

INSPECTION REPORT

**St John the Baptist Voluntary Aided Church of England
Primary School**

Great Amwell, Ware

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117432

Headteacher: Mrs M Jolley

Lead inspector: Mr G T Storer

Dates of inspection: 24th – 27th November 2003

Inspection number: 262159

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	142
School address:	Hillside Lane Great Amwell Ware Hertfordshire
Postcode:	SG12 9SE
Telephone number:	01920 870135
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr B Murphy
Date of previous inspection:	1 st June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St John the Baptist Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School is situated in a semi-rural setting in the village of Great Amwell, some two miles south-east of Ware. Principally, it serves the parish communities of Great Amwell and St Margaret's, although some pupils come from further afield. With 142 pupils on the school roll, this school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. During the last school year, the proportion of pupils (just over 3 per cent) known to be eligible for free school meals was below the national average. Pupils' attainments on entry to the school are about average, although a number of pupils face difficulties in their learning. There are 15 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs, although none needs support from a specialist teacher or trained assistant¹. The number of pupils who have special educational needs is below average for a school of this size. There are eight pupils who come from ethnic minority backgrounds, although none speaks English as an additional language. This is low in comparison with schools nationally. The school experiences a degree of pupil mobility that sometimes affects the school's performance in national tests, because year groups are small. During the last school year, 13 (almost one in every ten) pupils entered or left the school at times other than at the beginning of the Foundation Stage or the end of Year 6. The school was granted the Schools Achievement Award in 2002 and 2003.

¹ No pupils are currently subject to Statements of Special Educational Need that require this additional level of provision.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
19830	Mr G T Storer	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage Science Information and communication technology Physical education
9884	Mrs M Roscoe	Lay inspector	
19120	Mr D Pattinson	Team inspector	Special educational needs English Geography History
32621	Ms N Davies	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Music

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

St John the Baptist Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School is a good school that has many significant strengths but few important areas for improvement. Pupils of all ages and abilities make good progress in English, mathematics and science. Almost all pupils achieve the expected standards for their age and many achieve above average levels both at the age of seven and by the time that they leave the school. The overall quality of teaching is good and there are examples of very good teaching throughout the school. The school provides a good curriculum and the arrangements that promote pupils' personal development are successful. The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide good leadership. They receive sound support from other key staff and from the governing body. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Children get a good start to their education in the reception group.
- Pupils achieve high standards in core subjects² by the time that they leave the school.
- Many pupils also exceed nationally expected standards in design and technology, history, information and communication technology (ICT) and music.
- Attendance is well above the national average. Very regular attendance and punctuality are key factors in the high standards that many pupils achieve.
- Teaching is good. However, other than in English, mathematics and science, teachers do not assess regularly or use assessment information systematically enough in planning pupils' learning.
- Pupils have good attitudes and most behave well. They try hard and older pupils rise to the challenge to do their best. This good response improves the quality of their learning.
- The school provides a stimulating curriculum for its pupils.
- Current procedures for evaluating the work of the school and planning for improvement are not rigorous enough. Curriculum leaders do not get enough time to monitor their subjects effectively.
- The school has very good links with the community and with other schools that add considerably to the quality of pupils' learning. However, the nature and content of the school's communication with parents does not do enough to promote positive partnerships between home and school.

The school has maintained a good rate of improvement since its last inspection, although recent staff absences have posed barriers to improvement in some aspects of the school's work. Standards in core subjects have improved enormously and the proportion of good and very good teaching is higher than at the time of the previous inspection. The curriculum is better than it was because all pupils get regular opportunities to undertake practical and investigative tasks and able pupils do work that is challenging enough to extend their learning. The learning of children in the reception class has been improved by the provision of an outdoor play area. The school has made a sound start in introducing a structured approach to the use of assessment. However, in most subjects other than English and mathematics, the school still has a long way to go in this important area. Pupils' annual progress reports are better than they were, but the school still needs to improve other aspects of its communication with parents. The headteacher monitors aspects of the school's work more carefully, but subject leaders and governors need to be more involved in this process.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	A	A	A	A
mathematics	A	A	B	A
science	A*	A	B	A

² The core subjects are English, mathematics and science

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

Similar schools are those schools whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2

The achievement of pupils is good throughout the school.

When children enter the school, most perform at an average level for their age. However, they make good progress in reception and achieve almost all of the early learning goals³. Indeed, by the end of the reception year, a considerable number are above average in terms of their personal, social and emotional development and in some aspects of their communication and mathematical skills.

Almost all pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2. Last year, standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 were well above average. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils currently in Year 2 are on course to achieve above average standards. This does not indicate a drop in the quality of teaching or learning. Results vary somewhat from year to year because, in this small group, the performance of just one or two pupils can have a marked effect on the school's overall score. Nevertheless, the majority of pupils are likely to attain or exceed the nationally expected standard for their age by the end of the school year.

The table above shows that in 2003, pupils at the end of Year 6 achieved scores that were well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science. It also indicates that, although overall scores dipped slightly from the very high levels of 2002, these pupils had, nevertheless, made very good gains from the levels that they had achieved at the end of Year 2. Pupils currently in Year 6 are also on course to reach high standards. Their work suggests that almost all are well placed to achieve the nationally expected standard and that between a third and a half are likely to exceed national expectations in some or all core subjects.

By the time that they leave the school, pupils' performance is also set to exceed national expectations in design and technology, history, ICT and music. Pupils with special educational needs are achieving well in relation to the individual targets that have been identified for them. Pupils from different backgrounds make similar progress and boys and girls perform equally well.

Pupils achieve good standards in relation to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Arrangements that promote pupils' moral and social development are particularly effective. As a result, almost all pupils behave well in lessons and around the school and relationships at all levels are good. There is seldom bullying or other unpleasant behaviour in the playground. Staff and pupils treat each other with respect, which contributes strongly to the pleasant and harmonious atmosphere in and around school. Attendance and punctuality are very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good education for its pupils. Teaching and learning are **good**. Much teaching is stimulating and engages pupils' interest. Teachers insist on good standards of behaviour and ensure all pupils are included and have the chance to succeed. However, other than in the areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage⁴ and in the core subjects of the National Curriculum, teachers do not regularly assess and record pupils' attainment and progress. As a result, teachers do not always use assessment information systematically to plan work for pupils with different capabilities. This inconsistent approach is unsatisfactory because it affects the rate at which pupils learn in some subjects. The school enriches its curriculum with a good range of educational visits, activities and special events that bring learning to life and motivate pupils. Standards of care for pupils are good and induction arrangements for new pupils are effective.

