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. Accommodation and resources for learning are very good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The strong emphasis placed on pupils' learning of basic skills.
- The level of provision and expertise of learning support assistants is effective in helping pupils' learning.
- The emphasis placed on meaningful links between subjects, such as writing for different purposes, makes learning more relevant.
- Good use is made of visits to places of interest to enhance learning.
- The provision for pupils of very high ability is insufficient.
- The opportunities for pupils to develop their creative talents are too limited.
- There is a lack of good quality provision of all aspects of physical education.

Commentary

17. Pupils in Years 1 to 4 and children in the Foundation Stage receive a good education because their teachers plan carefully to meet their needs. Pupils enjoy their lessons. Thorough planning by teachers and learning support assistants ensures that pupils with special educational needs are taught similar skills and knowledge to those of their classmates and matched to their Individual Education Plans. Such planning is particularly effective in the teaching of basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT. Equally, teachers plan appropriate and purposeful links between subjects, for example, in a science lesson for pupils in Year 4, as much emphasis was placed on how to organise and write factual information as on learning the science content of the lesson.
18. Extra-curricular activities include several sports and French. The use of visits to places of interest, such as Whipsnade Zoo and Wendover Woods Country Park, makes learning practical and purposeful, and provides opportunities for pupils of high capability to write at length. In contrast, completion of worksheets in history, for instance, checks pupils' basic factual knowledge but denies bright pupils the opportunity to use their writing skills creatively and achieve higher standards. Equally, in art and design, pupils learn a good range of skills and techniques but do not go on to use them creatively as often as they could.
19. The school makes good use of research into pupils' learning. In particular, its involvement and commitment to the Early Reading Research programme is paying dividends in helping children to read, beginning in the Foundation Stage. This programme has significantly helped to make reading a strength of the school. Thorough analysis of how well individual pupils achieve in English and mathematics led to modifications to their programmes of study. For example, such analyses identified weaknesses in writing and these have been tackled successfully. Similarly, gaps in pupils' knowledge of shapes in two and three dimensions, for instance, are being plugged. The successful development of pupils' positive attitudes and social skills reflects teachers' confidence in teaching personal, social and health education. As a small school, the leadership of subjects is inevitably a large load. Nevertheless, the only significant gap in this aspect is the lack of subject knowledge of how to teach well the many facets of physical education. The school's best efforts to receive such training have been thwarted by circumstances not of its making. The school makes a strong attempt to include the needs of all its pupils in its programmes of learning. Curricular provision has improved considerably since the previous inspection.

20. Accommodation is of very good quality and provides several spaces for specific purposes, such as a new computer suite and a small music room. A spacious thoroughfare provides an adequate library. Extensive grounds have several areas of interest and good opportunities for learning. The good range of resources is used very well to support pupils' learning. ICT resources are very good. Levels of staffing are good and staff are deployed effectively.

Care, guidance and support

The school has very effective procedures and practices to safeguard the safety and welfare of pupils. Staff know pupils very well and, because of the excellent relationships in the school, pupils have access to very good personal support and guidance. The involvement of pupils in the decision-making process in the school, both formally and informally, is very good and has a positive impact on the quality of school life; a view shared by pupils themselves.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The personal support and guidance provided by all members of staff are of very good quality.
- The school council, formed in September 2003, meets regularly and all children have the opportunity to make their views known.
- Child protection procedures are very good and well-trained members of staff supervise children carefully at break times.
- The excellent relationships between pupils and staff ensure the confidence of both pupils and parents in the effective and fair handling of any problems or concerns that may arise.
- The educational support and guidance provided by the school help pupils feel secure, encourages them to do their best and, consequently, they achieve high standards.
- Procedures for tracking pupils' progress are good.

Commentary

21. The induction of children into the Foundation Stage is thoughtfully and thoroughly arranged and ensures that both parents and children feel happy about coming to school. The transition to middle school at the end of Year 4 is done equally thoroughly. For instance, bridges are made by pupils starting mathematical investigations in July, to be completed in Year 5 the following September.
22. Daily routines such as entering school at the start of day and at break times, moving in and out of whole school assemblies and dining arrangements are thoughtfully supervised and both pupils and children in the Foundation Stage comply with them. Thorough assessment procedures track pupils' progress carefully and teachers know well their pupils' personal development. Consequently, pupils have high self-esteem, very positive attitudes to learning and a willingness to take part in the life of the school. They are extremely proud of their achievements. Parents appreciate the care and guidance the school provides for their children. The school has a good, clear policy to promote racial equality. The overall quality of care provided for pupils has improved since the last inspection.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has very effective and genuine links with parents. The success of this strong partnership with parents has a major impact on the work of the school and the pupils' enjoyment of school life. The school also enjoys very good links with the Church and the local community, including the regular volunteers who work with pupils, the elderly and the farming community of the area. Very positive links with the local middle school ensure effective transition.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have very positive views of the work of the school and of the accessibility of staff.
- The high number of parent volunteers and members of the community are well briefed and very committed to the school, consequently they significantly enrich pupils' learning.
- Parents bring their children to school regularly and on time; the majority help and encourage them with their homework.
- Parents appreciate that all staff attend carefully to the hygiene and safety of pupils in the school.
- The quality of the information to parents is high, including annual written reports and the prospectus.

