

INSPECTION REPORT

ETCHING HILL C of E (VC) PRIMARY SCHOOL

Rugeley

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124292

Headteacher: Mrs J Rayner

Lead inspector: Mrs C E Waine

Dates of inspection: 12th – 15th January 2004

Inspection number: 263789

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils: 4 – 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 377

School address: Penk Drive
Etching Hill
Rugeley
Staffordshire
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Telephone number: 01889 256112
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mr Trevor Jeffries

Date of previous inspection: November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Etching Hill is a larger than average voluntary controlled Church of England primary school on the outskirts of Rugeley. It serves an area of average social and economic development. Most pupils are of white UK origin, with a small number of pupils from other ethnic backgrounds, almost all of whom speak English on entry to the school. Whilst the proportion of pupils with special educational needs is slightly below average, a higher than usual proportion have statements of their needs. Several of the special needs are related to autism and general learning difficulties but there are also a few pupils with physical needs, speech and language difficulties, Asperger's Syndrome or dyslexia. Attainment on entry varies from year to year and is currently a little below average.

The school has been successful in achieving a national Healthy Schools' Award and is a Staffordshire Dyslexia Friendly School. It is currently aiming for the national Gold Sports Activemark for its work in physical education.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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13448	Mrs D Lloyd	Lay inspector	
32872	Mrs S Douglas	Team inspector	English, art and design, music, special educational needs
33231	Mrs L Steele	Team inspector	Mathematics, geography, history, English as an additional language
2616	Mr P Cole	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, information and communication technology, physical education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUTATION

This is a good school where pupils achieve well. Standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Teaching is good and promotes pupils' academic progress well. There is a strong and supportive ethos that promotes pupils' personal development very well. Standards of behaviour are very good and pupils develop an enthusiasm for learning. Leadership and management are good and promote good improvement. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Achievement is good and pupils attain above average standards in English, mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT), geography, history, music and physical education. Standards in science are well above average by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils do not achieve as well in writing as they do in other aspects of English. In mathematics, higher attaining pupils could achieve more by the end of Year 6.
- Teaching is good and often very good.
- Leadership and management by key staff are good and the school has the full confidence of parents and pupils. The school has a clear picture of what it needs to do to improve.
- The use of assessment is generally good but marking is too variable and does not always inform pupils how to improve their work. Similarly, the setting of targets is inconsistent in quality and some targets are not reviewed frequently enough to promote maximum progress.
- Provision for pupils' personal development is good and promotes very good relationships and behaviour, helping pupils to become mature and confident.

The school has made good improvement since the previous inspection, both to the quality of teaching and learning and the curriculum. Standards have been maintained at above average levels and improved upon, particularly in ICT in Year 2. However, standards in religious education by the end of Year 6 are now average and not as high as they were at that time.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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 good. Children make good progress in the reception class, and most are on course to achieve the learning goals set for them; some are likely to exceed them, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development and in their communication, language and literacy skills. In Years 1 to 6, pupils achieve well, although, by the end of Year 6, most could achieve more in writing and higher attainers could achieve more in mathematics. Standards are above average overall by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and well above average in mathematics in Year 2 and science in Year 6. Boys and girls attain similar standards overall. **The promotion of pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good.** Pupils behave very well and have very good attitudes to school. Attendance is well above the national average, which reflects pupils' enthusiasm for learning.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good overall. Teaching is good throughout the school and often very good. Teachers plan work well to meet pupils' needs. Very good relationships between teachers and pupils give pupils confidence in their work. Pupils are managed positively and motivated to learn by interesting lessons. Teachers give good oral feedback to pupils in lessons but the quality of marking and target setting varies between classes and subjects, and does not always inform pupils sufficiently about how they could improve their work.

The curriculum is good. It meets all requirements of the National Curriculum, with a sound balance between subjects. There is good enrichment of learning experiences through a range of trips and expert visitors to school. A very good range of clubs and events adds much to pupils' personal development, as well as extending the curriculum very well. There is a good partnership with parents who have very positive views of the school. Links with the community and other schools are good and those with the church are very good. The school provides a very good standard of care for its pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The leadership of the headteacher and key staff is good and is promoting good improvement. There is a clear view of what must be done to help the school improve further and effective action is taken to rectify identified weaknesses. Management is good. The school analyses assessment information thoroughly to identify and act upon any weaknesses. This is effective in improving achievement and raising standards. Whilst there is a full programme of procedures to check the quality of teaching and learning and to track pupils' progress, there is sometimes a lack of rigour in the process. Governance is sound. Governors play an active part in school life and have a clear overview of the school. They are appropriately involved in planning for its development.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents' views are very positive. They particularly appreciate the strong ethos that promotes confidence and maturity in their children. Pupils also have positive views about school. They enjoy lessons and have confidence in their teachers.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- raise standards in writing by the end of Year 6;
- raise the levels of higher attainment in mathematics by the end of Year 6;
- improve the rigour and consistency of marking and target setting.

The school has already identified these improvements and is acting upon them.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils achieve well throughout the school and standards are above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards at the end of the reception year are average, with most children achieving the goals for their age group and a sound proportion exceeding them. Whilst standards in English are above average overall, they are not as high in writing as other aspects of the subject. Standards in mathematics are above average and standards in science are well above average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make good progress through the school and achieve well.
- Standards in many subjects, including English, mathematics and ICT, are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Standards in writing are not as high as those in other aspects of English, particularly by the end of Year 6.
- Higher attaining pupils could achieve more in mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Standards in science are above average by the end of Year 2 and well above average by the end of Year 6.

Commentary

- 1 On entry to the Foundation Stage, standards vary from year to year but are, generally, a little below average. Whilst the majority of children enter with average levels of attainment, there are few children of higher attainment. Children make good progress in all areas of learning and are on target to achieve the learning goals set for them. A good proportion is likely to exceed these goals in communication, language and literacy and in their personal, social and emotional development, and standards in these areas of learning are above average.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.7 (17.2)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	16.5 (16.1)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	17.8 (18.2)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 56 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- 2 Standards in Year 2 are above average overall and pupils achieve well. This reflects a slight fall from the standards recorded in national tests in 2003, when standards were well above average overall, because of a natural variation in the year group, which has fewer higher attaining pupils and more who are lower attainers.
- 3 Standards in reading are now similar to those of the previous inspection and standards in writing have improved, particularly in the last two years when the impact of new initiatives was felt. Standards in mathematics are now well above average, with almost all pupils working at the levels expected and a good proportion exceeding them. There has been good improvement in achievement and standards in mathematics, which were noted as strong at the previous inspection.