³ Early learning goals – These are the standards that children are expected to reach by the end of their reception year.

⁴ The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three and ends at the end of the reception class year. It is a distinct stage, preparing children for later schooling, and is based on six areas of learning. These mainly refer to communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and personal and social development, but also include knowledge and understanding of the world, and physical and creative development.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is good. Since the last inspection, the headteacher has built an effective staff team. She has also successfully led the drive to raise standards and to improve the quality of education that the school provides. However, current arrangements for evaluating the work of the school and for planning for improvement are unsatisfactory because they are not sufficiently thorough. The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide good examples to staff, both in their teaching and in their leadership. However, other staff with management responsibilities are not contributing effectively to school improvement or to curriculum development because the school does not give them the time or resources needed to do their job properly. Governors are conscientious in overseeing the work of the school. They know many of the school's relative strengths and weaknesses but are not yet fully effective in monitoring aspects of the school's work, in holding the school to account for what it achieves or in ensuring that all statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Most parents are satisfied with the school. They are particularly pleased that their children like school and that the school provides pupils with a good range of activities. They are also pleased with the quality of teaching because they feel that staff expect pupils to work hard and that their children are making good progress. However, a minority of parents feel uncomfortable about approaching the school and have concerns about the information that they receive about their children's progress, about the homework that their children receive and about the extent to which the school seeks the views of parents. Inspectors endorse parents' positive views but also find evidence to support their concerns. Pupils' annual progress reports are of good quality, but the tone and content of some of the school's other communications cause some parents to feel excluded from full participation in the life and work of the school, especially as the governing body rarely seeks parents' views and opinions. Teachers' use of homework is generally satisfactory, although there are variations in frequency and amounts set. **Pupils are also very satisfied.** They are most happy that, although they have to work hard, they learn new things in lessons, teachers treat them fairly and there are adults to turn to if they are worried.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- introduce more systematic and rigorous procedures for evaluating the work of the school and give subject leaders and other staff with management responsibilities the time and resources to gather information about standards and the quality of aspects of the school's work;
- improve procedures for assessing and recording pupils' attainments in subjects other than English and mathematics and ensure that teachers use assessment information more systematically to identify what pupils with different capabilities need to learn next and how they need to adapt teaching to meet the needs of all pupils;
- improve the school's communications with parents so that they draw all parents into a more constructive partnership with the school;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- ensure that the school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents contain all of the required information;
- consult parents on the principles of the Behaviour Policy;
- provide an accessibility plan and inform parents of its contents.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils of all ages and abilities are achieving well. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress. By the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average. In Years 3 to 6, standards in core subjects are well above average. Pupils throughout the school are exceeding the expected standards for their age in most other subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By the end of the Foundation Stage, children achieve most of the early learning goals.
- By the end of Years 2 and 6, almost all pupils attain or exceed nationally expected standards in core subjects.
- Pupils in Year 6 are on course to improve considerably on the standards they achieved in core subjects at the end of Year 2.
- Standards in most other subjects are good and many pupils achieve above average standards.
- Pupils with special educational needs are doing well in relation to the targets that are set for them.

Commentary

Key Stage 1

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores⁵ in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.3 (17.2)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	16.7 (14.8)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	17.6 (17.8)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 18 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Key Stage 2

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.4 (28.8)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	28.1 (28.4)	26.8 (26.7)
science	29.7 (30.2)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 22 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. When children enter the reception group, most have knowledge, understanding and skills that are average for their age. They make good progress during their time in reception and so achieve almost all of the early learning goals⁶. Indeed many are on course to be above average,

⁵ Average point scores are a statistical method for comparing a school's performance in a single core subject or in all core subjects with the performance of all schools or of similar schools. The school's scores are derived from the levels that pupils in Years 2 and 6 achieve in the annual National Curriculum tests.

⁶ Early learning goals – These are the standards that children are expected to reach by the end of their reception year.

- particularly in terms of their personal, social and emotional development and in some aspects of their communication and mathematical skills, by the end of the reception year.
2. Almost all pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2. Last year, standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 were well above the national average and above the average for similar schools. Over the last five years, standards in Key Stage 1 have risen more quickly than in schools nationally. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils currently in Year 2 are on course to achieve above average standards. This does not indicate a drop in the quality of teaching or learning. Results vary somewhat from year to year because, in this small group, the performance of just one or two pupils can have a marked effect on the school's overall score. Nevertheless, the vast majority of pupils are likely to attain or exceed the nationally expected standard for their age by the end of the school year.
 3. The table above shows that in 2003, pupils at the end of Year 6 achieved scores that were well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science. Along with the table in the summary, it also indicates that, although overall scores dipped slightly from the very high levels of 2002, these pupils had, nevertheless, made very good gains from the levels that they had achieved at the end of Year 2. Standards in Years 1 and 2 have also risen more quickly than in schools nationally in recent years. Pupils currently in Year 6 are on course for high standards. Their work suggests that almost all are well placed to achieve the nationally expected standard and that between a third and a half are likely to achieve the higher Level 5⁷ in some or all core subjects.
 4. Moreover, pupils are achieving well in other subjects. By the end of Year 2, many pupils achieve higher than normal standards in science, design and technology, history and personal, social and health education, including citizenship (PSHE&C). By the end of Year 6, many pupils are set to exceed national expectations in design and technology, history, ICT, music and PSHE&C. Pupils with special educational needs are achieving well in relation to the individual targets that have been identified for them. Pupils from different backgrounds make similar progress to most other pupils and boys and girls perform equally well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Arrangements for promoting spiritual, moral, social and cultural development work well. Attendance and punctuality are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' good attitudes and behaviour in lessons add to the quality of their learning.
- Pupils behave well and treat all members of the school community with care and respect.
- Opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are well planned and contribute to pupils' positive attitudes and behaviour.
- Attendance and punctuality are very good.

Commentary

5. The pupil questionnaire indicated that most pupils like their school because they learn new things in lessons and are expected to work hard. Inspection evidence substantiates these views. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good, they are keen to learn and try hard in their lessons individually, in groups and as classes. These positive attitudes improve pupils' learning and progress.
6. Pupils' behaviour is good, both in lessons and outside in the playground. Staff expect pupils to behave well in and around the school and pupils live up to these expectations. Pupils behave well because they are clear about the behaviour code and adults use it consistently.

