

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST NICHOLAS CHURCH OF ENGLAND VOLUNTARY
CONTROLLED INFANT SCHOOL**

Stood, Rochester

LEA area: The Medway Towns

Unique reference number: 118643

Headteacher: Mrs A E Pullen

Lead inspector: Mr Eric Jackson

Dates of inspection: 10 – 12 May 2004

Inspection number: 265337

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Type of school: | Infant |
| School category: | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils: | 5 -7 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| Number on roll: | 110 |
| School address: | London Road Strood Rochester Kent |
| Postcode: | ME2 3HU |
| Telephone number: | 01634 717120 |
| Fax number: | 01634 724626 |
| Appropriate authority: | Governing body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Reverend J A Randall |
| Date of previous inspection: | 16 November 1998 |

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Nicholas CEVC Infants' School is smaller than most schools of its type with 55 boys and 55 girls on roll. Currently, the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The number of pupils with special educational needs is above average, although the number with a Statement of Special educational Need is below average. The pupils' special educational needs range from specific to moderate learning difficulties, with a significant proportion with speech and language difficulties. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average, and a very small number learn English as an additional language. The number of pupils who leave or join the school at other than normal admission times is below average. The socio-economic circumstances of the area served by the school are below average. The attainment of pupils at entry to the school is below average, but covers a wide range. The school has achieved an award for its pupils' improved achievement in 2003, and also has the Basic Skills Quality Mark, and the Artsmark.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team | | | Subject responsibilities |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|--|
| 3108 | Mr Eric Jackson | Lead inspector | English Science Art and design Design technology Music Physical education English as an additional language |
| 9520 | Mr John Leigh | Lay inspector | |
| 32136 | Mrs Lesley Brookes | Team inspector | Mathematics Information and communication technology Geography History Foundation Stage Special educational needs |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **very effective school**, with many strengths and no significant weaknesses. It is very well led, and offers a very good quality of education that helps its pupils to achieve very well. It provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Leadership and management are very good, with very clear vision leading to a high ethos for learning based in the staff's high expectations of pupils' personal development.
- The quality of education is high, with very good teaching inspiring great interest for pupils in learning, and very good curricular provision.
- Standards are above average by the end of Year 2, and pupils' achievement is very good.
- Care and welfare are very good, and pupils receive outstanding guidance in their learning.
- Links with parents are also very good.

The school has improved well since its last inspection, particularly in the quality of education offered, and in its provision for information and communication technology.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Achievement is very good, including for pupils with special educational needs. At entry to reception, children's attainment covers a wide range, but is generally below that of children of a similar age. By the end of Year 2, pupils consistently reach above average standards in national tests in reading and writing, varying year-on-year from above average to average in mathematics. The table also shows that the school achieves equivalently compared with similar schools. Currently, a higher proportion of Year 2 pupils than usual for the school, equally boys and girls, are working at above average levels in reading, writing, mathematics and science.

| Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with: | all schools | | | similar schools |
|---|-------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2003 |
| reading | B | A | B | B |
| writing | B | A | B | B |
| mathematics | B | B | C | C |

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

Children in reception make good progress and achieve well, so that they generally attain average levels in all the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the year, and some of them achieve higher levels. The school has earned the Artsmark for its focus on work in art, music, dance and drama. Insufficient evidence was seen of standards in dance for a judgement to be made, but in art and design, music and drama, standards are above those expected by the end of Year 2. Standards are also above those expected in information and communication technology and above expected levels in religious education, representing very good achievement. **Pupils' personal development is very good, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.** Attendance has improved to be satisfactory, and pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are very good. Relationships are very good at all levels in the school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is very good. Teaching is very good, and leads to the pupils achieving very well. Teaching is at least good in almost all lessons, and in many it is very good. All the classes include pupils from more than one age group, and the staff ensure that all the different year groups have tasks, activities and resources well-suited to their age. Those pupils with special educational needs make very good progress towards their targets, and very effective provision is also made for gifted and talented pupils. The staff work very well as a team, so that the support assistants are fully effective in working with groups and individual pupils. The heart of the school's success is in the very good atmosphere for learning and the staff's high expectations of the pupils' commitment and attitudes to the school. These combine to help the pupils to become self-confident, and determined to achieve the objectives set for their learning, whether in literacy, numeracy, or singing and drawing. The curriculum is rich and varied, carefully linked between different aspects of learning so that pupils see and build on the connections in their work. Parents are very happy with the high quality care and guidance offered, and support the school very well. There are also good links with other schools and the community, including the church.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school's development, founded very securely in the agreed aims. She sets the tone of high expectations by her thorough and inclusive manner, so that the governors, staff, parents and pupils know exactly what is expected, and strive to achieve it. She is very well supported by the deputy headteacher, who leads by example in the high quality of her teaching and leadership of key aspects of the school's work. The school is very well managed, and the efficient but supportive monitoring of performance is used to confirm strengths and point to areas for further development. The governors are astute and knowledgeable, supporting very well and challenging the staff to continue to improve.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils have a very high opinion of the school. Parents praise its secure and purposeful atmosphere, whilst many pupils cannot think of anything that needs improvement.

MINOR IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The school has no significant weaknesses, but governors may wish to consider the following:

- to achieve the school's aim for pupils to become more independent in their learning, ensure that they generally take responsibility for retrieving and returning the resources and equipment they use in lessons.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards achieved are **above average**. Achievement is **very good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in reception achieve well.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve very well in response to very good teaching.
- Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress towards their targets.
- Literacy and numeracy skills develop well.
- Investigational skills in mathematics and science are very well developed.
- Skills in ICT are good by Year 2, and pupils achieve very well in the subject.

Commentary

1. On entry to reception, children's attainment covers a wide range, but is generally below that of children of a similar age. By the end of Year 2, pupils consistently reach above average standards in national tests in reading and writing, varying year-on-year from above average to average in mathematics. The school achieves equivalently compared with similar schools. Currently, a higher proportion of Year 2 pupils than usual for the school are working at above average levels in reading, writing, mathematics and science. The few pupils from minority ethnic groups attain similar levels to their peers. The school identifies pupils who are potentially gifted or talented, and they achieve very well.