- 4 Standards in science and ICT are above average. Standards in religious education are in line with those expected in the local agreed syllabus for the subject.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.8 (28.4)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	28.5 (27.9)	26.8 (26.7)
science	30.4 (29.5)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 66 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- 5 Standards are above average overall in the current Year 6 and similar to those recorded by last year’s pupils in the tests of 2003. These were average when compared to those of schools whose pupils attained similar standards in the Year 2 tests. Current standards represent good achievement for Year 6, as their results at the end of Year 2 were average overall and slightly below average in reading and writing. Achievement is improving and this reflects the good impact being made by recent initiatives to raise standards and promote better achievement in writing for all pupils, and in mathematics for higher attaining pupils. Boys and girls achieve at similar levels, overall.
- 6 Standards in English are above average, overall. Pupils achieve well in speaking and listening and reading but could achieve more in writing. The school has recognised this and put strategies into place to raise standards. The effect of these initiatives is particularly evident in Years 3 to 5 but has not yet had a full impact on Year 6. Standards in mathematics are above average and have been maintained at this level since the previous inspection, with occasional variations because of the make-up of different year groups. New initiatives to improve the achievement of higher attaining pupils are beginning to have an impact, but again this is not yet reflected fully in Year 6.
- 7 Standards in science have been maintained at a well above average level since the previous inspection because the school teaches the subject very well, focusing on a practical approach that provides good levels of challenge for all pupils. Standards in ICT are above average by the end of Year 6 and pupils achieve well. Standards in religious education are in line with those expected in the local agreed syllabus. This reflects a decline by the end of Year 6 from the previous inspection, when standards were above average. This is partly linked to annual variations in the year group but also reflects a change in the teaching arrangements for pupils in Year 6, who were previously taught by a specialist in the subject.
- 8 Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress towards the targets set for them because work is planned well to meet their needs and they are supported effectively. Pupils for whom English is not the first language make good progress in learning to communicate orally and in writing because they are supported well and staff take time to ensure that they understand what is said.
- 9 Standards are also above average in history, due to good teaching and the use of a good range of resources, including ICT. It was only possible to sample work in other subjects, but evidence shows that standards are also higher than usual in geography, music and physical education in both Year 2 and Year 6, and at expected levels in art and design, and design and technology.

Pupils’ attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils behave very well and have positive attitudes to school. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural is good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are open, friendly and self-confident.
- Relationships throughout the school are very good.
- The behaviour of pupils in lessons and around the school is very good.
- Pupils are very positive and confident in their approach to work.
- Provision for social and moral development is very good.
- Attendance is well above average.

Commentary

- 10 Pupils like coming to school and enjoy the opportunities it provides, taking pride in their school and their achievements. They are keen to be on time, to participate in lessons and to be involved in the wide array of after-school clubs and activities. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and they are enthusiastic in lessons. Very good relationships prevail in the classroom and promote a very good learning atmosphere. Pupils of all different groups, including those from minority ethnic groups and those with special educational needs, work and play together amicably. They have a mature approach to school life and their self-esteem is high, which is evident in a variety of everyday situations. For example, pupils ask and answer questions with confidence and enthusiasm; they are polite and friendly, and share resources and ideas in an open and constructive way. Older pupils undertake a variety of tasks around the school, such as by helping in the dining hall and setting out play equipment.
- 11 Behaviour is very good and there have been no exclusions from school in the recent past. Pupils work in an atmosphere free of harassment or bullying through a readiness to report incidents to staff, with confidence that they will be listened to. Pupils, parents and staff agree that bullying or harassment occurs rarely. Any occurrence is taken seriously and dealt with swiftly and highly effectively. Any minor incidents at break times are watched carefully by the supervising adults, who intervene quickly before they develop into issues.
- 12 The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and is guided well by the Christian ethos of the school. This creates a harmonious and caring atmosphere. Provision for moral and social education is very good and consequently the school operates as a calm community in which mutual respect and thoughtfulness abound. Pupils are guided skilfully toward an understanding of the importance of very good social skills and recognise the moral choices they have to make as part of everyday living. This was well illustrated in a Year 5 history lesson where pupils were allowed to change or add to the school rules as an activity illustrating the responsibility of a ruler of a country. Teachers provide good role models and pupils abide by the school's caring code. An active school council provides pupils with a good understanding of how communities operate and allows them a say in the school's provision and organisation. Provision for spiritual development is good and is supported well by links with the local church. Teachers are particularly effective at helping pupils to grow in their understanding of themselves and their place in the community and develop in them self-respect and a respect for others. Cultural development has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. Planning for its development is improved and there are many opportunities for pupils to become involved in the arts in out-of-lesson activities and to become involved in community cultural events. Multicultural awareness is developed appropriately through faith studies in religious education, celebration of cultural traditions and the study of the art and music of other cultures.

Attendance

- 13 Attendance is well above the national average, which reflects pupils' enthusiasm for school. Punctuality is good, both at the start of the day and in lessons. For example, no time is wasted as pupils move to their teaching groups in English and mathematics.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%) – 2002/2003

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.3	School data	0.0
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

- 14 There have been no exclusions from school in the recent past. Pupils work in an atmosphere free of harassment or bullying through a readiness to report incidents to staff, with confidence that they will be listened to. Pupils, parents and staff agree that bullying or harassment occurs rarely. Any occurrence is taken seriously and dealt with swiftly and highly effectively. Any minor incidents at break times are watched carefully by the supervising adults, who intervene quickly before they develop into issues.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good and promotes pupils' academic and personal development well. Teaching is good throughout the school and there is a good curriculum, which is very well enriched by out of formal lesson activities. The standard of care and pupils' welfare is very good and there are good partnerships with parents, the community and local schools.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is good overall and promotes good learning for pupils. Assessment is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan interesting lessons, using a variety of effective methods to engage and sustain pupils' interest. Lessons are organised and managed well.
- Teachers know their pupils well and usually plan work well to meet their needs.
- Very good relationships between teachers and pupils give pupils confidence.
- Pupils' positive attitudes and behaviour make a strong contribution to learning.
- There is good use of support staff and teachers' own specialisms.
- There is good attention to developing pupils' vocabulary in all subjects but teachers do not consistently provide opportunities for writing in other subjects.
- Whilst assessment is good, the quality of marking and the use of individual learning targets are inconsistent between classes.