⁷ Pupils who achieve National Curriculum Level 4 at the end of Year 6 are in line with national expectations. Pupils who achieve the higher Level 5 are exceeding national expectations

Consequently, pupils treat lunchtime supervisors, teaching assistants and teachers with courtesy and respect and readily respond to their requests. This good behaviour means the school has not excluded any pupils during the last school year.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White - Irish
White – any other white background
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – any other mixed background
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
110	0	0
1	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0
4	0	0
11	0	0

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

- There are good relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults. Teachers encourage pupils to work together purposefully. Pupils also develop good relationships between themselves and with adults through their many shared experiences and opportunities. For example, pupils spoke positively about residential visits and about the whole school making tiles in a recent art project, particularly appreciating the fact that teachers, teaching assistants and catering staff were involved too. During a boys' choir rehearsal, boys from Year 2 to Year 6 encouraged and supported each other to perform their parts as well as enjoying themselves enormously.
- The school provides effectively for pupils' personal development. Opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are well planned to help pupils develop sensitivity, maturity and self-confidence. The wide range of school visits and activities help pupils to learn about their communities and their responsibilities. In the pupil questionnaire, nearly all pupils felt they could approach an adult in school if anything was worrying them. There are also effective procedures to help pupils who find themselves in difficulty. There is a 'buddy bench' if they have nobody to play with, a letter box through which to report bullying incidents and a carer system where older pupils take it in turns to help younger pupils during breaks and playtimes. As a result, the school functions as a caring community. Pupils are also encouraged to think about wider communities and to learn about and respect different ways of life.
- Last year, attendance was well above the national average. In the current year, attendance rates remain high. Very regular attendance and punctuality are key factors in the high standards that many pupils achieve.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	4.3	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.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good education for its pupils. Teaching is effective, the curriculum is stimulating and the school takes good care of its pupils. There are weaknesses in some aspects of the school's partnership with parents, although links with the wider community and with other schools are very good and add to the quality of pupils' learning.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. However, teachers' assessments and their use of assessment information in their planning for some subjects are unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is consistently good throughout the school.
- Teachers manage pupils well and insist on high standards of behaviour.
- Teachers set work that is challenging. Activities are planned to bring the best out of all pupils and to enable higher attaining pupils to achieve above average standards.
- Teachers use support assistants well to help pupils learn.
- Pupils' positive response in most lessons helps them to learn.
- In most subjects, other than English, mathematics and science, procedures for assessing and recording pupils' attainments are not systematic enough and teachers do not use assessment effectively to plan the next steps in pupils' learning.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 25 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0%	16%	64%	20%	0%	0%	0%

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons

10. Teaching and learning have improved since the school's last inspection. Teaching is consistently good throughout the school. Four out of every five lessons seen during the inspection were good or very good and there were examples of very good teaching in both key stages. There was no unsatisfactory teaching.
11. All teachers enjoy good relationships with pupils. They have high expectations of pupils and insist that they behave well. They manage pupils effectively and establish classroom routines that promote effective learning. Teachers have wide-ranging subject knowledge. As a result, teaching is authoritative and accurate. Secure subject knowledge also enables teachers to pose skilful and probing questioning that helps pupils to develop essential understanding, for example during a complex science lesson in Years 5/6, during which pupils devised tests to find out how different solids dissolve. In the best lessons, teaching is brisk and purposeful and so keeps pupils interested and involved. Teachers set tasks in English, mathematics and science lessons at different levels of difficulty so that pupils with different capabilities can succeed and make good progress in relation to their own prior attainment.
12. Teachers use resources well to improve pupils' learning. In particular, they plan the role of the support assistants carefully. As a result, classroom assistants support the work of teachers well and contribute significantly to pupils' learning. Support staff work effectively to ensure that pupils with special educational needs receive the support that they need to overcome their difficulties and make progress alongside others in the class.

13. The quality of learning mirrors that of teaching and is improved in both key stages by pupils' consistently good attitudes and behaviour. All teachers use encouragement and praise very well to motivate pupils and to enhance their self-esteem and confidence. As a result, most pupils apply themselves well to the tasks they are given and older pupils rise to the challenge of demanding work. When required to work in pairs and groups, they co-operate and collaborate effectively.
14. Staff in the Foundation Stage assess children's attainments when they first enter the school and use periodic and on-going assessments effectively to track their progress through to the end of reception. The school conducts the annual statutory and optional National Curriculum tests and supplements these in English, mathematics, science and some other subjects with additional half-termly or end-of-topic assessments. However, some of these assessments are inconsistent in the form that they take and some assessments are inaccurate. For example, teachers' assessments in science at the end of Year 2 suggest that pupils do less well in science than in other core subjects. This view is not borne out by inspection evidence, which indicates quite strongly that standards are every bit as high in science as they are in other subjects.
15. Teachers use assessment information satisfactorily to track pupils' progress in the core subjects, to target additional support and to modify tasks to meet the needs of pupils with different abilities. Similarly, effective assessment and recording procedures usually result in the early identification of pupils with special educational needs. They form the basis for effective individual education plans, which help these pupils to make good progress towards the targets that are set for them. However, teachers do not consistently assess and record what pupils learn in other subjects. Therefore, teachers do not have the accurate and up-to-date information that they need in order to build carefully on pupils' prior learning in all subjects. This is unsatisfactory because it results in tasks that are too easy for some and too difficult for others and prevent some pupils from doing as well as they can.
16. Pupils increasingly have personal targets to help them to better understand their own learning and progress. However, this important initiative in on-going assessment is still at an early stage of development and has not had time to impact fully on pupils' learning or on developing their understanding of how they can improve. Most marking is sound because it not only celebrates pupils' efforts but also helps them to move forward with their learning.

The curriculum

The school provides a good curriculum, which is enriched by a wide range of additional activities.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan a stimulating programme of visits, activities and special events.
- Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is successful.
- The school ensures that the curriculum is inclusive.
- Curriculum evaluation and development is limited.

Commentary

17. The school provides a stimulating curriculum for its pupils. It teaches all the subjects that it should and also offers French to all pupils in Year 6. Furthermore, teachers plan a good range of visits, activities and special events, which successfully motivate pupils and promote enthusiasm for learning. Residential visits enhance the ICT curriculum and add considerably to pupils' personal development. Visitors to the school bring pupils' learning to life, and develop pupils' understanding of the wider community, as do educational visits to local restaurants, shops and places of interest. The school has a good range of after-school clubs, which

supports pupils' learning in science, music and physical education and gives some pupils the chance to learn Spanish.