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| reading | 16.3 (17.2) | 15.7 (15.8) |
| writing | 15.3 (15.6) | 14.6 (14.4) |
| mathematics | 16.5 (17.4) | 16.3 (16.5) |

There were 39 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Children in reception make good progress and achieve well, so that they generally attain average levels in all the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the year, and some of them achieve higher levels. There is a strong concentration on their personal and social development, so that they make really good progress in becoming independent and working with a partner or in small groups. Most are still in the early stages of learning to read, but have begun to form letters accurately and write their own name, and simple sentences, reaching levels close to average for their age. The staff focus well on developing their speaking and listening skills, and the children achieve well.
3. Pupils make very good progress in Years 1 and 2 in speaking and listening as they have many varied opportunities to improve. For example, Year 2 pupils took the roles of eye-witness and reporter in working on the story of 'Jack and the Beanstalk'. The reporters' questions were skilfully posed to elicit sentences rather than one word answers, good for their age. Year 1 pupils listened spellbound as the teacher read them the story of 'The Smallest Whale', becoming visibly concerned when the whale is beached.

4. Standards are above average in reading and writing, and pupils achieve very well because they are so well taught. The work is focused on their needs and keeps them interested, so that they make very good progress through concentrated effort. For example, in the Year 1 and 2 mixed class, pupils wrote lively and evocative descriptions of sea-shells following discussion and close handling of a beautiful variety of shells from round the world. A high attaining Year 1 girl wrote, 'In the bottom there's a swerl trying to get to the top. It looks like a stretched zebra that's been swerled into a spiral.'
5. The standards attained in mathematics by the end of Year 2 vary year-on-year from average to above average. This year, evidence suggests that all the pupils are working at levels expected for their age, with well over half of them above that. A strength in the work is the way that pupils think about their work carefully and respond to the staff's encouragement to use their developing skills to solve problems for themselves. They carry this approach very well into their science investigations, making detailed observations and careful records of how plants grow.
6. Those pupils with special educational needs are very well supported to make very good progress. They take a full part in all activities, and many of them achieve age expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics. In national tests, far fewer pupils than is the case nationally achieve below expected levels for their age. This underlines the pupils' very good achievement for their capabilities.
7. The school has earned the Artsmark for its focus on work in art, music, dance and drama. Consequently, in art and design, music and drama, standards are above those expected by the end of Year 2. Standards are also above those expected in science and information and communication technology and above expected levels in religious education, representing very good achievement.
8. There are no significant weaknesses in pupils' achievement.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' personal development is **very good**, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Attendance has improved to be **satisfactory**, and pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Action to promote better attendance has been successful.
- Pupils are fully engaged in lessons, showing very good attitudes to learning.
- They respond very well to the staff's high expectations, and behave very well.
- The quality of relationships at all levels is a key strength.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well.
- Occasionally, pupils are not expected to take out and return resources they use in lessons.

Commentary

9. Attendance has improved significantly this year to be in line with national averages, above the levels represented for last year in the table. The school does all it can to ensure pupils and parents are aware of the importance of good attendance. The staff analyse attendance data well and involve external agencies where necessary. There is little unauthorised absence. The youngest children settle very well and leave their parents happily at the start of the day. Most pupils are punctual, which means that they are quickly into their daily learning.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

| Authorised absence | |
|--------------------|-----|
| School data | 7.8 |
| National data | 5.4 |

| Unauthorised absence | |
|----------------------|-----|
| School data | 0.2 |
| National data | 0.4 |

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

10. The pupils show real interest in the work prepared for them, and try hard at all times to achieve their best. The staff plan very successfully to meet the school's high expectations, and the ethos for joint endeavour is outstanding. The atmosphere in lessons, assemblies and around the school is just as parents described it at the pre-inspection meeting. This was exemplified on the first morning, when staff, pupils and parents greeted one another warmly in the playground before nine o'clock as supportive members of the school family. From the reception on, pupils learn to be independent, but also how to cooperate in different groups with other pupils and staff. The staff expect the pupils to work things out for themselves, and to take responsibility seriously. Adults often take out and put away resources and equipment at the start and the end of lessons. This is seen as being helpful, and sometimes it is appropriate, but this practice also occasionally limits the pupils' development of personal responsibility unnecessarily.

11. Pupils' very good behaviour has a significant positive impact on their learning as time is not wasted. At times, the quiet hum of pupils busily engaged in their tasks was almost palpable, and staff were free to help those who needed specific advice without having to impose control. This is because expectations are made clear and followed, in the main, and the high quality of relationships supports the purposeful atmosphere. On one occasion, however, Year 2 pupils became bored by the work they had to do late in the day when they were tired, and the teacher had to keep reminding them to be quiet and continue with their work. This was the only exception to the generally very good self-control shown.

12. Spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is very good. It has a significant impact on pupils' general achievement. They are encouraged to talk about themselves and the beginnings of self-knowledge and spiritual awareness are developed. For example, in a reception class pupils were asked to close their eyes and reflect on the Chinese music being played, to say what feelings it brought to them and what pictures it brought to their mind. In an assembly they were asked to consider God as being a father to them and that he was forgiving and loved them. They are engaged in an impressive range of charity work such as Unicef in Ghana and Vietnam in helping to provide safe, clean water. Children get on very well together and learn to distinguish right from wrong. They have good opportunities to explore different cultures. For example, they learn about a very good range of world environments from deserts to rain forests and are aware of people in distant places through studying African masks and South American textiles.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

| Categories used in the Annual School Census |
|---|
| White – British |

Exclusions in the last school year

| No of pupils on roll | Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 69 | 3 | 0 |

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

13. The exclusions shown in the table were very rare for the school, and resulted from a pupil's violent behaviour towards others. There have been no exclusions this year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Teaching and learning

Teaching is **very good**, and leads to the pupils learning **very well**. Assessment is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff teamwork is very effective.
- Lesson planning is very thorough and meets all pupils' needs very well.
- Pupils' creativity and imagination is developed well through carefully planned themes.
- Information from assessment of pupils' learning is used very well to plan new tasks for them.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 29 lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 1 | 12 | 12 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

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

14. As the table shows, teaching is at least good in almost all lessons, and in many it is very good. It is very good overall in all three year groups. It has improved well since the last inspection. In the one unsatisfactory session, the work in religious education was not at a sufficiently challenging level for the abilities of the pupils.
15. Teaching in one lesson was excellent.

