

INSPECTION REPORT

CHESTERTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Newcastle under Lyme

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124169

Headteacher: Mr J. Jones

Lead inspector: Dr Eric Peagam

Dates of inspection: 19th - 22nd January 2004

Inspection number: 260524

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:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	147
School address:	Brittain Avenue Newcastle under Lyme Staffordshire
Postcode:	ST5 7NT
Telephone number:	01782 561255
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. R. Cooper
Date of previous inspection:	20 th September 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Chesterton Primary School is a one-form entry school for pupils from aged from 3 to 11, serving mixed housing in a former mining area to the north-east of Newcastle under Lyme. Most pupils come from the immediate area of the school. There are 131 pupils of compulsory school age, which is significantly below the average for primary schools. In addition, 16 children attend the nursery each morning. Pupils come from a range of backgrounds, but with a very high proportion of poor socio-economic circumstances; currently over 50 per cent (well above average) are entitled to free school meals. The school's population is falling, as is the case with other local schools, and numbers in each year group fluctuate widely (from 30 to 11). The percentage of pupils on the special needs register is higher than average at 28 per cent, and this includes a well above average number of pupils with statements of educational need. Attainment on entry is very low, particularly in relation to literacy skills and personal and social development. There are a very small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and none who require support because they are in the early stages of learning English.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
14943	Eric Peagam	Lead inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Music Physical education Provision for pupils with special educational needs Provision for pupils with English as an additional language
32676	Nicolas Power	Lay inspector	
22397	Stuart Fowler	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology History Geography
22831	Clive Lewis	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage Science Art and design Religious education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Chesterton is an effective and improving primary school that serves its pupils and its community well. Staff are committed to raising standards and teaching is good throughout the school. As a result, pupils learn well, although the very low overall standards on entry and the high incidence of special educational needs mean that many pupils continue to attain well below average standards by the time they leave. At the same time as showing a strong commitment to raising standards in basic subjects, the recently appointed headteacher, together with the staff and governors, puts a strong focus on promoting personal development and citizenship as well as providing a safe and supportive environment. The school gives satisfactory value for money

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher, governors and the senior management team provide good leadership and ensure that the school is well managed.
- Teaching and learning are good overall and, in the foundation stage, they are very good.
- The school makes good provision for personal and social development and citizenship.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The school works well with parents, although there is still much to be done to ensure parents can support their children's learning at home.
- Overall attainment is very low on entry and remains well below average in most subjects.
- Standards in the core subjects have been steadily improving.
- The school does not use measures that are sufficiently sensitive to demonstrate the level of improvement in attainment for many pupils.
- Resources in some subjects are not sufficient to support the curriculum.

The school has improved satisfactorily since the last inspection. The action plan from the previous report has been completed well and there has been a significant improvement in overall standards, especially in mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). The overall quality of teaching and learning has improved. The school now has more effective systems for assessing and monitoring progress, while its commitment to self-improvement is demonstrated by the Investors in People Award. Attendance has improved and the governing body has become a more cohesive unit with clearly defined committee structures and individual roles.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	E	E	E	E
mathematics	E	E*	E	C
science	E	E	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 achievement is satisfactory. In the Foundation Stage, although some children arrive with average or above average levels of attainment, for a majority these are very low, particularly in personal and social skills and in communication, language and literacy. They achieve well from this very low base although only a minority attain the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception. Achievement in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall, with some good achievement in mathematics and ICT. However, attainment remains well below average, except in mathematics, where it is average and very high compared with similar schools. Satisfactory achievement in Years 3 to 6 results in a similar low overall level of attainment, as progress across many subjects

continues to be adversely affected by pupils' difficulties in literacy. The very large number of pupils with special educational needs affects the school's overall scores. However, these pupils make satisfactory and often good progress towards their individual targets although the fact that these reflect small steps. The school provides well for higher-attaining pupils, who, as a result, score well in national tests.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are developed well. Behaviour is good overall and pupils show good attitudes to their work and participate well in the life of the school. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory, with most pupils attending well.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. In the Foundation Stage it **is very good**. The curriculum is relevant and includes all subjects, with good emphasis on basic literacy and numeracy skills, as well as promoting personal and social development and citizenship. The curricular provision for pupils with **special educational needs** is **very good**. The **teaching is good** and this is reflected in the **good learning** that usually takes place, although many pupils have difficulty in retaining what they have learned. Teachers know their pupils well and check their progress carefully. They ensure that pupils know how well they are doing and this encourages them to be more confident learners. Support staff and other adults in the school make a very good contribution to pupils' learning and personal development.

Pupils are well looked after and the school is effective in developing and using community links to enhance the opportunities for pupils. The school has good links with parents, but although the school tries to help parents to support their children's learning at home, this is not yet having enough effect. The very good community and other links are well used to the benefit of pupils' all-round learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good**. The recently appointed headteacher has clear ideas about what needs to be done and is well supported by all staff and governors. There is a strong sense of unity that helps the school to run well. Governors and senior management have a clear idea of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and plan well for improvement. Money is spent wisely and the school continually looks to achieve good value for what it spends.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The great majority of parents have a very positive view of the school and there are few areas of concern. Some issues, for example, consultation with parents, are already being addressed by the new headteacher. Almost all parents agreed that teaching was good and that their children are expected to work hard. Although some parents felt that behaviour was unsatisfactory, this was not evident during the inspection and it appears that views have been affected by a few specific recent incidents which are not typical. Pupils speak well of the school, they particularly appreciate the way their views are taken into account and they feel safe and supported.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- to continue to raise standards in core subjects and across the curriculum through concentration on key skills, particularly literacy skills.
- to develop and extend links with parents to ensure that they are enabled to support their children's learning at home more effectively.
- to refine assessment procedures sufficiently to reflect the small steps by which many lower-attaining pupils progress in order to set and monitor realistic targets for school improvement;

- To complete the review of resources and ensure that these are sufficient to support the curriculum in all subjects.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Children arrive in the school with a range of attainment, including some with above-average attainment but, overall, it is well below average. While at the school they make satisfactory progress overall and in some subjects, good progress is made. By the time they leave, although standards are still significantly below the national average, overall, achievement is at least satisfactory and, in some cases good, especially for pupils of higher ability and those with significant special educational needs. As a result, pupils are effectively prepared for the next stage of their education.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of attainment are well below average.
- Pupils' literacy skills develop slowly from a very low base and, in many cases, remain insufficient to enable them to produce a full range of written work to demonstrate their learning in other subjects.
- Children in the nursery and reception classes make good progress overall and particularly good progress in personal and social development.
- Numeracy and ICT skills are being developed well and are used effectively across the curriculum.
- Personal and social education, together with citizenship, is fostered well and contributes very well to pupils' moral and social development.
- Pupils with a range of special educational needs achieve well as a result of the very good support they receive.

Commentary

1. Children entering the nursery generally have very low levels of attainment, although a small minority arrive with higher levels of attainment. In many cases, they have significantly depressed levels of social and personal skills as well as limited communication, language and literacy skills. As a result of the very good provision in the nursery and reception classes, including consistently very good teaching, they make good progress by the time they enter Year 1, although only a minority achieve the early learning goals.

