

INSPECTION REPORT

OAK HILL CE (VC) PRIMARY SCHOOL

Tewkesbury

LEA area: Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 115670

Headteacher: Mrs S Proctor

Lead inspector: Mrs J Coop

Dates of inspection: 2–5 February 2004

Inspection number: 263832

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 years
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 103

School address: Junior Base
School Road
Alderton
Tewkesbury
Gloucestershire
Postcode: GL20 8NP

Telephone number: 01242 620448
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Appropriate authority: Governing Body
Name of chair of governors: Mr M Hunt

Date of previous inspection: 6 July 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This small Voluntary Controlled Church of England school, situated on two sites five miles apart, serves the rural villages of Alderton and Dumbleton and the surrounding areas. There are 103 pupils on roll between the ages of four AND eleven. Pupils aged four to seven attend the infant base in Dumbleton and older pupils attend the junior base in Alderton. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds and the proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is average, as are the socio-economic circumstances of the school. The majority of pupils are of white ethnicity and no pupils are new to speaking English. Attainment on entry varies each year, but is average overall. This year the children have started with above average skills. Six per cent of the pupils have special educational needs, which is well below the national average. Two per cent have a statement of Special Educational Needs, which is in line with the national average. There are equal numbers of boys and girls in the school, but in some classes girls outnumber boys significantly. Seven per cent of pupils have joined or left the school other than at the usual times. This is average, but in a small school is significant in some year groups. The school attained an Investor in People award in 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
31862	Mrs J Coop	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage English Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Physical education Special educational needs English as an additional language Music
31758	Mr E Tipper	Lay inspector	
30559	Mrs J Taylor	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Geography History Religious education Personal, social and health education

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good and improving school, which provides good value for money. Very good leadership by the headteacher and good teaching ensure that pupils achieve well. Very good attitudes to learning are nurtured within a strong Christian community and supportive family atmosphere.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses:

- The headteacher is an excellent role model, who is supported well by governors and staff.
- Standards are very high in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2, and above average in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6.
- Opportunities for pupils to use and apply their literacy, mathematical and information and communication technology skills in other subjects are improving, but not fully developed.
- Standards in design and technology are below average at the end of Year 2.
- The checking and monitoring of pupils' work and progress is good overall, but this information is not used in all subjects as well as it could be.
- Provision for spiritual, social, and moral development is very good, and is instrumental in developing mature pupils, who behave very well and respect each other.
- The school has established very good links with parents, who greatly value the recent improvements made.
- There are outstanding links with the local community, which add much to the quality of school and community life.
- The accommodation is improving. Limited space is used well, but the infant toilets are in an unsatisfactory condition.

As a result of the hard work of the recently appointed headteacher, together with that of the governors and staff, good improvement has been made in a short time. All issues identified in the last report have been fully addressed. Standards are rising, and pupils are making better progress, because the quality of teachers' planning, and leadership and management, have improved.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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.*

Pupils achieve well overall. There is a wide spread of ability in each year group and small numbers make it unreliable to make year-on-year comparisons. In the Reception class, children have started with above average skills this year. Children make satisfactory progress and their level of achievement is satisfactory. Most are on course to exceed the expected standards in all areas of learning by the time they start in Year 1. The exception is their personal, social and emotional development, where they make good progress, and most are likely to well exceed the expected goals. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are very high at the end of Year 2 in the 2003 national tests. This places the school in the top five per cent of all schools nationally. Observed standards in these subjects remain very high. At the end of Year 6, standards in the national tests are well above the national average in mathematics and science, and above average in English. Standards are well above those of similar schools. Currently, standards at the end of Year 6 are above average in all three subjects. The number of pupils attaining the higher level in writing has

improved due to the school's efforts, but a number of boys are not quite attaining expected standards. The school is working hard to move their learning on. Standards in design and technology are below average at the end of Year 2, mainly because work is too teacher-directed and pupils' creativity is not nurtured sufficiently. Standards in religious education are well above those expected in the locally agreed syllabus by the end of Year 6. Standards in all other subjects inspected in detail are in line with expected standards. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the effective way they are supported.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development, are very good overall. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and behave very well. Pupils greatly enjoy coming to school. Attendance is very high and in the top five per cent of all schools nationally.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching is good overall and improving due to the increased opportunities for training. Teaching is satisfactory in the Reception class. Children are happy and settled so they enjoy learning, but not all activities are sufficiently well matched to their individual abilities. Teaching in Years 1 to 6 is good, overall with some very good teaching of basic skills in Years 1 and 2, which has a significant influence on the high standards achieved. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to the quality of learning in all classes.

The curriculum is satisfactory and is enriched effectively by an interesting range of additional activities. The care of pupils is good. The school is sensitive of pupils' individual needs and they are provided with good support and guidance. Partnership with parents is very good. There are excellent links with the community and good links with other schools. These significantly boost the range of activities this small school is able to provide for its pupils, and add significantly to the quality of pupils' learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management provided by the recently appointed headteacher are very good. She has worked tirelessly to develop the school. She is supported by a small team of experienced staff, who are gaining a better view of provision across the two school sites. As a result, there is a developing whole-school team spirit, which is contributing positively to improving standards. Management is effective overall and is based on very high expectations and a very clear vision for the future direction of the school. Consequently, within the limitations of a split school site, much has been achieved in a short time. Governance is good. The governing body shares the headteacher's vision and works hard to monitor the work of the school. The governors fulfil all their statutory requirements.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have a very high opinion of the school and relish the opportunity to support its work. Pupils share their parents' views. As one pupil stated, "All the teachers are kind, all the pupils are very nice, you learn well and have lots of friends to play with."

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure that the outcomes of pupils' work are more individual at the end of Year 2, particularly in design and technology.
- Provide more planned opportunities for pupils to use and apply their key skills in other subjects.
- Make consistent use of assessment information to plan tasks more closely matched to pupils' abilities, particularly in the Reception class and subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Explore ways of improving the toilet facilities in the infant base.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is good overall. Standards are very high at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics, and above average in mathematics, science and English at the end of Year 6. Standards in religious education are well above those expected in the locally agreed syllabus.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Reception class make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development.
- Pupils make good progress overall.
- Standards have risen faster than the national trend in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2, because of improved use of assessment and higher expectations.
- Pupils' individual creative skills are not fully developed, so that standards in design and technology are below average at the end of Year 2.
- Overall standards are above average in science and mathematics at the end of Year 6, but independent investigational and problem solving skills are not as high.
- Standards are improving in English, but pupils' spelling skills and less able pupils' ability to write at length prevent standards from being higher.
- The school has successfully plugged the gaps in pupils' information and communication technology skills because of good links with other schools and improved resources.

Commentary

1. Standards vary each year owing to the small numbers in each year group, and depending upon the proportion of more able and less able pupils. This makes any year-on-year comparison of standards unreliable. As a result of the introduction of detailed systems for monitoring and checking progress, the school is alert to any differences in learning and acts decisively. Standards are rising as a result in many subjects, and have risen significantly at the end of Years 2 and 6 since the appointment of the current headteacher. Through better teaching and improved planning and resources, pupils are making better progress than they were, and in many subjects this is reflected in good levels of achievement for all groups of pupils. The school reached the targets it set in 2003, and evidence indicates that the targets the school has set in English, mathematics and science should be attained in 2004.