Example of outstanding practice

Year 1 and 2 pupils empathised with the emotions of a near tragedy through excellent storytelling.

The teacher's wide eyes and strained voice evoke the fear the smallest whale feels as it is swept towards the beach. She imitates urgently the high distress calls of the calf and mother as they become separated. The children, tight with suspense, join in the call anxiously. She tells them how tired and stressed the calf has become, and they join her in lessening the cry that is now quietly piercing and eerily moving, carrying teacher, class and observer out to the wild sea-spray and the tide. The teacher maintains exactly the right mix of storytelling, explanation and subtle questioning to keep the children transfixed as she reveals how the whale's bodyweight will crush and kill it if not rescued. When the whale is saved, the satisfied sigh of collective relief coincides perfectly with time for lunch, and the children leave the classroom glowing with the contented pleasure that only a good story outstandingly delivered can bring.

16. All the classes include pupils from two year groups, and the staff ensure that all the different year groups have tasks, activities and resources well-suited to their age. This is because they work very successfully together to plan their lessons based on an agreed pattern of themes and topics that cover all the subjects. The school has earned the Basic Skills Quality Mark for the high level of its teaching of speaking, listening, literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. The pupils' skills gained through this teaching are then used effectively in learning in other areas such as science, history, geography and religious education. Because basic skills are covered so well, the staff feel confident in providing a wide range of opportunities for the pupils to develop their imaginative and creative responses. For example, in learning about the

characters in 'Jack and the Beanstalk', Year 2 pupils took turns to answer questions from the 'hot seat'. One girl 'giant' said that the headscarf was to keep her hair tidy, and the studded bracelet was her favourite piece of jewellery. However, when asked why it was studded, she said it was to cut people's faces in a fight! This showed how she brought her own perspective to the character, but also understood its darker side.

17. Those pupils with special educational needs make very good progress towards their targets, and very effective provision is also made for gifted and talented pupils. The staff work very well as a team, so that the support assistants are fully effective in working with groups and individual pupils. They feel strongly valued, and give willingly of their own time to supplement the very good training opportunities provided by the school to develop their own teaching and support skills further. The continuous assessment of all pupils' progress and achievements provides a clear focus for the next steps in their learning. These are shared successfully with the pupils from an early age so that they know what they need to do to improve.
18. There are high quality relationships developed, that enable lessons to move smoothly and efficiently. The very good atmosphere for learning, and the staff's high expectations of the pupils' commitment and attitudes to the school also contribute strongly here. These help the pupils to become self-confident, and determined to achieve the objectives set for their learning in all aspects of the curriculum. Indeed, the quality of pupils' singing and appreciation of music is testament to the high value placed on this subject, and the skilled contribution to its development offered by key members of the teaching and support staff. The award of the Artsmark underlines the school's commitment to helping the pupils learn through a rich diet of experiences, exemplified by the high quality of pupils' displayed art work.

The curriculum

Overall, the curriculum is **very good**. There is a broad range of opportunities for pupils to learn, and consistent approaches to planning for them. Opportunities for enrichment are very good. The school's values for inclusion and equality of opportunity are consistently reflected in what the pupils do.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and a real strength of the school.
- Annual, termly and weekly planning, based on schemes of work, promotes learning very well.
- Opportunities for curriculum enrichment are very good.
- The pupils' participation in the arts is very good.
- The provision for personal, social and health education is very good and aids the pupils' development well.

Commentary

19. The school keeps its curriculum under constant and effective review and implements changes successfully. Curriculum planning and schemes of work have been systematically developed to ensure full access to a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils. Each subject is given an appropriate amount of time. Teachers adapt the curriculum well to pupils' needs, having regard for any differences between pupils of different gender and capability. The school identifies gifted and talented pupils and modifies the curriculum to provide effective challenge for them. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Their specific needs are monitored carefully and reviewed regularly to ensure that the work in different subjects is at the right level for their needs.
20. A good variety of activities outside lesson times enriches pupils' learning. The range of visits and visitors, together with educational visits, gives pupils many extra interesting chances to learn. The depth and range of clubs offered is of a good standard. Given the small size of the school, there is a good range of clubs on offer. There are regular educational visits that enhance the quality of learning, including very good use of the local area and the school

environment. Visitors share their knowledge and expertise with pupils. Visits to local places of interest, such as a rural life museum, develop skills in geography, history and science.

Regular theme weeks dedicated to specific areas of the curriculum are organised, such as arts and science. These make a very good contribution to the richness of the curriculum.

21. The quality of staffing is very good. The experienced teaching assistants provide good extra support. Accommodation is satisfactory, although some parts of the building are old and poorly insulated. A programme of refurbishment is due to start in the summer holiday. Since the last inspection an outdoor area for the youngest pupils has been developed. As it has a retractable sliding roof it can be used in all weathers to maintain children's activities. Subject resources are good and support the curriculum well. They have been extended and improved very well since the last inspection. An attractive and well-stocked library has been developed.

Care, guidance and support

The care, welfare, health and safety of pupils is very good. Very good support, advice and guidance are provided based on good monitoring of achievement and personal development. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. The school seeks, values and acts on the views of pupils very well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attendance is monitored very well.
- The environment for learning has been developed very well.
- Pupils' access to support and guidance in their learning is excellent.
- Care of the pupils is very good.
- Pupils have very strong, trusting relationships with adults in the school.