2. Pupils make at least satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2. This is reflected in the results of tests in literacy and numeracy at the end of Year 2, where, although overall levels are usually still well below the national average, a significant minority of pupils are achieving well. For example, in 2003, when the results are compared with those for schools in similar circumstances, defined in relation to the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, they are in line with the average in reading and writing but well above average in mathematics. This reflects the strong focus on basic skills within the school which is achieving a steady rise in overall standards, although this inevitably fluctuates from year to year as a result of the effect of variations in the nature and extent of pupils' special educational needs on small year-groups.

3. In addition, comparison of points-score measures with the proportion of pupils attaining the expected National Curriculum level shows that there is a higher proportion of pupils attaining Level 3 than would be expected in relation to those achieving Level 2, showing that the school is effective in promoting the attainment of its more able pupils. For this reason, although a below average number of pupils attain Level 2, average points in mathematics in 2003 were actually slightly above the national average.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	13.2 (13.4)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	12.4 (12.3)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.5 (14.0)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 21 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. Progress in Years 3 to 6 continues to be at least satisfactory and, although the full benefits of the focus on numeracy and literacy have not yet worked through the school and overall standards remain well below average, these are improving, as is demonstrated by the school's overall performance and work observed during the inspection. Over the past five years, the improvement in the overall average points score for the school at the end of Year 6 has been in line with that found nationally. In comparison with schools in similar circumstances, while attainment was below average in English and science, it was in line with the average in mathematics, which continues to develop as the strongest area within the school. When compared with schools achieving similar points scores in Year 2, the school comes out less well in English and science, indicating that standards are still well below average. Again, as at the end of Year 2, the average points score is boosted by the disproportionate number of pupils attaining at Level 5, above the national benchmark.

5. The school uses an effective range of data for identifying and setting appropriate overall 'broad-brush' targets, in particular, using a nationally validated system for predicting Year 6 results from baseline assessment and attainment in Year 2. These result in fluctuating year-on-year targets, which the school uses as a basis for minimum expectations, which are usually exceeded. The school has a larger than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs that are mainly related to overall learning difficulties. For these pupils, the school sets individual targets and progress towards these targets is at least satisfactory and, in a majority of cases, good. Pupils know their half-termly targets and are aware of the progress they are making towards them.

6. However, this means that the usual National Curriculum related measures are insufficiently sensitive to show the progress being made. The school has not yet adopted a sufficient range of small-step criteria for planning and assessment to take account of this both to demonstrate school improvement and set targets for future improvement.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	23.7 (23.4)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	24.9 (23.4)	26.8 (26.7)
science	25.3 (25.8)	28.6 (28.3)

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

7. There are no significant differences in attainment between girls and boys and it is not possible to draw conclusions about the performance of different ethnic or other groups within the school, as these groups are very small.

8. In other subjects, while pupils acquire satisfactory skills and knowledge, their ability to manage information, including presenting and reporting what they have learned, continues to be affected by their overall literacy problems. This is the case in science where achievement is no better than satisfactory. However, in areas such as ICT, physical education and, to some extent, music, where the impact is less, pupils make good progress and, in some respects, achieve in line

with expectations. The limited amount of written work in subjects such as religious education means that it is not possible to make secure judgements about standards.

Pupils’ attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils’ attendance and punctuality are **satisfactory**. Their attitudes and behaviour are **good**. The school’s provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Nearly all pupils have a mature attitude and behave very well.
- The school provides a good range of opportunities for pupils to take responsibility.
- The school does not have a plan for the spiritual and cultural development of its pupils
- Moral and social development are well promoted through a range of activities

Commentary

9. Pupils’ attitudes and behaviour are very good, although teachers have to work hard to manage the behaviour of a small number of pupils who display unsatisfactory attitudes to work. The school has a broad range of strategies to develop good attitudes and behaviour and these work well for most pupils. The school council is involved in deciding the nature of the rewards for good behaviour or achievement. There are many opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility for aspects of running the school, for example, helping in the office or looking after the younger children at playtimes. Teachers track pupils’ involvement carefully to ensure that no pupils are overlooked.

10. Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is not formally planned for and this means that pupils’ development in these areas, although satisfactory overall, is not as good as it could be. Morally and socially pupils develop well as a result of the strong sense of community and the emphasis on moral responsibility throughout the school. These aspects are further reinforced by the school’s clear behaviour strategies and the opportunities provided for pupils to work collaboratively through the school council and the range of jobs they perform around the school. Although the school provides a satisfactory range of opportunities for developing spiritual awareness and celebrating cultural diversity, there is insufficient planning to ensure that these are consistently promoted.

11. The attendance rate in the school is well below the national average. The school and the Education Welfare Officer monitor the attendance of pupils closely. However, strategies for improving the attendance rate have not yet had a significant impact. Many parents take their children on holiday during term time, but these absences are only authorised after a discussion with the head teacher. Relationships with parents are improving as a result of the hard work of the school, but some parents do not appreciate the value of formal education for their children.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	6.9	School data :	0.2
National data:	5.4	National data:	0.4

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

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	142	3	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	1	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0

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

12. Exclusion is not routinely used and, when it occurs, it is usually agreed with parents as part of a strategy for individual behaviour management. Pupils do not see it as a significant feature of the school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. The curriculum is good overall; it is relevant and includes all subjects, with good emphasis on basic literacy and numeracy skills, as well as promoting pupils' personal and social development and helping them to recognise the responsibilities of citizenship. The curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is **very good**. The teaching is **good** and this is reflected in the good learning that usually takes place. Pupils are well looked after and the school is effective in developing and using community links to enhance the learning opportunities for pupils.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of **teaching and learning is good** throughout the school. In lessons, it was usually good, frequently very good and, on occasion, outstanding. It was never unsatisfactory. This represents a significant improvement on the previous inspection, when it was largely satisfactory and unsatisfactory at times. The very high quality of nursery and reception teaching found at that time has been sustained.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in all aspects of the nursery and reception classes is very good; it is particularly effective in promoting personal and social development.
- Planning and delivery of literacy and numeracy lessons are good, and very effective use is made of plenary sessions.
- Teachers routinely share the objectives of the lesson with pupils and these are well used as a basis for reviewing learning at the end.
- Teachers plan very well for the wide range of ability within class groups and individual planning for special educational needs is very good.
- Throughout the school, support staff, volunteers and others, including teacher training students make a very effective contribution to teaching and learning.
- There is some outstanding teaching in ICT and skills are increasingly being effectively used to support teaching across the curriculum.
- Teaching is, at times, no better than satisfactory when the pace of lessons slows as a result of the need for teachers to manage potentially difficult behaviour from a small number of pupils.

- Formal assessment procedures are good in English, mathematics and science, although they could be improved by developing more detailed assessment procedures to plot the small levels of progress that many pupils achieve.
- Assessment procedures in other curricular areas are less well developed.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 29 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	7	18	3	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.