Commentary

23. The links with parents and the wider community, including the Church, are a strength of the school. The quality of these aspects has improved since the last inspection. They contribute effectively to the sense of family in the ethos of the school and to the achievements of pupils. Parents have ready access to class teachers and the headteacher and issues are normally resolved informally. Parents' readiness to help in lessons and with visits to places of interest supports pupils' learning very effectively. For example, during a design and technology lesson for pupils in Year 4, a group of parents successfully supervised the safety aspects of the practical activity and supported pupils' learning. Equally, a local farmer contributes regularly to lessons in geography, discussing with pupils life on the farm and its contribution to the production of food. The school has satisfactory arrangements for gathering parents' and pupils' views that are fed into the school improvement planning process. The responses to the parents' questionnaire and of those who attended the meeting with inspectors, indicate parents' high level of satisfaction with the school. Concerns expressed by a small minority indicated they were not sufficiently well informed how their child is getting on, that the school does not provide appropriate homework, and there is insufficient provision for competitive sport. Inspection findings, however, do not support these claims.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are very good overall. Leadership, management and governance are each very effective. The school deserves the high regard in which it is held by the community and beyond. These findings mark significant improvements on the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the headteacher is dedicated to ensuring the highest possible standards in teaching and learning – all adults work as a team towards this goal.
- Detailed analysis of trends and weaknesses in achievements leads to very effective action.
- Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are very effective.
- The governing body is both supportive and challenging, contributing fully to school self-evaluation and to planning for improvement.
- Self-evaluation is reflective, honest, accurate and embedded in practice.
- Performance management procedures are resulting in higher standards.
- The role of subject co-ordinators lacks sufficient clarity.
- The school improvement plan, whilst effective in planning for improvement, lacks sufficient clarity in the success criteria within a few of its objectives.

Commentary

24. The leadership of the headteacher provides the drive and direction for the school very effectively. As a result, the ethos of the school is one of a shared vision built on teamwork. The deputy headteacher has a key role in leading the curriculum for Years 1 and 2 and is a good support to the headteacher in the overall leadership and management of the school. Learning support assistants are a strong feature of the teamwork. Development planning reflects a strong commitment to improvement for pupils of all abilities and ensures equality of opportunity. The priorities are clear because planning is based on thorough and confident evaluation of what needs to be done and on having the necessary income. Key objectives generally have clear intended outcomes, but a few lack sufficient specification of the benefit to pupils' learning in order to indicate clearly how success will be measured and evaluated. Although subject leadership is good overall, and is very good in English, mathematics and ICT, the current job descriptions for co-ordinators are unhelpful because they are not clear enough about the specific expectations of the role. This is particularly important when most staff have multiple responsibilities and some are new to the role.
25. All aspects of management and organisation are strong. The headteacher is confident, well informed and ambitious for the school. The best use of the available resources and advice is made to continually strive to ensure that pupils and children receive the quality of education outlined in the school aims. Self-evaluation carefully analyses strengths and weaknesses and this leads to very effective action for improvements in teaching, learning and standards. High aspirations are apparent. For example, the intention to raise standards in writing, which were already above the national average, were well conceived and they succeeded - standards are now well above the average. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because provision for them is well managed. Performance management is systematic and outcomes benefit both the individual and the school. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in the core subjects are very good because they lead to improvement, for example, in ICT, teachers and learning support assistants have regular and appropriate training to help them improve pupils' learning. Administrative support staff are efficient in assisting the headteacher in the daily management of the school and provide a very friendly welcome to pupils, parents and visitors.
26. The governing body makes a major contribution to the successes of the school. Governors take their work seriously, work corporately, find it rewarding and have a clear voice, used productively on behalf of the school. They provide support for hard decisions, such as class size and organisation, and they effectively debate issues relating to improvement, for example, in physical education and sport. Statutory duties are addressed assiduously and such requirements are all in place, monitored and reviewed carefully through a clear committee structure. Each subject, and broader whole-school aspects, such as special educational needs and staff morale, are linked to an interested governor. This enables each governor to share a very clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and to take appropriate action for improvement.

Financial information

27. Finances are thoroughly managed and controlled and are used very efficiently and effectively for the benefit of pupils. Governors and key staff are very well informed on matters of income and expenditure aligned to the school's priorities for improvement. In the table below, the large balance from the previous year arose from careful management of the budget to provide an ICT suite to support pupils' learning. Governors understand the elements of best value and give thoughtful consideration to them. They compare standards and costs of services, for instance, and consult with pupils and parents. They challenge themselves to improve on standards and the cost-effectiveness of services. In this way two providers were changed recently, and standards continue to rise. The school

serves its parish and wider community very effectively and provides very good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	463,376
Total expenditure	451,871
Expenditure per pupil	2,416

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	43,989
Balance carried forward to the next	11,505

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The overall provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good and has been maintained since the previous inspection. The leadership and management of this area of the school are good. Balanced learning opportunities are provided for children, firmly based on the recommended areas of learning. Assessments are used satisfactorily to track children's academic and social competences, although they are not always used effectively to plan activities that are suitable to children's individual needs. The staff in this unit form a very effective team and work with strong commitment and expertise to ensure that children have a good start to their school life and are very well prepared for the next stage in their learning. At the time of the inspection, 18 children were attending school part-time and 11 were full time. Children attend full time from the September following their fourth birthday. The Foundation Stage unit accommodates a mixed age class.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's attitudes and behaviour are very good.
- They have good relationships both with adults and other children.
- The very good quality of teaching and learning enables children to achieve very well.
- Children are on course to exceed the expected goals for learning by the end of the reception year.