18. The school successfully promotes pupils' personal, social and health education. PSHE lessons and circle⁸ time give pupils regular, planned opportunities to develop greater awareness of issues that they face in everyday life. Health related issues also form a regular part of science and physical education lessons. The school has recently qualified for the Healthy Schools Award, which has helped raise pupils' awareness of their own health and well-being.
19. The school is sensitive to the needs of individual pupils and works hard to ensure that all pupils are included in every aspect of school life. Pupils with special educational needs have full access to the school's curriculum. Work is adapted to meet pupils' needs so that they can make good gains in learning. Staff value the contributions of all pupils and use their knowledge of individual pupils well to make sure that all pupils get a chance to contribute to activities or discussions. Where this is most successful, teachers go beyond this to make special provision for pupils who may not naturally contribute. For example, there is a boys' singing club (which also plays football) to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to develop their singing skills, but not at the expense of other activities. Similarly, all pupils take part in the school productions. The expressive and performing arts feature strongly in the school's curriculum because the school sees this as an area where 'every pupil has the chance to shine'.
20. Although the school has curriculum plans to ensure that pupils cover the curriculum systematically as they progress through the school, subject co-ordinators do not have the opportunity to monitor and evaluate how these plans are put into practice and how well they support pupils to learn. They are not given time to see the impact of these plans on pupils' learning and achievement. This is unsatisfactory because they cannot readily judge how well pupils are achieving and how their progress in particular subjects could be improved.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils are well cared for and involved effectively in school development. Provision for pupil support and guidance is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most policies and practices associated with pupils' care and support are effective.
- Pupils do not always receive sound guidance on how to improve their work in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Pupils participate at various levels in the decision-making process.

Commentary

21. There are effective arrangements to ensure a good standard of care for pupils. The school's policy and practice for dealing with child protection issues are in line with local authority guidelines. Staff have received thorough training and know how they should respond. A major outcome is the ease with which pupils are able to seek adult help if worried or concerned. Most parents are satisfied with this aspect of the school's work.
22. Sound procedures ensure that most statutory health and safety requirements are met. Staff are alert to safety considerations that relate to teaching because of the risk assessments they complete. However, pupils' activities are assessed informally and, as a result, current arrangements, such as those that allow quiet and boisterous playground activities to take place in close proximity, sometimes result in minor upsets or accidents. A satisfactory adult to child

⁸ Circle Time – when younger pupils sit together and share thoughts and feelings or talk about things that are important to or concern them.

ratio is maintained at this time but not enough is done to ensure ball games do not interfere with others' enjoyment of the playground. When minor accidents occur, staff readily provide care, comfort and, if necessary, first aid.

23. Induction arrangements are providing children with a smooth start in the reception group and ensure they settle well. Pupils receive sound advice and guidance as they move through the school. Teachers and pupils get along well together and pastoral care is good. The introduction of PSHE and citizenship to the curriculum has improved the quality of personal guidance available to pupils. In the academic domain, personal targets in English, mathematics and science involve pupils in their learning and progress, although this level of academic advice is not yet available in other subjects.
24. Pupils' views are sought regularly and valued. They have recently been consulted about school rules. Pupils' democratic voice is expressed through the school council and pupils with special educational needs contribute to reviews of their progress.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with the community and with other schools are very good, and at a satisfactory level with parents.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most parents are happy with the school and most are able to support learning in meaningful ways.
- Systems for communicating with parents are not promoting positive partnerships between home and school.
- Parents value the good range of activities provided and the contribution they make to pupils' personal development.
- Parents have not been consulted about their needs and expectations and a significant number of parents are dissatisfied with the manner in which their concerns are acknowledged and dealt with.
- The prospectus and governors' annual report to parents do not include all required information.
- Educational links with other schools are very good and regular visits and visitors from the community enliven the curriculum.

Commentary

25. The questionnaire and the meeting with parents before the inspection revealed that the majority of parents are happy with the quality of education provided for their children. They give the school constructive support, both by contributing to pupils' learning in the home and by providing financial support for the many additional activities that enrich the school's curriculum. However, a significant number would like improved lines of communication between themselves and the school. A number of parents expressed concern about the way the school works with them in solving complaints about access to class teachers and long-term bullying issues. Inspectors looked into these concerns and judged that the school places insufficient importance on gaining parents' views or responding to their concerns in a spirit of partnership.
26. Most parents are happy with the amount of information that they receive about their children's progress. Annual reports meet all current requirements and contain 'user-friendly' targets for improvement. The prospectus encourages parents to raise day-to-day concerns with the class teacher. However, in practice, almost all meetings between class teachers and parents have to be arranged through formal avenues. This practice is unsuccessful in easing communications between parents and their children's teachers and winning parents' hearts and minds because it acts as a barrier between the school and a number of parents.

27. Newsletters are frequent but there is an imbalance in the content between matters of an educational interest to parents and requests for payments or reminders about 'do's and don'ts'. Opportunities are missed to draw parents more fully into the work of the school by celebrating achievement, informing them about what is to be taught in each class or describing homework tasks. Despite their frequency, some parents are unsure about aspects of school policy and practice and this leads to misunderstanding and concern. There are also omissions from the statutory information for parents contained in the school prospectus and the governors' annual report.
28. The system used to involve parents in the life of the school by seeking, valuing and acting on their views is unsatisfactory. Parents' views were not sought, for example, before finalising the Behaviour Policy. Similarly, there is a mismatch between what parents and the school consider to be bullying. As a result, even though the school is taking positive steps to eliminate all forms of harassment and upsetting behaviour, some parents believe that the arrangements for following up alleged bullying incidents are ineffective. Parents simply do not know about the school's anti-bullying strategies or have confidence in their implementation because the processes for consulting parents, incorporating their views in development plans and involving them in the every day life of the school are ineffective
29. Pupils gain much from the school's very good links with other educational establishments and with the wider community. Links with local secondary schools ensure that Year 6 pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Work with other schools and colleges also supports pupils' learning in science and physical education and the arts. Representatives of the local church, road and rail safety officers and visiting theatre groups support pupils' personal development well. The school also has productive links with the local business community. These have benefited pupils by involving them in educational projects, such as the art competition in support of 'fair trade', and by sponsoring the provision improved facilities, for example in the outdoor play area for children in the Foundation Stage.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide good leadership. Leadership by other staff is satisfactory, but requires development. The school is well managed and governance is sound.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has high aspirations and a clear vision for the school.
- The deputy headteacher sets a good example to staff and is helping to shape the school's direction.
- The management of the school is good, with a clear focus on maintaining high standards.
- Current procedures for evaluating the work of the school are not rigorous enough.
- The school makes the most of the money it has.
- The governing body carries its responsibilities satisfactorily, but is not yet holding the school to account for what it achieves.