Foundation Stage

2. Assessment data shows that the attainment of children who start in the Reception class varies considerably each year. Overall, it is in line with national expectations in all areas of learning for children of this age. This year, however, the children have started with above average skills overall. Children benefit from small numbers in their class and warm friendly relationships. As a result, they are happy, settled and confident. In addition, because of the many opportunities to take responsibility and play with older pupils, they make good progress in developing their personal, social and emotional skills. They are in line to well exceed the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning. They are likely to exceed the expected goals in the other areas of learning, but there is the potential for them to make more progress if activities were better matched to their individual capabilities and provided more challenge. Teachers in the class, who are new to the profession, are being well supported. As a result, this aspect is already being addressed by the headteacher, and the quality of the provision is improving.

Standards at the end of Year 2

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	19.8 (18.8)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	18.1 (17.5)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	18.8 (16.3)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 16 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. Results in the national tests in 2003, at the end of Year 2, in reading, writing and mathematics, were very high compared both to the national average and similar school's results. These results place the school in the top five per cent of all schools nationally in all three subjects for the second year running. The inspection findings show that standards remain very high. All pupils attain expected standards and a significant proportion reaches the higher levels. This is due to the very good way that basic skills are taught. However, despite this very positive picture, opportunities are missed for pupils to use and develop these skills in meaningful ways in other subjects. Consequently, indications are that standards in geography and history are most likely only average. This is because all pupils complete the same work and have limited opportunities to write in their own words, or research simple facts, using their very competent reading skills.
4. Standards in religious education are above those expected in the locally agreed syllabus because of the good way that pupils' knowledge and understanding are developed in assemblies and class discussions. Standards in science are well above the national average and pupils have a very good understanding of basic processes, but practical tasks are sometimes overly teacher-directed and this limits the opportunities for the most able pupils to move forward to a higher level in their thinking. Consequently standards are not quite as high as in other core subjects.
5. Standards in information and communication technology are improving and are average. Although the infant base has limited resources, staff make good use of provision in a local school and pupils are making satisfactory progress overall. Standards in design and technology are below average and, although only sampled, evidence suggests that standards in art and design are also below average. Although pupils' drawing skills are above average, they have limited opportunities to explore a wider range of materials and to develop an individual and creative style. The school is aware of the below average standards in design and technology and has begun to address this factor.

Standards at the end of Year 6

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.1.(25.7)	26.8.(27.0)
mathematics	29.2.(25.7)	26.8.(26.7)
science	30.3.(26.3)	28.6.(28.3)

There were 11 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

6. Results in the national tests in 2003 are above average in English, and well above average in mathematics and science. Standards are well above those of similar schools and, overall, are the best results attained since the last inspection. Inspection evidence shows that those pupils who started in the school at the usual time made good progress and achieved well in relation to their capabilities in mathematics and science. This is due to the hard work of the headteacher, who has developed teaching skills well, and acted decisively to address past weaknesses in teaching. In addition, she has ensured that teachers are supported by better assessment procedures.
7. Inspection evidence shows that standards are above average in all three subjects. This represents good progress and achievement for this group of pupils. More pupils are in line to attain the higher level in English because of an increased level of challenge. However, standards in English are not higher because of two factors. First, there is a group of less able boys who are not quite attaining the expected standards. They lack confidence and motivation to write and, despite reading well, do not use this knowledge in their writing. The school is working hard to improve their motivation and skills, so that they are making better progress than they were. Secondly, pupils make many spelling mistakes and this influences the overall standards achieved. Standards in religious education are well above those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. This is because of the way that pupils are helped to consider the lessons that can be learned from their studies, which can influence their own lives.
8. Standards in all other subjects inspected in detail are average. Although progress and achievement are satisfactory in these subjects, teachers are not yet adapting their planning sufficiently to ensure that tasks are well matched to pupils' abilities, and so provide the highest level of challenge. In addition, opportunities are not consistently used to make meaningful links between subjects, and so provide opportunities for pupils to be creative and develop and improve their key skills in more meaningful ways.
9. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and benefit from detailed Individual Education Plans. Targets are relevant and used well to inform planning and support. As a result of the school's emphasis on educational and social inclusion, these pupils are valued members of the school and make the same progress as their friends in lessons. Boys who are finding literacy more difficult are receiving good advice and support so that they are making up for lost ground and developing their confidence.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to their work and towards others in the school are very good. Their overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also very good, as is their attendance and punctuality.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very high standards of behaviour exist within the school.
- The school actively encourages pupils to show a high respect for the feelings of others.
- The school instils in pupils a strong moral code, and helps them develop very good relationships with each other and adults working in the school.
- Pupils are given very good opportunities to develop an understanding of their own culture and an introduction to those of others.

Commentary

10. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to school are very good. Pupils move around the school in a quiet and purposeful way, and lunchtimes are calm and friendly. Despite having to eat in classrooms, and with limited space, there is a friendly family atmosphere in both school bases. All pupils play very enthusiastically in playgrounds, but don't become too boisterous,

and pupils from all year groups play happily together. There is little evidence of inappropriate behaviour, especially in the form of bullying. Both parents and pupils express their confidence that any problems in this area are sorted out promptly.

11. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has been developed well since the last inspection, due to the hard work of the headteacher, staff and governors. This contributes well to the success in pupils' learning and very good attitudes to school and each other. Pupils' spiritual development is nurtured very effectively. Many opportunities are provided for the pupils to reflect on, and to consider their place in the world through assemblies, discussions or just sitting quietly. The strong Christian ethos of the school, supported by the close relationship that exists between parents, pupils and staff, creates an environment where pupils flourish and develop caring, sharing relationships with each other and adults in the school.
12. Older pupils look after their younger friends at playtime and support them well in the classroom. They learn the difference between right and wrong from the time they start in the Reception class, where children's personal development is nurtured successfully. This is reinforced constantly by adults, so that it becomes second nature by the time they leave the school. Similarly, the importance of appreciating the views and feelings of others is regularly discussed with pupils. For example, during the inspection, the topic of 'co-operation' was the assembly theme, which was referred to during lessons when good examples of this in practice were experienced. This approach successfully promotes a harmonious atmosphere where all pupils, regardless of their backgrounds or special educational needs, are encouraged to value each other's unique qualities.
13. The School Council, which consists of representatives from each year in the junior base, allows pupils to develop a sense of responsibility. In addition, Year 6 pupils perform roles as house captains, vice-captains and 'playground pals', who help pupils in the playground who have nobody to play with, or otherwise feel unhappy. Throughout the school, pupils regularly undertake other tasks responsibly, such as activities as classroom monitors, or simply helping the teacher. Pupils speak enthusiastically about their responsibilities, which clearly help to develop their confidence and self-esteem.
14. Pupils' cultural development is good overall. Pupils are given a wide experience of their own culture through a combination of visits to and from the school. There are numerous trips to theatres and museums, and the school participates in festivals of dance, literature, music and science in Cheltenham and Gloucester. Pupils also learn about their environment through trips to the source of the River Isbourne and an environmental studies centre. Their appreciation of the cultures of others is not quite as strong. However, the 'cross-base' day, where pupils from across the school joined together to experience what it is like to live in Australia, France, Italy and Kenya, is an example of how they are helped to prepare for life in a multi-racial society.
15. Attendance is consistently very high in comparison with similar schools and, last year, the school was in the top five per cent nationally. This reflects the support and encouragement of parents and the overwhelming eagerness with which pupils look forward to coming to school.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (97%)

