

INSPECTION REPORT

**MEXBOROUGH ST JOHN THE BAPTIST
CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Mexborough

LEA area: Doncaster

Unique reference number: 106764

Headteacher: John Hunter

Lead inspector: Steve Bywater

Dates of inspection: 24th to 26th May 2004

Inspection number: 264587

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	216
School address:	Sedgefield Way Mexborough South Yorkshire
Postcode:	S64 0BE
Telephone number:	01709 582619
Fax number:	01709 584957
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Jeff Riley

Date of previous inspection: 28th October 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St John the Baptist Primary School, Mexborough, is an average sized Church of England (voluntary aided) school situated midway between Doncaster and Sheffield. There are 216 pupils aged between four and 11 on the full time roll. Attainment on entry to the school includes the full range of attainment from well above to well below average, but is best described as average. Pupils attending the school live in a mixed socio-economic community in a variety of private and rented accommodation. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals (7 per cent), is below the national average. There are very few pupils from ethnic minority groups and no pupils speak English as an additional language. At the time of the inspection, there were approximately 17 per cent of pupils identified with special educational needs, which is about average when compared with most schools. The majority of these pupils have learning difficulties, but a small number have physical and other needs. There are four pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need, which is below the usual figure in this size of school. The school holds Basic Skills Quality Mark, Healthy Schools and Investor in People awards. The school has recently struggled to overcome a number of staffing problems including the secondment of the headteacher to support a school in special measures. Teaching has been affected in a number of classes as illness, maternity leave, secondment and promotion has meant a succession of supply teachers have been brought into a number of classes.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18463	Steve Bywater	Lead inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Music Physical education
1305	Brian Rance	Lay inspector	
20326	Peter Clarke	Team inspector	Foundation Stage ¹ Science Art and design Design and technology Physical education
22704	Garry Williams	Team inspector	English Geography History Special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

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¹ The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three and ends at the end of the reception class. It is a distinct stage in preparing children for later schooling and is based on six areas of learning. These mainly refer to communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development, but also includes knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a satisfactory school with a number of good features and others which need attention. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and much is good. Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall and reach average standards in most subjects by the time they leave the school. The school is satisfactorily led and managed and provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils have a very good attitude to school, get on well together and behave very well.
- Due to the lack of effective monitoring, the school has not been accurate in its self-evaluation.
- Assessment and target setting systems are not accurate enough.
- The caring aspect of school is strong and the school values the input of pupils.
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- There is a good range of activities, which enhance the school curriculum.
- There are some important omissions from the school's statutory documents.

The school has made satisfactory progress since the previous inspection. There were no issues in the previous report, but the minor pointers which were suggested have been dealt with. The school has provided policies and detailed schemes of work for children under five and an effective transfer document from nursery schools. Classroom assistants are now used effectively in the literacy hour.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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.*

Achievement is satisfactory overall. Children start school with average overall attainment. They achieve satisfactorily in the reception and in all areas of learning, children attain the Early Learning Goals² that they are expected to reach by the beginning of Year 1. Although pupils' achievement is also satisfactory over time in Years 1 to 6, they are capable of better and showed this during the inspection when they achieved well. Standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are currently in line with national expectations in English, mathematics and science. Pupils achieve satisfactorily and attain standards in ICT, which are in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. A significant minority of pupils attain higher standards than this. There are many examples of the pupils' good quality art work around

² Early Learning Goals - these are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They mainly refer to achievements children make in connection with: communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; and physical and creative development. There are many goals for each area of learning, for example, in language and literacy pupils should be able to write their own name and other things such as labels and begin to write simple sentences.

school and the school choir sings beautifully. Standards in the Year 2 national tests in 2003 showed standards to be in line with the national average in writing, above average in reading and well above average in mathematics. However, teacher assessments were very inaccurate when compared with test results and the teacher expected very few pupils to achieve the higher levels, although many did. In the 2003 national tests for Year 6 pupils, standards in English and science were above the national average and standards in mathematics were well above the national average.

Pupils' personal development is very good overall. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a very good attitude towards school and their behaviour and relationships are also very good. School initiatives such as the school council positively promote pupils' sense of responsibility. The attendance rate is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Overall, the school provides a sound quality of education. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Currently, teaching is particularly effective in Years 1, 4, 5 and 6. In these classes pupils are presently achieving well in their reading, writing and number work. This has not always been the case. The quality of teaching by previous temporary teachers in Years 4 and 5 was below the quality normally expected and pupils' achievement during these times was unsatisfactory and there is evidence of unsatisfactory teaching in Year 2. The school has comprehensive systems for assessing and tracking pupils' standards of work. Teachers share targets with pupils, but they are not always certain of the levels pupils are capable of and some pupils are not challenged enough. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well and are ably supported by skilled assistants. The curriculum is satisfactory, but it does not always help pupils to develop their writing skills. There is overuse of photocopied worksheets, which often require a one word answer. Care and support are good, and pupils are actively involved in the school's work. Links with parents and the community are satisfactory. Links with other schools are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The leadership of the headteacher is satisfactory as is the leadership of other key staff. The last year has been difficult with staffing issues, not least of which has been the two-term secondment of the headteacher to another school. This has impacted on developments in monitoring and the overall progress made since the previous inspection. The headteacher and deputy headteacher now have a clear vision for school improvement, but the school's own evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses have been inaccurate due to the absence of the headteacher. **The overall management of the school is satisfactory.** Current weaknesses involve the work of some curriculum co-ordinators and in communicating information to parents. **The work of the governing body is satisfactory.** The governors are fully committed to supporting the school and act as critical friends in challenging the school. There is an acceptance both by the headteacher and governing body that the School Prospectus, Governors' Annual Report and Pupils' Annual Reports need to be improved to include statutory information.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is viewed highly by its pupils and their parents. Parents feel that the school is caring and compassionate, and are pleased with the ethos. They appreciate the school's personal approach and open door policy, and add that the regular teachers know pupils well and are

interested in them. Pupils also have complimentary things to say. When asked how to improve the school, one pupil said, “You can’t improve it, leave it as it is!”

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve the quality of teaching to ensure that it is consistent throughout the school
- Tighten up assessment procedures, giving greater emphasis to monitoring the trends and patterns in pupils’ achievement and act on what is found out.
- Ensure that subject coordinators have a thorough understanding of the standards and quality of education in their subjects and use this information to raise standards.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure that the School Prospectus, Governors’ Annual Report and Pupils’ Annual Reports include all the necessary information.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards in English, mathematics and science are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils' achievement in reception is **satisfactory** as it is for pupils in Years 1 to 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Planning does not always provide sufficient challenge for more able pupils, especially in Year 2
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well due to the teacher and support staff effectiveness and well drawn up individual education plans.
- Teachers are not acting on the results of the assessments carefully enough when tracking shows pupils are not achieving as well as expected.
- Literacy across the curriculum is not well planned, resulting in missed opportunities, particularly in writing. Teachers in many classes are using worksheets indiscriminately and this is affecting the ability of pupils to record their work.
- Opportunities for reading are well established, resulting in attainment above that which is normally expected by the end of Year 6.
- There are limited opportunities for higher attaining pupils to undertake their own scientific investigations.