Commentary

30. The headteacher provides good leadership, as at the time of the last inspection. She has established an agenda for school improvement, which has led to higher standards and an improved quality of education since the last inspection. She has inspired a sense of shared purpose among all staff and governors who are keen to build on the school's recent success. All hold the headteacher in high regard and work well together to help secure high standards. The headteacher receives good support from her deputy, who carries out her management responsibilities effectively and sets a very good example in the classroom because of the quality of her teaching.

31. The headteacher has implemented sound systems for monitoring standards and the quality of teaching and learning and has established an annual timetable to ensure there are no omissions. Pupils' performances in the national tests are analysed in order to identify and overcome weaknesses in the curriculum. The outcomes of monitoring inform the on-going training of teachers and support staff and contribute to increased efficiency. Procedures are kept under constant review and, as a result, most aspects of school management are effective.
32. School improvement planning is satisfactory. There is a clear agenda for raising standards in key aspects of the school's work and current arrangements effectively determine the best use of the funds available to support the school's development priorities. However, current arrangements for evaluating the work of the school and for planning for improvement are unsatisfactory. They are not as thorough as they should be, because subject leaders are not sufficiently involved in monitoring the school's work. Most do not have the chance to check how plans are being put into practice in their subject or to evaluate the effect of this on pupils' learning. This is unsatisfactory and is inhibiting the overall development of the curriculum.
33. The governing body provides sound support for the headteacher and carries out its statutory duties satisfactorily. Governors know the strengths of the school and the areas where it needs to improve. They take a keen interest in its development and are kept well informed by the headteacher. However, the governing body does not yet challenge enough in all areas. It is not yet fully effective in monitoring aspects of the school's work, in holding the school to account for what it achieves or in ensuring that all statutory requirements are met.
34. The school secretary works tirelessly to ensure that the school runs smoothly and supports the headteacher very well. Day to day administration and financial control are very efficient and effective. Careful and regular monitoring of spending patterns ensures that the school's budget is used efficiently to benefit the pupils. The governing body is committed to ensuring that all funds are wisely spent. The surplus on last year's budget was slightly larger than normal, but this is satisfactory, because it was part of a planned programme to improve access and facilities for the disabled. Even though the cost of educating each pupil is quite high, the very good standards that pupils achieve indicate that the school gives satisfactory value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	424,566	Balance from previous year	1,051
Total expenditure	402,493	Balance carried forward to the next	23,124
Expenditure per pupil	2,904		

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

35. Children enter school with average attainment. They make good progress in the reception class because teaching is good and the curriculum provides a wide range of interesting activities that are well matched to their needs and soundly balanced between those directed by adults and those chosen by the children. Almost all are on course to attain the early learning goals for children of their age. Teaching is particularly successful in aspects of personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. Children achieve well because the teacher and support assistant assess and record children's skills very carefully. They systematically use the information they gain to identify and meet individual children's learning and development needs. The teaching assistant supports groups and individuals purposefully and makes a significant contribution to children's learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff in reception successfully ensure that the children settle very securely into school life.
- The teacher and support assistant value each child's efforts and effectively boost their self-esteem.
- The children quickly learn and accept the boundaries that are set in school.

Commentary

36. The parents meet the staff and the children visit the school before they start. These well-planned arrangements successfully promote a smooth transition between home and school. The teacher and teaching assistant ensure that the reception class is very welcoming and classroom systems are firmly established. As a result, all boys and girls grow in assurance in their approach to activities and daily routines.
37. Staff give lots of individual praise and encouragement, so that the children are motivated to do their best and show pride in what they have achieved. Teachers plan topics that extend the children's self-knowledge, for example by drawing self-portraits. Many reception activities involve working or playing co-operatively with others, taking turns and sharing. These activities build children's confidence in learning and in their relationships with others so that most achieve the standards expected for their age.
38. The teacher has high expectations of the children's involvement and behaviour. The children are already learning what is expected of them and beginning to respond eagerly. They settle to tasks and maintain interest when working independently or as part of a group. They handle books and equipment carefully. Most respond promptly to instructions and behave sensibly in their classrooms, in the outdoor area and when they move around school. The successful teamwork between all adults in the reception class gives the children an effective model of co-operation, concern for others and a thoughtful approach to work.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teacher carefully plans worthwhile opportunities for the children to improve their communication skills.
- The children enjoy sharing a varied range of stories, rhymes and non-fiction books.
- The teachers successfully promote children's writing skills through imaginative activities.
- Some teaching is quite formal but nevertheless meets pupils' learning needs.

Commentary

39. Children in reception talk purposefully to adults and each other. Several children are already quite articulate and, at times, outspoken. However, staff set a good example by valuing all such 'contributions' and finding the time to hear what they have to say. This promotes a joy in speaking and a willingness to listen. There are also many opportunities for children to talk informally, as part of their imaginative play. As a result, children make rapid progress. They develop confidence in communicating with others and good speaking and listening skills.
40. The teacher successfully implements a programme of lively, early reading activities, which successfully stimulates children's interest and promotes learning. They are already beginning to associate letters and sounds and recognise familiar words. Stories such as *Mitch the Fish* hold children spellbound and add to their enjoyment of books. Parents are very supportive of the home reading scheme and are conscientious in sharing books and hearing their children read. As a result, many children achieve well. By the end of the reception year almost all are well launched into reading and standards are above those normally expected of five-year-olds.
41. Children regularly practise writing patterns and form their letters carefully. They understand that writing conveys meaning. Imaginative activities, such as writing a prayer for grandma or doing their writing on the computer, stimulate the desire to write. By the end of the reception year, children attain average standards. They write their own names and simple words, phrases or sentences independently.
42. Each day in reception is full of opportunities for children to develop communication, language and literacy skills (see below). However, teaching during the daily literacy lesson is quite formal and carefully structured. The teacher uses information from her on-going assessments to group children according to their prior attainment. She allows higher attaining reception children to work alongside pupils in Year 1 on tasks taken from the National Literacy Strategy, while younger or less able Year 1 pupils undertake tasks normally associated with the Foundation Stage. This approach works well, because it ensures that the needs of children of different ages and abilities are met and that all make good progress.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children make good progress in counting and recognising numbers.
- The teacher plans activities that successfully promote children's mathematical development alongside other areas of learning and are well matched to children's prior attainment.
- Mathematical activities contribute well to children's language and communication skills.