Commentary

13. The above evidence of teaching was confirmed by the scrutiny of pupils’ work and other, shorter observations of teaching activities in a range of settings. Good teaching was seen in all classes, but that seen in the nursery and reception classes was consistently good. Outstanding teaching was seen in ICT when pupils made very good progress in using a desktop publishing application.

14. The high quality of teaching and learning results from thorough planning that takes good account of ongoing information from informal assessment and the information gleaned from regular and consistent marking. Teachers make very effective use of the small classes in most years to ensure that all pupils are offered work at an individually appropriate level. By offering tasks with at least three different levels of difficulty and preparing individual work for pupils with special educational needs, teachers ensure that very effective class teaching is supported by productive and well-paced group activities. This is particularly effective in Years 5 and 6 where pupils are grouped by ability across both years for literacy and numeracy. This ensures that the highest-attaining pupils are fully stretched, while the more basic learning needs of the lower-attaining pupils are systematically met. However, even when year groups are much larger as, for example, in Year 4, very good management and the very constructive role of support staff ensure that pupils are able to build securely on previous learning.

15. Staff work very effectively as a team, sharing skills and expertise and supporting one another well. Planned professional development has been very effectively used to upgrade teachers’ skills for teaching to the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and, increasingly, in ICT. The school makes very effective use of specialist teacher knowledge and the very high levels of skill shown by support staff and volunteers to enhance and extend pupils’ opportunities for learning. Some teaching assistants have been additionally trained in using additional national strategies in literacy and numeracy and their work with small groups enables these pupils to make better progress in their learning.

16. Although the majority of teaching seen was in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, where work in other subjects was sampled, teaching was also good overall. For example, in music, offered by visiting specialists, and in physical education, where teachers take their own classes, secure subject knowledge and a grasp of the curriculum result in good teaching.

17. All adults working in the school maintain good relationships with pupils, which support learning well. Teachers plan and make good use of opportunities to raise the esteem of pupils, for example, by ensuring that lower-attaining pupils are enabled to contribute successfully in oral work by careful use of individually targeted questions. They make effective use of appropriate praise, so that pupils feel their efforts are valued and they are encouraged to make greater efforts to do well.

18. All teachers consistently implement the school’s appropriate behaviour policy that is based on positive reinforcement of high expectations and, as a result, behaviour is generally good in

lessons, pupils are well motivated and work hard. Individual planning to support pupils with identified emotional and behavioural difficulties enables their needs to be balanced well with those of the class as a whole. However, there is a small number of pupils that is currently not responding to these measures and, at times, this slows down the learning of the whole class when the teacher has to spend time on managing this behaviour.

19. From an early stage pupils are encouraged to work independently, particularly in literacy and numeracy lessons, but this is slow to develop and pupils tend to remain heavily dependent on adults throughout most of their time in the school. However, by the time they leave, many show confidence as they discuss their ideas or opinions with partners or in small groups. They increasingly work together on investigations in mathematics and science, so that they are able to learn from each other. Assessment procedures have improved since the previous inspection and are increasingly built into the planning. Those in English mathematics and science are well-established and consistently used. In mathematics, effective use is made of the objectives that are drawn from the National Numeracy Strategy. However, for many pupils whose learning progresses in small steps, the National Curriculum-related measures of progress are insufficiently sensitive to reflect the actual progress being made. Learning targets are identified in lesson plans, usually shared with pupils at the beginning of lessons and progress towards them is assessed towards the end, which helps pupils to monitor how well they are learning.

The curriculum

The school provides a good and broad range of curricular opportunities and there are good opportunities for enrichment. The quality of accommodation and the range of learning resources in most areas of the curriculum are satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good provision for pupils with special educational needs
- The very good provision for equality of opportunity and inclusion for all pupils
- The reception class currently lacks readily accessible outdoor facilities
- Resources for some subjects are barely adequate

Commentary

20. The curriculum provides a broad, balanced and coherent curriculum, with a good and secure level of continuity and progression and a good range of opportunities for enrichment. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements, including provision for religious education and collective worship, and provides effective personal, social and health education, including, where appropriate, sex and drugs' awareness education. The School Council, with elected members from each class, meets regularly and pupils are encouraged to take responsibility. There is a very good level of equality of opportunity for all pupils and the school is very "inclusive" in all its policies and practices.

21. There are consistent whole-school approaches to teaching and applying literacy and mathematics across the curriculum and there is ample evidence of the school's willingness to adopt new strategies and to seek and accept guidance on making changes in the curriculum in order to make improvements.

22. The school provides pupils with a good range of interesting, relevant and well-attended extra-curricular activities. Sporting and cultural visits linked to the curriculum are organised to extend pupils' experiences and a good range of visitors works in the school during the year.

23. There is a good match of teachers to the curriculum and a very good match of well-qualified and hard-working support staff. The school's accommodation is satisfactory overall, although it presents a number of inherent difficulties due to its basic design; several classes can only be entered by walking through another classroom and access to the main school involves negotiating

several flights of steps. Although the headteacher has well-advanced plans to make significant changes to the nursery and reception class accommodation, the reception class currently lacks readily accessible outdoor facilities. However, the school accommodation is used well and the building, whilst not ideal, does not directly detract from any curriculum activities.

24. Resources are generally of satisfactory quality and in ICT they are good. However, in a number of subjects, such as music and design and technology, they are barely sufficient. The school is conducting an audit to ensure that pupils' learning will not be held back by shortage of equipment or materials.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides a safe environment and cares for its pupils well. Support, advice and guidance are **good**. There is good involvement of pupils in the work of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Formal whole school health and safety procedures are very good.
- The school seeks, values and acts upon pupils' views.
- Teachers' knowledge of their pupils as individuals is well used to provide good support, advice and guidance.
- Teaching assistants provide conscientious and well-focused support.
- Support for pupils joining the school is good, so that they settle happily into their school life.
- Parents are very happy with what the school provides for their children.

Commentary

25. All members of the school community work together to provide surroundings in which the pupils feel well cared for and secure. School staff and governors have proper regard for the health and safety of the school community. Procedures for health and safety are very good. School governors have carried out a comprehensive health and safety audit of the premises and there is good provision in place to ensure the safety of pupils on school trips. The governor with responsibility for health and safety is very well qualified and takes her responsibilities extremely seriously. She has ensured that regular risk assessments take place to ensure that all statutory requirements are met. There is good attention paid to safety in lessons and elsewhere. Security arrangements are very well organised and first-aid and fire safety arrangements are of high quality. As yet, the school does not have wheelchair access.

26. The school takes care to ensure that all pupils are treated equally, and given proper support appropriate to individual need whatever their background or personal circumstances. There is provision for all to have equal opportunity to take part in all activities organised by the school without regard to the ability to pay. The pupils are happy at school. An analysis of the pupil questionnaire revealed that almost all pupils felt confident in approaching an adult if they needed help or advice. The School Council offers pupils the opportunity to make a contribution to the running of their school. They handle their own budget and are currently deciding whether to extend the provision of drink dispensers within school. This forum helps pupils to develop leadership skills and to influence their own learning.