Commentary

- 15 During the inspection, teaching was always at least satisfactory; it was good in the majority of lessons, and it was very good in over a quarter of lessons. Examination of pupils' books confirms that this is the usual standard of teaching. It marks an improvement on the previous inspection when some teaching was unsatisfactory.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 56 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	15 (27%)	30 (54%)	11 (20%)	0	0	0

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

- 16 Teaching for the pupils in the Foundation Stage is good, sometimes very good, and children are enthusiastic learners. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan a good balance of direct teaching and free choice activities. These engage children's interest well and promote good progress. Very good teamwork between the teachers and good quality support staff reflects their high expectations of children.
- 17 Teaching is good overall in Years 1 to 6, and often very good. It is good in English, mathematics, ICT and history. Teaching in science and for the pupils with special educational needs is very good and promotes very good achievement by the end of Year 6.
- 18 The quality of teaching has been maintained and improved upon since the previous inspection, when there was a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. The incidence of very good teaching is now to be found throughout the school, whereas it was then most often found in the reception classes and Years 3 to 6. As at that time, teaching is good overall and often very good in English and mathematics. It is improving in these subjects because the school has identified weaknesses by analysing assessment information and test results effectively. A good programme of training and a greater focus on writing and problem solving are enabling teachers to plan more successfully for these aspects of learning.
- 19 Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of most subjects and plan interesting lessons, using a variety of methods that engage pupils in learning. Work and resources are prepared and organised well, so that pupils can work efficiently. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils, which gives pupils confidence in attempting new work and encourages them to give of their best. Teachers have very high expectations that pupils will behave well and work hard, and manage pupils very well; the behaviour policy is applied consistently and pupils' resultant positive attitudes and behaviour make a strong contribution to their own learning. The school makes effective use of teachers' strengths, such as in the teaching of ICT and art in Year 6.
- 20 Teaching for the pupils with special educational needs is very good. Work is planned very well to meet their needs and they are supported very well by well-trained and high quality support staff. Support staff are deployed well to meet those pupils' needs, enabling them to take a full part in lessons and make very good progress towards their personal targets. Staff value the contribution of these pupils and encourage them to participate fully in whole-class sessions.
- 21 Assessment procedures are good and information is used effectively to organise teaching groups and to target individuals for additional support or challenge. Teachers know their pupils well and make good use of their assessment information in most lessons to provide work that is sufficiently demanding of most pupils. The use of individual targets is not yet consistently rigorous enough to help all pupils understand how to improve their work or how well they are progressing towards their targets. Most targets are appropriate and specific but some are not reviewed frequently enough to promote good progress. Whilst some teachers make good use of marking to inform pupils of their successes and areas for improvement, others do not inform pupils sufficiently how they could improve their work or understand how well they are progressing towards their targets.
- 22 Teachers focus well on developing pupils' vocabulary, language and reading skills across all subjects, providing ample opportunities for discussion and research. Whilst most provide some good opportunities for writing in subjects such as history, this is not consistent between classes or subjects. For example, in religious education good opportunities are provided in Year 3, but by Year 6 pupils do not record enough of what they have learned.

The curriculum

The quality and range of learning opportunities are good. Opportunities for enrichment are very good. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and they make very good progress.
- Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good.
- The use of ICT across the curriculum is effective.
- There is a very good range of visits, expert visitors and extra-curricular clubs and activities, which are well supported by pupils.
- Whilst the school makes good use of the accommodation available, it does pose some difficulties for the school, such as the lack of a separate outdoor secure space for the youngest children.

Commentary

- 23 The school has successfully maintained the good curriculum noted at the previous inspection and provides well for equal opportunities for pupils. It is broad and balanced, meets legal requirements and has many strengths. The curriculum for the children in the reception classes provides a good range of exciting and stimulating activities. These are planned well to promote interest and enjoyment and provide for good progress, particularly in children's personal, social and early literacy skills. In Years 1 to 6, the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy are successfully established. However, the school has increased the time allowed for English in its drive to raise standards in writing, which results in less time for other subjects. Teachers often make good use of this extra time to include a focus on writing in other subjects, such as when Year 5 wrote persuasively about the Santa Maria. However, this varies between year groups and subjects, and, in some classes, results in less work being recorded in other subjects than would be expected, such as in religious education in Year 6. The use of ICT across the curriculum is a strength of the school; it adds to the effectiveness of direct teaching and to pupils' independent learning and recording in most subjects. Teachers plan well for pupils' personal, social and health education, with an appropriate emphasis on leading a healthy life style, sex education and the dangers of alcohol abuse and drug misuse.
- 24 There is a very good range of extra-curricular clubs that extends the curriculum very well. Many pupils take part in the activities that cater for those interested in sporting, musical, artistic and creative activities and these support pupils with particular talents well. Pupils have the opportunity to learn a wide range of musical instruments, taught by school staff and the Staffordshire peripatetic music service. Many of the sporting and musical activities enable pupils not only to practise skills but also to work with pupils from other classes and other schools. Teachers are effective at using visitors to the school and visits out of school to bring learning to life in an exciting way. Residential visits enrich learning and develop pupils' personal and social skills effectively.
- 25 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The national code of practice has been carefully and effectively implemented and clear procedures are in place for the early identification and assessment of pupils. The special educational needs co-ordinator, teachers and support staff work together effectively to plan for and support pupils. Individual programmes of work are of good quality and care is taken to ensure that the work provided is closely suited to pupils' needs.
- 26 The school makes best use of its buildings, although they present some limitations. For example, the mobile classrooms are small for the pupils in Years 5 and 6, which restricts opportunities for practical work, particularly large three-dimensional work in art and design. Although a small ICT area has been provided, this is too small for the teaching of large groups. The school has overcome this well by providing a specialist support assistant who works with

groups, helping pupils to practise and develop the skills taught to the whole class. The building is clean and well maintained and enhanced well by displays of pupils' work. The school entrance foyer has been remodelled since the previous inspection, resulting in improved facilities and a small attractive library area. There is no designated, secure outdoor play area for children in the Foundation Stage, which limits their opportunities for physical development. There are plans to provide one in the near future.

Care, guidance and support

The overall quality of care provided for pupils is now very good, with very good attention paid to health and safety.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good relationships between pupils and adults, which contribute positively to pupils' personal development and attitudes to learning.
- Procedures to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety are very good.

Commentary

- 27 Pupils hold their teachers and helpers in high regard. The high quality of relationships in classrooms and around the school creates a happy, secure atmosphere, which encourages pupils to try hard and have confidence in tackling sensitive issues in lessons. Personal and social education is promoted well through activities such as circle time, when pupils are given opportunities to explore their feelings about life. Exercises that involve saying "thank you" to someone in the class who has helped them, or describing the positive attributes of their classmates, teach pupils to have respect and consideration for others and help build up their own self-esteem. For example, in Year 5, pupils showed no anxiety or embarrassment at the prospect of learning what others had to say about them. No one abused the trust placed in them to make sensible, positive comments about their friends and even about the class teacher. The delight on the faces of the pupils as they read out what others had to say clearly showed how successful the exercise had been.
- 28 Because relationships throughout the school are so good, and because staff show genuine concern for the children's well-being, pupils are confident in approaching them. They know that if they have problems of any kind, either personal or academic, they can take these to an adult who will give them the support and guidance that they need. Pupils receive good advice and guidance based on routine monitoring undertaken by class teachers. Academic monitoring provides well for pupils' progress, overall, but the targets they are set are occasionally too general. They are not reviewed often enough to be fully effective in guiding pupils on how to improve.
- 29 There are comprehensive arrangements to ensure the health and safety of pupils, staff and visitors to the premises, and regular checks are carried out so that high standards are always maintained. Staff undertake detailed risk assessments for all activities, including trips outside school, and pay particular attention to safe practices in lessons such as science and physical education. Pupils are very well supervised at all times. First aid provision includes a designated medical room and trained staff, while information on the specific needs of individual pupils, such as asthma or food allergies, is carefully documented so that staff know what to do in an emergency. Parents are always informed if minor accidents occur. Proper procedures for child protection are in place and both staff and governors have attended appropriate training.
- 30 The school has recently gained accreditation as a Healthy School, having satisfied a wide range of criteria. A healthy lifestyle is promoted through the curriculum, for example, in science and in personal, social and health education, and through the daily life of the school, where pupils are offered healthy meals and snacks and encouraged to enjoy fresh air and exercise.