Commentary

1. The achievement of children in the reception year, from their average attainment when they start school, is satisfactory overall in all areas of learning except for children's creative development and their personal, social and emotional development where it is good. Most children get off to a solid start with learning the basic skills of reading, writing and working with numbers. They settle fairly quickly into school life and routines, and learn to sit quietly, listen and take turns in formal class lessons. On leaving the reception class, the majority of pupils are successful in achieving all the Early Learning Goals. A significant minority achieve standards above those expected for their age. Since the previous inspection, standards have been maintained.
2. In Years 1 and 2, pupils achieve satisfactorily overall and their standards are in line with national expectations in speaking, listening, writing and mathematics. Standards are above expectations in reading. However, higher attaining pupils are sometimes insufficiently challenged, resulting in a lower number of pupils attaining Level 3. In writing, there are many missed opportunities to promote their writing skills in Years 3 to 6. The overuse of worksheets limits challenge, opportunities and experiences to allow pupils to develop their writing skills to a level synonymous with their ability. In mathematics higher attaining pupils are only challenged sufficiently in number work, and not in the other areas of mathematics including shape, space and measure. As a result, although pupils' achievement is good in Year 1, achievement in Year 2 is unsatisfactory in mathematics. The number of pupils achieving the higher levels is well below average in Year 2 and remains an area of relative weakness. This judgement is based on wafer thin evidence of work submitted from Year 2. The following table indicates that inspection judgements are a little lower than the school's results in last year's national tests for seven year-olds.

Standards were well above the national average in mathematics, above average in reading and average in writing. In comparison with similar schools, standards were above average in mathematics, average in reading and below average in writing. Improvements in test results have been below the national trend and suggest that the school has not done well enough in recent years.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.5 (16.4)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	15.2 (15.0)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	17.6 (15.6)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 34 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- By the end of Year 6, standards in speaking and listening are currently above average, as are reading skills, but writing skills are average. In writing, there are missed opportunities to promote writing skills due to the overuse of worksheets, although in Year 6 worksheets are sensibly balanced with other exercises. The standard of work is average overall. In Years 3 to 6, pupils currently achieve well in English. Achievement in mathematics in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory, but has been uneven. In Years 4 and 5 pupils were taught for substantial periods by temporary teachers. Pupils at these times were often given very similar work irrespective of their abilities. Higher attaining pupils produced a substantial amount of accurately completed but relatively easy work, whilst lower attainers produce very little of the same work. In science, there are bright prospects for the future as the current Year 5 and Year 4 reflect good potential to raise standards higher.
- The table below shows standards were higher last year than they will be this year. This is no surprise since this year there is a much larger proportion of pupils on the schools list of special educational needs. Although achieving well, these pupils are unlikely to meet the nationally expected levels. Last year standards were above the national average in English and science and well above average in mathematics. When compared with similar schools, standards were average in mathematics, but below average in English and science. This suggests that the school was not doing well enough.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.9 (27.7)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	28.5 (27.3)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	29.5 (29.7)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 33 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- In other subjects, standards in ICT are in line with national expectations at the end of both Years 2 and 6. Overall, pupils achieve satisfactorily. The use of ICT across other subjects of the curriculum is satisfactory. There are many examples of the pupils' good quality art work around school and the school choir sings beautifully. There is too little evidence to make a judgement about standards and achievement in other subjects.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well which is better than their peers. The good teaching they receive is effective in raising their attainment. The additional quality of support in the classrooms means that these pupils achieve well. They have confidence to take part in all classroom activities. Thus, good reading and language development helps them to complete tasks in other subjects.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The school is very successful in helping pupils to achieve very high standards in their personal qualities. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**. Pupils' attendance and punctuality is now **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are very keen to learn and apply themselves very well in lessons.
- Very good relationships and very high standards of behaviour exist.
- Pupils mature well and are very capable in coping with responsibility.

Commentary

7. Pupils throughout the school display very good attitudes towards school and their learning. Pupils are very polite and they behave very well both in and out of school and the school has had no cause to exclude any pupil.
8. The school atmosphere and environment is a very positive one where pupils are clearly valued. It is not surprising then that pupils at St. John the Baptist Primary thoroughly enjoy coming to school. They arrive in a happy and positive frame of mind each morning and very quickly organise themselves and their belongings. They settle very promptly in lessons, including after break and lunchtime, and are clearly very keen and interested in what is being taught. They listen and participate very well and so they are able to take full advantage of the education and other opportunities on offer to them. The youngest pupils are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals for personal, social and emotional development by the time they reach Year 1.
9. Pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes to their work due to working with motivated, competent teachers and support staff. They behave well at all times and focus on their individual tasks. As a result they are proud of their achievements.
10. Staff presents good role models to pupils. They set very high expectations of personal conduct and they are very skilled in using praise rather than criticism to encourage good behaviour. They purposefully provide very many opportunities for pupils to work co-operatively and collaboratively together. As a result, very good relationships exist and pupils behave very well both in and out of school. There is a very high level of mutual respect and pupils not only extend courtesies to adults but to each other as well. There have been no exclusions for many years.
11. Moral development is very well pursued by teachers who make good use of opportunities as they arise to make valuable learning points, which was particularly evident in Years 5 and 6. Social development is similarly pursued energetically by teachers to enable pupils to develop responsibility and maturity. There is a whole-school approach to recognising and valuing pupils for the part they play in school, for example, the school council. There is a deliberate effort to entrust older pupils with specific and regular roles. The school council has a genuine influence on the development of the school and pupils are proud of their membership of it. Consequently pupils grow in confidence and willingly accept responsibility and cope admirably.
12. Spiritual development is encouraged through assemblies, the very good relationships throughout the school and occasional moments of awe in lessons. Cultural development

is well supported by school visits and visitors that leave a lasting impression on the pupils. The main world religions and cultures are taught in school and where possible, the school reinforces pupils' understanding of different faiths through visits to a range of places of worship.

Attendance

13. In the last complete reporting year, as shown in the table below, pupils' attendance was well below the national average. However the school's reporting system shows that, near the end of the present reporting year, pupils' attendance is now close to the average, as it was at the time of the previous inspection. The recent improvement in attendance results from the improved procedures used by the school to promote attendance and the cooperation of parents, although a significant number of pupils are absent from school each year through taking family holidays in term time.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	7.1	School data:	0.2
National data:	5.4	National data:	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **sound** quality of education. Teaching and the curriculum are both **satisfactory**. There is **good** provision for extra-curricular activities. The school provides **good** levels of care. Links with parents and the community are **satisfactory**. Links with other schools are **good**.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **satisfactory** overall. The use of assessment is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The use of assessment is unsatisfactory for pupils in Years 1 to 6.
- Currently, there is high quality teaching in Years 1, 4, 5, and 6.
- The management of pupils is generally good.
- Good use is made of resources and support staff.
- Pupils in some classes are being given identical work in many subjects. This work is often too easy for higher attaining pupils and too difficult for lower attainers.
- The over-use of worksheets in some lessons restricts higher attaining pupils from writing and working independently.
- There are a number of examples of unsatisfactory marking because it often takes the form of a tick only and does not explain how pupils can improve their work.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 29 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	4	14	11	0	0	0