27. Pupils, whatever their needs, have ready access to well-informed support, advice and guidance from the headteacher, teachers and support staff. Child protection procedures are very secure, and governors and staff have been involved in recent whole-school training. Formal assessment records are complemented by informal arrangements that benefit from adults' knowledge of pupils as individuals. These arrangements ensure that pupils' needs, whatever they are, are recognised, so that they can develop both academically and as responsible members of the wider community.

28. The provision and guidance provided for the above average number of pupils who have special educational and other identified needs are very good. Clear records are kept, and effective monitoring by the co-ordinator and class teachers contributes to the progress of all groups of children. Pupils with special educational needs are regularly assessed and information is recorded to help to identify pupils' current attainment. The information gained is used most effectively to plan suitable work for individual pupils within lessons. For example, the school has accessed additional funding to enable pupils in Years 5 and 6 to be taught in small ability groups. Pupils with learning difficulties receive effective support from the teaching assistants.

29. Parents' responses to the recent parent questionnaire were very positive. Nearly all parents felt that there were good arrangements and support for children joining the school or starting their school life. Parents are encouraged to participate in their children's learning through the home reading scheme and homework and, during the week of the inspection, a group of parents were beginning a course to develop their computer skills in order to be able to support their children's learning at home. The very effective welfare support that the school provides enhances the quality of education enjoyed by the pupils and ensures that they can work in a secure and happy setting.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with the community and other schools are **very good**. The school's links with parents are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school makes very good use of its links with the community.
- Parents, whilst supportive, are not sufficiently involved in helping their children to learn.
- The support given to pupils to prepare them for transfer to secondary education is very good.
-

Commentary

30. The school and its governors realise that the school has an important role to play in the life of the local community. The school is actively involved in many aspects of the community. The effect of this is that the community supports and helps the school and the school supports and helps the community. There are strong links with the Anglican Church and the Salvation Army and these are used well to help the pupils to understand the beliefs and purpose of local faith communities. A local housing association has sought the involvement of pupils from Chesterton to help to shape the development of the local area.

31. The relationship between parents and the school is good. The regular newsletters to parents are informative and attractively presented. The school uses the links it has with the community to provide facilities and help for the parents of pupils at the school. For example, the Family Learning project and the Parent Partnership help parents to develop academically and personally. However, parents are not sufficiently involved in helping to raise the standard of their children's work.

32. The Parent, Teacher and Friends' Association is well supported. It raises significant funds and has provided, in consultation with the school and its pupils, good improvements to the school's facilities and environment.

33. Very good links between local schools mean that pupils' transition to their secondary school is smooth. Pupils from the secondary school visit pupils in Years 5 and 6 to share their experiences and pupils in Year 6 visit the secondary school for 'taster' sessions prior to their transfer. Teachers from the secondary school lead a variety of lessons at Chesterton and this further helps pupils to start their new school with the minimum of disruption.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of governance is **good**. The new headteacher provides **good** leadership. Other key staff make a good contribution to the school's goals and values. The effectiveness of management overall is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very clear sense of purpose and high aspirations of the new headteacher.
- The governance of the school.
- The commitment of the whole school staff to inclusion and equality and concern for the needs of individuals.

Commentary

34. The governing body has developed a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and is helping to shape the vision and direction of the school. Governors monitor school performance consistently and have successfully promoted school improvement through setting realistic targets. They ensure all statutory duties are fulfilled appropriately and are challenging and supporting senior managers well, while acting effectively as a 'critical friend' to the headteacher. In addition, they provide a very secure and active link with the local community which, in turn, is effectively used to enhance pupils' learning opportunities.

35. The newly-appointed headteacher is providing good leadership for the school. He has a very clear sense of purpose and high aspirations for the school and, in a very short period as headteacher – at the time of the inspection, just over one full term - has been successful in boosting the morale of the staff and in creating an effective team who work together very well and inspire, motivate and support fellow staff and pupils. He has quickly identified areas where the school can improve and has initiated planning to address these areas. Delegation is very effective and this enables staff with management responsibilities to carry these out well.

36. The Nursery and reception classes are very well managed and the leadership and commitment of subject leaders in English, mathematics and science are good.

37. The senior management team, comprising the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the Foundation Stage leader/special educational needs co-ordinator, monitor performance data consistently, review emerging patterns and take effective action.

38. The headteacher and all staff have a very clear commitment to inclusion and equal opportunity for all pupils and provide them with very good role models. Systems for the monitoring of individual pupils' achievement are established and policies for behaviour, planning and assessment are reflected clearly and consistently across the work of the whole school.

39. The school's performance management systems are appropriately managed and have been effective in providing support and in bringing about improvement.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	482 302	Balance from previous year	6 717
Total expenditure	481 744	Balance carried forward to the next	7 275
Expenditure per pupil	2 676		

40. The school's most recent audit report was undertaken a considerable time ago and the main recommendations were acted upon appropriately at the time. Inspection findings confirm that essential management functions are covered well and are not unduly bureaucratic, allowing teachers to get on with their job of teaching. Well-organised and well-monitored accounting systems help the school achieve their key educational priorities. The governing body are aware of the "best value" principles of challenge, comparison, consultation and competition and have diligently applied these principles to date in decision-making when planning for improvement.

41. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

42. Provision in the Foundation Stage is **very good**, a significant improvement since the last inspection. As a result of very good teaching and planning and a very strong focus on developing personal and social skills and communication, language and literacy skills, children achieve well from a very low starting point in most areas of learning. At the time of the inspection, the Nursery class consisted of 16. Despite their very low level of skills on entry, children attend for mornings only. The reception class has 21 full-time children.

43. Teaching is very good in all areas of learning and all adults set high expectations for the children and provide a very good and imaginative curriculum, which meets children's needs extremely well. Staffing levels are generous and all children are supported well. Relationships are excellent and, as a result, the children's personal skills rapidly improve. The co-ordinator, who is also the reception class teacher, provides very good leadership, managing change and improvements skilfully through very good procedures for planning, monitoring and assessment. Assessments are used well to plan work at the correct level for all children, including those identified as having special educational needs. The accommodation is satisfactory overall. Although the Nursery and reception classes are very spacious and are attractively-decorated and stimulating places to learn, some of the larger equipment, both indoor and outdoor, has seen better days and, more significantly, there is no direct outdoor access from the reception class, hindering to some extent the planning for and provision of a planned outdoor curriculum.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The excellent relationships between children and adults and the clear routines create a highly effective learning environment in which children feel secure.
- Planning is very good.

Commentary

44. This area of learning, of necessity, receives a particularly high profile when children start in the Nursery and this focus continues throughout the reception year. Due to very good teaching, the excellent relationships and a well-planned and ordered environment into which children quickly settle and feel secure, most children make rapid progress in developing their personal and social skills. However, it is likely that by the end of the reception year a significant number of the current cohort of reception children will not have attained the expected standards for personal, social and emotional development, because of their very poor levels of attainment on entry to the school.