- 31 The school council provides a good forum for pupils to express their views and contribute to decisions about school life. All pupils contribute suggestions to the council, through a 'post box' system and they debate these suggestions, providing minutes to inform pupils of their decisions and action to be taken. For example, following a suggestion, the school council decided to operate a stationery shop. They bought and priced an attractive range of stock from a given budget and Year 6 pupils run the shop for other pupils on a weekly basis.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has good links with parents, who strongly appreciate what is offered to their children. Good links with the local community extend and enrich pupils' learning experiences, and links with other schools are developing well, ensuring a smooth transfer to the next stage of education.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides very good information for parents about school issues and about pupils' progress.
- Parental concerns are dealt with very effectively and sensitively.
- Parents have very positive views about the school but the response of some parents to the school's attempts to involve them in their children's learning is disappointing.
- There are good links with the community and other schools.

Commentary

- 32 The school uses a wide range of methods to keep parents informed about children's progress, about educational developments and about relevant administrative issues. Termly parents' evenings are supplemented by specially arranged meetings to explain aspects of the curriculum, by regular newsletters and by a well-presented, informative website. The prospectus is nicely illustrated with photographs of children at work and contains useful information written in a clear, friendly style, while the governors' annual report to parents celebrates the achievements of staff and pupils and describes their successful involvement in sporting and musical activities within the local community.
- 33 When pupils start school, parents are given attractive brochures explaining how children learn and how they can help support that learning at home. Information meetings for parents clearly illustrate the different activities that children will experience in their first year at school and the educational goals they will be working towards. School reports are detailed and helpful. They give good descriptions of what pupils know, understand and can do. Some also highlight weaknesses and show what pupils need to do to correct these. Reports include a useful section on how parents can help their children to improve. Whilst advice is often specific and helpful, comments are not always precise enough.
- 34 Parents are unanimous in their view that the school is approachable. They find that if they have concerns or queries there is always a prompt and sympathetic response. The school takes great care to work closely with individual parents and to help them resolve any problems that may arise. Issues are handled with diplomacy, so that confidentiality is preserved for both parents and pupils.
- 35 Most parents are very pleased with the school. They take a serious interest in their children's learning at home and those who are not constrained by work and family commitments give practical help in classrooms. The flourishing Parent, Teacher and Friends Association organises social and fund-raising activities and has raised substantial sums to purchase additional equipment for the children. However, the school has been disappointed by the reluctance of some parents to become involved in school life. Planned initiatives have been cancelled through lack of support; some parents, especially of older pupils, do not attend consultation evenings, show little interest in learning more about how subjects are taught and,

most unusually, even fail to attend performances given by the children themselves. The school, however, continues to arrange events and activities that it hopes will appeal to all parents.

- 36 There are strong links with the local church and good links with other parts of the community. For example, when studying electricity in science, and the environment in science and geography, pupils visit the local power station and use loan packs of materials to aid their research. Links with other schools are also good; they support curriculum developments and ease the transfer between schools. For example, the local high school provides good support and training for the physical education co-ordinator and is supporting the school in its application for the national Gold Sports Activemark.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good overall. The headteacher provides good leadership and effective management. Other key staff make a valuable contribution in supporting the success of the school. The governance of the school is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher is determined, has high expectations and builds effective teams.
- Senior staff and subject co-ordinators provide good leadership and management in their areas.
- Good use is made of data on national tests to identify what needs to be done to raise standards.
- The school is committed to staff development and teacher training and this has a positive impact on the quality of the school's provision.

Commentary

- 37 The headteacher's positive vision, commitment, high expectations and support and encouragement of staff continue to ensure that this is a good school that positively embraces change and enables pupils to achieve well. Her commitment is shared by senior staff and teachers. They are knowledgeable and work enthusiastically and well together to ensure that there is good provision in the areas that they are responsible for. All staff are supportive of each other and are open to new ideas.
- 38 The school analyses and evaluates test and assessment data on a regular basis and uses this information well to identify what needs to be done to raise standards and help pupils improve their performance. The headteacher and co-ordinators observe lessons and examine pupils' books. Guidance is then given to individuals and training is provided to help them improve their provision, but there is some lack of rigour in this process, which has impeded its effectiveness. For example, variations in the quality of marking and the setting of targets for pupils have not been ironed out. The school improvement plan is satisfactory and takes an appropriately strategic view of developments.
- 39 The governing body shares the headteacher's vision for the direction of the school and supports the work of the headteacher and senior staff effectively. Visits keep governors abreast of curriculum developments and the pastoral life of the school well. They have a satisfactory understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and take account of National Curriculum assessment data to form their views on the school's performance. Though consulted on the school improvement plan, their role as critical friends in questioning, challenging and seeking justification of actions and proposals is insufficiently strong and insufficient account is taken of the principles of obtaining the best value when making decisions. Governors ensure that inclusion is a strong feature in the school's life but they have yet to formulate practice and procedures into a formal policy, although all the linked statutory policies, such as the race equality policy, are in place. Statutory responsibilities are met fully and governors have appropriate committees in place to govern the school.

40 Performance management and staff development are managed well and support improvement in teaching and the school's effectiveness. The school makes a good contribution to initial teacher training through its involvement with school-based training. The school's annual budget is managed carefully and funds are used well to support developments.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	808028
Total expenditure	809699
Expenditure per pupil	1980

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	25120
Balance carried forward to the next year	25650

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The provision made for children across the kindergarten and the reception classes is **good**.