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

14. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen. During the inspection, teaching in Years 1, 4, 5 and 6 classes was of consistently high quality. However, teaching is judged to be satisfactory overall because the scrutiny of pupils' work produced prior to the inspection shows teaching has not always been as good as this in Year 2, Year 4 and Year 5 classes. These classes have been disrupted by teacher absences and the temporary teaching has not always been of the normally expected quality.
15. There are sound procedures in the reception class for assessing children's learning and interests. The teacher and support staff monitor and record pupils' progress across the six areas of learning thoroughly. The assessment of pupils' achievement and standards between Years 1 to 6 is, however, unsatisfactory. Although good systems are in place to collect and use assessment information, teachers are not using the information sufficiently to improve their teaching and to raise standards. The school appropriately concentrates on English and mathematics and uses these subjects' assessment information to set targets. Results of national tests are analysed and the expected achievement of each pupil is plotted. However, once the targets have been set, too little is done to ensure pupils are making the required amount of progress. As a result, the match of work for some of the higher attaining pupils' lacks challenge and as a result their work is not extended.
16. Teaching in the reception class is satisfactory and gives children a sound foundation on which to base future learning. The teacher and supporting adults know the children well and plan a range of activities that give them the opportunity to develop a suitably wide range of skills and prepare them appropriately for their education in Year 1. Adults form a strong and supportive team, all ensuring that children enjoy their tasks, concentrate and persevere. The management of children is good. Because children choose their own activities, they are actively involved with their own learning and work hard. The teacher encourages children to be independent and work hard to raise their confidence and self-esteem. Children know what they have to do and why they are doing it. There is clear sense of common purpose where support staff help the teacher to track behaviour, attitudes and achievement when children are listening or involved in practical activities. This information helps the teacher plan future lessons and ensures children with special educational needs are identified quickly and provided with support.
17. Throughout the school, the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is satisfactory. There are strengths in literacy and numeracy lessons. In Year 3, for example, pupils responded eagerly to the teacher's lively approach to reading different types of poetry. She used well prepared material effectively with humour, variation in tone and pace, which led to real enjoyment and very good learning. In well-structured numeracy lessons, such as one taught in Year 5, the teacher built well on previous learning and pupils were clearly focused as they concentrated on using the 'probability scale'. In mental mathematics sessions, pupils show high levels of interest and are keen to achieve at speed. Skilful teachers' questioning in both literacy and numeracy lessons promotes pupils'

understanding and tests their understanding. Pupils know that their contributions are valued and respond enthusiastically when they are challenged. The weakness in literacy and numeracy lessons has been teachers' failure to use assessment information to match work to the needs of different groups of pupils. For example, in some lessons higher attaining pupils are not challenged sufficiently and as a result they do not achieve well enough. In other lessons, lower attaining pupils struggle with their work.

18. The organisation of lessons is mostly good. The whole-class teaching almost always includes good exposition, explanations and good questioning. This promotes thinking and requires pupils to expand on their answers. Teachers go over work from previous lessons to consolidate pupils' understanding and to ensure that new work is built on solid foundations. Pupils are usually fluent, confident and enthusiastic in their responses. One of the main reasons for this is that teachers have sensitive and caring relationships with their pupils and work hard to raise pupils' self-esteem and pride in their achievements. Pupils speak highly of their teachers. Teachers use praise and encouragement regularly to enthuse and motivate them. All teachers manage and control pupils well.
19. A good feature of teachers' planning is the use of links between subjects. Pupils are given opportunities to apply their knowledge, skills and understanding, and to realise that learning in one subject is not an isolated experience. Teachers are now beginning to use computers for research and to enhance the work in other subjects and as a result pupils use computers naturally as part of their studies.
20. During the inspection, teachers provided challenging targets for most pupils and ensured that pupils were aware of them. Learning objectives were always clear and described in the lesson planning. Teachers shared the objectives with the class at the beginning of the lesson so that pupils were focused. The marking of pupils' work is often inconsistent. Whilst it regularly praises, it seldom tells pupils how to improve their work. The over-use of worksheets in some lessons also restricts higher attaining pupils from writing and recording their work independently.
21. Teachers are particularly aware of pupils with special educational needs and as a result they achieve well. Their individual education plans match the work effectively to their needs and teachers and support staff make helpful notes about pupils' achievements.

The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum throughout the school is **satisfactory**. Opportunities for enrichment are **good**. There is a **good** range of extra-curricular activities.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Recent links between the reception class and Cherry Tree Nursery have suitably widened children's opportunities.
- The good range of extra-curricular activities enhances pupils' experiences.
- The overuse of worksheets restricts the opportunities for pupils to develop writing skills in subjects other than English.
- The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good.
- Display is of good quality, giving a high profile to pupils' work and providing an environment of which they can be justifiably proud.
- The curriculum offers good provision for pupils with special educational needs.

Commentary

22. The school is socially inclusive and provides a relevant, broad, balanced curriculum to which most pupils have equal access. All statutory requirements are met. A comprehensive plan has been introduced for the development, monitoring and reviewing of all areas of the curriculum from reception upwards, resulting in appropriately focused subject action plans. The strategy for teaching literacy has been successfully implemented across the school but the over use of worksheets limits the opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills across the range of subjects. In the majority of classes, the school's strategy for teaching numeracy is good. However, in Year 2, there is insufficient work in working with shape, space and measures. The school is effective in providing work for slower learners, but it is not giving the same levels of attention to ensuring that planning, provision and resources drive forward the achievement of higher attaining pupils at a consistent pace in all subjects. Scrutiny of pupils' work clearly indicates the overuse of photocopied worksheets hence writing skills are often not used if one word answers inserted into a blank space provided are the only answer required. In many instances, the same worksheets are issued to lower and higher attaining pupils. In mathematics, the overuse of worksheets does not support pupils in recording in their own way.
23. Children in the Foundation Stage have a wide range of experiences in the creative and aesthetic aspects of the curriculum. The recent linking of children in Cherry Tree Nursery and the reception class through well planned activities is very good. The recent successful introduction since the previous inspection of the Early Years Policy is having a positive effect on the achievement of children in the Foundation Stage. Given time to suitably weld the two units together, the prospects look bright.
24. The school provides a good range of opportunities for pupils to have experiences outside the constraints of the curriculum. There is a good range of well planned trips successfully linking topics taught in class to first hand experiences. For example, on a recent visit to a Viking village, pupils enthusiastically undertook a range of prescribed activities that gave them a real feel for life in Viking times. Pupils told inspectors of their enjoyment of these visits. Frequent visitors into school, including links with local churches, also support and positively enhance the curriculum. Lunchtime clubs organised by a sports college offering tennis coaching, drama, French, competitive sports activities and choir enable pupils to benefit considerably from these experiences.
25. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is good. The individual education plans are appropriately documented identifying pupils' targets and support them to achieve well.
26. Pupils' personal, social and health education figures highly in the general fabric of the school and all these activities are conducted well. They are carefully planned and organised, preparing pupils for the next stage in their education. Accommodation is well maintained and provides a bright and stimulating setting in most classrooms and corridors. A range of pupils' work undertaken during art lessons is tastefully displayed to good effect and in many instances successfully linking the use of ICT, for example, to pupils' work in the style of Kandinsky. Overall, the accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Care, guidance and support

The care that the school takes of pupils is **good**. The ways that pupils are involved and their views are taken into account are **good**. The guidance and support that pupils receive is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Procedures for ensuring the welfare, health and safety of pupils, including child protection are well established.
- Staff know the pupils well, care for them and guide their personal development.
- The involvement of pupils in the way that the school runs, particularly the school council is effective.