Commentary

28. Children settle very well into school life. They learn how to behave in school and be part of a social group. They readily join in with class and school routines, taking a full part in, for example, school assemblies. The children are eager to explore new learning, happy to make their own choice of activity and concentrate well on work being undertaken. They have a well developed sense of right from wrong and their behaviour is consistently very good.
29. The children work well with other children, take turns and share fairly. They move confidently around the classroom and the school. They ask for assistance when required. Their attitudes to school, to other children, to their teacher and the nursery nurse, and to their whole environment are most positive.
30. Teaching is very good. Staff know the children well and respond very appropriately to their individual personal and social needs. The children are continually encouraged to be involved in a range of activities and, where necessary, are reminded about such things as sharing and taking turns. The teacher and nursery nurse work together very well as a team, acting as very good role models and establishing high standards in behaviour and social skills. Children are helped to make very good progress.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children attain high standards in the skills of speaking and listening, reading and writing.
- The high quality of teaching and learning enables them to achieve very well.

Commentary

31. Children are on course to be well above the early learning goals by the time they leave reception. They pay close attention to their teacher, listening with interest and concentration to stories, discussions and instructions. Speaking skills are well developed and the majority are keen to answer questions and offer opinions.
32. Children show a keen interest in books and they handle them with care. Most children have embarked on the school reading scheme and the majority can recognise a range of simple words. At this early stage of the school year, more capable children are beginning to use their knowledge of letter sounds to read unfamiliar words.
33. Teaching is very good overall. Many opportunities are provided for children to develop their speaking and listening skills, both in front of the class and in role play. Parents and helpers are used most effectively to help children with their reading and this provides a valuable contribution to their learning. The recent introduction of the Early Reading Research programme to support the development of reading skills is enjoyed by the children and is having a very positive impact on their progress.
34. Children are given good opportunities to develop their writing skills, such as, recording what they have brought for the autumn display. Almost all write their names independently and the majority are beginning to write simple words on their own. More capable children write simple sentences and have already attained the early learning goals (normally achieved by the end of reception) at this early stage in the school year.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have a good basic knowledge of number.
- They use mathematical language accurately.
- The good quality of teaching and learning enables children to achieve well.
- Teachers and children make good use of resources.
- Assessment is not always used well to plan activities that are suited to different individual needs of older children.

Commentary

35. Children are on course to reach above the early learning goals when they leave the reception. Most children successfully count forwards and backwards from ten, and many extend their counting further. The majority clearly understand the concept of 'how many' and count an appropriate number of objects with confidence. Higher attaining children have already started simple addition and readily 'add one more'. As they use counters correctly to measure pictures of different sized giraffes and crocodiles, for example,

children confidently demonstrate their understanding of mathematical vocabulary such as tall, long and short, before they successfully sequence them in order of size.

36. Teaching is good overall. Many opportunities are provided for children to count, often within practical activities. Children are encouraged to apply their mathematical knowledge to practical problems when, for example, they count the number of school lunches, or estimate the number of conkers in a jar. A good provision of resources, such as water, sand, number games and number lines, helps children to develop their mathematical language and understanding. For the most part, activities are suitably challenging and children are well motivated by the interesting activities. Although progress is good overall, it is occasionally limited when assessments are not used sufficiently to plan for the development of specific skills closely focused to individual needs, particularly the older children.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good quality of teaching ensures children learn well.
- Children are confident in producing work on a computer.
- Assessment information is not always used effectively to plan activities that are suited to individual needs.
- The range of multicultural resources is limited.

Commentary

37. Children are on course to be above the early learning goals by the end of reception. As they go through the reception year, they learn to recognise and label the external features of the human body, such as, hand, foot and elbow. They become aware of the various human senses, for example, they identify sounds they hear around the school. They begin to compare the difference between past and present as they consider their seaside holidays with those long ago.
38. All children have good opportunities to use computers and older children demonstrate accurate control of the mouse to draw, for instance, three different sized owls. With help, they use the equipment to print their pictures. Children demonstrate growing familiarity with the keyboard as they confidently write their names.
39. Teaching is good in this area of learning. As a result, children achieve well. They are provided with a wide range of experiences such as looking at pictures and photographs, being taken on trips, using the computer and undertaking practical activities. The nursery nurse provides most effective help to children in many of these activities. As with mathematics, although progress is good overall, it is sometimes limited when assessment information is not used rigorously to plan activities specifically focused on individual needs. Good opportunities are provided to teach children about multicultural festivals but resources for this are limited.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have good skills in using and handling large and small items of classroom equipment.

- They have confidence, co-ordination and control when moving in a dance lesson in the hall.
- Teaching is of good quality and enables children achieve well.
- Good use of resources by teachers enables children to learn effectively.