- 41 The school has no nursery at the moment but does operate a part-time kindergarten class in the spring and summer terms. Most children enter this class with some form of pre-school experience, usually in playgroups. Close links have been established with these playgroups and staff visit them, as well as visiting children at home before they enter the kindergarten. This ensures that children settle quickly and get off to a fast start. Provision is organised well with similar routines being used in both kindergarten and reception classes. This helps to ensure that little time is wasted and children feel secure and develop independence quickly.
- 42 Teaching is good overall. Effective team teaching in the reception classes makes maximum use of the available space. Planning is firmly based on the national guidance for the Foundation Stage curriculum and ensures a good balance between short adult-led sessions and opportunities for the children to learn at their own pace in activities they choose. The quality of free choice activities is satisfactory but does not always provide sufficient enrichment and opportunities to extend learning. For example, when focusing on their fruit topic, there were no opportunities for children to choose to paint and explore colour mixing or the texture of paint; the café role-play area was sparsely equipped and opportunities for children to write, use money and 'prepare' meals were limited.
- 43 Teachers and support staff have good understanding of the curriculum and have clear targets for each session, which they work purposefully to achieve. Everyone has a clear role, for example, in leading target groups, assessing children who are engaged in self-chosen options or supporting learning through play. Staff use learning resources, such as counting aids, thoughtfully to help children develop their understanding. They explain clearly and encourage children to work things out for themselves through careful questioning and encouragement. Many opportunities for incidental teaching and reinforcement are taken, such as when organising children into groups for assembly. Children's responses are continuously assessed and significant 'events are captured on notes and later recorded on each child's learning profile. Information is used effectively to inform the grouping of children and to support them as individuals.
- 44 Leadership and management are good. The enthusiastic co-ordinator is keen to try new approaches and determined to continue improving the quality of provision. She has successfully introduced improvements to the use of registration times, which now contribute well to learning and provide parents with more opportunities for involvement. Effective assessment procedures have been developed and the use of ability grouping helps to ensure that the match and challenge of work are good for each group of children. A strong commitment to training and professional development supports improvement well. Children continue to make the good progress that was identified by the last inspection and provision has improved.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good, children achieve very well and standards are above average.
- Children develop very good attitudes to school and behaviour is very good.

- Children develop good skills of independence.

Commentary

45 Teaching is very good and children achieve very well. Most are on course to exceed the early learning goals by the end of the school year. They settle into school quickly and clearly feel secure because of the effective liaison and consistent routines in place and, most of all, in response to the very caring relationships established. Staff have high expectations regarding behaviour and involvement and deal sensitively with children who find these more difficult. Behaviour is very good and almost all children sit quietly, take turns, concentrate and contribute during registration group sessions, as well as when working with adults in smaller groups. They co-operate and share when playing imaginatively with small world toys and construction equipment, and sustain their play well. Firm foundations are being laid for their learning in school. The 'options board', self-registration, tidy time and the staff's expectations that children will undress and dress themselves for physical education lessons are all helping to promote children's independence and self-care successfully.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and helps children achieve very well.
- Teaching of letters and their associated sounds is very good and helps children develop their early literacy skills.

Commentary

46 Teaching is very good and children's skills develop very well. Children regularly read at home and in school, and considerable effort is made to help them learn new sounds, letters and words. Most have a good knowledge of initial sounds, recognise letters and are developing a basic sight vocabulary. Higher attaining children read simple texts with confidence. Teachers plan short, direct and purposeful 'literacy' sessions both with registration and ability-based target groups. These promote children's speaking and listening skills successfully, as well as the development of early reading and writing skills. Interesting group activities, often enlivened by the teachers' use of puppets, such as guessing what is in the box, encourage children very successfully to listen carefully and to contribute in oral sessions. Children enjoy these sessions, maintaining concentration and involvement very well. Teachers model writing well and provide many opportunities for early writing skills to develop. For example, children take notes when engaged on an 'animal hunt' with a support assistant. Most children write their name and higher attainers record their ideas with a good degree of independence. Many are likely to exceed the early learning goals for speaking and listening and reading by the time they have completed the reception year.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and children achieve well.

Commentary

47 Teachers provide regular purposeful sessions that successfully promote the children's understanding of number and ability to compare objects, sort and measure. These numeracy sessions are well focused and sustain children's interest well. Almost all the children can count to ten and many beyond. They identify zero, understand and describe 'more than' and 'less than', and higher attainers can perform simple additions of numbers, sometimes without the use of equipment. All know the names of common shapes and many can identify and name more complex shapes, such as hexagon and cube, and can compare objects using terms such as 'smaller' and 'larger', 'shorter' and 'taller'. They naturally use these words to describe, for example, the models they make together when using construction toys.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and children achieve well.
- Learning is brought to life by visits, events and visitors.

Commentary

48 Teachers provide a good range of adult-led and supplementary free choice activities that encourages children to use their senses and extend their knowledge. For example, they explore the qualities of different fruits and study the variety of fruits that are available. These sessions develop well children's ability to observe, compare and sort, and help them to express their preferences. Other work, such as exploring magnets, planting and observing seeds growing, and comparing photographs of children as they grow, contributes well to children's understanding of the natural and physical world. They have many opportunities to construct, use computers and investigate small world environments, as well as experiment as they play in the water and sand. These experiences develop their skills and understanding successfully. Learning is brought to life by a good range of visits and activities, such as participating in a 'wedding'. Sharing food prepared by an Indian mother and work on the theme on Africa supports the development of the children's understanding of cultures and beliefs effectively.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and children achieve well.
- Physical education lessons in the hall are of good quality.
- There are insufficient opportunities to use tools such as saws and hammers.

Commentary

49 The children have many opportunities to develop their fine motor skills effectively; for example, they use scissors and glue spreaders as well tools for mark making. They confidently roll, stretch, and squeeze play dough and similar materials to create shapes. Few opportunities are provided for them to refine and develop their physical skills using other hand tools such as saws and hammers. Regular sessions in the school hall and outside with large toys are helping children to develop good control of their bodies. The children are encouraged successfully to use space well, to balance, stretch and explore how they can travel in different ways. They express themselves in response to music and challenges from the teacher, such as moving like different wild animals. The organisation, pace and challenge of the lessons in the hall are good and provide children with vigorous exercise, as well as successfully advancing their skills.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because teaching is good, particularly in the direct teaching of skills.

Commentary

50 Teachers use directed activities well to help children develop their skills in choosing materials, using tools appropriately and refining their use. Teachers resource these activities well and are careful to encourage, question and, when needed, demonstrate skills to ensure that children develop them securely and systematically. The children confidently make collages, use paint and print. They are not provided with many opportunities to refine their skills by, for example, experimenting with colour mixing and the thickness of paint in the optional activities available in the reception area. The provision of small world toys and role-play areas successfully encourages the children to develop imaginative ideas as they play together. The regular singing of rhymes and songs and opportunities to experiment with mainly percussion instruments are developing their musical skills satisfactorily. The use of music in physical education lessons is enabling them to respond imaginatively to musical stimulus.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average and pupils achieve well.
- Standards in writing, although improved, are not as good as in reading and speaking and listening.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Good encouragement and engagement of pupils provide motivation and result in very good attitudes and behaviour.
- The subject is led and managed well.
- Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress.
- There is insufficient guidance given in marking.
- Some good links are made with other subjects but this is not consistent.