Commentary

22. Child protection has a high profile. It is handled sensitively, effectively and promptly. Staff always work in the best interests of all pupils to safeguard their welfare. Child protection is well supported by comprehensive and effective arrangements, where the school, parents and other agencies liaise and work together very well.
23. Pupils work in a healthy and safe environment. All reasonable steps are taken to keep children safe and protect them from injury or ill health. Regular inspections of school premises are carried out. One of the governors has designated responsibilities for health and safety. Risk assessment is comprehensive, thorough and up to date.
24. The school provides a most secure, caring environment where pupils feel safe and are happy. The key to this is how well the staff know and understand the pupils and their needs. Pupils' views are sought through questionnaires where they are asked for example if they are happy at playtime. They know where to get help if they have a problem. The school makes every effort to ensure every child can achieve what they are capable of.
25. Effective procedures to monitor attendance and well-kept records have resulted in significant improvements in attendance.
26. The school has very good procedures to monitor and promote personal development through, for example, pupils in the Green Team who care for the environment, the Caring Crew who befriend others and help at playtime, and the Trolley Team who sort lunch boxes and take them to the hall. In the reception class staff carry out individual observations of children, with the information used to develop their personal attributes such as improved social skills. This approach is continued in Years 1 and 2, and has a strong impact on the achievements made by pupils academically, and on the development of their personal qualities. It is very effective because staff know the children very well and use every opportunity through encouragement,

support or target-setting to extend pupils' development. They are always available to help and guide pupils to increase their progress.

27. Good behaviour and attitudes to work are recognised and rewarded accordingly. Pupils understand the consequences of anti-social behaviour. They become increasingly independent, self confident and knowledgeable about themselves and such issues as healthy and safe living. The school equips pupils very well with the skills necessary to become good citizens. Their knowledge and understanding for environmental protection is very good. For example, in a Year 1/2 class pupils designed posters for display in school with themes such as composting and removing litter.
28. There are good induction arrangements for children entering the school, welcomed strongly by parents. These arrangements are flexible enough to suit the needs of the children, and are based on very good relationships with them and their parents.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's partnership with parents is very good. Links with the community and other schools are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents' views of the school are very positive.
- Parents contribute very well to pupils' learning at school and home.
- Parents are well informed.
- Complaints are dealt with well.

Commentary

29. Parents are very well informed by regular, well-presented general school newsletters. The prospectus is of good quality and communicates well what the school does. Curriculum information explains what their children will be learning. For example, parents appreciate the information board placed daily in the playground, which keeps them up-to-date on current topics and events. Parents receive good information about their children's progress throughout the year. Communication with those parents whose children have special educational needs is very good. The reports that inform parents about pupils' progress are thorough, accurate and helpful. Targets are clearly set, such as 'to consolidate knowledge of number bonds to ten and learn those to twenty'.
30. Parents are very pleased with what the school provides. When asked what they liked, one parent immediately said, "The school has a heart for children." Parents think their children make good progress. The school encourages a strong sense of partnership based on mutual trust and confidence. It has an 'open door' policy, very welcoming to parents. This helps build very good relationships with them. Parents are committed to the school and a small group provides much appreciated and beneficial help in school. For example, they support reading and mathematics games with groups during lessons. They are very supportive on school trips. If they are concerned about anything they are confident to approach the school for resolution. Parents are appreciative that their children receive the help and support they need. The school seeks the views of parents through a questionnaire and through day-to-day contact and acts, where it can, on these views.
31. Homework is regular, appropriate and supports learning very well. Parents are able to help their children very well because of the school's clear expectations and information to them. Most parents strongly support this part of the school's work.

32. Parents support the school very well through the active Parent, Teacher and Friends Association. This raises significant additional funds for the school. These funds are used to purchase such items as bicycles for the under fives and the provision of story sacks.
33. There are several visitors from the local community who contribute significantly to the pupils' achievement. For example, the minister from the local church led an assembly using the theme of the Prodigal Son and encouraging pupils to think of God as a loving Father. It is clear that this contributes strongly to the personal, spiritual and moral development of pupils. The school uses the local community well to enhance the learning of its pupils through visits to local shops and Broomhill Park where they study farmland and nearby villages.
34. Parents appreciate the good induction arrangements for pupils joining the school, as they enable their children to settle very well. The transition from pre-school groups is handled well because of good liaison between the staffs. There are effective links with the junior school supported by transfer days, staff liaison and transfer of information, which enables children to make a smooth transition into the next stage in their development.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has outstanding vision for the school's development, and leads very well.
- The governing body makes a very good contribution to the work and development of the school.
- The management of the school is very good and the role of the subject co-ordinators is well developed.
- Monitoring and evaluation of performance, especially in teaching and learning, is of high quality.
- The staff work very well as a team.
- Financial management is very good and the principles of best value are applied very effectively.

Commentary

35. The experienced headteacher leads her staff with a very clear vision for the improvement of standards in the school, and also the improvement of the immediate environment. In addition to the consistent raising of standards, leading to an Achievement Award, one of her main concerns has been planning successfully for the improvement of the previously unsatisfactory accommodation and facilities of the school. Additionally, her caring leadership style has ensured that the school has remained at all times a happy place, with a dedicated staff, and pupils who enjoy their school and achieve very well. The headteacher, deputy, governors and staff all work well and effectively as a team. Leadership and management overall have improved well since the last inspection.
36. This stability and good school ethos are also due to the very good leadership of the deputy headteacher. She works very closely with the headteacher, and their skills complement each other very effectively. She leads the school very well in a range of areas such as curriculum development and assessment.
37. All the teaching staff have several subject responsibilities in addition to their teaching roles; their leadership and management roles are well developed. They generally have sufficient time to monitor their subjects. This aspect of leadership and management has improved well since the last inspection, when it had some weaknesses.
38. The management of the school is very good, and has several key strengths. The school evaluates its performance realistically and has a very clear view of where it is and where it is going, which is very well expressed in the school development plan. New staff are inducted very well; they have mentors within the school and are guided and supported consistently.