Commentary

40. Children are on course to be above the early learning goals by the end of reception. Their dexterity in handling large and small items in the classroom is developing well in working with, for instance, construction kits, tools and materials. Malleable materials, such as playdough, are used successfully when making cakes and sweets. They use construction toys with confidence, producing a range of houses and vehicles.
41. Children have suitable opportunities to use balls, climbing apparatus and wheeled vehicles in the outside area that help them learn effectively. In a dance lesson, they developed well their skills of body control as they moved in different ways around the hall, running, jumping skipping and stamping, moving high and low, taking large and small steps in response to the changing music.
42. Teaching is consistently good, and both the teacher and nursery nurse join in with the children and demonstrate how to carry out different activities and develop various skills. This helps all children to achieve well. Resources are used effectively to motivate children and stimulate their imagination when, for example, they each excitedly chose an animal costume to wear during the climax of their dance lesson. A wide variety of practical activities is provided and children are encouraged to keep busy throughout the day. Adults continually emphasise the need for children to carry out activities safely.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children produce a good variety of pictures and collages.
- They readily engage in imaginative role-play.
- Children are confident when taking part in musical activities.
- Teaching of good quality enables children to learn effectively.
- Occasionally, children are denied the opportunity to select their own choice of tools and materials.

Commentary

43. Children are on course to exceed the early learning goals by the end of reception. They confidently use a variety of paints and crayons to produce pictures, both from direct observation as well as from their imagination. For example, they successfully mix their own colours before using them to print patterns of autumn leaves. They also show some confidence in making three-dimensional items when, for instance, they effectively produce collages using material, feathers and glitter.
44. Children readily take part in role-play activities. They take on different family characters in the home corner with equal enthusiasm. Children confidently sing songs and rhymes and perform an appropriate range of actions to their songs. They successfully use untuned percussion instruments to accompany singing by the rest of the class. They listen carefully to a range of pre-recorded music.
45. Teaching is good. Through careful planning the teacher ensures that all children, both part-time and full-time, have opportunities to take part in all activities. Other adults also encourage children to develop their independence by arranging sessions where they are

allowed to move from one activity to another, when they are ready. They also make sure that children experience all the activities and that help is available when needed. Sometimes, however, adults intervene too early and activities become too closely structured. This limits progress by denying children the opportunity to use their imagination and to develop their independence by making their own choice of tools and materials.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The links that teachers make between speaking, listening, reading and writing help pupils to learn effectively.
- Very good teaching and the clear leadership of the subject enable pupils to attain high standards.
- Standards are well above average and pupils achieve very well by Year 4.
- Pupils use their literacy skills in other subjects very well.
- The quality of marking is not sufficiently consistent for pupils to be clear how to improve the standard of their work.
- Higher attaining pupils do not have enough opportunities to write creatively.

Commentary

46. Language has a high profile in the school. Teaching is consistently very good and so effectively promotes very good learning. As a result, pupils' attainment in Year 2 and Year 4 is well above what can be expected in reading, writing, speaking and listening. Around a third of the eight-year-olds in Year 4 are already meeting the expectations for 11-year-olds. The attention given to improving writing is clearly succeeding and there is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. This is because of very high expectations and well planned work that effectively uses assessment information to build on what pupils know and thereby make appropriate demands of pupils of all abilities. Consequently, pupils' achievement is good in Year 2 and high in Year 4.
47. Teachers work very hard and enthusiastically on behalf of their pupils. In turn, pupils are expected to work hard too, and they do. The response by most pupils are high levels of interest and involvement in lessons. Praise, encouragement and humour are used effectively to maintain pupils' involvement in learning. As a result, they develop confidence in, and a love of, language through their very positive attitudes.

Speaking and Listening

48. Standards in speaking and listening are well above average across the school. Pupils are confident, articulate and express ideas well. For example, the School Council was ably chaired by a nine-year-old during a very mature debate by pupils from the age of five, as they argued the case for obtaining signs for the new 'Buddy Bench'. These standards are attained because a large and successful part of the teaching is through discussion and debate, including 'Circle Time'. Teachers' very good questioning effectively develops pupils' speaking skills by probing their learning. This enables eight-year-olds to ask telling questions of teachers and each other. For example, while working with 'writing partners' in Year 4, pupils by their questioning made their own decisions as to *how* to work with their partners. In classes, groups and assemblies pupils listen attentively and as a result they are eager to respond with relevant comments and to offer their ideas. Pupils make

very good progress in acquiring vocabulary and in their powers of self-expression as they progress through the school.

Reading

49. Standards are well above average in reading. This enables pupils to read different texts purposefully, sometimes for information and sometimes to check their own writing for improvements that will make it interesting to the reader by, for example, the inclusion of similes, adverbs, adjectives or speech. Pupils are taught well the strategies for effective reading. For instance, all pupils use their knowledge of letters and the sounds they make, to build the whole word. Those with special educational needs receive very good, well-focused, encouraging support. Higher attaining pupils successfully use the sense of the surrounding text to help them read unfamiliar words. They are fluent and read expressively, with a very good understanding of what they read.