Commentary

- 51 Pupils achieve well and in Year 2 and Year 6 attain above average standards. This reflects the results of national tests and maintains the standards noted at the previous inspection. Current standards reflect good achievement for Year 2 from their starting point, and for Year 6 from their results in the tests at the end of Year 2, which were average and lower than usual for this school. Their progress is an improvement on the progress shown by the previous Year 6 pupils who, in their national tests in 2003, did not achieve as well as pupils in schools who recorded similar standards in their Year 2 tests. Standards have risen as a result of consistently good teaching and a recent concentration on improving standards in writing.
- 52 Teaching of speaking and listening is good throughout the school and by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils achieve well, attaining above average standards. Throughout the school, teachers work hard to provide good opportunities to develop skills and pupils participate actively in lessons, becoming confident and articulate speakers. For example, they frequently discuss their own ideas in class and paired activities, such as when Year 6 explored mythical characters. The teacher constantly challenged them with targeted questions, and her own interesting, lively input meant that all pupils listened attentively and developed their own skills well.
- 53 Teaching of reading is good and standards are above average. Teachers plan interesting lessons that include effective questioning to challenge pupils to think and express opinions about texts and stories. There are many opportunities for pupils to listen to stories, and reading books are carefully chosen to match pupils' needs. Throughout the school, teachers discuss texts and question well, to check that pupils understand what they are reading. They use a wide variety of interesting and challenging texts in shared reading sessions to engage interest; pupils listen carefully and are keen to join in discussions. Those in Year 2 join in and read the 'Big Books' with obvious understanding and enjoyment, whilst those in Year 6 have a good knowledge of books, and enjoy using them for pleasure and for learning.
- 54 The school has identified writing as an area for improvement and effective methods of raising standards have been put in place. Whilst these are promoting better progress through the school, standards in writing are not as good as they are in reading, particularly by the end of Year 6. Pupils draft, edit and rewrite their work in a good range of styles, such as stories, reports and poetry. Lessons are usually interesting and challenging but sometimes teachers do not use interesting enough ways to teach the basic writing skills and pupils are not then motivated by what they are asked to do. Teachers often give all pupils the same task, which does not interest or challenge lower or higher attaining pupils appropriately. Handwriting is satisfactory by the end of Year 2 and pupils print neatly. However, it is too variable in Years 3 to 6 because, with older pupils, insufficient attention is paid to building on previous skills of joined script. Some still choose to print much of their work in Year 6, whilst others are untidy and use a very immature style of handwriting.
- 55 Teaching is good overall. Learning targets for lessons are shared well with pupils at the start and then reinforced during whole-class sessions. All teachers have high expectations of behaviour, and relationships with pupils are very good, which has a positive effect on their work rate and progress as most pupils try hard to meet their teachers' expectations. Teachers give good oral feedback to pupils as they work and mark work regularly, praising the efforts that pupils make. Some mark work very well and set appropriate targets for the next steps in learning; particularly good examples of this are seen in Years 3 and 4. However, others do not give pupils enough information to help them understand what they have done well and how they can improve.
- 56 Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported. They make very good progress because of effective levels of guidance and support from teaching assistants. Teachers plan work thoroughly and work is well matched to pupils' needs through carefully considered individual education plans, which have precise targets to aid improvement.

- 57 The subject is led well and is promoting improvements in provision and standards effectively. Management is good and the co-ordinator has a clear view of the strengths and needs of the subject. She contributes to the raising of standards by clear monitoring and evaluation of assessment data but has not yet monitored the impact of new initiatives such as staff guidance booklets and recent training.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

- 58 Language and literacy are used satisfactorily to support work across the curriculum. Pupils' good speaking and listening and reading skills support learning well in all subjects. Whilst some teachers provide good opportunities to use and extend pupils' writing skills in all subjects, others do not consistently plan for this. There are some good examples, particularly in history, but these are not widespread or frequent enough.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average and most pupils achieve well.
- Higher attainers could achieve more by the end of Year 6.
- The quality of teaching is good overall and promotes good progress.
- Pupils' positive attitudes to the subject promote their learning well.
- The curriculum is well planned.
- Marking and target setting do not always inform pupils sufficiently how to improve their work.

Commentary

- 59 Pupils' attainment is average when they enter Year 1; they achieve well and by the end of Year 2, standards are well above average. By the end of Year 6 pupils attain standards that are above the national average. This represents good achievement from their starting point. Since the last inspection the rate of improvement is good overall and the school has successfully maintained the above average standards for all pupils. In the 2003 national tests, the proportion of Year 6 pupils who achieved the higher levels was below average. However, the school has recognised this and is now providing a better match of work for different groups of pupils and a good level of challenge to promote the mathematical thinking of higher achieving pupils, such as through the setting of independent investigations. Whilst this is promoting better achievement for the higher attaining pupils, it is not yet having a full impact on standards in Year 6.
- 60 Pupils enjoy manipulating numbers and are enthusiastic about learning methods of calculation. They respond quickly in mental arithmetic sessions, applying their knowledge of the four rules of number (addition, subtraction, multiplication and division) well. Year 2 pupils work confidently with numbers beyond 100 and by the end of Year 6 pupils work competently with three and four-digit numbers and with fractions, decimals and percentages, checking that their calculations are accurate.
- 61 It is clear from pupils' attainment that teaching and learning are productive. Teachers have good subject knowledge and there is an enthusiasm for learning, shown by teachers and pupils alike. Relationships are very good and pupils co-operate with one another effectively and behave very well. Teachers praise and encourage all to contribute, which promotes pupils' confidence and their willingness to answer questions. Learning assistants talk with pupils with special needs, to ensure that they are involved fully in lessons. Throughout the school, pupils are taught in groups based on their prior learning and this works well. Work is matched well to their needs to ensure that they are appropriately challenged and build on their understanding systematically and

securely. Lessons are interesting and successful and pupils enjoy mathematics as a result. Computers are used well to support learning in most lessons and both teachers and pupils use whiteboards very effectively in the upper junior classes.

- 62 Marking of work is not consistent between classes. Whilst there are some very good examples of marking which informs pupils of what they have done well and what they need to do to improve, other examples merely congratulate success. Pupils are set targets for improvement but they are not used consistently and not reviewed frequently enough. For example, one pupil's target to learn the five times table was only to be reviewed after nearly six months.
- 63 The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject well and provision has improved well. He has a good awareness of areas that still need to be developed further and is proactive in ensuring that these are understood by other staff. He conveys his enthusiasm for the subject to the pupils in his lessons and to his colleagues, providing a good role model.

Mathematics across the curriculum

- 64 There are good opportunities for mathematical development across the curriculum especially in science and ICT. For example, pupils collect data and enter it into charts, often presenting their results in graphs, such as in science when pupils collect a series of timed measurements and present their findings in graphs to show the effect of exercise on the heart. Pupils are competent in applying their mathematical skills in investigations and in recording their findings.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and well above average by the end of Year 6.
- Teaching is very good with a strong focus on independent investigation.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to learning; they display enthusiasm in their investigations.
- Good assessment procedures have recently been put into place to enable teachers to check pupils' achievements and progress.
- The quality of marking is too variable between classes.