Newly qualified teachers enjoy good training opportunities and are made to feel welcome as part of the school family. The staff's professional development is regular and very effective for the benefit of the school and for their personal development. There have been very good opportunities for professional development of the long-serving, conscientious body of teaching assistants.

39. Performance management is embedded in the school, and very effective monitoring of performance in teaching and learning takes place. Clear and helpful developmental points are made to teachers and they receive more formal written observations. Subject co-ordinators monitor teachers' planning and scrutinise pupils' work. They model and observe lessons.
40. A very active and positive governing body makes a very good contribution to the school's development. All governors are involved in regular support to the school and its staff and some have brought their own considerable professional expertise, to help in financial and building aspects, to very good effect. They work closely with the headteacher and are rightly proud of the school's achievements and its high standing in the community. They make a very effective contribution to the good strategic financial management of the school, and have a good understanding of the principles of best value. This enables them to offer both support and challenge in the areas of their competencies.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

| Income and expenditure (£) | |
|----------------------------|---------|
| Total income | 348,026 |
| Total expenditure | 348,940 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 3,172 |

| Balances (£) | |
|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Balance from previous year | 18,134 |
| Balance carried forward to the next | 17,222 |

41. The finance committee controls the budget very tightly, making very good use of the headteacher's financial acumen. Governors are very aware of the strengths of the school and are well informed about standards in basic subjects. They are involved in the observation and monitoring of subjects. There are dedicated governors for all areas, such as literacy, numeracy and special educational needs, and they are confident to act as critical friends in curriculum areas.

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

The overall provision for the children in the Foundation Stage is **good**. There was insufficient evidence to make full judgements about three of the taught areas of learning: Knowledge and Understanding of the World; Physical Development; and Creative Development.

The pupils in the two classes where there are reception-age children receive a good start to their education. Teaching is consistently good in all areas, and examples of very good practice were observed in each class. Very good quality planning and assessment systems contribute to the effectiveness of these early years of education. Although standards on entry cover a broad spectrum, the majority of the children are assessed as being below the levels expected for their age. Many have particular problems in their speech and language, and social skills. By the time they move into Year 1, the majority of the pupils will have attained the levels expected in all six areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum, or be close to doing so. Some will already be working within the early stages of the National Curriculum. This represents good achievement.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are developing their levels of personal independence well.
- They work collaboratively in pairs and groups well.
- Interesting and absorbing activities promote increasingly longer periods of concentration.

Commentary

42. The children have quickly developed their confidence and established good relationships with one another, the class teachers and the classroom assistants. They behave very well and are encouraged to be considerate of others. Teaching is of a consistently high quality and is matched well by children's good achievement. All the staff capture children's interest and attention by their enthusiasm, and by the good use of resources. These qualities, together with intelligent and sensitive planning, ensure that concentration is fostered and maintained well. All the children receive plenty of praise and encouragement. This is effective in building their self-esteem and confidence. They cope well with their personal needs and are mostly independent when changing for physical education, for example.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children's emergent writing is promoted well.
 - Their speaking and listening skills are fostered effectively.
 - Early reading skills are encouraged well.
43. Teaching is consistently good and often very good, involving the children in a range of interesting and exciting activities around the theme of 'Trains', and leading to good achievement. There are good links with other areas of learning such as when children used sticks to beat speech rhythms and then mark them on a railway track. Good opportunities are provided for children to extend their speaking skills through all areas of learning. When they enter the reception class, a number of children have underdeveloped speaking skills and

sensitive adult input encourages them to talk about what they are doing. The children, when listening to stories, join in enthusiastically with the repetitive phrases. For many, reading ability is in its early stages, but it is encouraged well. All the children have a reading book and many are beginning to read simple texts. Both classrooms have a good range of picture books, which are accessible to the children. Virtually all can write their names unaided and letter formation is usually correct. Many are able to write independently. Good use is made of classroom computers to support children's early reading and writing skills.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children count with confidence.
 - Their emerging skills are used across a good range of curriculum areas.
 - Their mathematical vocabulary is developing well.
44. The children are making very good progress in their early understanding of number, shape and measure through a consistently high quality of teaching. Most children handle simple calculations accurately with numbers to five and ten and the more confident to 20. Games and puzzles specifically designed to support early understanding of number are used well. The staff use resources, such as puppets effectively to support number work, and children are enthusiastic about their lessons. The carefully planned use of a range of resources captures and holds children's interest well. Their use of mathematical vocabulary is developing as expected.
45. Children make good progress in their **Knowledge and understanding of the world** because they have plenty of opportunities to experience a wide range of activities. They show a curiosity and interest in everything presented to them, and make suitable gains in their learning. Expeditions around the school and its grounds, as well as further afield, make them aware of the wider world. The children learn more about their world by handling and discussing a variety of objects, and displays encourage their interest and curiosity effectively. The children quickly learn to use computers and are developing good control of the mouse. Good use is made of classroom computers, and the dedicated ICT suite, to support children's early reading, writing and mathematical skills.
46. Children have regular, planned access to a small outdoor area adjacent to the classroom as well as to the larger playground. The development of this area is a significant improvement since the previous inspection, when its provision was a key issue. **Physical development** is planned and organised well and the children use the large equipment, which includes a climbing frame, in the school hall. They also have large wooden adventurous play equipment in their own outdoor area. A range of wheeled toys further develops their movement skills. Fine motor movements are developed through the use of pencils, brushes, scissors, and small construction apparatus.
47. Planning for children's **Creative development** is appropriate, ensuring that they have a range of artistic experiences. They use a variety of pencils, paints, pastels and collage to create images. Many examples of children's work are on display. They handle play-dough and use a variety of tools to create different effects. They learn to sing a number of songs and rhymes, and are given opportunities to listen to music as well as playing percussion instruments. They have good opportunities to use their imagination through role-play and are enjoying using the 'train station' and 'travel agents' in the classrooms.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils become very confident in speaking with other pupils or adults, and learn to listen actively.
- They achieve very well in speaking, listening, reading and writing.
- The staff promote enjoyment and imagination in the pupils' developing control of language.
- Language and literacy skills are used very effectively across the curriculum.
- The subject coordinator leads by example very well.