Authorised absence	
School data	3.0
National data	4.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.4

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

Exclusions

There have been no exclusions during the last school year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. This judgment is based on good teaching overall, good assessment procedures, good opportunities for enrichment, and effective care, support and guidance offered to pupils. Together with very good links with parents and excellent links to the community, these features foster very good attitudes to learning.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall. Assessment procedures are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good and this makes a significant contribution to the effort that pupils make in lessons.
- Marking is good overall so that pupils are aware of the progress they are making.
- Teaching of basic skills is good overall, and very varied and interesting in Year 1 and 2.
- Teachers plan a wide range of practical experiences, but pupils' independent learning and their creativity could be developed further in some subjects and year groups.
- Teaching assistants are used well to support learning, especially for pupils with special educational needs.
- The pace of some lessons is slow and pupils become restless.
- The school has very effective procedures to monitor pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science.
- All teachers do not yet consistently give pupils work that is well matched to their abilities.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 24 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	5	8	11	0	0	0

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

16. The quality of teaching is improving and this reflects the action by the headteacher to strengthen teaching and its impact on learning by relevant staff development initiatives, improved assessment procedures and a consistent whole school approach to planning.
17. Pupils of all ages really enjoy school and have a great deal of respect for their teachers. Consequently, most try very hard to complete the tasks set for them and to please their teachers. This ensures that, in many lessons, pupils make good progress, achieve well and quickly improve their skills. Pupils are confident that they are making better progress than they were and, because work is marked carefully in most instances, they recognise what they have achieved and where they need to improve. This in turn also has a positive effect on achievement.
18. Children in the Reception class equally delight in demonstrating their newfound skills and, because they are happy and settled, can confidently ask questions of their teacher. In this class, activities are generally well prepared and resources are used well to interest children in whole-class sessions. However, due to a lack of experience and nervousness, whole-class

sessions that started off well sometimes lasted too long. This caused some fidgety behaviour and also meant that children had less time to complete the practical tasks that had been prepared. Staff interact purposefully with the children and ask relevant questions, so that, although there is the potential for a further level of challenge, children make satisfactory progress.

19. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and improving; consequently, basic literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills are taught well, and pupils are increasingly confident to use them in lessons. In particular, literacy skills are very well taught in Years 1 and 2. In these classes, teachers use a wide variety of interesting activities that motivate pupils and make learning fun and relevant. However whilst this is a positive picture, it is vital that there should be a consistent approach to the development of these basic skills in all subjects, in order that pupils may recognise how they can support their learning across the whole curriculum.
20. Increasingly, teachers are planning a wide range of practical experiences, and most have sensibly moved away from being over-reliant on paper exercises. This is valued by pupils, who work with enthusiasm and learn well, especially when activities are practical yet challenging. However, in Years 1 and 2, work in design and technology and art and design is overly teacher-directed and this limits pupils' creativity and originality of thought, and inhibits standards and achievement.
21. The work of teaching assistants is effective and they make a valuable contribution to learning in lessons. They often take responsibility for small groups and support individual pupils with special educational needs with sensitivity and encouragement. These pupils, as a result, not only make the same progress as their friends in lessons, but are able to be fully included in activities and are not singled out as 'being different'.
22. In most classes, teachers handle pupils' misconceptions well. Teachers generally make good use of questions to probe the pupils' thinking and to check their knowledge and understanding. This is having a positive impact on the progress that pupils make in lessons and their achievement is improving as a result. Where teaching is most effective, these questions and answer sessions are lively and well paced and hold the pupils' interest. However, where teaching is less effective, discussions can last too long causing some pupils to become restless, and this also impacts on the time available for other learning to take place.
23. Since the headteacher's appointment, very good progress has been made in improving how the school monitors and tracks pupils' progress. This is especially relevant in a small school that occupies two sites several miles apart. Co-ordinators now have a detailed and relevant tool with which to identify progress in their subjects. This is especially successful in English, mathematics and science. Most teachers, as a result, are now using this information to plan activities that are well matched to pupils' abilities. In some subjects, teachers' use of assessment information is less effective. Activities, as a result, are not as well matched to pupils' abilities as they could be. This slows down the rate of progress and impacts negatively on how well pupils achieve.

The curriculum

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils. Opportunities for enrichment of the curriculum are good. Resources are adequate, but there are weaknesses in the accommodation adversely affecting younger pupils' capabilities to learn.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are effective procedures for reviewing the curriculum and taking effective action through the skilful leadership and management of the headteacher.
- Meaningful links between subjects are developing, but could be developed further.
- The curriculum for art and design and design and technology could be further developed, particularly in the infant base.
- Curriculum enrichment is good through the wide range of clubs, activities and visits.
- There are problems with the infant toilets, which require attention.

Commentary

24. As found at the time of the last inspection, the curriculum meets statutory requirements, including provision for personal, social and relationship education. The school implements the locally agreed syllabus for religious education well, and all subjects have detailed and relevant schemes of work. This is a marked improvement since the last inspection, but currently the curriculum for creativity is too narrow. Pupils have limited opportunities to demonstrate their imaginative and creative skills through a wide range of materials and techniques.
25. Upon her appointment, the headteacher introduced effective systems to review and develop the curriculum. This has contributed to the rising standards of achievement in English, mathematics and science. Together with the headteacher, subject co-ordinators monitor these subjects in detail and analyse data to ensure continuity and progression. They ensure that good progression within other subjects is secure through planning based on a two-yearly cycle. Whilst much has been achieved in developing the curriculum in a short time, the headteacher and staff are keen to make further improvements. There are growing links between subjects in the curriculum, such as history being used successfully as a vehicle to support literacy skills, but currently these tend to be incidental. The school is now sensibly keen to make further curriculum improvements to ensure that pupils are able to use their good basic skills in more meaningful situations, and to provide greater independence and breadth of experience.
26. All pupils are treated equally and fairly, and included in all aspects of school life. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, and much improved since the last inspection. Relevant advice and guidance are sought and used effectively, to ensure that those pupils with more complex learning needs can participate in all that the school offers. Good planning, that is well related to their Individual Educational Plans ensures that pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all aspects of the curriculum.
27. Despite the rural location, and the need for many pupils to arrive by school transport, the curriculum is enriched by a good range of activities for all pupils, which also develop their social and cultural skills well. The good range of additional activities available owes much to the commitment of the small number of experienced staff in the school. During the school year special days or half days are also held that not only provide interesting activities but also enable pupils of all ages to come together. A range of visits to and visitors from the local community also do much to make learning real and meaningful for pupils.
28. Pupils are accommodated in older buildings, which limit some activities. Space is limited in both schools, especially in the infant base, but through ingenuity every nook and cranny has been used to best advantage. Through the determination of the governors and headteacher, and in the face of some local opposition, older pupils will soon benefit from the extension currently under construction, where they will have a library area and a purpose built hall for indoor physical education and performing arts. This will also benefit younger pupils and provide a useful way for the whole school to come together for the first time.