Commentary

27. Clear child protection procedures are in place, with the headteacher having the role of designated person. All members of staff know their responsibilities in this regard. There is a sound health and safety policy in place and a thorough risk assessment of the premises is carried out and updated every term. Routines for dealing with first aid, medicines and accidents are well established, with two staff trained in emergency first aid. Safety checks on potentially dangerous equipment take place annually, alarms are tested regularly and practice evacuations of the premises take place each term, with their timings and any difficulties recorded.
28. Teachers, classroom assistants and all the other staff in school know the pupils and their families very well. Staff always speak to pupils in a calm and caring manner. Through the use of whole class and private discussions, staff are able to share effectively in the pupils' personal development. This is clearly shown in the comments that teachers make in the personal section of the annual reports to parents.
29. The pupil representatives on school council enjoy their role and take it seriously. It has been established for some time and pupils are pleased when their ideas are acted upon by the staff and governors, for example, improvements to the playground with quiet areas, litter bins and picnic tables. Year 6 pupils also take particular trouble to ensure that the views of reception pupils are listened to.
30. Pupils with special educational needs are identified at an early stage and well supported so that all pupils are helped to achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. The special educational needs co-ordinator uses a range of assessment procedures to draw up targets and individual education plans are compiled in close collaboration between the teacher and special educational needs co-ordinator. These are subject to frequent reviews to ensure they remain appropriate.
31. The checking of pupils' with special educational needs academic achievement is unsatisfactory. When looking at pupils' work from prior to the inspection, it was clear that all pupils in the class received identical work in many subjects. One of the reasons for this mismatch of work is that teachers do not use the systems available well enough to record what individual pupils can do and to analyse what they cannot do.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The schools partnership with parents and the community is **satisfactory**, and with other schools it is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have a high regard for the school, and are involved with their children's work.
- There are good links with parents of pupils with special educational needs and those in the reception class
- The information about the school that the parents receive, namely The Prospectus and Governors' Annual Report to Parents, and the annual reports on pupils' standards and achievement, do not meet national guidelines
- Links with the other schools in the area, nurseries and secondary schools are well established

Commentary

32. Parents are generally happy with the school. In meeting parents at school, informally and at the parents meeting, and from the parent questionnaires, few concerns were expressed. Parents appreciate the Christian ethos of the school, the care that the school takes of the pupils and their high standards of behaviour. The school provides parents with relevant information through regular newsletters. Parents of children in the reception class are particularly appreciative of the information supplied to them. Parents generally feel able to approach the school at any time if they have any worries about their children and believe that the school handles complaints effectively.
33. Parents help their children at home in their homework assignments and a number come into school to assist in class. They also support the schools events to raise funds, which have been used to improve the school's facilities and provide additional resources. In these various ways, parents support their children's learning well.
34. At the end of the summer term, parents receive the annual reports on individual pupils. These reports do not fulfil the requirements of National Guidance Circulars and the related Statutory Instrument, in particular by grouping commentary on all subjects apart from literacy and numeracy into one paragraph.
35. There are very good links with parents of pupils with special educational needs. They are kept fully informed of the achievements of their children and invited to frequent reviews of target set.
36. The school's prospectus provides the national test and assessment results for the pupils in the school, but does not include the national statistics for comparison. The Governors Annual Report to Parents omits a number of mandatory items, for example, arrangements for admission of pupils with disabilities and an accessibility plan, the schools targets for Key Stage 2 assessments and details of teachers' professional development. Neither document mentions other aspects recommended in the relevant National Guidance document, such as sporting aims and arts policy and provision.
37. The school is one of six schools in the pyramid of schools based on Mexborough (Secondary) School, to which the majority of pupils transfer. Liaison with that school is close, with a well managed programme for pupils to transfer on to Year 7. Headteachers and other staff from all the schools in the pyramid work together and have acquired additional funding which has enhanced the school's facilities, for example, the sound system in the main hall. Similarly the school works in close liaison with pre-school nurseries and in particular the Cherry Tree Nursery, which has opened in premises on the school site.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school is **satisfactory** overall. The leadership of the headteacher is **satisfactory**. The leadership of the key staff is **satisfactory**. Management throughout the school is **sound**. Management of the governing body is **sound**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The governing body, headteacher and staff have worked very well together to create very positive attitudes within a caring and supportive environment.
- The management of special educational needs is secure. Individual education plans are thoughtfully drawn up with all interested parties, including pupils.
- The headteacher's commitment, supported by a very able deputy headteacher, to inclusion and concern for the needs of individuals is good.
- The leaders of different areas of the school, some new, provide good role models for other staff and pupils.
- The school's self-evaluation and its use, including monitoring performance data, is underdeveloped.
- The governing body is highly supportive of the school. However, strategies to ensure a secure platform to identify priorities, including financial implications, in the initial stages are not yet formalised. The day-to-day administrative and financial systems are efficient.

Commentary

38. The headteacher has a clear and accurate view of what needs to be done to secure higher standards for all pupils of St. John the Baptist Primary. His focus and sense of purpose is shared by staff. The headteacher, staff and governors have worked well together over previous years to create very positive attitudes and very good discipline, which is critical in order to establish a learning environment, which is secure and caring. However, the key to further development is to raise standards and achievement, and improve the quality of teaching and learning, which will require rigorous monitoring, support and guidance. This has not happened recently and has been hampered by the secondment of the headteacher on two occasions in recent years. Whilst he has been absent 'an eye has been taken off the ball'. In effect, there has been slippage in achieving the aspirations, which he and the governing body rightly want and expect. This is clear from the school's inaccurate self-assessment of the current state of affairs. The headteacher acknowledges this and has clearly indicated a determination to strive to achieve the shared aspirations of all stakeholders.
39. There is good management of pupils with special educational needs. Early identification through careful monitoring by the special educational needs co-ordinator and staff supports pupils by ensuring they receive very effective help from all staff. They use the individual education plans, which are built into planning, as effective terms of reference. The individual education plans are thoughtfully drawn up by all interested parties, including the pupils themselves. All staff are very much concerned for the pupils in their care and the pupils themselves feel very secure in the school environment. They feel confident about approaching any adult about any concerns they may have. The management of Circle Time³ in the school supports this area well.
40. The school has worked hard to provide considerable data on the performances and achievement of its pupils. However, the information gathered is not, as yet, used

systematically to focus on and identify remedial action to provide improved achievement, especially for high attainers.