Commentary

48. Standards have been maintained at above average levels by Year 2 for the last few years, and in 2002 they were well above average. This represents very good achievement since entry to the school, and compares well with standards achieved in schools in similar circumstances. This very good progress is founded in the successful harnessing of the staff's skilled lesson planning to the school's aims, and the purposeful atmosphere for learning created.
49. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. A key strength is the concentration by all the staff on the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills. Pupils develop real confidence through paired and group discussions, question and answer sessions, and role-play and drama opportunities. The staff rightly view this as very helpful in promoting boys' confidence. For example, Year 1 pupils were challenged to discuss and record the main character's own feelings from a story, then to do the same for the feelings of the other characters towards him. This was acted out and recorded on a life-size figure, with the lead pupils imitating the characters and the rest of the class repeating the spoken chorus, 'Not now, Bernard.' This was very effective, as it gave those who took turns to lead confidence to speak in front of the group, and also involved all the pupils in the speaking and listening activity.
50. The above example also illustrates the school's view that the pupils need to increase their control and understanding of a rich and wide vocabulary in order that their reading will make sense to them. In acting out how the characters behaved, the pupils get inside the story, and begin to infer and understand, at a level appropriate to their stage of development, what the implications of the text are. This was well illustrated in a further development of the work above, when the pupils were asked to imagine a new character who was more sympathetic to Bernard. One boy extended his idea of the new character taking the monster away to 'Monsters Inc' by pretending to unfold a map to show how to get there.
51. The links drawn by the staff between all aspects of language development across the curriculum bind ideas and linked words, phrases and descriptions into building blocks of language that give the pupils confidence in experimenting with and extending their spoken and written communication. The subject leader provides an excellent model of this approach in her work with Year 1 and 2 pupils. Using the theme of the sea, the pupils read and listened to stories of whales and dolphins. As well as describing shells using similes and figurative language, the pupils rewrote a story of swimming with dolphins. Because this was made personal for them as the dolphins were to call their name in the rewrite, the pupils willingly experimented with the use of adverbs such as *suddenly*, *quickly*, *quietly* and *softly* to enliven their writing.
52. The staff are skilled in knowing how far the children have progressed, and setting new tasks to move them forward. Marking of pupils' work is secure and helpful, offering a good balance of

praise and further challenge. Those pupils with special educational needs are supported very well, and make very good progress towards the small step targets in their individual plans. Gifted or talented pupils are also identified, and the staff ensure that they are challenged effectively to extend their skills at a level appropriate to their prior achievement.

53. Handwriting and spelling are developed very well. The staff insist on well-presented work, and give pupils good opportunities to practise. For example, a support assistant supported pupils well by preparing writing patterns in their books for them to copy. A recently adopted commercial scheme is proving very effective in improving pupils' neatness and fluency when writing. Spelling is promoted effectively without inhibiting the pupils' confidence in trying to write expressively. For example, when describing how the story character feels, a Year 1 boy was praised by the teacher when he wrote and read back, 'I fil a bit a nood' (I feel a bit annoyed).
54. The subject leader provides very good leadership and management, and has very good understanding of how the subject is progressing. She is involved with the headteacher and the rest of the staff in very effective monitoring and evaluation of teaching, standards, and subject developments. A governor also regularly supports the coordinator in the monitoring and evaluation of the subject, keeping the governing body very well informed. This high quality leadership has ensured that improvement since the last inspection has been very good, particularly in the target area of extended and imaginative writing.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

55. The staff seek and use every opportunity very well to reinforce pupils' effective use of language and literacy across the curriculum, including writing lyrics for the summer show for parents. Pupils use word-banks on the computer to help them write and produce text with a range of punctuation and structures, and use spelling programs to develop accuracy in writing words with paired vowels. They search for and find information on CD-ROM and on the Internet. Good links are made through drama with geography and history, for example when learning about the Great Fire of London. Year 2 pupils develop their ability to write well-formed sentences using word-processing programs, and learn to enliven their writing by adding titles and images.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is good.
- Teachers provide pupils with many good opportunities to practise their skills in number.
- Pupils confidently use a wide range of strategies to work out solutions to problems.

Commentary

56. Results of the national tests in 2003 for pupils at the end of Year 2 were average when compared to all schools nationally. The results tend to fluctuate from year to year but maintain a pattern of being average or above average. From evidence gained during the inspection it seems likely that pupils will attain standards above average in the current year. They make good progress and achieve well. Pupils in Year 2 use a range of good strategies to solve problems and check their results and explain the methods they have used clearly.
57. The quality of teaching is very good overall. Teachers plan work very carefully in year groups to ensure that pupils of the same age in different classes have equal access to the curriculum. Teachers are confident in the subject and make very good use of techniques from the National Numeracy strategy to make lessons interesting and to gauge how well pupils have understood what they have just been taught. They give pupils good, regular opportunities to find solutions

for themselves. As a result, pupils from all groups make good gains in their learning. They enjoy their lessons, behave very well and develop confidence in using a variety of different methods to work out their answers. This also has a positive impact on pupils' social development and enhances their self-esteem. They have very good opportunities to use ICT skills in their mathematics lessons. For example, pupils used a programmable device to help them check answers to calculations by 'counting on' and moving the device appropriately.

58. Teachers plan well for groups of differing prior attainment. Pupils with special educational needs are supported effectively in their learning. Their targets are regularly reviewed and updated, using information from careful assessment. As well as receiving focussed support in groups or as individuals from specially trained teaching assistants, classroom assistants are given good information by the teachers on how to support these pupils in lessons. As a result they make good progress towards these individual targets.
59. The quality of assessment is very good and the information gained is used very well. Teachers share the learning objectives for lessons with the pupils, which enables them to develop a better understanding of how well they have achieved.
60. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has developed a very useful sample file of work at different levels to help teachers in assessing pupils' progress and achievement. She monitors teaching and learning in classes regularly and the information gained is used effectively alongside scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' workbooks to improve provision. Overall provision has improved well since the last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

Pupils use their mathematical skills very well across the curriculum, for example when recording in science through the use of tables and graphs. They use their mathematical skills in history and geography work and there are good cross-curricular links through most areas of the curriculum.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils develop very good investigative skills.
- The range of topics and themes brings the subject to life for the pupils.
- The staff understand how to engage and hold the pupils' interest.