Writing

50. Standards of pupils' writing are well above average. They write for a good range of purposes, including poetry. The teaching of knowledge and skills to enable pupils to become very effective writers is very good. They have all they need to become authors and, by Year 4, they write exceptionally well for their age. Because higher attaining pupils have a very firm grasp of the basic skills, including mature self-assessment about details that make writing interesting to the reader, they deserve more opportunities to be creative – to *use* their knowledge and skills to write at length. In Year 2, most pupils express their ideas clearly in well-structured sentences; they have a firm grasp of grammar and how to structure and organise their work. Handwriting develops extremely well from an early age. By Year 2, most pupils are joining their writing and by Year 4 they are developing their own style. Pupils take great pride in presenting their work to a high standard in all subjects. Punctuation and spelling are generally very good, particularly in Year 4.
51. English is very well managed and reflects the co-ordinator's clear understanding of the national strategy. Because of very good subject knowledge, the quality of marking is often good, but not always consistent, in telling pupils what they have done well and where they can improve. Useful steps towards improvement are inside each pupil's book, but these lack help as to *how* to use them. Recently, Year 4 pupils have begun to mark their own work, before their teacher, using marking grids. This is working very well indeed. Pupils are developing their skills rapidly in ICT, but not yet using them sufficiently to enhance and extend their learning in English. The school has made good progress since the previous inspection when speaking, listening and writing were judged to be in need of improvement.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

52. Teachers provide very good role models in their own use of language with pupils. Discussion as a way of learning is used to good effect, particularly with the oldest pupils. There are some very good links across the curriculum, for example, in science, where pupils learn ways of presenting factual information, and in music, where they look carefully at the characters in Tchaikovsky's 'Nutcracker Suite'. For younger pupils, work in history does not effectively use pupils' extensive writing skills; too often the work is reduced to completing worksheets. Technical language in each subject is always explained carefully, ensuring that all pupils understand.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Much high quality teaching, especially in Years 3 and 4, ensures pupils achieve very well.
- Standards are high by the end of Year 2 and Year 4.
- The subject is very well led and managed.
- High attaining pupils do not have enough opportunities to use and apply their mathematics to allow them to achieve their best standards.

Commentary

53. In Year 1, pupils get off to a good start in learning to handle appropriate numbers with confidence. At this early stage in the year, for instance, they readily count in tens to 100, and back again. As a result of effective teaching, pupils make good progress throughout Years 1 and 2 so that by the end of Year 2, all pupils generally attain at least the basic standard expected of seven-year-olds and about half of them attain significantly above it. For example, most of them have a good understanding of numbers to 100 and higher, and use the 100-square to help them mentally add or subtract numbers accurately. Most pupils confidently use their knowledge of numbers to solve appropriate problems in everyday contexts requiring two stages of calculation, for instance, finding the change from 50p when buying two articles. Equally, most pupils rise to the challenge of simple puzzles, such as, finding the fewest coins to make 50p, or, more difficult, finding the number of different ways to make 50p. Such problems help pupils to think mathematically but the most capable pupils do not do this kind of work sufficiently often. Nevertheless, pupils in Year 2 achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs are supported very well by both their teachers and learning support assistants. They work at similar tasks to their classmates and, with support, learn the basic skills effectively and achieve their best.
54. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 make very good progress and reach well above the expected standards. This is illustrated well by the outcomes of optional national tests taken by pupils in Year 4 during the summer term 2003 when nearly two thirds of the class achieved Level 4, the basic standard expected by Year 6. Thorough lesson planning with effective application of the teaching methods prescribed by the National Numeracy Strategy enable pupils to acquire confidence and accuracy in relevant arithmetical processes, geometry and data handling. Above all, by Year 4, pupils of high ability learn to think mathematically by extending the work being done by their classmates. For example, such pupils extended the basic ideas of perimeter of two-dimensional shapes to find the number of rectangles having a perimeter of 36cm. Their solutions revealed impressive systematic ways of recording by recognising patterns. One girl creatively extended her solution by using fractions. More of this kind of work could make their achievement very high indeed.
55. Pupils use mathematical resources to help them learn very well. For example, a group of lower attaining pupils from Years 3 and 4 used solid shapes, construction kits and ICT to help them understand the basic properties of common three-dimensional shapes, and to visualise them from diagrams. They acquired a clear insight how, for instance, a pyramid is represented in a diagram by matching the faces and corners of the solid to the diagram. Their learning was enjoyable and productive. In the ways referred to above, pupils of high ability and those who have learning difficulties achieve as well as they can.
56. Teaching is very good overall. It is good in Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 and 4. High expectations of what pupils can do, very good support for pupils with special educational needs and a secure knowledge of the numeracy strategy enable teachers to help pupils learn basic skills effectively. Introductory activities successfully include those designed to improve pupils' confident recall of number facts and increase their strategies

for mental calculation. This provides pupils with a solid platform of skills on which to build their knowledge and understanding of mathematics and attain high standards.

57. Leadership and management of the subject is very good. Teaching and the standard of pupils' attainments are thoroughly assessed and evaluated. This process reveals valuable areas for improvement in, for example, identifying pupils' difficulties in understanding diagrams of three-dimensional shapes. This led to a re-appraisal of methods of teaching geometry. Standards have improved significantly since the previous inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

58. Pupils use their mathematics well in other subjects, especially in science and in design and technology where measurements and representation of data are frequently needed.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above what is expected by Year 2 and Year 4.
- Effective teaching enables pupils to achieve well by Year 2 and very well by Year 4.
- Pupils learn to be scientists.