29. There would appear to be a problem with the drainage in the infant school. Toilet facilities for younger pupils require urgent review. Resources are adequate and generally in good condition. Storage for resources is limited, but best use is made of the facilities available and the judicious use of loan facilities ensures that limitations do not adversely impact on learning.

Care, guidance and support

The school makes good provision for the care, welfare, health and safety of pupils and also provides them with good support, advice and guidance. It seeks and acts on the views of pupils in a very active manner.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school constantly seeks to ensure its pupils work and play in a safe and healthy environment.
- Surveys of their opinions and the School Council enable pupils to become very actively involved in influencing the life of the school.
- There are very trusting relationships between staff and pupils.
- Pupils receive good personal and academic support and guidance.

Commentary

30. The headteacher is very concerned to ensure pupils live in a healthy and safe environment. Pupils are encouraged to drink water in the classroom and milk is available to all. Also, the school is seeking to educate pupils not to bring chocolate, crisps and fizzy drinks to school, and to replace them with fruit, and has ensured that salad is available at lunchtime. Similarly, the school works hard to ensure pupils are safe and secure. This has not been easy in the junior base during the building of the new hall, but is generally being achieved. The fully trained designated person for child protection ensures all members of staff are fully aware of their responsibilities in this area and know how to address any concerns. There is nobody currently who can act officially in her absence, but this will be addressed with the deputy headteacher due to undertake the training. The system is overseen successfully by a governor who has professional expertise in this area. Pupils receive good personal and academic advice, support and guidance
31. The school regularly seeks the views of pupils on an informal and formal basis. A questionnaire distributed last July was very detailed and well analysed. It identified areas of concern and differences in satisfaction between year groups and subjects. As result, pupils are given more 'hands-on experience' in lessons such as science and books more relevant to boys have been introduced. The School Council also allows pupils to express their views and become involved in the decision-making process. For example, they were concerned about the problems in the playground with so many wanting to play football at lunchtime. After several discussions, they agreed to form themselves into small teams and play in a league on a rotational basis. They would also have their own referee who would control the game and produce red and yellow cards for a pre-determined list of offences. During the inspection, the system worked very well, with those not playing on a particular day supporting the match knowing they would not have to wait long for their turn. Pupils rightly feel they have a real say in helping to determine what goes on within the school.
32. The quality of relationships in all classes is very good and there is a high degree of trust evident. Pupils agree this is a nice and friendly school that is 'just like a family'. There are good induction procedures for children starting in the Reception class. The arrangements for supporting pupils when they transfer to the junior base are also good.

33. Pupils are provided with good personal and academic support and guidance. Individual learning targets in English and mathematics, shared with pupils and their parents, are having a positive influence on progress and ensure that pupils have ownership of their learning. Whole-school, class and individual targets are regularly reviewed and adjusted in light of pupils' performances. In addition, pupils with special educational needs and those with more complex learning needs have additional targets, which provide a firm basis for improvement and support. These systems, and the overall care, support and guidance that individual pupils receive, have improved well since the last inspection.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has developed a very good relationship with its pupils, parents and carers. Its links with the community are excellent and with other schools and colleges, good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has established an extensive range of links with the local and wider community, and these have a powerful influence on its pupils' learning and the development of their social skills.
- Parents are provided with a high standard of information about the school and the progress made by their children.
- There are very good relationships with surrounding primary schools and a secondary school to which many of the school's pupils transfer.

Commentary

34. The links the school has developed with the community are truly exceptional for a small rural school. The two parts of the school are at the heart of their respective villages and there are close ties with other surrounding communities. Meanwhile, despite its remoteness from industry and commerce, the school takes every opportunity to benefit from its involvement. It has run a workshop on how solar energy works, sponsored by a multinational oil company, and worked with professional designers and engineers on a construction project. The wide range of community links has a significant impact on pupils' learning and the development of their social skills.
35. All the written communications with parents are very informative. The prospectus and annual report provide parents with all the required information and the booklet given to parents of children joining the Reception class is particularly useful. Pupils' annual progress reports vary in content as they move through the school. However, they all give parents a clear view of how well their children are achieving and what they need to do to improve. This applies particularly to English, mathematics and science, but is not so evident in other subjects. Parents are fully involved with discussions about the progress of pupils with special educational needs so that they have a firm foundation with which to contribute to their learning. The vast majority of parents are very satisfied with the way the school keeps them informed about their children's progress. The very wide range of information successfully informs parents how best to support their children's learning, both at home and at school.
36. The school has established very good links with one of the secondary schools to which many of its pupils transfer. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 attend an information and communication technology course there, for which they receive certificates of achievement, and they also make use of its sporting facilities. Oak Hill is also involved in the school's bid for science college status. There are close links between teachers in the two schools to ensure Year 6 pupils have a smooth transition to their new school. Relationships with the other main receiving school, however, are not as well advanced. The school has developed a very close and rewarding relationship with other small primary schools. They take part in sporting events

and participate in workshops and events, which they would not be able to finance on their own. These provide pupils with a range of different learning experiences, plus the opportunity to develop their social skills.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good overall. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. Governance and management are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has very good vision and aspirations for the school's development.
- All aspects of strategic planning are good and have made a significant contribution to the improvement in standards.
- The role of the deputy headteacher has been developed, and she is now taking an increasing part in the leadership and management of the whole school.
- Financial planning and the principles of best value are effective.
- The governors are supportive and influential.

Commentary

37. There has been a good level of improvement in the leadership and management since the last inspection. There is an exceedingly clear commitment by the headteacher, governors and staff to the continuous improvement that drives the school forward. The headteacher provides very good educational direction and demonstrates a steely determination to improve standards and educational provision for the whole school. She has achieved much since her appointment, and the progress that has been made since the last inspection is due to her hard work, and calm and efficient manner, which instils confidence in staff and pupils alike.
38. Clear goals are set for, and shared with, teachers and pupils, and the headteacher has high expectations of herself, the staff and pupils. She is an excellent role model, who has motivated staff, developed their skills and inspired them to improve planning. While recognising the importance of high academic standards, the headteacher, governors and staff place an equally strong emphasis on pupils' personal development. They ensure that all pupils, regardless of attainment or background, are fully included in everything that the school offers. The atmosphere of mutual respect, understanding and high expectations within the school is strong. All staff have high levels of commitment to the school's vision of providing a strong Christian ethos that values all pupils individually.
39. In this small school, the headteacher carries much of the responsibility for moving the school forward. This is made more difficult because of the nature of the school site. The deputy headteacher, with the support and encouragement of the headteacher, has developed her role, so that she now has more influence on whole-school development. The few other experienced subject leaders have also been well supported. As a result of their improved confidence, they have been successful in raising standards and have a stronger influence on the work of the school, particularly in core subjects. They monitor pupils' performance in the national tests very effectively and have a good understanding of strengths and areas for development. There is capacity to develop the role of subject co-ordinators further as more staff become eligible to take on areas of responsibility and through further developing the links between the two school sites.
40. Governors have developed their skills well since the last inspection and now have a clearer understanding of their role. They value the support and guidance that the headteacher and local education authority have provided. Strategic planning, as a result, is now more securely in place. They play an active role in the life of the school and are more influential in the school's

development. This is shown by their determination to improve the accommodation and provision for information and communication technology. The school improvement plan is well focused on identified needs and is an easily managed document that has significantly improved since the last inspection. It now provides a good tool that allows governors to monitor their decisions well. The plan only covers one year at the moment and this is a weakness, but longer-term planning is to be adopted when the additional building is fully operational.