Commentary

61. Standards are above those usually seen in Year 2, and above those in similar schools. Pupils achieve very well in all aspects of the subject, and develop their ability to investigate and test ideas very well. An analysis of pupils' work shows how thoroughly they work through each topic, exploring ideas, such as changes in living animals, including themselves, and how the forces of pushing and pulling affect different objects, including those with regular and those with eccentric wheels.
62. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. The staff are very well organised, and use a good range of resources and equipment to support pupils' learning. They plan to a common theme, such as growth and change, and link work across a range of subjects very effectively. They are rigorous in ensuring that the pupils receive their entitlement to the science curriculum, but also allow the pupils to be imaginative and creative in their response. For example, whilst exploring the story of 'Jack and the Beanstalk' in English and drama, the pupils plant and grow beans in science.

63. Year 2 pupils made accurate and detailed recorded observations of how the beans grew in different conditions. They measured them, inspected the roots, stem and leaves, drew them carefully and noted how healthy they looked compared to a known healthy specimen. They checked their predictions, commenting on how accurate they were, and were reminded regularly by the teacher to think about how they ensured that their testing was fair. This was active science investigation of a high order. Alongside this, groups worked in turn with a support assistant to use their observations to construct a model of a growing bean to illustrate the 'Jack and the Beanstalk' story: very good transference of learning from one area to another.
64. Year 1 pupils worked on the same area of growth, and planted cress seeds in different conditions. Whilst this could appear on the surface to be work at a similar level to that for the Year 2 pupils, the levels of expectation for the different groups were quite different. The Year 1 pupils were effectively challenged to build on their prior understanding, beginning to work into the level expected of pupils a year older. The Year 2 pupils were also pushed on to work into levels expected of pupils a year older than them, achieving in many cases above the level expected for their age. This exemplifies the school's very effective approach to learning in the subject, as pupils revisit ideas and topics but apply more advanced skills and techniques in testing and growing to understand them. This approach is very helpful for all pupils, and especially for those with special educational needs. Occasionally, however, opportunities are missed to encourage greater independence for pupils in choosing the resources they might use for themselves.
65. The subject is well led and managed by an interested and enthusiastic coordinator who only works part-time in the school. Despite this, she has a good understanding of how the subject is developing, and keeps an effective overview of standards and the quality of teaching and learning. A key area of development has been in developing 'Key Questions' used by staff to assess how well pupils have progressed in a particular topic, which has allowed the staff greater understanding of pupils' achievement. Work in the subject has improved well since the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

- The school's resources for the subject are good.
- The teachers and support assistants are enthusiastic, confident and knowledgeable.
- Pupils enjoy the subject and work hard.
- There are good links to other subjects.

Commentary

66. Standards are above expectations at the end of Year 2. Improvements in the teaching of ICT and in the resources available have been good since the previous inspection. The school now has a small ICT suite which is in regular, timetabled use. There are also computers in each classroom and these are used well to support and extend work during lessons.
67. Pupils achieve well. For example, they are becoming adept in the use of digital cameras, using them to record signs of spring and as a resource for geographical work. They obviously enjoy their lessons in ICT and in the lessons observed most could do something new by the end of it. Their word processing skills improve noticeably as they get older although in some cases keyboard skills are underdeveloped. Pupils sometimes have trouble locating letters and symbols but are helped by having lower case letters stuck on the keyboards. Pupils show confidence in their use of ICT and more able pupils are producing simple reports for projects in other subjects, such as history, using text and graphics. They are introduced to an increasing variety of software.

68. In the lessons seen, teaching and learning were consistently very good. The planning is good and is adapted from the plans to suit each class or year. The majority of lessons are very good because teachers are familiar with the software and confident with the hardware. Teaching assistants have good levels of knowledge and are well deployed to help anyone with a problem.
69. The subject is well led and managed and suitably resourced. The whole school is committed to improvement. The budget is well spent and there are clear plans for development. The co-ordinator provides expertise and is a confident role model for her colleagues. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. This subject has gone from a situation where teaching was limited, to every class having regular taught sessions together with opportunities to use ICT skills in other subjects.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

70. The use of ICT across the curriculum is well-developed and examples were seen in many lessons. A portfolio of completed work shows clear links across a variety of subjects.

HUMANITIES

History and Geography

71. History and geography were not a focus of this inspection. A scrutiny of teachers' planning and the pupils' work, together with pupil discussions, suggests that standards in both subjects are at least in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2. A good system of assessment for history has been developed and takes the form of a set of key questions. Teachers have found that this builds up an accurate picture of pupils' knowledge and understanding, particularly for those whose literacy skills are underdeveloped. At present, geography assessment follows the unit guidelines but is currently being developed to match the system used for history. Parts of a lesson in each subject were observed and teaching appeared to have good features. It was not possible to make an overall judgement about the standards of teaching and learning in either subject.

Religious education

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at the end of Year 2 are above those outlined in the locally Agreed Syllabus.
 - Standards have improved since the time of the last inspection and reflect the school's Christian ethos.
 - The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
 - Teaching is very good overall.
72. Since the last inspection standards have risen and they are above the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus at the end of Year 2. Pupils' achievement is good. They are introduced to an appropriate range of world faiths, including Christianity, and are developing a good understanding of the similarities and differences between them. Many understand the notion of worship as being central to religion, and are developing good understanding of the use of symbolism in religion. The school's Christian ethos is supported and developed well in religious education lessons and the subject features in all the classes.
73. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall although it was unsatisfactory in one observed lesson. This is because the work was not at a sufficiently challenging level for the

abilities of the pupils. Lessons are prepared well and the delivery of individual lessons captures pupils' interest and attention. A good feature of teaching is the use made of drama. The practice of supporting pupils' understanding of religion through first-hand experience is effective, such as visiting the local church. The subject co-ordinator has plans to invite speakers from other faiths to extend pupils' understanding and knowledge. Pupils' response in lessons is good and is matched well by their recall of their learning. They understand that the Bible is divided into Old and New Testaments and that the New Testament includes Jesus' life and work.