41. The governing body is highly supportive of the school but procedures to involve them at an early stage when establishing the school development plan and its financial implications are not securely and formally in place. This removes them from initial stage strategic discussions, which reduces the impact of their critical role. The headteacher acknowledges this and is considering strategies to formalise procedures in order that they are involved in first stage discussions. This identified strategy will provide greater in-depth knowledge of all aspects of the school, including its strengths and weaknesses and secure the total governing body role is absolute. The school secretary manages the day-to-day financial and administration effectively and efficiently. Recommendations of the previous financial audit have been addressed. Best value principles are employed and competitive tendering, comparison and service are a routine feature of the purchase of goods and services.
42. The very positive relationships and commitment of all members of the current staff team and governors are significant aids to raising achievement. There is a high level of care and concern for pupils and the creation of a high quality environment is a tribute to the school's desire for pupils to have 'the best' to support their learning and development. The major barriers are the staffing issues, which have, through no fault of the school, seriously affected standards, achievement and the inaccurate use of assessments.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	610,984
Total expenditure	623,915
Expenditure per pupil	2,902

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	15,172
Balance carried forward to the next	2,241

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage, which comprises of one reception class, is **satisfactory**.

43. Children in the reception class are taught in a newly created Early Years Unit, which also contains a private nursery run as a limited company under the school's management control. Recent innovations have amalgamated nursery and reception children together for specific defined activity sessions. During these sessions, children are required to choose the activities they would like to undertake from a given menu. This has successfully integrated children from the nursery and reception class. When children join the reception class, their skills are broadly the same as those of many children across the country. Satisfactory teaching enables children to achieve at broadly average levels, so by the time they transfer into Year 1 most are ready to start the National Curriculum. Boys and girls achieve similarly. Detailed regular assessment of how children are doing enables staff to pitch tasks at the right level so that learning does not lose its momentum. Pupils requiring additional support with their learning are identified early and given appropriate well founded guidance, and higher attaining pupils are positively encouraged to consolidate their more advanced reading skills. Parents are fully involved in helping and supporting their children, and conversation with them is good. The quality of reports sent to parents is very good, very informative and personal, clearly identifying a child's achievement and effort. The Foundation Stage manager, who is also responsible for the oversight of provision in Years 1 and 2, is hard working, and provides satisfactory leadership and management. She has successfully linked nursery and reception provision and motivates the nursery nurse team to work happily together in the interests of the children.
44. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory, with present levels of achievement and progress closely matching previous findings. However, good implementation of a recently introduced Foundation Stage Policy, a weakness identified in the previous report, has successfully welded together nursery and reception provision. As these new working arrangements are cemented together, the future looks bright.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have good levels of independence.
- Relationships are good and this boosts children's self esteem.
- Lower and higher attaining children have good support and this enables them to achieve well.

Commentary

45. Children enter the Foundation Stage with skills in their personal, social and emotional development broadly average for their age. By the time they leave the reception class they are well on course to achieve the goals expected for their age. Teaching and

learning are satisfactory. Daily routines are well established and enhance children's confidence and self esteem. Most adults are good role models and the children copy them to good effect. Most children co-operate together, clearly evident during partnership activities linking nursery and reception children. Behaviour is good, children take turns and show respect for each other. As observed during a practical session involving the rolling of play dough to create mini beasts, children co-operate well together and share equipment with the minimum of fuss. Children are expected to take personal responsibility when choosing and clearing away or selecting the next activity, and they rise well to the challenges set for them. Reception children develop their independence further when they get ready for physical activities. Staff take every opportunity to extend and develop children's personal development and this is the main reason that achievement is good for children of all abilities.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Supporting adults work well with children who require additional help and this enables them to make sound gains in their learning.
- Writing skills are boosted successfully in the reception class.

Commentary

46. Children achieve satisfactorily in the well structured sessions that closely mirror the national literacy guidelines in Year 1 and soundly stimulate children's interest in reading. Most teaching is satisfactory. During an activity session observed, children were provided with many opportunities to handle books to find pictures of mini beasts. Children enjoy looking at books and handle them with suitable care. Early reading skills are generally well focused as children learn new words by sight as well as letter sounds and names. Most children are on course to achieve the goals expected for them at the end of the reception year. Most children do not find the opportunities to write stimulating text and writing fails to capture children's interest. Nevertheless, most children are well on the way to writing for themselves. Routines for listening and giving answers are not totally established. The school is aware that there needs to be greater focus on developing speaking skills with the whole group listening quietly to each other's responses. There is some little way to go before they reach this target.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have well planned opportunities to learn basic counting skills.
- There are missed opportunities to link children's mathematical understanding with other subject areas.

Commentary

47. Staff take sound opportunities to develop children's understanding of number sequences, shape and space. Teaching and learning are satisfactory across the board. Practical

activities are generally well matched to children's ability, such as telling the time to the nearest hour. However, there are many missed opportunities to link mathematics with other subjects. For example, during a lesson involving activities related to time, no mention was made of the actual causes of day and night and the effect of the sun's position in relation to the earth in simple terms. Missed opportunities also exist to link new words with new learning as on many occasions suitable vocabulary failed to be displayed prominently. Number rhymes, songs and games encourage most children to join in with the majority counting up to 20 with a fair degree of confidence and accuracy. Achievement is satisfactory and the majority of children will achieve the expected targets set for them by the end of the reception year.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision for knowledge and understanding of the world is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Well planned opportunities suitably extend children's knowledge and understanding.

Commentary

48. Children's natural curiosity is extended by the organisation of interesting activities based on well selected topics, for example, mini beasts. Their growing awareness of the world around them is extended well using observation of living things, designing and making and using the computer confidently. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and children achieve soundly. Working on the computer children were adept at taking turns to use the mouse and directional keys to complete given tasks. Good relationships ensured there was a purposeful working atmosphere with sound gains in learning. The majority of children are on course to achieve their targets in this area of learning by the time they leave the reception class.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The outside play area is too small for the number of children expected to use it and, as such, fails to provide a range of exciting opportunities.
- A suitable range of activities promote sound physical development.

Commentary

49. As reported at the time of the previous inspection, concerns were raised about the quality and range of outdoor play provision. The same situation exists today. With the opening of the nursery an outside area has been created adjacent to both classrooms, but there is no direct access to it from the reception class. The area lacks a suitable covered space and is featureless. The school is aware of the need to further develop this resource and plans are in hand once finance has been agreed. However, most children achieve satisfactorily as they move through and over large apparatus as well as using small apparatus such as bats, balls and skipping ropes. Children learn how to use pencils, crayons and paintbrushes successfully. Most write their name using a series of uniform letters. They are encouraged to handle constructional toys and games as well as jigsaws, all of which promotes sound gains in physical development. Children have a growing awareness of the space around them and their physical activities link to topics, for example, moving like buzzing bees soundly promotes their physical skills and dexterity. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and most children are on course to reach the targets appropriate for their age at the end of the reception class.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because they experience a wide range of creative activities and they are generally well taught.