41. The school manages its finances well. The governors have carried forward sufficient funds to pay for their share of the new hall and to maintain staff levels. They have been successful in achieving this aim despite a fall in the number of children starting in the school. As a result, for the foreseeable future the school will be able to sustain the small Reception class. The governors ensure that they get the best value they can for their money by comparing the school itself with other schools and consulting parents. As a result, they provide good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	337,563	Balance from previous year	54,540
Total expenditure	327,234	Balance carried forward to the next year	17,769
Expenditure per pupil	3,239		

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

As found at the time of the last inspection, the overall provision for the children in the Foundation Stage is **satisfactory** and children in the Reception class receive a suitable start to their education. The outside learning environment has improved and makes a good contribution to learning.

42. Children come from a wide range of backgrounds, but most have attended some form of pre-school, which ensures that children are confident about learning. Teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. The teachers, who are both new to the teaching profession, are being well supported by the headteacher and senior staff, so that they are developing their skills for the benefit of the children. As a result, the school is well placed to effect further improvements to the quality of the provision.
43. At the time of the inspection nine children were attending full-time, and it was not possible to fully inspect work in physical development, creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world.

Personal, social and emotional development

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships are warm and supportive and children achieve well.
- Children have good opportunities to work collaboratively.
- Most are able to concentrate for longer periods as they are confident and happy.

Commentary

44. Teaching and learning in this area of learning are good. As a result, children are confident and have established good relationships with one another and the class teachers. The quality of the relationships in the infant base, and the way that children are encouraged to take responsibility and join in activities with their older friends, contributes to the good quality in this area of development. Despite their young age, children are encouraged to be thoughtful and caring and to play sensibly together. They enjoy helping each other and are generally sensible and helpful in and around the infant base. All children receive plenty of praise and encouragement and have many opportunities to play and work together, so that most can concentrate for long periods, especially when activities are interesting and challenging. Children make good progress as a result, and achieve well in relation to their individual capabilities, so that most are already exceeding the expected goals in this area of learning and are likely to well exceed them when they start in Year 1.

Communication, language and literacy

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching of letter sounds is good, but tasks are not sufficiently well matched to children's abilities.
- Children's speaking and listening skills are fostered effectively.
- The pace of lessons is sometimes too slow and children are expected to sit for too long.

Commentary

45. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, but the teaching of letter sounds is a strength. The use of puppets and other interesting resources ensures that children are not only interested, but are challenged to learn a wide range of sound patterns, which they use successfully to read and spell simple words. Children enjoy these sessions and concentrate hard, so that the more able children can already read and write simple words and have attained the expected goals in this area of learning. Good opportunities are also provided for children to extend their speaking skills in many lessons, such as in the 'post office', interviewing a 'postman' or during independent play. This boosts children's confidence and willingness to talk. However, a weakness in teaching is that not all activities are carefully matched to the children's level of ability. In addition, the children can spend too much time sitting listening to the teacher, and do not always have enough time to develop their skills in the independent activities planned. As a result, more able children can be just getting into their stride and attempting to write independently when the activity has to stop, whilst less able children find the tasks too challenging and do not have sufficient guidance to support their developing writing skills. At other times, there are missed opportunities to challenge more able children to write down their ideas, so they become restless. As a result, although most of the children started with above average skills and are likely to exceed the expected goals in this area of learning when they start in Year 1, their progress and level of achievement are satisfactory overall.

Mathematical development

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children count with confidence.
- Ongoing assessment is good, but its findings do not impact sufficiently on the adjustment of planning to suit individual needs.

Commentary

46. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and children are making satisfactory progress in developing their early understanding of number, shape and measure. Teachers use games and practical activities successfully to foster an interest in this area of learning. This ensures that children enjoy counting and most can count confidently up to twenty and beyond. They delight in using these skills when engaged in shopping activities. More able children can find different ways to make up a sum of money in their purse, and all children enjoy rolling the dice and can select the correct coins, but there are missed opportunities to extend their learning because they sit for too long waiting their turn in teacher-led activities. Teachers are not yet skilled enough in ensuring that their good knowledge of children's abilities is used to plan activities carefully to children's needs. As a result, although most children started with above average skills and are likely to exceed the expected goals in this area of learning when they leave the class, their level of achievement is satisfactory.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

47. This area of learning was sampled and no lessons observed.
48. Children have a developing interest in the world around them and are enjoying their topic about 'People who help them'. They are developing their computer skills and can talk about cameras they use with interest. They listen carefully in assemblies and recognise special people and events in their lives because of the good way that their early religious education is being supported and nurtured.

Physical development

49. This area of learning was sampled and one dance lesson observed.
50. Children enjoy moving around the improved outside area and can move with a good level of imagination in dance. Staff make the best use of limited space, and provide a satisfactory range of opportunities for the children to use small tools and equipment and suitable opportunities to develop their physical skills.

Creative development

51. No lessons were observed. Children's work on display was examined.
52. Children have suitable opportunities to paint, draw, and mix colours to create pictures. Staff encourage children to use their imagination and to act in role, in the Post Office corner, for example. Children enjoy these opportunities and develop confidence as a result. However, the work on display was quite similar for all children.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in reading and writing are very high at the end of Year 2 and pupils achieve very well.
- Standards in English are improving in Years 3 to 6 and are above average at the end of Year 6.
- Pupils have a limited range of spelling strategies in Years 3 to 6.
- Pupils with literacy difficulties receive good support but some older boys are underachieving.
- The subject is well led and managed and there are very good systems for tracking pupils' progress.
- Opportunities are not consistently planned for pupils to use and develop their literacy skills in other subjects.

Commentary

53. Attainment in the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 2 in reading and writing shows that standards are very high and in the top five per cent of schools in the country. Inspection evidence indicates that the school is on target to maintain this position. Standards have improved significantly since the last inspection, as a result of higher expectations and improved tracking of pupils' knowledge and understanding. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve very well in relation to their capabilities and make very good progress during their time in the infant base.
54. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2003 are above the national average and similar to those found at the last inspection. These results represent a significant rise in standards compared to the previous year and mark an upward turn in standards achieved. The school has worked hard to plug the gaps in pupils' learning and to make up for lost ground due to past weaknesses in provision. Improved monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress has enabled the school to input additional support, increase the level of challenge for more able pupils and improve pupils' writing skills. As a result, inspection evidence indicates that more pupils are in line to attain the higher level at the end of Year 6, and the level of achievement has improved.