74. The co-ordinator is relatively new in post. She already has a suitable overview and grasp of the subject, and how it could be further improved. The school uses the local education authority agreed syllabus, and assessment currently takes place through the evaluation of planning. Resources are appropriate, and sufficient, and are used effectively to support learning.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

No lessons were seen in design and technology, and two in gymnastics in physical education. Work in design and technology covers the required curriculum, and pupils' work saved or on display makes it clear how the school achieved the Artsmark for its interest in and development of this area of pupils' development, allied to work in art and design, music, dance and drama. For example, during a DT week last year, pupils chose different environments and designed and made artefacts and models to suit. These included sun hats and sunglasses for the beach, and pizzas for a restaurant, all with designs and evaluations of effectiveness. Pupils work with a good variety of materials and tools, including cutting and sticking hard and resistant materials, and deconstructing made objects to consider how they were designed and put together to meet their purpose. In PE, pupils experience the full range of the subject, including dance and games. In the sessions observed, pupils worked as expected for their ages in moving round the good hall, rolling, balancing and jumping effectively. However, when they used the gymnastics apparatus, their movements were more restricted as they tended to queue to use the apparatus and not use the floor as they had done earlier. The subject is due for review from September 2004, and this is timely.

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school values the subject highly, leading to the Artsmark.
- Pupils have very good opportunities to develop a good range of skills.

Commentary

75. Standards are above those usually seen by the end of Year 2, and some pupils achieve very high standards. For example, pupils took pictures of spring flowers in the school grounds with a digital camera, showing good eye for composition. They then used these as the basis, alongside observation from life, to create 'spring pictures', many of them at above average levels. Pupils also use ICT programs effectively to create images, pictures and illustrations.
76. Although only one lesson was observed, inspection evidence is that the quality of teaching and learning is very good, reflecting the subject's status. The whole school is a gallery of pupils' work, with pencil observational line drawings of plants of high quality, and illustrative work for geography and science that combines all the best elements of the school's approach to interconnectedness in pupils' learning across subjects. For example, Year 2 pupils have made painted plasticine images of flowers of real beauty. Year 1 pupils have painted sensitive portraits with good feel for facial dimensions, and well-matched skin tones. This work contributes well to pupils' spiritual development.

77. In the lesson seen, Year 1 and 2 pupils made closely observed drawings of shells they had used earlier in their literacy work. With music playing calmly in the background, they quietly discussed their work in progress, discussing how to reproduce a spiral, or the knobby spines or perforations. The teacher and support assistant worked alongside the pupils, modelling techniques, but not intruding or imposing their ideas on the pupils, rather experimenting with line, form and shade as artists together. Many of these pupils have well-developed observational skills, and good control of line and pattern. Some of them produced exquisitely detailed and accurate representational drawings, whilst others played with different aspects of the shell surface or edge to create particular effects.
78. The subject is very well led and managed. A recent survey undertaken as part of monitoring and evaluating the work has indicated that the subject is sometimes too closely linked to topic work to illustrate work in other subjects, rather than being developed in its own right, and that greater concentration on the work of artists and craftspersons is needed. These point the way accurately for the further development of the subject, which has improved well since the last inspection.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Music is central to the school's life.
- Very good use is made of staff's skills to promote the subject.
- Singing is promoted well.

Commentary

79. Standards are above those expected by Year 2, and achievement is good. Year 2 pupils sing a good range of songs tunefully and with good enunciation, and most play the first three notes effectively in learning to play the recorder. They also listen well to recorded and live music, and comment appropriately when this is required. Year 1 and 2 pupils listened to Vaughan Williams 'Lark ascending' and many took the opportunity to move to it very well, two boys appearing to float above the ground as they moved slowly round.
80. Teaching and learning are good. The whole staff contribute well to the development of the subject, and ensure that it has a high profile in pupils' learning. As well as incidental music in lessons, each assembly is accompanied by one of the support staff, a talented pianist, playing pieces of classical or popular music, such as waltzes by Strauss. She also accompanies the singing in assembly, and in singing practices for two classes together. These are good sessions, and the pupils enjoy a variety of songs. However, some boys do not take a full part, and are not always reminded to do so.
81. The staff have taken recent training in the subject very seriously, and apply what they have learned effectively. For example, a course organised through the local authority music service in multicultural music has extended the repertoire of songs in a number of cultural and language traditions, supported by the acquisition of a good range of instruments representative of these cultures. As an example of how staff adapt what they learn, they have a soft-sounding 'rainmaker' that a pupil plays to signal the end of session: this works very effectively. Year 1 pupils developed their understanding of tempo well by using these instruments to accompany an altered version of a happy song to make it sound 'grumpy' or 'excited'.
82. The subject is well-organised in the school, and the evidence from a video of the 2003 concert for parents shows how well the pupils use what they have learned to compose and perform

their own musical stories. Visiting musicians add to the quality of provision, and there is an after-school club where pupils learn a variety of musical techniques from a visiting teacher.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

83. In addition to meeting all the statutory requirements, PSHE is a positive force in the school. Pupils achieve very well, and learn to share and how to behave towards each other in the school community right from the start of their time here. They learn to participate fully in school life and to take responsibilities seriously. The school's over-arching ethos of fairness, tolerance and equality of opportunity shines through and is reinforced in lessons. There are good opportunities for pupils to take responsibility as school councillors, to listen to each other and demonstrate respect for different views and values and to empathise with those less fortunate than themselves.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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