Commentary

50. Children achieve satisfactorily and their creative work is well displayed in the reception class. This in turn lets the children know that their work is valued and respected. Paintings of plants and dinosaurs show well the cross-curriculum links with science topics as part of knowledge and understanding of the world. Children work with a good range of different media and most are on course to achieve the expected targets for their age by the end of the reception year. Teaching and learning are good and children are encouraged to evaluate their models, for example, caterpillars made from junk materials, during well focused end of lesson sessions. The focus on imaginative role-play extends children's imagination well. Children confidently described how acting as fire fighters using model toys in the sand pit they carried out a successful rescue.
51. Music is enjoyed as they sing 'Chunky chocolate crunch, crunch'. Children sing enthusiastically and tunefully. They quickly learn new words well and enjoy placing suitable actions to the words.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have very good behaviour and attitudes to learning, which can be attributed to effective teaching, particularly in Years 3 to 6.
- Opportunities for reading and for promoting speaking and listening skills are well established, resulting in attainment above those normally expected by the end of Year 6.
- Literacy across the curriculum is not well planned, resulting in missed opportunities, particularly in writing.
- Most teachers are skilled and enthuse their pupils who are eager to learn.
- Planning does not always provide sufficient challenge for more able pupils to achieve higher.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well due to the effectiveness of teachers and support staff and well drawn up individual education plans.

Commentary

52. Standards in English at age seven and 11 are average. Results in the 2003 national tests indicate that pupils age seven achieve results in reading that are above but that are average in writing. When compared to similar schools, they are in line with reading and below in writing. At age 11, pupils attained results above those expected nationally, but in comparison to similar schools, they were below average and this suggests that achievement throughout Years 3 to 6 was not at the pace expected. The inspection judgement broadly matches those found in the 2003 national tests. When compared to the previous inspection report results were similar at age seven, but show a slight decline

at age 11 years. There was no significant difference during the inspection in performance of boys and girls.

53. At age seven, standards in speaking and listening are satisfactory and improving, whilst those in reading are above average and those in writing average. Pupils speak confidently in class and group situations about their favourite stories and read fluently with good expression. The less able readers have a good understanding of how to work out unfamiliar words. They use appropriate vocabulary in mathematics and science confidently. In writing, there is an extravagant overuse of work sheets, which considerably limits opportunities to fully exploit writing, handwriting and spelling development. Scrutiny of worksheets confirmed expected coverage, but also confirms less than expected standards in aspects of writing, such as handwriting and extended writing.
54. At age 11, standards in speaking and listening are above average, as are standards in reading, but writing skills are just average. The school provides many opportunities to promote speaking and listening skills. In a Circle Time session, for example, Year 6 pupils used persuasive responses and arguments about their views on bullying displaying careful thought, confidence and delivery. Pupils mostly enjoy reading. They have favourite authors and books, and all pupils indicate a large collection of books at home. Many belong to the local library. All pupils interviewed were happy about the choice of books and authors available in the school. Most understand what is meant by, skimming and scanning, and the use of indexes. Choral speaking from the big books and reading from pictured text are used effectively to promote speaking and listening skills.
55. In writing, pupils' active vocabulary is not as effectively developed as it could be due to the high volume of worksheets. In pupils' books in Year 6, however, there are clear indications of improvement in all aspects of writing when the use of worksheets is sensibly balanced with writing exercises. The standard of work is as expected. Pupils display good use of extended writing, poetry and play writing. Speaking and listening skills, when promoted well, also encourage and promote social development.
56. Pupils currently achieve well overall but this has not always been the case. Pupils in Years 1 to 2 achieve satisfactorily, pupils in Years 3 to 6 and those with special educational needs achieve better. However, scrutiny of pupils' work shows that there have been times in lessons taught by temporary teachers when higher attaining pupils have been insufficiently challenged resulting in a lower number of Level 3 and Level 5's that could have been achieved.
57. The quality of teaching and learning is currently good but scrutiny of pupils' work shows temporary teachers have not always performed at this level. Most pupils enjoy learning and their behaviour and attitudes are very good. Teachers plan systematically so that skills can be practised and developed throughout the key stages. They often use imaginative methods, which are instrumental in building enthusiasm for the subject. Lessons are mostly brisk, which captures and sustains pupils' interest. They use good questioning skills, which promote an eagerness to answer. Support staff are used well to engage pupils and this is a key factor in maintaining the high standards of behaviour and very positive attitudes in most lessons. Marking is inconsistent and often does not advise pupils of what they need to do in order to improve further. Consequently, pupils throughout the school are uncertain how to improve their own learning. In some classes group targets were available on the table, which is a positive feature and a regular reminder of pupils' goals. The provision of homework is good. It is regularly set and this encourages

pupils to become independent and responsible for their own learning. In almost all lessons seen, pupils were given the opportunity to collaborate well in groups or pairs.

58. The leadership and management of the subject are effective. Although new to the role the subject leader is well aware of the areas of development that need to be immediately addressed. She has a useful insight into these areas and is already considering strategies to work with and support staff to raise standards, particularly for the higher attainers. Monitoring of planning, teaching, learning and standards are high on her agenda for development. Resources are good.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

59. Pupils are provided with an appropriate range of activities in other subjects that help them to practise the speaking and listening and reading skills. Pupils express their views distinctly. By the time they reach Year 6, they speak clearly and confidently and order their arguments systematically to influence other pupils to support their opinions. This was observed in Circle Time in Year 6. Listening skills are well developed throughout the school and pupils read well during their introductory activities and when reading the scientific challenges or about people and situations of the past. However, there are many missed opportunities to promote their writing skills in Years 1 to 4. The overuse of worksheets limits challenge, opportunities and experiences to allow pupils to develop their writing skills to a level matching their ability.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils do not achieve well enough in Year 2, where a small but significant minority of higher attainers are not doing as well as they could.
- Pupils with special educational needs in mathematics achieve well.
- Teachers are not acting on the results of the assessments carefully enough when tracking shows pupils are not achieving as well as expected.
- Teachers in many classes are using worksheets indiscriminately and this is affecting the ability of pupils to record their work.

Commentary

60. By the end of Year 2, standards are currently in line with national expectations. In the 2003 national tests for seven year olds last year, standards were above average. However, whilst the teacher expected all pupils would achieve the standards expected for their age, no-one was expected to achieve the higher level. In fact, 38 per cent of this group achieved the higher level and this suggested that assessments and expectations were not as they should have been. The evidence from lessons and pupils' work shows that higher attaining pupils are only challenged sufficiently in number work, and not in the other areas of mathematics including shape, space, measure and handling data. As a result, achievement in Year 2 is unsatisfactory. By the end of Year 6, standards are also currently in line with national expectations. This mirrors the achievement in last year's national tests. In the 2003 national tests for 11 year olds, pupils' standards were above the national average and average when compared with similar schools. Achievement in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory. This represents a dip since the previous inspection.
61. The reason for the dip is mainly in the quality of teaching. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory although it is unsatisfactory in Year 2. However, there was good quality teaching and learning during the inspection week where one lesson was satisfactory, two were good and three were very good. When pupils' work was scrutinised, there were serious shortcomings seen in the work of some teachers who were not present during the inspection. Weaknesses mainly concern the failure of teachers in Years 2, 4 and 5 to plan work at appropriate levels for the different abilities of pupils in the class. As a result, some of the pupils' learning was unsatisfactory and uneven. Pupils were often given very similar work irrespective of their abilities. Higher attaining pupils are sometimes given work to complete, which they already understand, before proceeding to more challenging tasks. Very often these higher attainers produce a substantial amount of accurately completed work whilst lower attainers produce very little of the same work. On too many occasions, this work took the form of photocopied worksheets, which restricted pupils recording skills and reduced the opportunity for them to think for themselves. There needs to be an increased emphasis on problem solving activities to help develop thinking skills. Teachers could make the subject more relevant for pupils by introducing more "real-life" mathematical experiences.
62. During the inspection teachers effectively planned with work at the correct level for pupils' abilities. All teachers explained lesson objectives clearly so pupils understand what they are going to learn. Teachers demonstrated good knowledge of the subject and developed pupils' mathematical vocabulary well. Most lessons were brisk and kept pupils interested. Pupils listened carefully in introductory sessions and responded well in the final sessions to explain