45. In the Nursery class, new children are still heavily dependent on adults but others, having been encouraged to take responsibility, are now sufficiently confident to work independently on their tasks. They take turns being monitors by helping to set out the beakers and bowls for 'snack time' sensibly, for example. In the reception class, many children show appropriate levels of confidence and independence when they tackle new learning and are learning to make choices and decisions about their work. For example, when the class is asked to tidy up for the next activity, most pupils help and two boys immediately go to get the pan and brush from the storage area, one explaining: "I get bush ban". At 'snack time' children sit at tablecloth-covered café-style tables and 'read' the menu cards, so steadily developing their day-to-day social skills.

46. Most children work very well together as a group, and are developing an understanding of the need to listen to the contributions of others, to take turns, and to share resources. Because staff are highly skilled in knowing how young children learn effectively, they plan an excellent range of activities, which lead to sustained interest and concentration from the children and a developing desire to learn.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Every opportunity is seized upon, by all staff, to enhance children's communication skills.
- Very good planning and assessment procedures.

Commentary

47. In all activities there are excellent opportunities for the children to develop their language skills, which are very low when they start school. Baseline assessments of children's attainment is followed up by regular and systematic assessment of their learning, which is, in turn, very well used in planning future work. Over the past few years attainment on entry in communication, language and literacy is significantly below the local education authority averages. On entry to the Nursery class, children's speaking and listening skills are much delayed and at times, even classroom staff who work with the children on a daily basis, have difficulty in understanding what children are trying to say, confirming the necessity for the 'speech therapy' support provided by the local education authority for a significant minority of children. Another example of poor literacy and language skills observed was during a group activity with the teacher who was encouraging reception children to use their 'five senses' to investigate a cube of jelly. The teacher asked what fruit the jelly was made from, giving a 'clue'; "It's red and it begins with 's'". The first response was "Silence". All children achieve well, but despite the very good teaching, attainment is likely to be well below the expected level by the time the children leave the reception class. Staff provide challenging and stimulating activities that are well matched to the needs of all pupils. The sharing of books, listening to stories, playing games and singing of rhymes are meticulously planned so that children learn letter sounds and a few simple words, and skilled teaching ensures that their learning is fun and highly effective. Very good focused support is given to help the children improve the way they form letters and the reception teacher explores words and sentences from stories such as "Elmer the Patchwork Elephant" in a highly stimulating way, keeping children totally engrossed in learning. Reception children have their own reading books and bags which they take home regularly and frequent opportunities are provided for them to practise in class. There is very good promotion of early writing skills and children are encouraged to 'write' in a variety of contexts.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is of a high standard and places a very high emphasis on learning through practical activities.
- Planning for mathematical development is very good.

Commentary

48. The high quality teaching of practical activities helps children to achieve well from a very low starting point although, despite this good achievement, a significant proportion of children are unlikely to attain the early learning goals for mathematical development by the time that they start in Year 1.

For example, when the reception teacher, during morning registration, asking for the children's help to change the daily calendar, says: "If yesterday was the 19th, what's today?", "17", "13" are called out. Poor mathematical skills were similarly vividly demonstrated during an observed teacher-led activity with a group of nine less-able children - almost half the class. Very good planning enables the teacher very carefully and skilfully to lead the children from what they know to where the activity is designed to take them. For example, pupils are led from counting up to five physical objects, to the concept of 'one more', using practical apparatus and the fingers on one hand. When the children were asked "How many **more** do I need if I've got four and I want to get five, only two of the nine children answered correctly, indicating not only the poor mathematical skills but also the poor communication skills of many children – significant weaknesses in learning skills that, in many cases, continue to have significant negative effects on their progress throughout their school life. Mathematical skills are extended well across all areas of learning and the reception class teacher is constantly reinforcing number concepts and vocabulary.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching provides children with numerous opportunities to learn about the world around them.
- Teaching and learning are very good.

Commentary

49. Teaching and learning are very good and help to ensure that all children achieve well. Children are provided with a wealth of opportunities to learn about their world. For example, during the inspection, children were investigating the concept of change, melting jelly and chocolate and waiting for them to set.

50. Although a majority of children are likely to reach most aspects of the early learning goals by the end of the reception year, a significant proportion will not have reached the goals for early learning. An example of the generally low levels of attainment was provided when the teacher asked the reception children: "What day is it today, if yesterday was Monday?" The first two answers offered were "Wednesday" and "Friday". The imaginative play areas are changed regularly to keep interest levels high and computers are used regularly to support learning.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good quality of teaching and planning.
- The facilities and resources for outdoor play.

Commentary

51. Children's attainment when they enter the school is below expectations but they make very good progress and, by the time they leave the reception class, the majority of children are likely to have attained aspects of the early learning goals for physical development, particularly in terms of control over larger movements although their skills in handling pencils, scissors, brushes and other tools are below expected levels. In a hall 'gymnastics' lesson, most pupils dressed and undressed independently and most moved freely, with pleasure and confidence. However, a small minority of

children moved and behaved with considerably less confidence and had little or no contact or interaction with others.

52. Plans are at an advanced stage to further develop both access to and resources for the outdoor play area for physical development and other areas of learning. Although the school has some wheeled toys, they are showing signs of wear and the outdoor area does not have a covered area and can only be used when the weather permits

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very effective teaching of direct skills is combined with very good opportunities for children to learn through play.
- Children are provided with an exciting range of activities that enriches their learning.

Commentary

53. Staff plan a wide range of stimulating activities and, with very good teaching and high levels of support, the children achieve well, with many attaining the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. As in most areas of the curriculum, however, the children need a lot of help to learn important skills when they first start school and therefore the direct teaching of specific skills is the focus of many activities, along with very good opportunities for play. They are taught, for example, the skills needed to mix paint, and they learn how to use scissors and glue.

54. The majority of the reception children are achieving some aspects of creative development when mixing primary colours. However, although pupils show great delight and surprise when the teacher demonstrates, through the use of coloured sheets of cellophane, that yellow and blue 'make' green and most identify the resulting colour as 'green' and one girl spontaneously offers that "red and yellow make orange", another girl identifies a pot of bright blue paint as 'purple'.

55. There is an exciting range of opportunities for imaginative play in classroom areas. In addition, children in reception benefit from a newly-instigated weekly lesson with a music specialist who, in conjunction with the class teacher, is successfully building up their skills in music from a low level, although when she plays "Baa baa black sheep" and asks the children, who learned the nursery rhyme in a previous lesson, what tune it is, the first two answers offered are incorrect.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in reading, writing and speaking and listening are well below average standards for pupils aged seven and eleven.
- The quality of teaching and assessment is good.
- Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills.
- Pupils with special educational needs receive good support.
- There is good subject leadership.
- Pupils have good opportunities to develop their language and literacy skills in other subjects.

Commentary

56. Standards in all aspects of English are well below average by the time that pupils leave the school. However, most pupils enter school with very poor language and literacy skills and the percentage of pupils with special educational needs throughout the school is high. For example, of the twelve pupils currently in Year 6, nearly half have learning difficulties and two have statements of special educational needs. Given their very low starting point, most pupils achieve satisfactorily throughout their time at the school.