55. Standards are very high in all aspects of the subject by the end of Year 2. Pupils benefit from small classes and regular opportunities to be heard reading by the wealth of parent volunteers. Speaking and listening skills are fostered very well in whole-class activities, and basic reading and writing skills are very effectively taught, especially letter sounds, so that all pupils attain the expected level and very many pupils attain the higher Level 3. This very good start provides them with a highly effective platform of skills to take forward into the junior phase of their education.
56. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils' reading, speaking and listening skills are generally well above average by the end of Year 6, but standards overall are above average. This is because writing standards are not as high, as there is a tail end of boys who are not quite attaining the expected level in writing. They generally lack confidence to put their ideas down onto paper and, although these boys often start off their writing well, they do not sustain their ideas. The school is alert to this issue and is working hard to develop their confidence so that they are now making better progress. In addition, pupils' spelling skills are relatively weak and, although most pupils make good attempts to spell words, they also make basic errors. Many state that they find spelling activities and tests 'boring'. In relation to their capabilities pupils' level of achievement is good. Progress is now more rapid due to the recent improvement in the overall quality of education and higher teacher expectations.
57. The quality of teaching and learning is very good in Years 1 and 2 and good overall in Years 3 to 6. Teachers' planning is detailed and has improved since the last inspection. As a result, activities are well matched to pupils' levels of ability and marking is supportive and constructive. The recent introduction of a two-week writing cycle has had a positive impact on the progress that pupils of all abilities make in lessons. Pupils now have sufficient time in which to develop confidence and consolidate their skills within a particular writing style, as a result, the gap between reading and writing standards is closing.
58. Teaching assistants provide invaluable support, especially to pupils with special educational needs. The pupils are treated with sensitivity, so they are not made to feel different from the rest of the class. Consequently, they respond well to their individual targets and make the same progress as their friends in lessons. Most teachers teach basic skills well and this is particularly effective in Years 1 and 2. In these classes, teachers plan a variety of interesting activities requiring a wide range of resources that encourage pupils to use all of their senses when learning. This has a very significant impact on pupils' enjoyment and quality of learning in lessons. However, there is not yet a consistent approach to the teaching of spelling in the older classes.
59. The subject is well led and managed. With the support of the headteacher, the subject leader has improved assessment procedures and introduced individual and group targets, which have been instrumental in the rising standards. Improved monitoring has indicated where improvements are needed, and the subject plans are relevant to making further improvements to the quality of the provision.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

60. There is a satisfactory and developing range of opportunities for pupils to use their skills in other subjects. However, currently, these opportunities are generally incidental and not consistently planned. This is a missed opportunity to show pupils that literacy is a 'key skill' that can be practised and developed in a variety of ways.

MATHEMATICS

The provision for mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well overall because of good teaching and high expectations of staff.
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to use their investigational skills and apply their knowledge of numeracy to other areas of the curriculum.

Commentary

61. There has been good improvement in standards since the time of the last inspection. Standards in the national tests at the end of Year 2 are very high compared to the national average and similar schools. At the end of Year 6, standards are above average when compared to the national average. Pupils' level of achievement are good overall, but standards could be higher, if there were more opportunities for independent learning and practical problem solving activities, particularly across other areas of the curriculum.
62. Inspection evidence shows that the high standards at the end of Year 2 have been maintained and all groups of pupils achieve very well. This is reflected in very good knowledge and understanding of place value to 1000. More able pupils, because of challenging teaching, understand place value to over 1000. Most pupils understand and can convert numbers to equivalent value in coins and when amounts are written in words. Pupils are able to record data using block graphs and are able to give written accounts of how they interpret this information.
63. In Year 6 pupils achieve well. As a result of improved monitoring and teaching of basic skills, standards are rising and pupils are making better progress than they were. Inspection evidence shows that pupils, including those with special educational needs, have made good progress and standards are above the national average. Most pupils are able to calculate the size of angles in triangles. They can explain the size and properties of obtuse and reflex angles and they can identify isosceles triangles. The pupils have a very secure understanding of mathematical processes, but there are limited opportunities for pupils to extend their knowledge further through practical, relevant problem solving activities. Pupils are sometimes constrained by too great a dependence on published mathematical programmes of study and over-direction. This prevents standards and level of achievement from being higher.
64. Teaching and learning are good overall and very good in Years 1 and 2, and have improved since the previous inspection. Where teaching is stronger, teachers provide very clear explanations. Together with good teaching of basic skills, and efficient use of time, this ensures there is a good balance of independent and whole class activities. This successfully motivates pupils, and contributes to the pupils' good level of understanding. However, some teachers do not use lesson time efficiently, and there is an inclination for some teaching to be over-directed. On these occasions, opportunities for pupils to question and discuss mathematical processes or to consolidate their learning in the planned independent problem solving activities are limited. This impacts on the progress they make in lessons and the development of their mathematical thinking over time. All teachers's planning, however, is detailed and based on pupils' earlier attainment and achievement, so that pupils are able to consolidate and build on earlier learning. The high level of support available within lessons also contributes well to the good achievement of all pupils.

65. The very good leadership and management of the subject have successfully improved standards. There are very good systems in place for monitoring and tracking pupils' progress and achievements. This provides secure evidence on which teachers can base the future planning that has been a key factor in the rising standards. The school is seeking ways in which to improve all aspects of mathematics and future plans are detailed and relevant.

Mathematics across the curriculum

66. Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to use their mathematical skills and knowledge across other areas of the curriculum, but these opportunities are usually incidental. Teachers do not systematically plan to integrate mathematics into other subjects in order to broaden pupils' experience, and increase their understanding of the relevance of mathematics. This is a limiting factor on pupils' learning and achievement.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good overall and pupils achieve well.
- Leadership and management of the subject are well focused on making further improvements.
- There are limited, but developing, opportunities for independent learning through practical investigation.

Commentary

67. Standards are above average by the end of Year 2 in Teacher Assessments, and well above average by the end of Year 6 in the 2003 national tests. Standards are not as high as in reading, writing or mathematics at the end of Year 2 because those pupils who are capable of working independently have limited opportunities to investigate and test their hypotheses and to discover for themselves the next steps of the process being studied. This is being addressed to a degree and more opportunities are provided, but could be developed even further.
68. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2, and inspection evidence indicates that standards are well above average and have improved. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, have a very good understanding of electricity, materials and living processes, but their investigational skills are not as high. Pupils have a very good understanding about which forces are necessary to move objects. This is supported well by practical activities which enable pupils to work together in groups to classify toys according to the force required to move them forward, for example. However, activities remain a little too teacher-directed, and there is an over-reliance on 'worksheets' prepared by teachers which are the same for all pupils, rather than enabling pupils to use their very good literacy skills to plan and record findings in their own words. This is holding standards down in this aspect of pupils' work.
69. By the end of Year 6, observed standards are above average. Pupils have a good understanding of most aspects of the subject. They have made good progress and achieve well in relation to their capabilities. Recently, there has been a move away from recording work on 'worksheets' and pupils are now encouraged to record their work through independent report writing, which has renewed their enthusiasm for the subject, which many stated was "like revision before". As a result, progress is more rapid, and standards of achievement are rising.