what they had learned. The “mental starter” part of the lesson was usually lively and challenging and the final summary part of the lesson gave pupils the opportunity to share problems they had encountered as well as explaining what they had learned. Pupils with special educational needs in mathematics were provided with individual education plans and pupils have clearly expressed targets for improvement to help them improve their work.

63. Pupils in most classes experience a good range of work in all the expected aspects of mathematics. However, in Year 2, the range of work is narrower and there is little evidence of thorough coverage of work involving shape, space and measure. Many higher attaining children in the Year 2 class are unnecessarily repeating work that they are already confident with and they do not achieve well enough. In short, in Year 2 there are occasions when all pupils are not being provided for as fully as they might be. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 build progressively on their work and develop a sound knowledge of number, a good recall of facts, and improve their speed with multiplication tables. They use mental strategies together with their knowledge of number to solve problems with the minimum of recording. Pupils understand a range of strategies and begin to use correct mathematical language. However, scrutiny of assessments and the school’s tracking shows that in all year groups there are times when pupils do not achieve well enough over time. Teachers are not making sufficient use of this information to improve their teaching or mathematics provision.
64. As a result of the poor assessments in Year 2 and the lack of effective monitoring of pupils’ achievement and the quality of teaching, the subject is judged to be led and managed unsatisfactorily.

Mathematics across the curriculum

65. The use of mathematics across the curriculum is satisfactory. For example, pupils throughout the school use various measures in design and technology and science lessons and they record information in spreadsheets and charts. Some of these are produced using ICT.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject leader has undertaken some monitoring of teaching and standards, but more remains to be done.
- There are limited opportunities for higher attaining pupils to undertake their own scientific investigations.
- There is insufficient use of ICT to support pupils’ work in science.
- There are pockets of good teaching throughout the school.
- The majority of classes have been taught by more than one teacher in the present academic year, which has had an impact on continuity and progression of learning.
- Standards in Year 2 are not high enough.

Commentary

66. Standards achieved in the 2003 national tests by Year 6 pupils were average. When compared to their attainment in Year 2, these results indicate satisfactorily achievement

for this group of pupils and are broadly similar to the standards achieved at the time of the previous inspection. However, the number of pupils achieving the higher levels is well below average in Year 2 and remains an area of relative weakness. Standards seen during the inspection are average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The very thin evidence supplied from Year 2 indicates that pupils' achievement in Year 2 is unsatisfactory because work has not been challenging enough and standards are not as high as expected. However, there are bright prospects for the future as the current Year 5 and Year 4 reflect good potential to raise standards higher. Boys, girls and pupils with special educational needs achieve at a similar rate.

67. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall but there are weaknesses in the teaching and learning in Year 2. All pupils show a keen interest in lessons and enjoy working in groups to carry out investigations or recording their own findings. The school has experienced a wave of staffing problems during the present academic year with some classes having more than three teachers. This has had a negative impact on progression and continuity of scientific skills. Scrutiny of pupils' work clearly indicates an over reliance on worksheets, thus restricting pupils' opportunities to undertake and record their own investigations. Too much work is teacher led and directed. Using worksheets, in many cases requiring the insertion of single words in the blank provided, does not transfer secretarial skills established in English in a systematic manner and learning is similar for all pupils regardless of previous achievement. Teaching is consistently good in Year 1, Year 4 and Year 5 in science. In the lesson observed in Year 5, the use of probing questions to extend pupils' thinking and draw all pupils into class discussions positively enhanced the very good relationships and enjoyment of new learning. These regular class discussions enable all pupils, including lower attaining pupils, to demonstrate what they have learnt orally, even though recorded work does not. Most teachers use correct scientific language and this assists pupils to use the correct scientific terms when talking about their work. Although there are instances of pupils using computers to produce graphs of results, for example, there is no use of ICT to control or monitor the results of experiments.
68. The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory and this has ensured satisfactory achievement overall. However, standards and pupil achievement are not checked closely enough to make sure the quality of teaching and learning and the curriculum are consistent across the school. National tests at the end of Year 6 and teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 are used plus additional test material at the end of Years 3, 4 and 5, however, individual pupil performance is not checked sufficiently rigorously to ensure that achievement is sufficiently challenging for higher attaining pupils. Assessment is left to individual teachers' discretion and therefore is not consistently used in all classes and is affected by the high level of staffing turnover. As a result, planning is not matched closely enough to individual pupils' needs in some year groups. At present, teachers' marking fails to indicate clearly how pupils can improve. The school is aware of the need to introduce well focused target setting that can be shared with pupils and parents to complement the limited information contained in pupils' reports. There are developing links with other subjects with literacy and numeracy skills used satisfactorily to record research information and measurements taken during investigations. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory overall because standards and achievement have been maintained for average attaining pupils.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and the contribution of support staff is very effective.
- There are a good number of computers available for pupils' use.
- There are some good examples of ICT being used to support learning in some other subjects.

Commentary

69. Standards are in line with national expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6. A small but significant number of pupils attain well. Pupils achieve satisfactorily throughout the school. The findings match those of the previous inspection and progress since then has been satisfactory.
70. The quality of teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan lessons with clear purposes and use appropriate methods to reach these objectives. Teachers' knowledge of how to use ICT to enhance teaching and learning is sound overall and, in some cases, good. As a result, most pupils achieve satisfactorily and a significant minority achieve well. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils achieved well as they used a program to create a story with a number of scenes with sound and speech bubbles to enhance them. Pupils were encouraged to work in groups and did so maturely and sensibly. Because higher attainers worked alongside lower attainers, pupils supported each other. Another positive feature of ICT lessons is the very effective use of the knowledgeable technical assistant. Her input and support from a governor ensured that all pupils had individual attention when they needed it and they achieved well. In another successful lesson in Year 5, pupils achieved well because they were actively engaged in using the computers to control a 'winking' robot. In all lessons, pupils enjoy using computers and ICT equipment and work hard, they are keen to try themselves. This can be seen from the way that pupils' work is often displayed using the digital camera.
71. Discussion with pupils and an examination of their work shows that they are covering what they are expected to. For example, in control technology, pupils in Year 1 give commands including directions and distances to a 'floor robot'. Pupils in Year 2 use a paint program to produce work in the style of Mondrian and Kandinsky whilst pupils in Year 3 have sent e-mails. All pupils have filled in an Internet Safety form and pupils use a number of appropriate websites to support their learning in other subjects. Pupils have created spreadsheets and used formulae, for example, when completing a database about creatures and their properties. Pupils are encouraged to think and talk about the uses of ICT in the world outside school and to suggest preferences. For example "Is this better produced on a computer or is it better to do it with pen and paper?" a teacher asks.
72. The subject is led satisfactorily by a co-ordinator who has only been in post for a few weeks. The co-ordinator has already identified the strengths and areas for development. A well resourced computer suite is supplemented by desktop machines in each classroom so there are enough computers for teaching the subject and for learning in other subjects. Good teaching is supported by good quality equipment such as an interactive white board, which enables demonstrations to the whole class. Assessment procedures are good and give both the teacher and pupil sufficient information about how well individuals are learning. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