57. The quality of teaching throughout the school is good and no unsatisfactory lessons were seen during the inspection. A significant strength of teaching in all years is the teachers' good overall interpretation and use of the National Literacy Strategy, which contributes effectively to the progress that pupils make. A strong feature of teaching is that teachers accurately plan work for pupils of different abilities either within their class or in the ability sets that are seen in Year 5 and Year 6. Learning objectives are made clear at the beginning of each lesson and are usually revisited at the end of the lesson to enable pupils to identify the progress that they have made. At the time of the last inspection, the final session of each lesson was often rushed due to poor time management. This is no longer the case, as could be seen when pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 were given opportunities to read their fables to the rest of the class. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the support that they receive from their effective learning support assistants. Teachers also make good use of ICT to ensure that their lessons are interesting and stimulating, such as when an interactive whiteboard was used to resource a group activity in a lesson in Year 4. In most lessons, pupils work well and attitudes and behaviour are good. However, despite good teaching, a small number of boys in Year 3 behave badly in lessons and this has a negative impact on learning, as their poor behaviour restricts the progress of other pupils in the class by requiring a disproportionate amount of the teacher's time.

58. Pupils enter school with very poor speaking and listening skills and all adults, including teachers, teaching assistants and non-teaching staff, make a positive contribution to improving these skills. Pupils are encouraged to talk to and listen to adults and their peers in virtually every lesson. For example, in a lesson in Year 3, pupils worked in pairs to develop compound words and to place them into sentences. Teachers encourage pupils to think about their responses with probing questions, but although speaking and listening skills improve throughout the school, they remain well below average for most pupils. In the upper literacy set in Year 5 and 6, for example, some pupils lacked sufficient confidence to read out their work to the rest of the class. Most pupils in the school answer questions with short or single word answers and lack the range of vocabulary to be able to respond in a confident and positive manner. This weakness severely restricts their ability to write and accounts for the well below average standards of writing seen throughout the school. Very few pupils leave school with the ability to write creatively or at length, although written work in Year 5 and 6 is often presented in an attractive, fluent style.

59. Standards in reading are well below average by the end Year 2 and Year 6. The school has recognised this fact and built into the curriculum a number of intervention strategies to improve standards in reading. It has invested in programmes such as “Reading Recovery” that are designed to support individuals and groups of pupils. Although pupils do receive regular additional adult support, many in Year 1 and Year 2 lack confidence in deciphering unfamiliar words using letter sounds and picture cues. From Year 3 onwards, the majority of pupils read at a standard that is well below national expectation and by the end of Year 6, few pupils have developed mature attitudes to literature or are able to discuss their reading books with fluency and expression.

60. The high numbers of pupils with learning difficulties are provided with good levels of support from their teachers and learning support assistants. The school implements a number of support strategies for groups of pupils, including Early and Additional Literacy Support programmes. Pupils have access to reading and writing skills ladders and additional reading support takes place during each afternoon. Teachers plan appropriate work for pupils within lessons, although many pupils lack the confidence to participate productively in independent activities. Access to additional funding has enabled the school to establish a small special needs group in Years 5 and 6 which provides these pupils with very good support, whilst enabling others to progress at a quicker pace.

61. The co-ordinator for English gives good leadership to the subject. She has a clear view of standards within her subject and works closely with other members of the staff to try to overcome the problems that many pupils face. She has good subject knowledge and has worked successfully to secure improvements since the last inspection through consistently promoting a school-wide literacy programme.

62. There has been satisfactory overall improvement in standards and provision in English since the previous inspection. There is now a policy and scheme of work that take account of the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy and the pace of lessons has improved. At the time of the last inspection, data was not sufficiently analysed but this is no longer the case, as there is now an assessment policy for English that includes data analysis and systems for tracking the progress of individual pupils. However, for many pupils, progress is slow and assessment procedures need to be more specific to take account of these small improvements.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

63. Pupils are given opportunities to develop their language and literacy skills across other areas of the curriculum. In design and technology, for example, pupils in Year 2 had written instructions for making a cake, whilst pupils in Year 3 had written about their visit to the local church and their recent science experiments. The school has an attractive and accessible central library and pupils’ independent research work has improved since the last inspection. For example, in history, pupils in Year 3 had researched their topic on “Ancient Egypt”, whilst pupils in Year 5 and 6 had used the library to find out about world weather as part of their geographical studies. Pupils now have very good access to research facilities through the Internet. For example, pupils in Year 6 had accessed data relating to mountains in Britain and the rest of the world. However, although these planned opportunities usually result in pupils writing about their research, achievement is limited by the well below average reading and writing standards that are seen throughout the school.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in mathematics are improving and pupils are achieving well. Pupils in reception to Year 2 are achieving in line with expectations overall, although they start from a very low base.
- Teachers plan effectively for the wide range of attainment found in most classes.
- Concentration on standards of presentation supports the development of computation skills well as careful setting out enables pupils to successfully add and subtract large numbers.

- Behaviour in lessons is good; pupils concentrate and learn without distraction or disturbance.
- Pupils have good opportunities to apply their skills to a range of realistic problems and contexts, including those that arise from work in other subjects.
- Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and are enabled to complete work that matches their need.
- The co-ordinator manages the subject well and effectively monitors achievement in the subject.

Commentary

64. Since the last inspection, standards have risen considerably. In the most recent reporting year, although overall attainment by Year 6 is well below the national average, it matches the average for schools in similar circumstances. The improvement, resulting from increased emphasis on numeracy in recent years, which is still working its way through the school, is even more evident in attainment by the end of Year 2. In 2003, for these pupils, attainment matched that achieved nationally and was very high in relation to similar schools.

65. One reason for the increased achievement is the consistent pattern and high quality of teaching in the subject. Teachers have adopted a common approach to lesson planning and the lesson objectives are shared and reviewed in every lesson. After a good oral introduction to the whole class, group activities are planned at a variety of levels to ensure that all pupils work at an appropriate level and make progress. Support staff and other adults are very well deployed to help pupils in these activities.

66. The school makes very effective use of the National Numeracy strategy to provide a planning framework and augments this by use of elements of published schemes to provide extension, variety and reinforcement to pupils' basic work. As a result, all areas of the subject, including using and applying mathematics, are well promoted. Assessment is securely based on numeracy objectives and marking is consistent and helpful.

67. The work offered to pupils with special educational needs is well matched to their ability and closely reflects the targets in their individual education plans. They are very well supported through grouping and setting, with very good arrangements to support them in small groups withdrawn from the class.

68. Higher-attaining pupils are also very well supported throughout the school and work is well designed to stretch them. As a result, a proportionately higher number of pupils achieves at a level above the national benchmark than would be expected within the overall pattern.