70. Teaching and learning of basic scientific skills across the school are good. Pupils make good progress and achieve well. Recently new teaching approaches have been adopted and there is a degree of independence being nurtured which is helping to raise standards. Stronger planned links with other areas of the curriculum could be developed further, however, so that pupils' knowledge and understanding are consolidated through a variety of experiences. Teachers use questioning successfully to challenge pupils and they respond well with 'thought-provoking' replies. Presentation of work reflects the high expectations teachers have of their pupils. Work is regularly marked, but there are missed opportunities to make constructive commentary and offer further guidance. This is a missed opportunity to involve pupils in their learning and so provide a vehicle to improve pupils' levels of achievement.
71. The subject is well led and managed. New initiatives have been being recently implemented to introduce a wider range of teaching strategies and to increase the use of assessment to plan more precisely. It is too soon for these to have become fully embedded in practice, and the co-ordinator recognises through her monitoring, that this still needs to be more consistent.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The provision for information and communication technology is **satisfactory** but improving quickly.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Resources have improved so that pupils enjoy learning.
- Links with other schools have supported learning well.
- Action planning for further development is very good.
- Teachers' subject knowledge and confidence have improved.
- The use of a technician is highly effective.
- Assessment is not yet used to plan activities matched to pupils' abilities.
- Opportunities to use information and communication technology to support learning in other subjects is satisfactory, but developing well.

Commentary

72. Standards in information and communication technology are in line with national expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6. These are not as high as those reported in the last inspection. Although the school has made considerable progress since the last inspection, including the setting up of a small computer suite and improving teachers' planning and confidence to teach the subject, national expectations have risen in the subject. Until the appointment of the headteacher, and new subject leader, the school had not sufficiently kept up with these. The school's improved resources have not been in place long enough to have had a more positive impact on overall levels of achievement, which are satisfactory for all groups of pupils.
73. By the end of Year 2, most pupils can log on and, with little fuss, use different tools such as magnifiers, fill and spray to enhance their work. Most pupils can save and print their work. They enjoy using the limited resources available in the infant base and talk enthusiastically about using the information and communication technology suite in a neighbouring school. By the end of Year 6, pupils of all abilities have a satisfactory level of ability and older pupils have benefited from an intensive 'catch up' course on control and modelling undertaken in a local secondary school. This has not only enhanced pupils' learning, but also effectively developed the confidence of teachers. As a result, older pupils are able to use a program to write instructions to turn on the lights of an 'Alien Ship', although many find it more difficult to sequence traffic lights. Pupils are able to use data handling devices such as spreadsheets quite confidently to accurately identify, record, and evaluate information. However, older pupils have only just benefited from the improved provision, and there are still some limitations in terms of resources. Consequently, there are some gaps in their learning and pupils' skills in

multi-media presentation are only just being developed. Nevertheless, all staff, including the governor linked to this subject, are working hard to ensure that pupils are making up for lost ground. As a result, pupils are confident that they have learned a lot in a short time and state that this is one of their favourite subjects.

74. During the inspection it was only possible to observe teaching for short amounts of time. It is evident that the work of the teaching assistant technician is invaluable in supporting teaching and learning. Teachers are developing their skills well and are usually adept at supporting learning. Teachers demonstrate key skills well and provide opportunities for less confident pupils to work with their more able friends. Teachers monitor pupils' progress in lessons and generally use questions effectively to challenge pupils and to move learning forward. However, although staff have a broad overview of pupils' abilities and progress, they generally plan tasks that are the same for all pupils. This is an area that the school is addressing and relevant plans are in place. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is judged to be satisfactory, but improving.
75. Since the appointment of the new co-ordinator and headteacher, much has been achieved. Good leadership and management, together with considerable support from the governor responsible, have enabled the quality of the provision to move forward quickly. A detailed and relevant scheme of work is now in place, and the advice and support of an advanced skills teacher, and effective links with other schools, have added much to the developing staff confidence, so that plans for future development are very well thought out.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

76. Samples of pupils' work seen in books and on display, from all subjects, show a satisfactory, but developing, use of information and communication technology. Links with literacy in particular are developing well and pupils are increasingly using their skills to record and enhance their written work. This is making a good impact on their enjoyment of learning and overall level of achievement in this subject.

HUMANITIES

77. In humanities, pupils' work in **history** and **geography** was sampled and discussions were held with pupils and subject leaders. Two history lessons were observed. Pupils have the opportunity to visit local places of interest. They state that they particularly enjoy researching and producing detailed reports in geography and exploring the locality, for example tracing the course of the local river Isbourne. It is not possible to form an overall judgement about the provision for these subjects. Indications are that standards are similar to those at the time of the last inspection and are in line with national expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6.
78. In history, pupils at the end of Year 2 understand the similarities and differences between toys of a bygone time and present day toys, but all pupils, regardless of their age or ability, complete the same work and this impacts on their progress and level of achievement. This is a missed opportunity to allow pupils to use their competency in literacy, for example, to support their learning in another subject. At the end of Year 6 pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of all topics studied. Year 6 pupils, however, have a good understanding of the quality of life for children of the Victorian age because they were provided with a very good opportunity to link this work to their work in a literacy lesson. This also made a good contribution to pupils' moral and spiritual development as they learnt to empathise with the constraints and hardship children experienced in Victorian times.
79. There are some links with other subjects, principally literacy and art and design. There is potential for standards in history and geography to be higher, if a more structured approach with other subjects were developed, so that pupils could use their very good basic skills to research and report their findings more imaginatively.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The provision for religious education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The high quality of teaching enables pupils to achieve well and promotes their spiritual and moral education very well.
- Close links with the local church to enable pupils to develop a good understanding of Christianity.
- Pupils are aware of and respect the beliefs of people of other faiths.
- Greater access to visitors and visits to extend their learning of other faiths and cultures would be beneficial.