Commentary

- 65 Standards of work are currently above average in Year 2 and well above average by Year 6, which reflects the results of the 2003 teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 and tests at the end of Year 6. Almost all pupils achieve the levels expected nationally, with an average proportion exceeding these levels in Year 2, and an above average proportion achieving a higher level by the end of Year 6. Pupils make good progress in developing skills of investigation and knowledge and consequently they achieve consistently well. They build up a good bank of knowledge in all areas of the subject, which they draw upon well when carrying out their own investigations. They understand how to devise a fair test and apply the conditions carefully. Those pupils with special educational needs are very well supported by staff and other pupils and achieve very well; some attain the levels expected for their age.
- 66 Teaching and learning are very good. Activities are well planned to provide a good level of challenge to all pupils through independent observation and investigation. Resources are used well to engage pupils and the level of interest and challenge provided results in the overwhelming majority of pupils working with enthusiasm and perseverance. All teachers have very high expectations of good behaviour and pupils respond very well. They are attentive to teachers and listen carefully to each other's points of view. Work is planned in small groups, which develops pupils' sense of co-operation and collaboration very well. This was particularly

evident in a Year 5 lesson, when pupils devised their own group test on evaporation. Teachers question pupils well and challenge them to explain their answers, making them think hard about what they have learned and this consolidates learning well. Computers are used appropriately to support learning and there are often good links to numeracy as pupils handle scientific data and produce graphs. Some good quality examples of different styles of writing are to be found in the recording work in most classes, although this is not as strong in Year 6, where writing standards are not as high as in other year groups.

- 67 During lessons, teachers provide very good guidance and oral feedback to pupils as they work but this is not reflected in the quality of marking. This is too variable between classes; some particularly good examples are found, such as in a Year 5 class, and these help pupils to understand their successes and next steps but other marking is limited to ticks or congratulations. Whilst it usually rewards success, it does not often guide improvement. Similarly, targets set are often very clear and understood well by pupils but they are not reviewed often enough.
- 68 Leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator has a clear view of standards and learning across the school. The school has recently introduced good systems for assessing learning and already monitors the quality of work in pupils' books. Test results are analysed and areas of relative weakness acted upon effectively. Since the last inspection the school has made good improvement in provision and maintained the high standards noted at that time.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above expectations and pupils achieve well.
- Teaching is good by both class teachers and the specialist assistant.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- Accommodation limits the further development of the subject.

Commentary

- 69 Pupils are achieving well and make sustained good progress in all year groups. This is despite the small ICT suite that can accommodate only small groups of pupils and the limit having been reached in the provision of networked computers in classrooms. This is a concern for future development. The curriculum covers all the requirements for ICT and is well balanced across the different strands of the subject.
- 70 No teaching was seen in Years 1 and 2 but pupils' completed work indicates that teaching is effective. Teaching observed in Years 3 to 6 classes was good. Teachers have good knowledge, understanding and skills, and teach the subject well. They provide their classes with weekly direct teaching of specific skills. All pupils have opportunities to practise and refine these skills with the knowledgeable and skilful ICT support assistant in the suite, or when working on classroom computers. This approach works well. Teachers plan clear learning objectives and lessons start with purposeful and effective introductions to the whole class, which tackle the key learning targets well, making good use of time. Teachers make particularly effective use of electronic interactive whiteboards to introduce new learning and explain what they want pupils to do when they are given their tasks. Careful questioning challenges pupils to think and enables teachers to check on how well they are learning. As a result, pupils develop good understanding and knowledge and are prepared well for their tasks. Despite groups having to go the ICT suite, little time is wasted; pupils work productively and sensibly, reflecting the very good relationships and pupil management skills of teachers and support assistants.

- 71 Pupils in Year 2 use art programs well to produce careful work, such as their vividly coloured firework pictures. They format written work thoughtfully, including clip art to make it more interesting. In mathematics, they have input data into the computer to produce graphs, for example of their favourite Christmas foods, and begin to learn to program devices through their work with a simple programmable robot. By Year 6, pupils are confident, articulate and enthusiastic in their use of ICT. They use columns, incorporate pictures and use a range of formatting and text effects to enliven their written work. They employ a wide range of tools to produce effective pictures when using graphical programs. Whilst they use spreadsheets functions and formulae to automate calculations, they are not very sure about the characteristics and facilities available in database programs. Pupils are confident in their use of the Internet; they search for information using search engines and exchange their ideas using email. Their skills in, and understanding of, control and monitoring are sound and better than is often found. Standards in other year groups are at least in line with national expectations and pupils' learning builds effectively on their previous skills.
- 72 Leadership and management are good. The knowledgeable and enthusiastic coordinator sets a good example through her own work. She has worked hard to support colleagues. For example, she has introduced very appropriate assessment arrangements and improved resources. Good arrangements and safeguards are in place to ensure safety when using the Internet. Good progress has been made since the last inspection; provision has improved and standards have continued to rise.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

- 73 Pupils have many opportunities to research information from the Internet and to record and present what they have found using computers. Teachers regularly plan the use of ICT into their work in many subjects well, particularly in English, science and the humanities and this consolidates and extends pupils' skills in ICT. Most teachers set pupils a good example in their own use of ICT as they teach, especially through their skilful use of the interactive whiteboards.

HUMANITIES

- 74 **Geography** was sampled because insufficient lessons could be observed to make overall judgements on teaching and learning. The analysis of pupils' work shows that the curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. This is confirmed by discussions with the subject leader. Discussions with Year 6 pupils and analysis of their work show that standards are above the national average, which reflects the findings of the previous inspection.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have good knowledge of historical facts and events.
- The subject is well led and managed, with knowledge and enthusiasm.
- Pupils have interest in and enthusiasm for the subject.
- The curriculum is rich and varied.
- The marking of pupils' work does not consistently give suggestions for improvement.

Commentary

- 75 Standards of work are above the expected levels by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 for most pupils, which represents good achievement. Pupils with special needs achieve standards similar to their classmates because of the very good support they receive from classroom assistants and teachers. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection. Pupils enjoy a

good range of activities and good opportunities are given to enhance pupils' skills. Pupils develop a good sense of chronology, effectively supported by the use of timelines. Good use of artefacts supports learning well, extending pupils' understanding of change and enabling them to make meaningful comparisons between the past and present.