69. The subject is well co-ordinated and monitored by the deputy headteacher and the continuity she has provided has been a significant factor in the improvement in pupils' achievements. She provides good leadership in the subject and ensures that it receives a high priority in planning. Good use of professional development opportunities for both teaching and support staff has ensured a high level of expertise and confidence across the school. Overall there has been good improvement in mathematics since the previous inspection

Mathematics across the curriculum

70. The high emphasis within the school on promoting pupils' ability to select and apply the appropriate mathematical operations to a given problem ensures that they are well equipped to use these skills in other subjects, which they do with confidence. They are given realistic opportunities to develop these skills, as when Year 5/6 pupils design a patio area in a garden They apply their knowledge of shape and combine it with their understanding of money when they plan to meet given criteria and seek the cheapest way to achieve the desired area. They read scales and measurements in science and use their knowledge of co-ordinates to support map-reading in geography.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in science are well below average for pupils aged seven and eleven.
- The good quality of teaching.
- The good planning to support the development of investigative skills.
- Inconsistencies between classes in the amount of investigative, practical science activities undertaken.

Commentary

71. Lesson observations and an analysis of work undertaken during the current school year indicate that standards in science are well below average at age 7 and 11. However, these low standards are due both to the very low levels of attainment on entry to the school and the particularly large percentage of pupils with special educational needs in the current Year 6. Pupils' overall achievement, given these significant barriers to learning, is satisfactory. No significant differences were observed between the achievements of boys and girls and pupils with special educational needs are very well-supported and achieve well in terms of their learning targets due to the good quality of support provided.

72. The quality of teaching in all lessons observed was good. Teachers plan their lessons well, have good subject knowledge and demonstrate very good classroom and behaviour management skills. However, these skills are essential due to the very high level of behavioural and social and emotional needs as well as learning difficulties present in each cohort. In lessons observed, both the teacher and the learning support assistants had to repeatedly remind pupils about appropriate behaviour throughout the lesson. For these reasons, pupils on the whole make only satisfactory progress in lessons, despite the good teaching.

73. Although an analysis of written work indicates considerable variety in the amount of practical investigative tasks undertaken from class to class – exercise books from some classes are full of investigations, whilst others consist largely of worksheets and copied text – good provision was made in planning and resourcing the lessons observed for the development of scientific enquiry.

74. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make good progress. The subject co-ordinator has only recently taken over responsibility and, although she has introduced a new assessment system for the subject, she has not yet had time to observe teaching or monitor the quality of work produced. Overall, provision in science has improved satisfactorily since the previous inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving throughout the school
- There has been a recent improvement in resources and staff expertise.
- ICT is used effectively to support learning in other subjects.
- The co-ordinator provides good leadership.

Commentary

75. At the time of the previous inspection, standards were below average, resources were outdated and not all areas of the subject were taught. Good improvement in teachers' skills and resource provision since the previous inspection has meant that all of these weaknesses have been eradicated and at the end of Year 6, standards are now in line with national expectations. Although standards remain below average at the end of Year 2, they are still improving as these pupils have only had access to the improved resources for two years of their school career.

76. In all lessons observed during the inspection, teaching was at least good and there was one excellent lesson in Year 4. The computer suite is well used to support the development of pupils' skills. The recent purchase of an interactive whiteboard and a digital projector has improved the ability of teachers to demonstrate procedures and this has a positive impact on learning. The computer suite is networked to allow internet access and opportunities for independent research are now better than at the time of the previous inspection. Other resources that contribute to the development of ICT include digital cameras and an electronic microscope.

77. The subject co-ordinator provides good leadership, including exemplary teaching in the subject. She has developed a scheme of work based on good whole-school curriculum guidelines and teaching now places an emphasis on the systematic development of computer skills. She has implemented assessment procedures, established a number of clubs within the school and developed strong links with the local High School that include access to their facilities

78. The subject action plan for future development highlights a commitment to monitor standards of teaching and learning throughout the school and to secure sufficient whiteboards for use in each classroom.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

79. ICT consistently supports learning in other subjects of the curriculum. Pupils in Year 4 have developed their historical awareness by accessing websites based on "The Romans", whilst pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 have improved their data handling skills by developing spreadsheets, showing the profit that could be made through the introduction of a tuck-shop. As part of a design and technology project, pupils in Year 2 have used the "Paint" programme to design Joseph's coat. Teachers make good use of the digital camera to record learning activities and photographs are used effectively as part of a number of attractive displays throughout the school.

HUMANITIES

Only one religious education lesson was observed and this was with a group of special needs pupils, giving insufficient information about standards in the subject. In geography and history, work was sampled and it was not possible to observe any lessons in either subject area it was therefore impossible to form an overall judgement about provision in these subjects. Provision in **religious education** is satisfactory. The school follows the Staffordshire 'Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education' with its seven "paths of enquiry" – conveying meaning, inheriting a tradition, living in a community, marking special occasions, meeting for worship, responding to nature and thinking about God, supported by a scheme of work for Primary schools. Since only one lesson were observed during the inspection, it was not possible to make a judgement on the quality of teaching in the subject. A scrutiny of work undertaken during the current school year indicates that each year, pupils throughout the school undertake work designed to develop their knowledge and understanding in the main attainment targets of the agreed syllabus. During the current school year, pupils in Year 1 have studied the story of Moses and learned about Guru Nanak; Year 2 pupils have learned about the story and message of the parable of "The Prodigal Son", considered the concept of 'Celebrations' and have looked at 'special books'. Pupils in Year 3 have learned about Ramadan and Id and the role of fasting and have considered 'landmarks in life'. Year 4 have learned about Vishnu, Shiva and Ganesh and looked at the prayer of St. Francis, whilst pupils in the Year 5/6 classes have studied the Jewish religion and have written their own prayers. Regular whole-school assemblies make a