Commentary

59. In the National Curriculum assessments in 2002, all pupils achieved at least the yardstick of Level 2 and the proportion achieving the higher Level 3 was very high. Only two lessons were seen during the inspection (one in each of Year 2 and Year 4) but these, together with evidence from extensive samples of pupils' work from the whole of last year, discussions with pupils and scrutiny of teachers' planning, indicate that pupils in Years 1 to 4 make good and often very good progress through their programmes of study in the three main branches of science. Most importantly, they learn how to enquire, plan, ask scientific questions, predict, make careful observations and collect and explain their evidence clearly. These factors enable pupils to do their best and attain high standards.
60. Pupils in Year 2 begin to understand the notion of a fair test and to link cause to effect. They explain well, for instance, how the length of the shadow of a stick changes because of the sun's movement. Equally, they analyse successfully why a simple electrical circuit does not work and, using a bulb and battery, demonstrate how to make it work. By working with a variety of materials, they effectively learn to make predictions about the effect of heat on given items and to understand the notion of 'irreversible change'. For example, they used scientific words well during the lesson in which they observed an egg and a slice of bread change into scrambled egg on toast.
61. In Year 4, pupils build on their scientific learning very systematically. For example, they learn to classify materials according to the degree to which the materials allow light through them, learning the meaning of transparent, translucent and opaque. They provide good answers to questions, such as, 'What will change and why?' When mixing solids with water, explaining that 'dissolve' means "while the tiny particles are spread out in the water, this is called suspension – like flour." Pupils of high capability attain high standards. During the lesson observed, one such group extended their research into 'teeth and eating' by comparing the teeth of fish and animals with those of humans, noting similarities and differences and offering good reasons for their answers. In this lesson, pupils used a computer to find useful information from a CD-ROM.

62. Very good subject knowledge, planning of good quality and high expectations of what pupils can do, combine strongly to enable teachers to pose challenging questions and engage pupils in the learning. Resources are used very well and learning support assistants are well-briefed to enable them to work purposefully with pupils, particularly those with special educational needs. Leadership of the subject is on a firm footing and has recently been taken on by another teacher. The quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils have improved significantly since the previous inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff training, recent acquisition of very good resources and very enthusiastic and effective leadership and management, have put the subject on a strong platform for further improvement.
- Pupils make very good progress in learning to use the new networked computers, working with commercial-standard software.
- The level of subject knowledge being acquired by both teachers and learning support assistants enables them to teach effectively.
- The use of ICT to enhance learning in other subjects is developing well but at this stage is less than is normally seen with pupils of this age range.

Commentary

63. Teachers' planning, samples of pupils' work and discussions with them about their current work, together with the lessons observed, indicate that by Year 2 and Year 4 pupils have experienced, and many attain, what is expected of seven and nine-year-olds. Prior to the arrival of the new resources, pupils had insufficient opportunities to learn the subject effectively. Progress this year has been good and pupils achieve well in relation to their previous standards. Higher attainers in Year 4 achieve above average standards in, for instance, organising and presenting a story in their own words based upon one they know well. They confidently use several features of the tool bar such as *bold* and changes in *font* to good effect. They are not fazed by the technology and respond enthusiastically to their teacher's request to concentrate on improving their writing skills as well as those of ICT.
64. From an early age, pupils learn to handle a sophisticated operating system and careful demonstrations by teachers, using a Smartboard, enable pupils to learn how to log on and select what they need from screen icons. They skilfully retrieve a saved file, edit and enter further text, and save their corrected file in their own folder. As the need arises, teachers add to pupils' skills, for instance, pupils in Year 3 quickly learned how to include common punctuation marks. A few pupils discovered these for themselves. Teachers, with well-trained learning support assistants, provide a good balance of whole class discussion and demonstration, direct teaching and support to pupils when working in pairs. By these means, they help pupils with special educational needs to master the basic skills of operating a computer and performing appropriate tasks, and skilfully prompt higher attaining pupils to improve their work.
65. Samples of pupils' work indicate that they have successfully used simple data handling packages, controlled events by a sequence of instructions using a programmable toy and used a database, such as a CD-ROM to find information.
66. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 to 4 are good. The clear strengths in the teaching are: teachers' high expectations of what pupils can do and how they will behave in the computer suite; encouragement and challenge; ensuring all pupils are engaged in

the learning; effective use of the resources; and, effective teamwork between teachers and learning support assistants. Consequently pupils firmly acquire the skills, knowledge and understanding expected of them.

67. The management of the subject is very good and it is enthusiastically and competently led. A file of examples of pupils' work provides good guidance to staff on the quality of work expected at different levels prescribed in the national guidance on curriculum planning. Teachers assess pupils' acquisition of skills effectively. A system of pupils' self-assessment is being developed. Pupils' achievement, the quality of teaching and the provision of resources have improved considerably since the previous inspection.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

68. During the inspection, several uses of ICT were seen other than the direct teaching in ICT lessons. Samples and displays of pupils' recent work indicate, for instance, good use of CD-ROM to extract information and such use was also observed in a Year 4 science lesson. Pupils with special educational needs effectively use programs that help them to consolidate number and language skills. Such a group of pupils from Years 3 and 4 enthusiastically used ICT to help them understand basic mathematical properties of shapes. The improved access to computers could now enable ICT to be a regular and consistent feature of learning in other subjects, especially in writing.