- 76 Teaching in lessons observed was good and pupils achieved well. Teachers have good subject knowledge that helps them plan interesting lessons that build well on previous knowledge and skills. The best lessons engrossed pupils from beginning to end because teaching was stimulating and challenging, and relevant artefacts were used to bring the period of history alive. This enthuses pupils, so that they enjoy the work and are very eager to learn. For example, in a very good lesson in Year 2, the teacher told the pupils, "You are going to be detectives" and pupils used a variety of sources to find out who the mystery person was. This included an old suitcase with artefacts related to the person, research on the Internet, books and photographs. Pupils are enthused when talking about historical periods and are clearly interested in the subject. This was seen in a good lesson in Year 5 where pupils discussed the life of King Henry VIII enthusiastically, which contributed well to the development of their speaking and listening skills. Computers are used well to support learning; for example, many lessons are enhanced by the use of the Internet to research the subject further.
- 77 Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and very good relationships with their pupils. Pupils respond well to this and behaviour in lessons is very good overall. Teachers plan good opportunities to use and develop their literacy skills in this subject. For example, in Year 5, a high achieving pupil wrote a persuasive letter from the Santa Maria, illustrating good knowledge of the conditions in this period, and in Year 3 there are good examples of extended and factual writing in research about the Romans.
- 78 The subject leaders' enthusiasm is infectious and it ensures that pupils and members of staff develop an interest and love of the subject. She has ensured that teachers plan visits and visitors to fit with the topics taught and has recently introduced a new assessment format for both history and geography which will further enhance learning.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have very good attitudes to learning about Christianity and other world faiths.
- Whilst pupils in Years 3 to 5 have better understanding of the underlying beliefs and importance of faith than many pupils of their age, this is not the case in Year 6, where standards are average.
- Strong links with a local church enhance pupils' knowledge of Christianity well.

Commentary

- 79 Standards in both Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with those expected by the local agreed syllabus for the subject and achievement is satisfactory. This marks a decline by the end of Year 6, as at the time of the previous inspection their understanding of the underlying beliefs and values and the impact on believers' lives was above average. This is partly because of a cohort variation and partly reflects a variation in the provision for the subject; at that time, there was specialist teaching by the subject co-ordinator in Year 6.
- 80 Pupils develop a satisfactory bank of knowledge of faiths and their knowledge of Christianity is good. This area of their learning is enhanced well by the close links that exist between the school and the local church. Pupils visit the church regularly and the vicar contributes frequently and effectively to lessons and collective worship. They have a sound knowledge of the stories, special artefacts and symbols of Christianity and higher attaining pupils relate how it

affects their own lives. However, those in Year 6 are less certain of the important beliefs and symbols of other world faiths and how they impact on believers' lives. They display a sound level of interest and respect for these faiths but pupils have only a superficial understanding of the links and the differences between Christianity and other faiths. In Year 6, the pupils' recording of work is insufficient to communicate their depth of knowledge and understanding. Although they have sound opportunities to discuss their learning and develop their speaking and listening skills, many opportunities are missed to develop their writing skills.

- 81 Only a few lessons could be observed during the inspection but these, together with an examination of pupils' books and discussion with Year 6 pupils, indicate that teaching is satisfactory overall and sometimes good. Most teachers discuss faith and how it affects the lives of believers well, and this helps pupils to understand its significance to everyday life. There is a good focus on Christianity and sound provision for the teaching of other faiths, but the oldest pupils do not learn sufficiently about the links and differences between faiths. Teaching is enhanced by the input of the local vicar and brought to life by visits to the local church, although pupils have not visited places of worship for other faiths.
- 82 The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and committed to improvement. She is leading the development of the subject well but has not recently had the opportunity to gain a full overview of provision and standards.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

- 83 Insufficient work was seen in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education to make overall judgements about provision, teaching or learning. There are good policies, planning and resources in place for all subjects.
- 84 Only one lesson could be observed in **art and design**. The lesson seen, discussion with pupils and an examination of pupils' work show that the majority of pupils in Years 2 and 6 achieve satisfactorily and attain standards in line with expectations for their age. In some year groups, a few pupils develop their own artistic style and achieve above average standards. For example, in Year 6, pupils' pattern work done in pen and pencil, based on designs from African textiles, shows flair and expertise. The variety of artwork on display illustrates the use of a sound range of media. Those pupils who attend the extra-curricular art club benefit from the opportunity to take part in a variety of additional activities, which promote the achievement of those who have a particular interest or talent well.
- 85 It was not possible to observe any lessons in **design and technology** because it was not taught in the week of the inspection. The range of evidence available from samples of work from the previous term and discussions with pupils in Years 2 and 6, shows that pupils make at least satisfactory progress in designing, making, and evaluating products, displaying pride in their achievements. Standards are average, as they were at the previous inspection and pupils' products are finished attractively and displayed well around the school.
- 86 During the inspection only a small number of lessons were observed in **music** and, therefore, it was only sampled. However, in the work observed, which included both singing and elements of composing, standards were above average. The attitudes and behaviour of the pupils were good and they clearly enjoyed making music. Pupils enjoy a wide range of musical experiences during their time at the school; much has been interesting and, at times, inspiring. They listen to music across a range of cultures, such as African and Indian music. The quality of opportunities for pupils in the wide range of activities that take place outside the school day has a significant impact on standards and contributes to the life of the whole community. These activities are popular and enthusiastically attended. The pupils particularly enjoy the percussion club, 'Bangers and Blowers', and the school orchestra, both of which perform regularly in school assemblies. The school offers a wide range of instrumental tuition and a strong choral and orchestral tradition, which provide pupils with opportunities to perform to a wide audience, as in the joint Rugeley Schools' Pyramid Christmas Concert and in the local Recorder Festival.

The high standards of the school choir and the number of pupils who are involved contribute to the good quality of singing in collective worship.

- 87 Lessons were sampled in **physical education** and the subject was discussed briefly with the co-ordinator. The available evidence indicates that the subject is taught well, that standards are above national expectations and that pupils achieve well. Good teaching and achievement were seen in games and gymnastics in junior classes and in gymnastics in an infant class. All pupils learn to swim and all achieve the 25 metre standard. All lessons observed were well organised and delivered at a good pace that enabled pupils to exercise vigorously. In the best lessons, teachers consistently guided pupils in refining their skills, using explanations and demonstrations well. Occasionally, teachers did not help pupils to improve their skills sufficiently and progress in these lessons was only just satisfactory. The school provides a well-balanced programme that covers the National Curriculum thoroughly. Many additional out-of-lesson activities provide very good enrichment and extension for pupils. These include a wide range of well-attended clubs, visitors to school and links with a local sports college. The school's commitment to high standards in the subject is reflected in its target of achieving the national Gold Sports Activemark.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

- 88 Provision was sampled and no overall judgements can be made on its overall quality or on teaching and learning. The school provides a good and interesting curriculum to support the progressive development of pupils' skills and knowledge, in specific lessons and as part of other subjects. For example, in science pupils learn about the impact of a healthy lifestyle on their bodies and in religious education they begin to understand how communities have to decide rules and processes to guide how they can live together. In specific weekly lessons such as personal, social and health education lessons and class discussions, called 'circle time', pupils have good chances to share ideas and talk about their experiences and feelings in a supportive and secure environment. Pupils listen to what other people think, and respect their views. They develop a good understanding of how their decisions affect their own and others' lives and learn to be responsible members of a community.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3

Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
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	3
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	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).