significant contribution to pupils' understanding of the Christian religion. In **geography and history** there is every indication both from the scrutiny of pupils' work and that of displays throughout the school that standards are broadly average and similar to those seen at the time of the previous inspection. However, the standard of pupils' written work is below average, although it is often presented very well. The curriculum is suitably balanced and provides a range of topics, planned to cater for the needs of all pupils within the school. The curriculum is enriched by a number of visits. Pupils develop their historical awareness through visits to Shugborough Hall to experience a Victorian school and Newcastle Borough Museum. Visits to local parks and a residential experience to Stanley Head for pupils in Years 5 and 6 contribute to developing pupils' geographical skills. ICT skills are promoted effectively through both the history and geography curriculum and research skills are much improved since the time of the previous inspection. Teachers provide pupils with regular opportunities to carry out independent research using both the school library and the Internet, such as when pupils in Years 5 and 6 have accessed the Internet to find out about world temperatures and what Chesterton was like in Victorian times. Although pupils do have opportunities to develop their literacy skills in both subjects, the quality of written work is hampered by poor writing standards. Leadership and management of the subjects are sound. The co-ordinators have ensured that policies and schemes of work are appropriate and both are beginning to develop and introduce assessment procedures. Resources for both subjects are satisfactory.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Too little teaching and learning were seen in art and design and design and technology to make secure judgements about the quality of the provision. There was also too little evidence of work in art and design across the school for any judgement to be made about standards. There was too little first-hand evidence for judgements to be made about the provision or standards in physical education. In **art and design** pupils are exploring and developing ideas, recording from direct observation and learning about the materials and processes utilised in art and design, craft and design. They identify similarities and differences in styles in the work of artists from different periods and attempt to develop their own work in various styles. Younger pupils use charcoal to illustrate the brushwork in Van Gogh paintings. They produce self-portraits in abstract style, both on paper and using a computer program. They complete half a portrait, matching hues and tones to the original half, showing good awareness of symmetry. They make recognisable observational drawings of flowers and use a variety of materials to make stamps for printing. Older pupils investigate pattern and demonstrate movement in art and design by slicing portraits. They design a garden and participate in a competition to design a Christmas card. In **design and technology** on the basis of scrutiny of work offered, pupils are attaining below the levels expected for their ages in design and technology, but in relation to their overall abilities and experiences, achievement is satisfactory. Pupils follow a nationally recognised scheme of work that ensures that they cover all aspects of the subject, albeit with a limited range of materials. Younger pupils explore structures and mechanisms when they produce models of playground equipment and use levers and pivots to reflect their visit to the Borough Toy Museum. Older pupils extend their construction skills when they use levers and linkages to design and make pages for a 'pop-up' book. They design and build an alarm system following an evaluation of how various systems work. They consider the important design features of a shelter, taking into account the purpose to which it will be put and selecting appropriate materials. Skills in textiles are developed when pupils design and make a container for money, embroidering a design and in ceramics when they make slab and coil pots in various styles. Arrangements for co-ordination are not yet fully established. Resources are limited and barely satisfactory. In **physical education** in the one lesson seen, Year 2 pupils were attaining broadly in line with expectations. They understand the importance of warm-up activities and demonstrate an awareness of methods of travelling and a range of single and multi-point balances. They work successfully alone and with a partner, creating movement sequences which they perform successfully and confidently. The school provides a full programme of physical education and augments its own resources by the use, for example, of the High School swimming pool, and by making use of the skills of a dance specialist also from the high school as well as outside specialists. Resources and facilities are sufficient, in addition to a suitably equipped multi-purpose hall; the school has a very good field which is used for football and athletics. There is a range of sporting activities offered as extra-curricular activities,

including badminton and pupils have the opportunity to represent the school from time to time in inter-school football matches.

Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving throughout the school.
- Pupils sing songs they know well with enthusiasm and good regard for tune.
- Year 2 pupils make good progress in learning the recorder.
- Pupils listen well to music and reflect on the mood it conveys.
- Lack of sustained musical experiences in the past means that there are significant gaps in pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Standards in music are hindered by the lack of a suitable range of resources, especially instruments.

Commentary

80. The school has, until recently, lacked the services of a music specialist, so that the subject has not been well promoted. As a result, standards have declined since the previous inspection when they were judged to be good. However, recent initiatives, including the use of part-time music instructors, are having a significant effect both on standards and the status of music within the school.

81. Achievement in reception to Year 2 is better than in Years 3 to 6, as the older pupils lack many of the 'building bricks' of musical knowledge and skills so that their progress is slower. Younger pupils, particularly recorder players in Year 2 are making rapid progress and, in this respect at least, are attaining in line with expectations. They produce a clear note, sustaining it where appropriate and read from a simple 'note letter' score to play tunes using the notes 'B', 'A' and 'G'. They take turns in conducting by pointing to the notes while the others play in time. Pupils recognise the role of silence to mark the beginning and end of a piece of music.

82. As at the time of the last inspection, younger pupils sing in unison from memory and follow the directions of their teachers. Older pupils learn a variety of words to the same tune and, when they are familiar with them, sing them with gusto and confidence. When pupils come together to sing in assembly, they sing in groups echoing each other as when they sing 'It's up to you', as well as giving strong renderings of well-known songs like 'Any dream will do'. They participate enthusiastically in the weekly hymn practice. When they are not familiar with a song, even the oldest pupils lack confidence and singing is weak.

83. Pupils in Year 5 are developing confidence in copying rhythms in a group. Higher-attaining pupils are developing good listening skills as they follow the teacher's with their eyes shut.

84. Pupils develop an understanding of the way that music is used to create or support moods and feelings and they listen attentively to words and music, noting how one supports or modifies the effect of the other. In assembly they use the background playing of 'Nimrod' from Elgar's 'Enigma Variations' as an effective aid to reflection and respond sensitively to a song by Marvin Gaye that refers to Martin Luther King.

85. Pupils have participated in a range of performances including a recent successful musical by older pupils, a Nativity presentation by younger pupils and a mass choir event.

86. Teaching, which is undertaken mainly by visiting specialists, is good and planning is securely based on National Curriculum objectives, using a nationally recognised scheme of work. Planning for

improvement includes the introduction of a range of genres, extending opportunities for composition including the use of tuned instruments, the consistent use of symbols and notation through the school and systems for recording and reporting pupils' achievements. Resources are barely sufficient overall and lack the breadth necessary to provide experiences drawing on a sufficiently wide range of cultural traditions.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education and citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school promotes citizenship well through pupil participation.
- There is a good programme for formal personal and social education.
- Circle time contributes well to pupils' ability to deal with issues.
- Assemblies contain well-taught themes that promote social and moral awareness.
- Pupils are increasingly able to make informed choices regarding personal and social issues.

Commentary

87. The school regards this area of its work as a prime focus and achieves considerable success in promoting it. The results are reflected in the high level of participation by pupils and their sense of investment in and belonging to the school community.

88. Personal, social and health education is well promoted through extended assemblies that offer pupils the chance to learn about and reflect on significant moral and social issues such as inequality and discrimination based on prejudice. They consider what it means to be strong in support of a cause and how people have put community interests before their own.

89. In personal, social and health education lessons, pupils participate in active learning exercises, such as planning school events and charitable fundraising. They learn from visits and visitors about a range of social issues including sex and drug awareness and about relationships, in a way that equips them to make sensible decisions. The regular residential visit to the Stanley Head Centre provides good opportunities for developing teamwork and recognising the need for mutual support.

90. Class organisation is designed to enable pupils to participate equally without conflict and this is well supported by the regular 'circle time' in each class. Pupils understand the rules of discussion and take turns to contribute, showing good respect for each other's contributions.

91. Personal, social and health education and citizenship are well supported through planning in other subjects so that the concepts pervade the curriculum. Environmental and ecological issues in science and geography and issues about caring for the world and its creatures in religious education contribute to overall understanding, while conflict in history is used to indicate the benefits of democratic and peaceful resolution.

92. The school council reflects the high regard for citizenship that is shown throughout the school. Pupils see it as having a significant influence on the life of the school and participate in it with enthusiasm and great seriousness. As a result, they feel a great sense of ownership of the decisions and a pride in their ability to influence the school environment.

93. Provision in this area is still developing and is being enthusiastically promoted by the co-ordinator. The influence of the subject is significant in contributing to the overall personal and social development of pupils as well as the quality of life within the school.

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	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	6
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4
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	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
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	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
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).