Commentary

80. Standards at the end of Year 2 are above those expected in the locally agreed syllabus and pupils of all abilities achieve well. By the end of Year 6, standards are very good compared to the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and pupils' level of achievement for all groups is very good. This is very good improvement since the time of the previous inspection as a result of the improved quality of teaching and planning.
81. By the end of Year 2, pupils are developing a good knowledge and understanding of Christian beliefs and values, and close links with the local church contribute well to this aspect of learning. They recognise the need for prayer and for giving, and regular discussions support their learning well. There is good use of self-evaluation so pupils are aware of their learning. By the end of Year 6, pupils have made very good progress in their level of knowledge and understanding. This is because of the very effective way that pupils are encouraged to learn from the topics studied and relate this to their own and others' lives. Older pupils, for example, study the Ten Commandments and relate them to their own experiences. Discussions show a mature depth of thought and understanding about the change brought about in society by shops opening on Sundays, for example. By the end of Year 6, pupils are able to appreciate the importance of the holy books of different faiths. They know the Bible is important to Christians, and that the Jewish 'Torah' and Muslim 'Koran' have a significant impact on the lives of the followers of those faiths. Pupils learn to be empathetic and to respect each other's views. This also has very significant influence on their personal development.
82. No teaching was observed in Years 1 and 2. The quality of teaching and learning are very good in the older classes. Lessons are very carefully planned and all pupils are fully included in all activities. Teachers know pupils very well and relationships are very good, so that discussions are lively and promote open debate. However, it is evident from pupils' books that there is a tendency in the youngest classes for all pupils to complete the same written work. There is an over-reliance on paper exercises which do not challenge pupils' thinking or develop their skills in more meaningful ways. It is likely that these weaknesses are holding back standards and achievement.
83. The subject is led and managed well. A member of the local clergy visits school regularly and there are strong links with the church and local diocese. There are visits to local Christian places of worship to take part in a combined historical and religious education study day. Pupils do not yet have the opportunity to visit other places of worship in spite of the best efforts of the school to develop links with other faiths and cultures. This influences their knowledge and understanding of different faith groups. Occasionally visitors from other faiths will come to school to talk to pupils and when this occurs pupils' understanding of other faiths is enhanced.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

84. Work in **art and design, music and physical education** was sampled. Work was analysed, discussions held and one lesson was observed in art and design and music. Work in design and technology was inspected in depth, because the school is aware of the shortcomings and is rightly keen to develop this subject further.
85. In **art and design**, indications are that standards in drawing are above average across the school and pupils make good progress and achieve well in this element of the subject. Pupils are provided with a good grounding in developing their drawing skills, and by the end of Year 2 produce work that shows a good level of detail. However, despite this positive picture, pupils' work is overly teacher-directed. There is little creative and original work in pupils' books or on display. Pupils study famous artists, but copy their pictures rather than using their style in their own work. Opportunities for pupils to explore different ways of using paint, for example, are not fully explored so that tasks are insufficiently artistically challenging for the most talented pupils. Work observed indicates that pupils' level of achievement is most likely unsatisfactory overall. By the end of Year 6, evidence indicates that pupils have made satisfactory progress and pupils' work on display shows a developing eye for composition, form, line and tone to enhance their work. All pupils are very enthusiastic about the subject and make mature evaluations about their work. However, throughout the school, pupils have a limited range of experiences to develop their skills when working in three dimensions and do not have enough opportunities to progressively develop their skills and knowledge of working in clay, other mouldable materials and natural objects. The very recently appointed co-ordinator is feeling her way in the development of the subject. She has made a satisfactory start and is rightly seeking advice from outside expertise.
86. In **music**, indications are that pupils attain above average standards in singing and performance by the end of Years 2 and 6. Most pupils sing in tune and with enthusiasm. By the end of Year 2 pupils' abilities to play the recorder are impressive and all pupils are able to play a simple tune to the music showing a good understanding of correct fingering and breath control. Pupils across the school experience a wide and interesting range of additional experiences, such as visiting musicians, participation in a music club and visits to music festivals, which add much to pupils' social and cultural development. A new scheme of work has recently been introduced that supports non-specialist teachers well, but currently the assessment of pupils' knowledge and understanding has not been fully developed. The subject leader is addressing this factor and training has been booked.
87. No lessons were observed in **physical education** so it is not possible to make a judgment about the quality of provision or standards attained. Currently, the school does not have a hall, but use is made of local facilities such as the village halls, and other sporting venues. As a result, pupils have sufficient opportunities to develop their skills in all aspects of the subject. Additional activities also add much to the range of sporting activities available. The school has worked hard to canvas for a new hall, which is nearing completion in the junior base. This has the potential to significantly improve the provision for physical education and will provide much needed space for pupils in both bases to develop their skills.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Provision in design and technology is **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Work is too teacher-directed so that pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable at the end of Year 2.

- By the end of Year 6 pupils attain expected standards, but evaluations are not yet linked to the initial designs.
- Pupils lack confidence to use tools in all year groups.
- Good links are made with other subjects.
- Older pupils take great care with the quality of their plans and finished models.

Commentary

88. The subject was inspected in depth because the headteacher is very keen to develop the quality of the provision and improve standards. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 is below national expectations and most pupils, including those with special educational needs, are not achieving well enough in relation to their capabilities. This marks a decline since the last inspection.
89. Despite there being a recent improvement in the range of learning opportunities provided for younger pupils and good links made with subjects such as geography and literacy, pupils' work is too teacher-directed and this is holding back progress and standards. This was evident in pupils' designs for a home for 'Incy Wincy Spider', which were all the same. Pupils' design and making experiences are very limited. As a consequence, they have not mastered basic techniques such as joining, choosing suitable materials, designing or evaluating their work. Although pupils have recently been taught how to make a hinged joint, and now recognise the need to strengthen structures, they have not had the opportunity to explore these skills in a creative or individual manner, selecting different options, or of stretching their imaginations.
90. By the end of Year 6, pupils have begun to make up for lost ground and are attaining standards that are in line with national expectations. Most pupils can generate detailed designs that are clearly labelled and precisely drawn with accurate measurements to aid the making process. However, some designs tend to be over ambitious, which indicates a lack of previous experience. Pupils adapt their original designs through trial and error and finished products are carefully made. Pupils are now evaluating their work and are aware of the strengths and weaknesses in their designs, but it is a weakness that more able pupils do not test their finished products or evaluate the outcomes in relation to the intended purpose. Pupils are enthusiastic about the subject and work well together, but have had limited experience at using woodworking tools, for example. As a result, most are not confident, and are a little overexcited, when the opportunities arise.
91. Only one lesson was observed, which was of satisfactory quality. In this lesson, pupils were well supported by all staff so that they made satisfactory progress in designing and making movable toys. Overall, teachers' confidence and subject knowledge is improving due to the efforts of the headteacher. Teachers are supported by an improved scheme of work and a wider range of resources so that most pupils are making better progress than they were. However, although teachers have a broad overview of pupils' progress and level of attainment, they do not yet have a means by which to track pupils' progress in individual subject skills, which would better support teaching and learning.
92. The co-ordinator has made a good start in identifying areas of weakness and has acted decisively to improve the quality of the provision. Whilst much has been achieved in a short time, she correctly recognises that more is still required if pupils' level of achievement is to improve to better match their capabilities. Her plans are relevant and detailed. The leadership and management are, as a result, good.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

93. No lessons were observed in this area of the school's work so it is not possible to make a secure judgment about the quality of provision.
94. In addition to meeting all statutory requirements, the teaching of personal, social and health education is successfully interwoven into all aspects of school life and is a strong driving force in the school. It places a good emphasis on developing pupils who are confident, mature and able to make sensible decisions. As a result, pupils are developing their independence through the wide range of opportunities afforded to them.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	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	2
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	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	1
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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