HUMANITIES

Only one lesson was seen in **geography** during the inspection, so no overall judgement on provision or teaching can be made. Evidence from samples of pupils' work and teachers' planning, however, indicate that standards by Year 2 and Year 4 are similar to those expected nationally and have been maintained since the previous inspection. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. By the end of Year 2 and Year 4, pupils make sound progress and all areas of the programmes of study are covered in depth. They use their writing and mathematical skills effectively to write and explain their findings clearly, for example, when writing up notes made from watching a video on the importance of the rainforests. They use their computer skills well to present work clearly and succinctly. Pupils improve their ability to use maps steadily throughout the school. By Year 4, pupils successfully compare different maps to find the best place for a settlement. They learn to compare different parts of the country and different countries of the world with increasing detail and understanding and to present their findings in a variety of ways, for example, using graphs to compare the rainfall and temperature of Bangalore with London.

Teachers know their pupils well and have a satisfactory overall view of their attainment. The samples of pupils' work, however, indicate that too often the same tasks are set for all pupils. This, on occasion, causes higher attaining pupils not to achieve as well as they could.

Pupils have very good attitudes and are enthusiastic about the subject. In the lesson seen, pupils listened very carefully to a visiting farmer, asking well considered questions as he talked about the farming year. The co-ordinator has been in role too short a time to have had an impact on standards. Assessment procedures are not yet used effectively to plan for the progressive development of skills of individual pupils.

History

The provision for history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils attain standards above those expected by Year 4.
- Pupils in Year 4 are developing good skills in historical enquiry.
- The quality of teaching is good in Years 3 and 4.

- Pupils are very interested in the subject.
- There is an over-reliance on the use of worksheets in Years 1 and 2.
- Assessment procedures are not used effectively to plan work for individual needs.

Commentary

69. Standards are in line with those expected at Year 2 and above those expected at Year 4. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The achievement of pupils is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 and 4. By the end of Year 2, pupils' knowledge and understanding of history are developing satisfactorily and they have a sound understanding of chronology. They begin to understand the difference between then and now and make comparisons across time periods, such as, comparing their own homes with those long ago. They demonstrate good knowledge of famous people in the past, including Florence Nightingale and Samuel Pepys. In discussion, they accurately describe the events leading to the Great Fire of London and the changes that took place as a result.
70. By Year 4, pupils have a good knowledge of life in the past and of the influence of famous people. They have also developed good skills of historical enquiry. They interrogate documents such as maps, paintings and artefacts and they research information using videos and CD-ROM. In discussion they demonstrate good recall of the main events and characters in the periods they have studied. For example, they detail the differences between the living conditions of the Celts and the Romans and when talking about the Tudor period they explain articulately why Henry VIII needed to divorce his first wife.
71. In Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with some good features. The good aspects of teaching mean that pupils are well managed, engage in lively discussion and are required to think and solve problems. This was the case when pupils were required to examine a variety of pictures of the Great Fire of London for clues as to why the fire spread so quickly. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make progress commensurate with the rest of their class. They frequently undertake the same worksheet, however, regardless of their individual abilities. This limits the development of historical skills, particularly for higher attaining pupils. In Years 3 and 4, the quality of teaching is good, with some very good features. Teachers are secure in their knowledge of the subject and pass on their own enthusiasm to the pupils, who have very good attitudes as a result. Teachers are innovative in their approach and use methods, such as role-play, which capture and maintain pupils' interest. Pupils are encouraged to use their literacy skills to write in different genres and to write at length. Such work enables them to develop empathy with people in the past because they are encouraged to see life then through the eyes of different people.
72. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator, while having good subject knowledge, has only been in role for a short time and has not yet had time to have an impact on standards. Assessment procedures are satisfactory overall in identifying pupils' progress in topics. They are not sufficiently informative, however, to enable pupils to have a clear understanding of what aspects of historical skills they need to improve.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

73. Only a small number of lessons were seen in the following subjects: two in physical education – both dance; part of one lesson in art and design; and none in design and technology. It is not possible, therefore, to make clear judgements about provision in any of these subjects.
74. Samples of pupils' work from last year, together with teachers' planning and discussions with pupils indicate that work in **art and design** is satisfactory. Standards for the older

pupils are above average. They use sketchbooks very well to learn a variety of techniques, such as colour mixing and matching, curling and folding paper and printing, using a good range of media, including pencil, paint, oil crayons and pastel. When studying different artists, for example, William Morris, Van Gogh and David Hockney, they produce very thoughtful work. Rangoli patterns for Divali were well executed and this work also enriched pupils' understanding of other cultures. Although planning is good and covers all the aspects, staff confidence varies. This sometimes leads to a tendency for adults to predetermine outcomes - to 'do' art rather than giving pupils the opportunity to learn techniques and then use them creatively.

75. Work in **design and technology** is above the standard expected of pupils by Year 2 and by Year 4. The key elements of the subject: investigation of ideas; learning a range of skills; and designing and making using a variety of materials; are covered in depth. Pupils achieve well and really enjoy the subject because the process is made purposeful with well-focused tasks to develop their skills. This allows them to make choices based on their growing knowledge and skills. As a result, standards in the samples of work seen are above average. One eight-year-old said: *'It is really good. You practise lots of different skills, then put them all together to design what you want and then use your skills to make it'*. There are very good links with science, art and design and health education. For example, pupils designed and made a 'balanced' sandwich safely and hygienically. Parents and other volunteer helpers make a valuable contribution to such activities.
76. During the inspection, only two lessons (both in dance) were seen in **physical education**, so no judgements can be made about overall standards or teaching in the various aspects of the subject. Teacher's planning, however, indicates that provision has improved since the previous inspection. The scheme of work provides sufficient guidance to support teachers in their planning of lessons and ensures progression in the development of skills. Appropriate coverage is made for the subject during the year and pupils' learning is enhanced satisfactorily through extra-curricular activities, including table tennis, short tennis and hockey. In the two dance lessons, standards were above what is normally expected and pupils achieved well because of high quality teaching. Pupils were enthusiastic and very well behaved throughout these lessons. The school is aware that teachers lack the expertise to teach well all aspects of the subject.

Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Enthusiastic leadership has a positive impact on standards and the curriculum.
- A strong emphasis is placed on practical music-making and leads to effective learning.
- The best use is made of the expertise among the teachers to teach others' classes.
- Insufficient use of composition in practical lessons limits pupils' achievement.

Commentary

77. By Year 2 and Year 4, pupils have made satisfactory progress. Their achievement is satisfactory and they attain standards that match the levels expected in the main aspects of the subject. In Year 2, they know the names of some percussion instruments and play them with good control. They understand pulse, rhythm and patterns of sounds, and are beginning to understand dynamics. For example, pupils in Year 1 learn to play untuned percussion instruments starting softly, growing louder and then soft again when creating a sound picture about the sunrise. In Year 4, they learn phrasing and begin to sing in two rounds with support. Pupils generally sing tunefully, with a good sense of shape and melody. They have a growing knowledge of different types, styles and moods of music

from both their own and other world heritages, by studying composers and learning music such as a carnival song from Brazil.

78. The teaching of music is good. Planning is thorough and ensures that all pupils take part in a regular programme of musical opportunities led by the specialist co-ordinator and class teachers. Visiting specialist teachers enhance and extend learning and attainment through instrumental tuition for piano and violin. Recorder sessions are organised at lunchtime. A self-assessment system allows pupils to recall what they have learnt. In a Year 3 lesson, for instance, all pupils achieved well because the teaching showed them how to improve their sense of changing rhythms and melody when learning the 'Shadow Song'. Pupils showed a huge sense of delight and pride in their final performance. "That's the best we've ever sung that!" said a pupil. Because teachers constantly reinforce it, pupils have a good musical vocabulary, such as the names of instruments, chorus, verse accompaniment and percussion. Pupils' attitudes to music lessons are very positive. They enjoy making music, behave very well and maintain good concentration: they are actively involved and retain a fair amount of what they are taught.
79. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and very enthusiastic: she is effective in raising standards by teaching music to most classes in the school. Pupils enjoy lessons and respond positively when, for example, they are in groups and are called 'musicians'. Planning is clear, linked to National Curriculum requirements, and resources are well organised and readily accessible for teaching and learning.
80. The subject has shown marked improvement since the last inspection. Expertise is used to teach across the school, music lessons are regular and practical, and planning is well established. Resources are adequate and used well. As a result, pupils make steady progress and standards match those expected nationally for the age groups in the school. Pupils have insufficient opportunities to be involved in the compositional aspects of music in lessons and to learn to use simple symbols to represent sounds to perform their own music. Not enough use is made of ICT to record and save pupils' *own* compositions in order to listen to, and improve, their performance.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

81. Only one lesson in **personal, social and health education** (PSHE) and a short session of circle time were seen during the inspection and so no judgement can be made about overall provision. Nevertheless, from observations of other lessons and activities together with documentary evidence, the school successfully helps pupils to develop very good personal and social skills. It also builds positive attitudes to a healthy life-style and a strong sense of citizenship. This is achieved through specific lessons in PSHE, class 'circle time' and through normal lessons and assemblies. Celebration assemblies, whether for birthdays or achievement, are particularly effective in building pupils' self-esteem and confidence in themselves. During a circle time session for pupils in Year 3, for example, skilful and sensitive teaching allowed pupils to grow in confidence, raise their self-esteem and develop positive attitudes by taking turns to complete the sentence: "Something I would like to achieve is". The teacher allowed time for pupils to reflect and used effective strategies to manage the discussion well. Similarly, during a PSHE lesson, pupils explored the value of friendship by considering and identifying the factors that make people good friends. In lessons and assemblies, the themes help pupils to develop confidence to express themselves on issues that affect them, such as how to make others happy and how people in the past may have felt. As a result, pupils grow in trust and confidence.
82. During lessons and break times, pupils are encouraged to take responsibility, for instance, in responding to the needs of others who ask for help by sitting on the 'buddy bench' or by routine tasks of keeping areas tidy. Policies are in place to encourage pupils to take responsible attitudes to drugs. There are good routines for hygiene which pupils

and children understand. They know how exercise helps sustain a healthy body. Pupils learn to play an active role as citizens by supporting a range of charities. During last year, they raised over £1,650 for eight charities, some were national and others were international, such as the RNIB and UNICEF. The totality of what the school provides is very effective in developing pupils' very positive attitudes, high quality relationships and respect for others and their property. Nevertheless, the programmes for PSHE and circle time lack sufficient co-ordination and rationalisation with other related features of the curriculum, for example, the healthy schools initiative and relevant parts of the programmes of study for science and for design and technology, to provide a more coherent experience for pupils.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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