Commentary

43. Children develop a good sense of number, order and sequence through regular counting routines. The teacher plans a good balance of games and practical activities to encourage children to practise these skills. They regularly join in number rhymes and songs, which successfully reinforce their learning. Many are on course to exceed expectations in this aspect of mathematical development.
44. The teacher plans a balance of formal activities and activities based on play. Tasks such as counting, ordering, making up number pairs to ten, completing jigsaws and making clocks successfully promote children's interest in number and keep them fully involved. The teacher uses on-going assessments to ensure that tasks are well matched to children's prior attainment and so move their learning on. There is a clear emphasis on children explaining what they are doing and why, which reinforces mathematical understanding as well as fostering communication skills.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD, CREATIVE AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

There was insufficient evidence to make judgements about standards or the overall quality of teaching and learning in these areas. The small amount of work seen was as expected for children of this age. However, planning for this term and for the school year indicates that provision for these areas is **sound**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children regularly use computers and are already developing sound basic skills.
- Children experience a good range of creative activities.
- The development of communication and language plays an important part in most activities.
- Facilities and resources for physical development are better than they were at the time of the previous inspection.

Commentary

45. From their earliest days in school, children use the computers as part of their every-day work. They learn to control the mouse by dressing teddy and soon progress to using the creative tools to make pictures and to using the keyboard for basic word processing. These activities contribute to children's growing **knowledge and understanding of the world** and are a firm foundation for the development of ICT skills in later years. They also add to children's enjoyment of creative and literary tasks and so promote positive attitudes to school life and work.
46. **Creative activities** form part of every day's work in reception. Children have ample opportunity to engage in imaginative play. They can dress up as a princess or pretend to bake cakes. They use construction toys or experiment freely with art materials. There are also guided activities which develop children's skills, for example of how powder paint can be applied, and extend their understanding of how colours mix. These activities also contribute to children's physical development because using tools, equipment and toys develops their co-ordination and fine control.
47. The development of communication and language is an important component of all of these activities. Staff take every opportunity to extend children's vocabulary and to encourage both correct and creative use of language. As a result, children correctly name parts of the computer or describe music as sounding like 'jelly wobbling' or 'rain coming down'. This consistent emphasis on language makes a strong contribution to standards by the end of the Foundation stage.

48. The school has better facilities and resources for promoting children's **physical development** than it had at the time of the last inspection. There is a secure outdoor play area that is well equipped with a play house, covered decking, a tarmac area marked with tracks for the wheeled toys and a storage shed for these and other items of outdoor equipment. As a result, the Foundation Stage curriculum is better than it was because free and structured physical development activities form a much more regular part of children's experience.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **good** with many pupils achieving well, especially in reading and writing.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are much higher than at the time of the last inspection.
- The consistently good teaching is helping to secure high standards.
- The subject is soundly led, but the co-ordinator is not yet fully effective.
- Analysis of data from national tests is helping pupils to improve.
- Minor weaknesses prevent pupils from making even better progress.
- Literacy skills are developed well through other subjects.

Commentary

49. Standards in English have improved significantly since the last inspection, when pupils' attainments in all areas were in line with national expectations. Standards are now above average by the end of Year 2 and are well above average by the end of Year 6. Standards are higher in Year 6 than they were at the time of the 2003 national tests because teachers are giving greater emphasis to writing throughout the school and this is improving pupils' overall levels of performance. Pupils write for a wide range of purposes, which include letters, instructions, captions, poems, stories, diaries and newspaper reports. Standards are high in reading because teachers ensure that all pupils read regularly and discuss their books with adults. In this regard, most parents support their children well at home. As a result, most pupils read with fluency, accuracy, understanding and expression by the end of Year 6. Pupils have many opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills through question and answer sessions, individual and group presentations and by taking part in class and school productions. These opportunities result in many pupils becoming confident and articulate speakers by the time they leave the school. Pupils with special educational needs are achieving well and pupils from different backgrounds make similar progress, as do boys and girls.
50. Teaching is consistently good in both key stages. Most teachers ensure that they share lesson objectives with pupils at the start, evaluate the extent to which they have been met at the end and record what they know and understand to help them to build carefully on what they have learnt. Pupils now have personal targets that help them overcome identified weaknesses and enable them to understand how well they are learning. Most teachers use marking constructively to help pupils to move forward as well as to celebrate their achievements. Teachers are using information gained in this way to group pupils by ability, so that work in lessons is more precisely matched to their needs and so enables them to make the best possible progress. In a particularly effective lesson in Years 5/6, the teacher's subject knowledge was secure, the lesson's content was challenging for pupils of all abilities and the pace was brisk enough to keep pupils involved. The teacher's probing questioning helped develop pupils' understanding of poetic devices and her enthusiasm ensured pupils' attitudes to learning were good.

51. The subject is soundly led and there are clear plans for its continued development. Data from national tests are now being analysed to help identify and overcome weaknesses. However, the subject co-ordinator is not fully effective because she does not regularly monitor teaching, learning and pupils' work in order to identify what is working well and what still needs doing. As a result, some areas still require attention to enable some pupils to achieve higher standards. Pupils do not always readily transfer the handwriting skills they are taught to other areas of their written work, resulting in variable standards of presentation. Lists of words pupils are required to learn for spelling tests are not always matched to their precise needs to enable them to make the best possible progress. Pupils make some use of ICT to draft and re-draft stories to help improve their quality but there is scope for this aspect to be extended.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

52. Pupils write widely and so develop their literacy skills in other subjects. For example, in science, they write independently about their investigations with magnets and springs and there are further worthwhile examples of the planned development of literacy skills in work associated with ICT, the humanities and the expressive and performing arts.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in mathematics are high.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning in mathematics are very good.
- Pupils use and apply mathematics well in lessons and across the curriculum.

Commentary

53. Standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and well above average by the end of Year 6. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when standards were average throughout the school. In the 2003 national tests, almost all Year 2 and Year 6 pupils achieved the expected standard for their age and more than a third achieved at the higher level. The work of pupils in the current Year 2 confirms that most pupils are on course to achieve or exceed national expectations.
54. Lesson observations and the work of pupils in the current Year 6 indicate that almost all pupils are likely to attain the nationally expected standard and the proportion of pupils achieving at a higher level is set to rise. The few pupils with special educational needs also achieve well because they are well supported by teaching assistants who make a significant contribution to their progress. Girls' achievements have improved in recent years and are now on a par with those of boys.
55. The teaching of mathematics is good. Teachers have good levels of knowledge and understanding and prepare carefully for their lessons. Teachers are clear about what they want pupils of different abilities to learn. Sharing this with pupils makes sure that all pupils are involved from the start. Lessons begin well with lively and interesting mental activities. Teachers make sure that they keep all pupils thinking by using 'real life' examples, finding different ways of giving information or asking challenging questions. Teachers bring pupils together at the end of lessons and use this time effectively to make sure that all pupils understand what they have learned.
56. Pupils respond very well to these approaches and pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. Most pupils work very hard on their activities because their work is demanding and

because their teachers' expectations are high and productive habits of concentration and perseverance are firmly established in most classes. Pupils generally make good progress because tasks are well matched to their previous learning. Pupils are encouraged to discuss their work with others using mathematical words, symbols and diagrams and to develop their own strategies for solving problems. Teachers make more use of investigative work than they did at the time of the previous inspection and, as a result, pupils' understanding is more secure.