73. Pupils have sound opportunities to use computers in other subjects. During the inspection they were used effectively to support work in literacy and mathematics. For example, in mathematics, pupils in Year 1 used programmable toys to enhance their understanding of control, direction and distance. In Year 3, pupils supported their numeracy skills in graphs and data handling as they produced bar charts. Pupils use numerous CD-ROMs to support their learning in geography and history. ICT has not been used sufficiently to support learning in science.

HUMANITIES

74. The work was sampled in **history** and **geography**. During the inspection, it was only possible to observe one lesson in each subject. Evidence is gathered from school documentation, scrutiny of work and discussion with co-ordinator and pupils.
75. Planning ensures good coverage of subjects, which is well balanced with appropriate time being allocated. A major strength of provision is that in both subjects emphasis is firmly placed on providing pupils with as much direct experience as possible. This is achieved by a wide range of well planned visits to support, through the actual experience, a practical approach to 'live learning', which was directly linked to their historical and geographical topics. These experiences extended their knowledge from both experience and information gathered, which pupils indicated they valued immensely.
76. The management of both subjects is good. The co-ordinator is well informed, enthusiastic and systematic in her approach to planning complementary visits and identifying the strength of pupils' learning. She supports her colleagues well and has customised geography, for example, to coincide with local rivers to enhance their river study. From discussions with the co-ordinator and pupils and scrutiny of work, it would appear that the standards reached will be at least in line with some pupils achieving higher standards than expected in Year 6 but in line in Year 2. There is a sufficiency of resources to deliver the curriculum well.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

77. Due to timetable constraints only one design and technology lesson could be observed and no lessons were observed in art and design, music and physical education. Consequently no overall judgements on the quality of provision, especially teaching and learning can be made in these subjects. Inspectors looked at pupils' work and teachers' planning and talked to pupils about these subjects. Indications are that standards are above average in art and design and broadly average in design and technology at the end of Year 6, reflecting a broadly similar picture to the previous inspection's findings. In music, although the quality of whole-school singing in school assemblies was reasonable, the quality of the school choir is very good. Some pupils also achieve highly in their playing of orchestral instruments. Over the course of the year most pupils are taught all the elements of these subjects.
78. In **art and design** a good range of pupils' work on display clearly illustrates that pupils' efforts are valued. Most pupils show good levels of pride in their work. The above average standards have been maintained in two-dimensional work and achievement is good. A very positive feature of the art work in the school is the very good attention paid to basic

drawing and painting skills, especially, for example, Victorian portraits in Year 1, drawings of plants in Year 3 and the oil pastel portraits of animals in Year 5. Pupils use a wide range of resources well in paintings, collage, montage and drawings in the style of painters whose work they have recently studied, for example, Mondrian, Van Gogh and Kandinsky. Recent studies of artwork from non-European cultures, for example, South African art in Year 6 and Year 5's Chinese Willow Pattern designs in the entrance area, are contributing well to pupils' cultural development and awareness. The recent involvement of an artist in residence during which a frieze was created in the stairway enhances the appearance of the school.

79. In the **design and technology** lesson seen teaching and learning were satisfactory. Pupils in Year 5 were given good opportunities to explore ways of making a model animal's jaw move. Pupils confidently used a range of well prepared materials, handling scissors with good precision and accuracy. Pupils' enthusiasm and enjoyment enabled the majority to sustain good levels of interest. Good, well focused planning enabled pupils' creative skills to be successfully developed and extended. A good range of pupils' work on display, for example, weaving inspired after an evening stream dipping at Castleton, reflects the high status the subject rightly holds within the school. In Year 1 pupils have undertaken the manufacture of a calendar, clearly illustrating each month with a picture. In Year 3 well designed, brightly decorated hats successfully link the use of a digital camera to record exhibits. Well drawn plans, clear evaluation and future improvements underpin the progression of practical skills. However, scrutiny of pupils' work clearly indicates the subject's fairly low status in Year 2 and Year 6 due to the many staff absences that have occurred this academic year.
80. In **music**, the school has a very strong tradition of teaching singing successfully, and two members of staff have the talent to do so. Many pupils benefit from this strong expertise, particularly the approximately 50 pupils in Years 3 to 6 who successfully take part in the school choir competitions. This provision makes a very good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development.
81. A few pupils study and reach very good standards for pupils of their age when they learn to play violin, flute, clarinet and guitar. Pupils listen to a fairly extensive range of music, and recorded music of several kinds can be heard in corridors all through the day. Teachers introduce pupils to a rich diet of songs, musical styles and musical ideas as part of lessons, and pupils occasionally have opportunities to express their own views about it.
82. In **physical education**, pupils enjoy a full curriculum and develop their skills progressively as they go through school. The school's records show that almost all pupils can swim the expected 25 metres by the time they leave the school. The school makes good use of coaching by adults other than teachers, including football, cricket and tennis. There are satisfactory opportunities for pupils to take part in inter-school competitions.
83. The subject co-ordinators for art and design, design and technology, music and physical education have written detailed action plans, which illustrate priorities for development. However, there has been very limited time for subject co-ordinators to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning to check that work agreed in planning is actually taking place in lessons. There are no assessment procedures and this requires urgent review, as does the need to ensure that teachers make use of the assessment data to inform lesson planning geared towards accelerating learning, especially for the higher attaining pupils.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

84. The school is a harmonious community in which all pupils are given equal status and show tolerance and respect for one another. Pupils speak particularly about the support they receive from staff and the opportunities they have to be responsible, for example, the school council. The school has in place a carefully planned programme for sex education and drugs awareness, which is supported by the school nurse and the local constabulary. Year 6 pupils are very aware of issues relating to bullying, for example, who they could turn to for support and how they in turn could support the bullied and exert positive influence on the bully. They recognise the need for rules and feel, through class discussions and the school council that they contribute to the positive ethos in the school.
85. Staff know pupils very well and through Circle Time provide regular opportunities to discuss school issues. Thus through formal discussions in Circle Time and the school council and informally through general class discussions, pupils are made to feel valued, secure, confident and aware.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	4
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	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
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	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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