57. The mathematics co-ordinator has done a sound job of leading developments in her subject. She regularly shares new information and initiatives with other staff and all teachers have recently attended training. She has developed the use of mathematics targets with pupils and has taken steps to develop more consistent planning for mathematics across year groups and classes. However, she is largely unable to check on the impact of these developments on teaching and pupils' learning because she has not been given the time to observe classroom practice or monitor individual pupils' achievements systematically.

Mathematics across the curriculum

58. Teachers know the value of linking aspects of subjects in order to develop pupils' learning and plan to include mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding in their work in other subjects. There are good examples of pupils' work in science, ICT, art, and design and technology that add to their mathematical understanding. As one Year 2 pupil commented in a design and technology lesson, 'It's good because we are doing maths and design together. We are using what we learned in maths to make our frame'.

SCIENCE

The school makes **effective** provision for science and, as a result, standards are considerably higher than at the time of the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By the time that pupils leave the school, their science scores in National Curriculum tests are well above average.
- Pupils have made very good progress from their scores at the end of Year 2.
- Pupils receive a regular 'diet' of practical and investigative work.
- Teachers have high expectations and pitch work at a challenging level.
- Procedures for assessing and recording pupils' attainments in science are inconsistent and, at times, inaccurate.
- The science co-ordinator does not have opportunities to observe teaching and to evaluate aspects of pupils' learning at first hand. This limits her ability to maintain an overview of standards in the subject.

Commentary

59. Standards in science are considerably higher than they were at the time of the last inspection. However, teachers' assessments at the end of Year 2 have proved to be unreliable in recent years. They have suggested that attainment in science has been below or even well below average for some years and that pupils were doing less well in science than in other subjects. These indications are not substantiated by the work of pupils currently in Years 2, 3 or 4. Almost all of these pupils are achieving the nationally expected standard for their age and up to a third is on course for above average standards, either seven or eleven years of age. Standards are above average by the end of Key Stage 1 and well above average by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils' test scores at the end of Year 6 have varied somewhat from year to year because, in a small year group, the school's average score is affected by the performance of just a few pupils. However, work in the books of pupils currently in Year 6 confirms this picture.

of consistently high standards and achievement and indicates that the proportion of pupils achieving the above average level is set to rise again.

60. Standards have risen because the teaching of science is good. Teachers have good levels of knowledge and understanding and they prepare carefully for their lessons. As a result, their teaching is authoritative and accurate and they use questions skilfully to make pupils think more deeply and to extend their understanding. They have high expectations and successfully establish habits of good behaviour and positive response that enable them to manage complex practical activities effectively. Teachers are not using assessment information effectively to modify tasks to meet the needs of pupils with different capabilities. However, they make particularly good use of classroom assistants to support the learning of younger or less able pupils or those with special educational needs and so these pupils are usually able to succeed and make good progress alongside others in the class.
61. Another factor impacting on standards is the quality of the curriculum. Informal monitoring indicated that teachers were not giving enough emphasis to the teaching of investigative skills. The co-ordinator has successfully remedied this weakness through a combination of improved guidance and support. Pupils' work shows that most now receive a regular 'diet' of investigative work that takes their understanding to a higher level. Similarly, tasks in all year groups are set at a more demanding level and so enable higher attaining pupils to achieve above average standards in many aspects of their work. Activities such as the 'science club' and visiting science *road shows* bring pupils' learning to life and motivate them to succeed.
62. The co-ordinator has also introduced a system to enable teachers to assess pupils' skills in scientific investigation. However, she has not been able to check the consistency or progress of this important initiative or to evaluate standards or the quality of teaching and learning in individual classes because she has not been given the necessary time to carry out these tasks. This lack of provision for monitoring is unsatisfactory because it reduces the pace of development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Inspectors only saw ICT being taught as a component of other lessons. These lessons, along with examples of pupils' completed work and discussions with pupils, form the basis of judgements on provision, overall standards and about pupils' response to this subject. However, there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about the overall quality of teaching and learning.

Provision for ICT is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are higher than at the time of the previous inspection.
- The school has improved its resources and facilities for the teaching of ICT.
- Teachers and classroom assistants have sufficient knowledge and understanding of ICT to teach basic skills effectively.
- Teachers are not using assessment data to plan work for pupils with different capabilities.
- Procedures for checking on standards and the quality of provision are not established.

Commentary

63. Standards are higher than at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils are achieving good standards in all aspects of ICT. Most pupils are on course to achieve the nationally expected standard by the time that they leave the school and many already have above average skills.
64. Standards have risen because the school's resources and facilities for teaching ICT are better than they were at the time of the last inspection. The school does not have enough space for a

dedicated ICT room but there are now far more computers in classrooms and around the school. These computers are linked and teachers plan carefully and co-operate together so that pupils can be given the maximum 'hands on' time. The school has also just received projection equipment to enable teachers to demonstrate more effectively. The school has the necessary software to teach all aspects of the ICT curriculum. In addition, teachers and classroom assistants have undertaken extensive training. As a result, they are both competent and confident when teaching ICT.

65. However, arrangements for assessing pupils' attainments in ICT are very new and so staff are not using assessment information to inform their planning. Consequently, planning rarely takes account of the different needs and capabilities of the pupils. In most lessons, all pupils undertake the same task and, even though teachers and classroom assistants work hard to support pupils with learning difficulties and to challenge the higher attainers, these pupils do not always make the progress that they should. This lack of specific planning is unsatisfactory.
66. Pupils also contribute to the overall quality of learning in ICT lessons. Younger pupils are excited by the equipment that is available to them, but on most occasions channel their excitement into productive work. Older pupils have the confidence to work independently but also collaborate very well and give constructive help that enables others to succeed.
67. The co-ordinator for ICT has done a good job in leading new developments in her subject. However, there are no arrangements for the co-ordinator to monitor aspects of the subject by observing teaching and learning in other classes.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

68. Pupils use ICT well as an aid to learning other subjects. Examples seen or discussed during the inspection include:
 - the word-processing of poems and stories using different colours, fonts and borders;
 - the combining of words and pictures in 'Powerpoint' presentations;
 - the use of information handling software to create graphs to display science results;
 - the use of the Internet as a source of historical information;
 - the use of creative tools to make pictures in response to music;
 - the use of the programmable robot device to reinforce mathematical or geographical understanding.

Whilst careful planning ensures that hardly any opportunities are missed, this worthwhile application of skills is restricted because teachers still have to ration access to computers in classrooms in order to ensure that there is equal access for all.

HUMANITIES

This area of the curriculum was not included in the main focus of the inspection. Inspectors saw only one lesson each of history and geography. Both lessons, along with examples of pupils' completed work, discussions with pupils, work displayed around the school and teachers' planning, form the basis of judgements on provision, although there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about standards or about the quality of teaching and learning in geography.

Provision in history has improved since the last inspection and is now **good**. Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Commentary

69. **History** has a high profile in the school's work and is given good emphasis by teachers. As a result, pupils make good progress and reach high standards. For example, in work on Anglo-Saxons, Year 2 pupils show good understanding of how people then lived, and make pertinent comparisons with today. By Year 6, pupils' knowledge of Britain since 1930 is beyond national

expectations. Well-organised and tidily presented topic folders contain much relevant, interesting and carefully researched information about life in wartime Britain.

70. Imaginative and well-presented displays help to motivate pupils in **history** through the use of carefully chosen artefacts, pictures and photographs. Pupils develop their literacy skills well in **history**. For example, older pupils compile wartime newspaper reports and interview an imaginary relative who has been evacuated from central London. Pupils' work also shows good links with other subjects. For example, pupils use information technology to research information about wartime bombing raids.
71. The subject leaders for **geography** and **history** do not have regular opportunities to monitor teaching or pupils' work and this impairs their effectiveness in evaluating what works well and what requires further development. Approaches for assessing pupils' progress in the development of knowledge, skills and understanding are not yet securely established, but have been introduced to help teachers match work more precisely to pupils' needs.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Inspectors observed five lessons covering art and design, design and technology, music and physical education. These lessons, along with evidence from looking at pupils' completed work, talking to pupils about aspects of their work and sampling extra-curricular activities, form the basis of judgements about provision and standards. However, there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about the quality of teaching and learning or about pupils' response to these subjects.

The school makes **satisfactory** provision for art and design and physical education. Provision for design and technology and music is **good**. The school's focus on the creative and performing arts adds to the quality of education that pupils receive.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in design and technology and in music are above average.
 - Teachers give good attention to the teaching of skills.
 - Very good cross-curricular links, special projects and events make learning exciting.
 - Procedures for assessment and teachers' use of assessment are unsatisfactory.
 - The monitoring aspect of the co-ordinator's role is unsatisfactory.
72. In **art and design**, visits by professional artists or craftspeople add significantly to the learning of pupils and enhance their already positive attitudes to the subject. Pupils talk about and compare ideas used in their work and in the work of others, for example commenting positively on the tiles made by teachers and the lunchtime assistants during a recent whole school tile-making project. Links with ICT, music and English give added meaning and purpose to pupils' art work and result in exciting projects such as 'painting the colour and shape of music'.
73. In **design and technology**, standards are above average. Most pupils work accurately with a range of materials and many work from their own detailed plans, developing and changing their ideas when necessary. Pupils' work indicates that they have good opportunities to develop their skills in this subject. For example Year 5 pupils use appearance, texture, flavour and cost to evaluate different types of bread. Teachers know the value of linking aspects of subjects in order to develop pupils' learning and pupils' work in design technology often links to their learning in English and mathematics.
74. Because **music** is very much part of school life, most pupils achieve well in this subject. Teachers plan stimulating musical activities in subject lessons and across the curriculum. For example, pupils in Years 4 to 6 learn to play the recorder and rehearse with others in some of their music lessons. Pupils in Year 1 try to 'paint' the music and in physical education, pupils in Years 5 and 6 develop group dances using both Bhangra and Samba music. Interesting and

relevant musical projects and performances motivate pupils to get involved, as do extra-curricular choir activities and opportunities for instrumental tuition. They draw in pupils who may lack musical experience and challenge pupils with good musical abilities to achieve even more. As a result, pupils of all abilities make good progress.

75. The dance element of **physical education** makes a good contribution to the performing arts and to pupils' cultural development. Pupils learn about dance traditions from different cultures and use them to devise and perform original dance routines.
76. Arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment in the creative, aesthetic, practical and physical subjects are at a very early stage of development. In most lessons, all pupils complete the same activities because teachers do not have the necessary information to match tasks closely to pupils' prior attainment. High expectations and challenging tasks result in above average standards in some areas, but overall standards are generally lower than in the core subjects because planning for pupils with different abilities is less precise.
77. The subject leaders organise much of the above provision, provide documentation to support teachers' planning and maintain resources at a satisfactory level. However, they do not have opportunities to observe teaching and to evaluate aspects of pupils' learning at first hand. This limits their capacity to secure consistent practice and to plan for further improvement in their subjects.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

The overall provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- PSHE is well planned and opportunities are used to develop links with other subjects.
 - There are insufficient opportunities for evaluating teaching and learning across the school.
78. The school promotes pupils' personal, social and health education successfully. Pupils have regular, planned opportunities to develop greater self-awareness and confidence by discussing a range of general issues including those they face as part of everyday life. Teachers plan appropriate activities for the timetabled PSHE lessons or 'circle time'. The development of the School Council also gives pupils an opportunity to act on behalf of others and to represent pupils' views on aspects of school life. Teachers make effective links with other subjects to ensure that pupils develop a healthy lifestyle, and learn how to respect the feelings of others and the differences between people. For example in a very good Year 6 lesson, the teacher made effective links to pupils' work in history, relating their learning about World War 2 to the experiences and feelings of people displaced by wars around the world today.
 79. The enthusiastic PSHE co-ordinator has helped develop planning for the subject so that it includes work on diet, health, sex and relationship education, the misuse of drugs, personal safety and citizenship. The Healthy Schools award is leading to further worthwhile developments in the subject. However, there are insufficient opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor and evaluate the impact of curriculum development on pupils' learning and experience.

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	4
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	2
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
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	4
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	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
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).